

**Trans-Pecos region of Texas - Spring 2021 (1 March 2021 - 31 May 2021)**

**Noteworthy Bird Sightings**

**Compiled by Jim Paton and Steven W. Cardiff**

Counties Covered: Brewster, Crane, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Val Verde, Ward, Winkler

Texas Bird Records Committee (TBRC) review species in **bold**. Cited observers listed alphabetically at the end of the report.

**PART 1 of 2 - El Paso area (El Paso and Hudspeth Counties)**

**Sub-regional compiler: Jim Paton**

Continuing and intensifying drought left grasslands and desert habitats in increasingly grim condition. Based on casual observations of very few butterflies, insect populations were presumed to be low which likely reduced reproductive success away from areas with water. Drought was likely responsible for some late lingering migrants as well as excellent showings for Hermit Warbler and Hepatic Tanager, an echo of their large numbers in the fall. Notable rarities included Ruddy Ground Doves, Costa's Hummingbirds, and a local first Yellow-billed Loon.

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** - The two Greater White-fronted Geese that wintered at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co remained through at least 14 Apr (m.ob.).

**CANVASBACK** - A female Canvasback at Horizon City, El Paso Co 24–27 May (Michael Harvey) was late.

**LESSER SCAUP** - A male Lesser Scaup lingered through the period at Horizon City, El Paso Co (Michael Harvey).

**BUFFLEHEAD** - Late Buffleheads in El Paso Co were a pair at the Jonathon Rogers Wastewater Plant 15 May (Liz Walsh) and a male in Horizon City through 27 May (Zach Millen).

**SCALED QUAIL** - Six Scaled Quail in an agricultural field in west El Paso, El Paso Co 3 Apr (ph. Kevin Floyd, John Groves, Vicki Milne) were away from typical habitat and presumably drought related.

**RUDDY GROUND DOVE** - A male Ruddy Ground Dove in an El Paso yard, El Paso Co 3–18 Mar (ph. Barry Zimmer) looked by bill structure to be a different bird than the one in a pair present there in Nov-Dec; the pair in west El Paso, El Paso Co 29 Mar - 10 May (ph. John Groves, m. ob.) were certainly continuing birds from fall. A well-described pair at a different El Paso site 29 May (Laura Kohrt) was never confirmed.

*Chaetura* swifts – El Paso Co had a number of reports of *Chaetura* swifts with two early ones 28 Mar (Jim Paton), two on 15 Apr (John Groves), at least one at Ascarate Park 23–25 Apr (ph. Kevin Floyd, John Groves, m.ob.), and one 5 May (Barry Zimmer); none were conclusively identified to species but the latter one was suspected to be Vaux's Swift.

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** – Male Black-chinned Hummingbirds in El Paso, El Paso Co 16 Mar (Barry Zimmer) and 18 Mar (John Kiseda) were about five days early.

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** – An Anna's Hummingbird in an El Paso yard, El Paso Co 4 Apr – 2 May (ph. Barry Zimmer) looked recently fledged and would add to the handful of local breeding records. A male in another El Paso yard, El Paso Co 1–5 Apr (John Kiseda), along with several other poorly-documented reports 30 Mar – 7 May suggest an expanding spring presence in El Paso.

**COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD** – The Costa's Hummingbird that first appeared in El Paso, El Paso Co 15 Feb remained through 16 Mar (ph. Barry Zimmer) and an adult male was in west El Paso, El Paso Co 27–28 Mar (ph. John Groves, John Kiseda).

**RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** – As has become the norm in recent years, a few spring migrant Rufous Hummingbirds appeared in El Paso, El Paso Co with adult males 10–14 Mar (John Kiseda) and 19–28 Mar (Barry Zimmer).

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** – The female-plumaged Calliope Hummingbird that appeared in El Paso, El Paso Co 24 Jan had proven to be a male by the time it was last seen 18 Apr (ph., Barry Zimmer).

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD** – A female Broad-billed Hummingbird at the Indio Mountains Research Station 17 Apr (Michael Harvey) was just the second for Hudspeth Co.

**MOUNTAIN PLOVER** – 43 Mountain Plovers near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 19 Mar (Nicole Foley, ph. Tyler Scott) were the first there since 2007.

**WHIMBREL** – A Whimbrel near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 5 May (ph. Jim Paton) was just the third county record.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** – Rare but regular in late spring, a White-rumped Sandpiper was west to Dell City, Hudspeth Co 13 May (Kim Garwood, Willie Sekula).

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** – A Solitary Sandpiper in west El Paso, El Paso Co 5–7 Mar (ph. Ad Konings) was likely the bird seen nearby in winter rather than an early migrant.

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** – 66 Franklin's Gulls at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 30 Apr (Barry Zimmer) was an impressive total for the Trans-Pecos.

**LEAST TERN** – A Least Tern at Horizon City, El Paso Co 24 May (Michael Harvey) fit the expected window, but sightings have been few in recent years.

**YELLOW-BILLED LOON** – A late Yellow-billed Loon at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 8–18 May (ph. Kevin Floyd, Vicki Milne) was a local checklist first for El Paso and was enjoyed by many. After it became entangled in fishing line it was captured by El Paso Zoo staff, found to otherwise be healthy, rehabbed for several weeks, and released 6 Jun at a different body of water.

AMERICAN BITTERN – Seen less than annually in El Paso Co, an American Bittern was on the west side of El Paso 26–31 Mar (ph. John Groves, Patricia Russell).

TRICOLORED HERON – Two Tricolored Herons were west to El Paso, El Paso Co with one at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park 14–15 May (John Sproul) and one at Keystone Heritage Park 17 May+ (ph, Ad Konings, m. ob.).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – Along with Tricolored Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron is the most expected of the rare herons in the El Paso area. This spring one to two were again at their regular site in west El Paso 26 Mar+ (ph, John Groves, Patricia Russell) and another was at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park 15 May (Al Wallace).

GLOSSY IBIS – A Glossy Ibis near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 24 Apr (Jayna Adams, ph. T. Jay Adams) was just a second county record.

BLACK VULTURE – Two Black Vultures at the Indio Mountains Research Station, Hudspeth Co 1 May (Michael Harvey) were at the western edge of the species range in TX.

WHITE-TAILED KITES – One to three White-tailed Kites were again at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 6 Mar – 1 Apr (m. ob.), the only regular site in the El Paso area.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – Nine reports of Broad-winged Hawk in El Paso Co 4–25 Apr (Jim Paton, m. ob.) were above average for this rare migrant.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK – A Zone-tailed Hawk by Dell City, Hudspeth Co 24 Apr (Jayna Adams, ph. T. Jay Adams) was a county first and another was in El Paso, El Paso Co 25–26 May (ph. Ad Konings) where rare.

LONG-EARED OWL – A Long-eared Owl was at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 30 Apr – 16 May (John Sproul).

WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER – Much more expected in fall, a rare spring lowland Williamson's Sapsucker was in El Paso, El Paso Co 19–21 Mar (ph. Barry Zimmer).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER – An Olive-sided Flycatcher in El Paso, El Paso Co 22 Apr (ph., Liz Walsh) was about a week early so one there 13–18 Apr (ph. Jim Paton) was really early.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER – The Hammond's Flycatcher that wintered in El Paso, El Paso Co was last seen 3 Apr (Jim Paton).

EASTERN PHOEBE – Eastern Phoebes near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 9 and 20 Apr (Jim Paton) were late for the El Paso area with the latter bird record so.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD – Tropical Kingbirds returned to Ascarate Park, their only known nesting site in El Paso Co 4 May (John Kiseda, m. ob.) and a pair near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 19 May (ph. Jim Paton) was the fourth year for the lone site in that county.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 1–5 May (ph., Jim Paton, Lisa Studdard); there are fewer than ten county records.

HUTTON'S VIREO – Rare fall through winter, a late Hutton's Vireo was in El Paso, El Paso Co 19 Mar (ph. Ad Konings).

BLUE JAY – First found in Jan, a Blue Jay that flirted with the state line in extreme western El Paso Co was relocated 8 Mar – 15 Apr (ph. John Groves, Patricia Russell).

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY – After a winter with very few in the area, a Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay in the northern Franklin Mountains, El Paso Co 8 May (Michael Harvey) was unexpected and getting late.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH – White-breasted Nuthatches in El Paso, El Paso Co through 17 Mar (Ad Konings) and 26 Mar (Jim Paton) were getting late.

HOUSE WREN – A House Wren in El Paso, El Paso Co 30 May (Jim Paton) was several weeks past expected departure dates.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET – Ruby-crowned Kinglet gets quite scarce after Apr, so one in El Paso, El Paso Co 23 May (Jim Paton) was notably late.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH – A Swainson's Thrush in Dell City, Hudspeth Co 13 May (Kim Garwood, ph. Willie Sekula) was only the third for the county and another was at Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso Co 21 May (ph. Pat Lucas).

GRAY CATBIRD – Two Gray Catbirds were near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 12 May (ph. Jim Paton); there remain fewer than ten records for the county.

CEDAR WAXWING – Late Cedar Waxwings were three near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 26 May (ph. Jim Paton) and three in El Paso, El Paso Co 30 May (Jim Paton).

CASSIN'S FINCH – After a winter with very few reports, three records of lone Cassin's Finches in El Paso, El Paso Co were a surprise: 29 Mar (ph. Jim Paton), 9-11 Apr (ph. Barry Zimmer), and 22-23 Apr (ph. Michael Harvey).

PINE SISKIN – Pine Siskin continued its fine winter showing with small numbers remaining through the period in El Paso, El Paso Co (Jim Paton, Barry Zimmer). A flock of about 70 near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 12 May (ph. Jim Paton) was a record count for the El Paso area.

OVENBIRD – Lone Ovenbirds were seen in El Paso, El Paso Co 20–21 May (Kevin Floyd) and 31 May (Barry Zimmer).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER – Although Black-and-white Warbler is rare but regular in El Paso Co, one in the Indio Mountains Research Station 1 May (Michael Harvey) was in Hudspeth Co which has fewer than ten records.

HOODED WARBLER – Two Hooded Warblers were west to El Paso Co with one in El Paso 17 Apr (ph. Paul Hyder) and one in Clint 22-23 May (ph. Alfred Olivias).

AMERICAN REDSTART – In addition to several expected El Paso Co records of this rare migrant, there were four records of American Redstart near Dell City, Hudspeth Co which has fewer than ten county records: a male 5 May (Jim Paton), two females 13 May (Kim Garwood, Willie Sekula), and a female 26 May (Jim Paton).

NORTHERN PARULA - Lone Northern Parulas were west to the Indio Mountains Research Station, Hudspeth Co 1 May (ph. Michael Harvey) and El Paso, El Paso Co 10 May (Jim Paton).

GRACE'S WARBLER - Always notable as a lowland migrant, a Grace's Warbler was in El Paso, El Paso Co 30 Apr (ph. Kevin Floyd).

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER - A Townsend's Warbler at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 30 May (ph. Randy Hesford) was late.

HERMIT WARBLER - Hermit Warbler is a rare migrant through El Paso Co, especially in spring, so four to five records in El Paso 19 Apr - 3 May (Kevin Floyd, Michael Harvey, Jim Paton) were exceptional and probably drought related.

BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW - A Black-chinned Sparrow in desert scrub south of Dell City, Hudspeth Co 1 May (ph. Jim Paton, Lisa Studdard) was exceptional for the date and habitat.

SAVANNAH SPARROW - Two Savannah Sparrows at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 17 May (ph. John Kiseda) were late.

DARK-EYED JUNCO - Numerous Dark-eyed Juncos lingered through mid-May in the El Paso area with the latest in El Paso, El Paso Co 26 May (Jim Paton) and 27 May (Barry Zimmer), both Gray-headed.

HEPATIC TANAGER - At least four Hepatic Tanagers in the El Paso area 5-22 May (Michael Harvey, Jim Paton) were more than expected, especially for spring, and likely drought related.

SUMMER TANAGER - By late May a rare county breeding record was confirmed for Summer Tanager in El Paso, El Paso Co (ph. John Groves).

NORTHERN CARDINAL - Northern Cardinal nests regularly along the Rio Grande west through about the eastern third of Hudspeth Co as evidenced by the dozen or more at the Indio Mountains Research Station 2 May (Michael Harvey). Despite lots of apparently suitable floodplain neighborhoods in El Paso, it is rare to casual in El Paso Co away from Rio Bosque Wetlands Park where at least a pair was again present (m. ob.).

VARIED BUNTING - Varied Bunting was at several sites in the Indio Mountains Research Station 1-2 May (ph. Michael Harvey) in southeastern Hudspeth Co at the western edge of its typical range in the state; farther west a pair was at Hueco Tanks State Park, 30-31 May (ph., Liz Walsh), its lone outpost in El Paso Co.

COMMON GRACKLE - Rare and roughly annual, a Common Grackle was in El Paso, El Paso Co 8 Apr (ph., Jim Paton).

Cited observers: Jayna Adams, T. Jay Adams, Kevin Floyd, Nicole Foley, Kim Garwood, John Groves, Randy Hesford, Paul Hyder, John Kiseda, Laura Kohrt, Ad Konings, Pat Lucas, Zach Millen, Vicki Milne, Alfred Olivas, Jim Paton, Patricia Russell, Willie Sekula, Tyler Scott, John Sproul, Lisa Studdard, Al Wallace, Liz Walsh, Barry Zimmer

**PART 2 of 2 - Eastern Trans-Pecos (Brewster, Crane, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Loving,  
Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Val Verde, Ward, Winkler)**

**Sub-regional compiler: Steven W. Cardiff**

The ongoing extreme drought impacting most of the region persisted through the spring season after disappointing winter and spring precipitation. Increasingly depleted water and wild food resources depressed breeding bird activity and concentrated birds at residual water sources and feeding stations, possibly accounting for many of the unusual high counts of some finches, tanagers, grosbeaks, buntings, etc. Tinder dry conditions also contributed to several significant wildfires at higher elevations of some of our precious sky islands. During mid-April, the "South Rim" fire impacted about 1000 acres of some of the best high elevation birding area in the Chisos Mountains, and the "Dog" fire consumed about 2000 acres in the Guadalupe Mountains from mid-May into early June.

**Notable Species observed during the period:**

Snow Goose – Spring transient Snow Geese encountered away from the traditional wintering area around Balmorhea, Reeves Co, included one at B. J. Bishop Wetland, Presidio Co 1 Mar (Jeff Bennett) and a flock of 75 at Devil's River SNA, Val Verde Co 18 Mar (Joe Findley).

Canada Goose – Late straggler Canada Geese included one at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 15–22 Apr which was joined by a second individual 23 Apr–12 May (Nicholas Schleissmann et al.), one at Monahans, Ward Co 29 Apr (Laura Sare), and two there on 24 May (Will Kennerley).

Least Grebe – Four relatively far west Least Grebes may all have been the same continuing individuals first reported during the preceding fall/winter: at Terlingua, Brewster Co through the period (ph. Stephen Falick, m. ob; first observed 25 Oct 2020); at Lajitas, Brewster Co, 26 Apr (ph. Stephen Falick) and 29 May (Greg Cook; first reported 13 Nov 2020); at Daniel's Ranch Road, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 10 May (ph. Stephen Falick; first observed 23 Jan 2021), and at Candelaria Wetlands, Presidio Co 28 May (D. D. Currie, Dell Little; first observed 10 Nov 2020).

Chimney Swift – Reports of Chimney Swifts towards the west side of the region included singles at Van Horn, Culberson Co 29 Apr (ph. Nick Bonomo et al.), in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 3 May (Donna Dittmann), and at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 13 May (ph. Donna Dittmann, Steve Cardiff). A "*Chaetura* sp." at Lawrence Wood picnic area in the Davis Mts., Jeff Davis Co 12 May (ph. Jon McIntyre) was also likely a Chimney Swift.

Rufous Hummingbird – Although a common fall migrant, Rufous Hummingbird is decidedly rare during spring migration. So, an adult male in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 3 May (Steve Cardiff) was a surprise.

Broad-billed Hummingbird – A male Broad-billed Hummingbird at Limpia Crossing, Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 12 Apr–27 May (ph. Dell Little, D. D. Currie) was the only report.

American Golden-Plover – American Golden-Plover is generally rare in the region, but definitely more so in spring than in fall. So, one at Terlingua, Brewster Co 2–7 May (ph. Dell Little, D. D. Currie, ph. Carolyn Ohl) was exciting and appears to establish a first hard-evidence occurrence for Brewster County and

provided only about the fifth hard-evidence spring occurrence for the region.

Hudsonian Godwit – A Hudsonian Godwit at Terlingua 13 May (ph. Stephen Falick, ph. Jon McIntyre) appears to represent a first for Brewster County and only about the fourth well-documented regional occurrence.

Marbled Godwit – Always a good bird during spring, up to 11 Marbled Godwits were present at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 19 Apr–14 May (Michael O'Brien, ph. Jay and Judy Wilbur et al.).

Baird's Sandpiper – Up to six Baird's Sandpipers at Amistad NRA, Val Verde Co 29 May (ph. Jacob Bagley, ph. Bryan Calk, ph. Tyler Scott) were relatively late.

Wilson's Phalarope – Rather early Wilson's Phalaropes included one at B. J. Bishop Wetland, Presidio Co 19 Mar (ph. Troy and Marla Hibbitts) and three at Monihans, Ward Co 30 Mar (Bill Sain).

Red-necked Phalarope – Always a good bird in the region, single Red-necked Phalaropes were possibly also first county occurrences at Van Horn, Culberson Co 14 May (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood), and at Crane, Crane Co 15 May (ph. Steve Glover).

Solitary Sandpiper – An early Solitary Sandpiper was noted at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 19 Mar (Stephen Gast).

Willet – Thirteen Willets at Terlingua 23 Apr (ph. Bryan Calk et al.) may represent the first modern well-documented occurrence for Brewster County. Singles at Independence Creek, Terrell Co 19 Apr (ph. Ryan Smith), and at Van Horn, Culberson Co 12 May (Willie Sekula et al.) may have also been first spring county occurrences. There were several observations at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 16–26 Apr (ph. Mike Stewart et al.), with a new record high of 58 there on 26 Apr (ph. Bill and Julie Schneider).

Laughing Gull – Inland Laughing Gulls included six at Amistad Reservoir, Val Verde Co 15 Mar (Cin-Ty Lee) with decreasing numbers reported from the area thereafter and the last observed on 29 May (ph. Bryan Calk, Jacob Bagley), and a subadult even farther northwest at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 31 May (ph. Ty Allen, ph. Caleb Helsel et al.).

California Gull – A California Gull at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 31 Mar–1 Apr (ph. Bergie Bergstrom, ph. Michael Harvey) was, surprisingly, possibly the first, or one of the first occurrences of a definite spring transient in the eastern Trans-Pecos. There is an early March 2017 record of an immature at Lake Amistad, Val Verde Co that could have pertained to a wintering individual.

Herring Gull – A late migrant adult Herring Gull was at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 18 Apr (ph. Jon McIntyre, ph. Tom Ewert, Rodney Wedel).

Caspian Tern – Caspian Terns are surprisingly scarce spring migrants in the region and the species goes undetected some years. So, seven at Amistad NRA, Val Verde Co 10 Apr (Jonathan Eckerson, Evan Lipton) and another nearby at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 28 May (Hank Taliaferro) were of interest.

Neotropic Cormorant – Up to 850 Neotropic Cormorants estimated at the Candelaria Wetlands, Presidio Co 11 May (Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittmann) was an unprecedented number for the region by almost an order of magnitude. The source of such numbers remains unclear. There were no indications of active breeding in the area, but it's possible that breeding had occurred in the vicinity earlier in the year or that this was simply a massive feeding aggregation drawing birds from a larger geographic area and taking

advantage of receding water levels.

Little Blue Heron – A rare Little Blue Heron, an adult at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 16–18 Apr (ph. Mike and Yvette Stewart, ph. Tom Ewert, Rodney Wedel) was the only well-documented report of the spring.

Glossy Ibis – An adult Glossy Ibis at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 2 May (ph. Martina Nordstrand) was possibly the first regional occurrence backed by hard evidence.

White-tailed Kite – A White-tailed Kite at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend NP 11 Mar (ph. Christy Negele) was an excellent find; there are very few well-documented occurrences for Brewster County, especially from spring and from the Rio Grande corridor. Singles near Del Rio, Val Verde Co 11 Apr (Jonathan Eckerson, Evan Lipton) and near Marfa, Presidio Co 26 Apr (Molly Richard, Virginia Rettig) were the only other reports for the season.

Harris's Hawk – There were scattered reports of Harris's Hawks west/north to Presidio, Reeves, Loving, and Ward counties, most interesting of which was a nesting pair near Candelaria, Presidio Co 11 May (Donna Dittmann, Steve Cardiff), and with at least two downy chicks confirmed there 28 May (ph. Dell Little, D. D. Currie).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** – A Northern Saw-whet Owl heard in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 19 May (Beth McBroom, Randy Pinkston) was at a location where the species is suspected of breeding and was well-documented in spring 2017.

Green Kingfisher – A female Green Kingfisher at Candelaria Wetlands, Presidio Co 19 Mar (ph. Troy and Marla Hibbitts) was the second for that location. There are only a few previous occurrences west to Presidio Co, including a male at this location in January 2021.

Williamson's Sapsucker – Most notable among the few Williamson's Sapsuckers detected in the western portion of the region into spring were probable migrants at Christmas Mountains Oasis, Brewster Co 27 Apr (ph. David Provencher) and in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 4 May (ph. Lorrie Lowrie).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – A fair number of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers lingered unusually late into the spring, with at least eight reported from mid-March into early May (m. ob.), latest of which was a female that made an appearance on the West Texas Feeder WebCam

(<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/west-texas-hummingbirds>), located in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co, on 11 May (archival images *vide* Ben Wieland).

Red-naped x Red-breasted sapsucker – An apparent Red-naped x Red-breasted sapsucker was photographed at Laguna Meadow, Chisos Mts., Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 1 May (ph. John Dreves).

Downy Woodpecker – Two Downy Woodpeckers made for five occurrences in the region since September 2020 and included the second for Brewster Co at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend NP 26 Mar–26 Apr (ph. Larry Waddell, ph. Bonnie de Grood, ph. Michelle Rometry, et al.), and a possible first for Reeves Co at Balmorhea 8 Mar (ph. Anita Meagher).

Crested Caracara – Crested Caracara sightings continue to accumulate from southeastern portions of the region as the species slowly expands northwestward. This spring two were found at Big Bend NP, Brewster Co, with one at Persimmon Gap 19 Mar (Christy Negele), and the other along Gano Springs

Road west of Panther Junction 17 May (ph. Fred Collins, Randy Pinkston).

Gray Flycatcher – Single Gray Flycatchers in Big Bend NP, Brewster Co at Cottonwood Campground 1 Mar (ph.) and at Daniel’s Ranch Road 4 Mar (both Dave Rudemiller) were likely wintering birds reported that had been reported at those locations into mid-February.

Brown-crested Flycatcher – A territorial pair of Brown-crested Flycatchers at the Miller Ranch, Presidio Co 14 May (ph. Donna Dittmann, Steve Cardiff) were a surprise away from the immediate Rio Grande corridor and may represent the farthest west well-documented occurrence for the region.

Great Kiskadee – Certainly unexpected was a Great Kiskadee at Sanderson, Terrell Co 14 Apr (ph. Forrest Rowland). There are just a few previous regional occurrences from this far west, all from Brewster and Pecos counties.

Hutton’s Vireo – A Hutton’s Vireo at Dog Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains NP, Culberson Co 8 May (Chris Runk) was the only report away from the Davis and Chisos mountains.

Red-eyed Vireo – Well-described sight reports of Red-eyed Vireos included three individuals at Guadalupe Mountains NP, Culberson Co, including one at Smith Springs Trail 19 Apr (Karen Tanquist, Patrick Coy) and two nearby at Devil’s Hall Trail 5 May (Michael Clay, Jay Bolden), one at Pine Canyon, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 22 Apr (MaryAnn Parsons et al.) and 27 Apr (Greg Vassilopoulos), and one at Davis Mountains SP, Jeff Davis Co 8 May (Cathy Rudzinski et al.).

Gray Catbird – A Gray Catbird at Daniels Ranch Road, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 12 Mar (Dave Rudemiller) likely involved a bird that had wintered in the area. There were another ten or so reports of spring migrants scattered across the region 19 Apr–24 May (m. ob.).

Brown Thrasher – Several wintering Brown Thrashers lingered surprisingly late into the spring period. One first reported 25 Oct 2020 at Davis Mountains SP, Jeff Davis Co remained to 18 Apr (ph., m. ob.) at which point two individuals were observed simultaneously on multiple dates 18 Apr–5 May (ph. Mike Stewart et al.), and with at least one lingering to 10 May (ph. Steve Compton, ph. Richard Hayes et al.). One first observed 20 Nov 2020 at Gage Gardens, Marathon, Brewster Co (m. ob.) was last observed 22 Apr (ph. Dale Ohl et al.). Several reports from Rio Grande Village and vicinity, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 28 Mar–9 May (ph. John Harrington, ph. Erik Wolf et al.) could have pertained to the 1–2 reported there during December 2020. New individuals were found in Brewster County just west of Marathon 25 Mar (Stephen Falick) and at Fort Peña Colorado Park 20 May (Christian Fernandez).

Mountain Bluebird – Reports of late-lingering Mountain Bluebirds in Brewster Co 6–19 Apr (m. ob.) came from multiple locations as far south as the Rio Grande corridor of Big Bend NP. Most reports were of single females but, intriguingly, an apparent pair was in the Cottonwood Creek cabins area south of Alpine 12–13 Apr (John C. Mittermeier) with the male still present to at least 19 Apr (ph. Missy McAllister Kerr). Exceptionally late was a female at B. J. Bishop Wetland, Presidio Co 30 May (ph. Tony and Phyllis Frank).

Swainson’s Thrush – Non-Hermit *Catharus* thrushes tend to be very scarce migrants in west Texas, so ten Swainson’s Thrushes detected across the region 26 Apr–28 May (m. ob.) seemed above average.

Wood Thrush – Decidedly unexpected in the region, a Wood Thrush in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis 12 Apr (ph. Lorrie Lowrie) was only about the second confirmed in Jeff Davis Co, and another at Alpine

18–22 Apr (ph. Jon McIntyre, ph. Bryan Calk, ph. Stephen Falick et al.) was, even more surprisingly, apparently only about the second to be well-documented in Brewster Co.

Clay-colored Thrush – A Clay-colored Thrush at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 25 Apr (ph. Barry Zimmer et al.) was presumably one of the several reported there during the preceding fall-winter.

Cassin's Finch – Despite the relative lack of Cassin's Finches during the preceding winter, there were several interesting late spring reports. One or two females at Marathon, Brewster Co 17–22 Apr (D. D. Currie, Dell Little, ph. Jim Crites, ph. Dale Ohl) were relatively far east and another in Val Verde Co between Del Rio and Sonora 29 Apr (ph. Laura Keene et al.) was exceptionally so. In the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co, several lingered into early May with one observed to at least 14 May (ph. Donna Dittmann, Steve Cardiff).

Pine Siskin – Not surprising following a substantial fall-winter irruption, Pine Siskins continued widespread and abundant through the period. Even so, more unexpected were counts as high as 300 at some feeding stations in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co into the middle of May (Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittmann).

Clay-colored Sparrow – Small numbers of Clay-colored Sparrows were detected into late May, with the latest being 1–2 at Limpia Crossing in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 30 May–1 Jun (ph. Dell Little, D. D. Currie).

Dark-eyed Junco – With the exception of breeding “Red-backed” Juncos in the Guadalupe Mts., the vast majority of wintering Dark-eyed Juncos typically vacate the region by mid-April. But Spring 2021 produced numerous reports across the region from mid-April into mid-late May, latest of which were a Pink-sided at Christmas Mountains Oasis, Brewster Co 27 May (ph. Carolyn Ohl) and at least three Gray-headed in the Davis Mts., Jeff Davis Co 16 May (ph. Erik Wolf, Greg Cook et al.).

Dark-eyed (Red-backed) Junco – On the heels of an above-average winter for Dark-eyed (Red-backed) Junco in the region (at least away from their regular haunts in the Guadalupe Mts.), early spring detections included at least one in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 12 Mar–17 Apr (ph. Beth McBroom), and additional singles at the Miller Ranch, Presidio Co 15 Apr (Cecilia Riley), and in Big Bend NP, Brewster Co at Cottonwood Campground 14 Apr (ph. Michael O'Brien et al.) and at Santa Elena Canyon 21 Apr (ph. Heidi Belinsky).

**Yellow-eyed Junco** – A Yellow-eyed Junco at Boot Canyon Trail, Chisos Mts., Big Bend NP 30 Mar (ph. Lee Hoy, Debra Floyd) was certainly a shocker and appears to represent one of the only photo-documented occurrences from anywhere in the region; there are just three previous TBRC-accepted sight records for Brewster County.

Harris's Sparrow – A Harris's Sparrow at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend NP 14 Apr (ph. Michael O'Brien et al.) represented the latest-ever spring occurrence for the region and only about the tenth occurrence for Brewster County.

Baird's Sparrow – Single Baird's Sparrows were documented in Big Bend NP at Daniels Ranch Road 20 Apr (ph. Ad Konings) and at nearby Rio Grande Village 9 May (ph. Araks Ohanyan, Mariam Ohanjanyan). There are now at least ten accepted occurrences of spring migrants from southern Brewster Co during the window 20 Apr–13 May.

Song Sparrow – Song Sparrows normally depart the region relatively early, so one at Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co to 22 Apr (ph. Andrew Theus et al.) was noteworthy.

Hooded Oriole – Most interesting among several Hooded Orioles found north of the Rio Grande corridor was a female at Davis Mountains SP, Jeff Davis Co 21 Apr (ph. Greg Vassilopoulos); there are surprisingly few well-documented occurrences for the county.

Common Grackle – A Common Grackle at Rio Grande Village 14–15 May (ph. Mike Baker, ph. Bruce Cramer et al.) was just the second photo-documented spring occurrence for Brewster County. One at Alpine, Brewster Co 8 Apr (Robert McClure) may have wintered in the vicinity as a few were present in that area during late 2020.

Worm-eating Warbler – Two Worm-eating Warblers spiced-up Brewster County, with one at Lajitas 26 Apr (ph. Stephen Falick) and another at Pine Canyon, Chisos Mts., Big Bend NP 29 Apr–1 May (Jeff Dawson, ph. Bonnie Graham et al.).

Louisiana Waterthrush – Louisiana Waterthrushes typically migrate relatively earlier than do Northern, and such was the case in the eastern Trans-Pecos this spring with Louisiana Waterthrushes documented in the Davis Mts., Jeff Davis Co 25–26 Mar (ph. Rich Kostecke), and at Fort Peña Colorado Park, Brewster Co 30 Mar–2 Apr (ph. Dallas Harrell, ph. Stephen Falick, ph. David McQuade et al.). Compare with the season's 20 or so reports of Northern Waterthrush that were all observed from 17 Apr–23 May.

Blue-winged Warbler – A male Blue-winged Warbler at Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend NP 27 Apr (ph. Chris Daniels, Letha Slagle) was about the seventh for Brewster County.

Prothonotary Warbler – Three Prothonotary Warblers during one spring was outstanding. They were at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 13 Apr (ph. Peter Gottschling); Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 8 May (ph. Michael B. Cooper et al.); Fort Peña Colorado Park, Brewster Co 20 May (ph. Christian Fernandez).

Lucy's Warbler – Lucy's Warblers are known to breed locally along the Rio Grande corridor from Hudspeth County east to Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend NP, Brewster County. There have been numerous reports from farther downriver at Rio Grande Village and vicinity, but details have largely been lacking until this spring when several singing males were extensively documented 17 Mar+ (Kyle Ashton, ph. Bruce Cramer, ph. Christian Fernandez, ph. Peter Hellman, ph. Jon McIntyre, ph. Letha Slagle, m. ob.). Much more unexpected was one well-described at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 19 Mar (Stephen Gast, Timothy White).

Kentucky Warbler – Very rare, late, and possibly a first for Jeff Davis County was a male Kentucky Warbler at Limpia Crossing in the Davis Mts. west of Fort Davis, 26 May (ph. Cecilia Riley).

Hooded Warbler – A female Hooded Warbler was at Davis Mountains SP, Jeff Davis Co 14–16 Apr (ph. Gary Yoder, ph. Jeanine Tumbleson), and a male was reported from nearby Lawrence Wood picnic area 25 Apr (Michelle Rometry, Bonnie de Grood).

Cape May Warbler – A male Cape May Warbler was well-described from Laguna Meadow, Chisos Mts., Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 1 May (John Dreves). There are only a few previous regional occurrences.

Cerulean Warbler – A well-described male Cerulean Warbler was reported at Devil's River SNA, Val Verde Co 2 May (Tira Overstreet et al.). This would possibly be just the second or third regional spring

occurrence.

Magnolia Warbler – The sole report for Magnolia Warbler was from Dolan Falls Preserve, Val Verde Co 28 Apr (ph. Charmaine Ganson, Bill Sain).

Blackburnian Warbler – A male Blackburnian Warbler observed at McKittrick Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains NP 6 May (Michael Clay, Jay Bolden) may have been a first spring occurrence for Culberson County.

Chestnut-sided Warbler – A Chestnut-sided Warbler at Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 8–15 May (ph. Michael B. Cooper, ph. Fred Collins, Randy Pinkston, et al.) was the only report of this rare spring migrant.

Black-throated Blue Warbler – A male Black-throated Blue Warbler at McKittrick Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains NP 6 May (Michael Clay, Jay Bolden) was possibly another first spring occurrence for Culberson County.

Palm Warbler – A Palm Warbler was confirmed at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 7 May (ph. Steve Glover, ph. Meg Barron, Elynn Corey). The vast majority of previous regional occurrences are also from spring.

Hermit Warbler – A Hermit Warbler at Christmas Mountains Oasis, Brewster Co 27 Apr (David Provencher et al.) was the season's only report from a low elevation site.

Townsend's x Hermit warbler – A hybrid Townsend's x Hermit warbler studied at Pine Canyon, Chisos Mts., Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 18–19 Apr (Eric Smith, Glen Abbott et al.). There are just a few previous occurrences for the region.

Painted Redstart – Lowland detections of Painted Redstarts involved relatively late migrants at Daniel's Ranch Road, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 16 May (Allen Coddling) and at Christmas Mountains Oasis, Brewster 21 May (Barbara and Dennis Trujillo). Two at Guadalupe Mountains NP, Culberson Co, including an early individual at Smith Springs Trail 1 Apr (ph. Andrew Fontenot), and one at McKittrick Canyon 8 May (Erik Atwell) added to the relatively few spring occurrences for the park.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – About 20 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reported from across the region 27 Apr+ seemed above average (m. ob.).

Lazuli Bunting – Typically a scarce spring migrant through the region, Spring 2021 generated an exceptional number of reports of Lazuli Buntings 16 Apr–22 May (m. ob.), including counts of up to 10+ at some feeding stations (m. ob.). A male at Santa Elena Canyon, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 29–30 Mar (ph. Andrew Kinslow, Dawn Huber, Andrew Fontenot) was very early and conceivably could have been the same wintering bird documented there 8 January 2021.

Indigo Bunting – Indigo Buntings were also more plentiful than normal with several dozen reports from across the region 14 Apr+ (m. ob.).

Dickcissel – A much scarcer migrant in spring versus fall, the only Dickcissel reports were from southern Brewster County where singles were found at Christmas Mountains Oasis 3 May (ph. Carolyn Ohl et al.), and in Big Bend NP 12 May at Cottonwood Campground (Jesse Huth et al.) and at Santa Elena Canyon (Barry Lyon, Brooke Smith).

Cited observers:

Glen Abbott, Ty Allen, Kyle Ashton, Erik Atwell, Jacob Bagley, Mike Baker, Meg Barron, Heidi Belinsky, Jeff Bennett, Bergie Bergstrom, Jay Bolden, Nick Bonomo, Bryan Calk, Steve Cardiff, Michael Clay, Allen Coddling, Fred Collins, Steve Compton, Greg Cook, Michael B. Cooper, Ellyn Corey, Patrick Coy, Bruce Cramer, Jim Crites, D. D. Currie, Chris Daniels, Jeff Dawson, Bonnie de Grood, Donna Dittmann, John Dreves, Jonathan Eckerson, Tom Ewert, Stephen Falick, Christian Fernandez, Joe Findley, Debra Floyd, Andrew Fontenot, Tony and Phyllis Frank, Charmaine Ganson, Kim Garwood, Stephen Gast, Steve Glover, Peter Gottschling, Bonnie Graham, Matt Hale, Dallas Harrell, John Harrington, Michael G. Harvey, Richard Hayes, Peter Hellman, Caleb Helsel, Troy and Marla Hibbitts, Lee Hoy, Dawn Huber, Jesse Huth, Laura Keene, Will Kennerley, Missy McAllister Kerr, Andrew Kinslow, Ad Konings, Rich Kostecke, Cin-Ty Lee, Evan Lipton, Dell Little, Lorrie Lowrie, Barry Lyon, Beth McBroom, Robert McClure, Jon McIntyre, David McQuade, Anita Meagher, John C. Mittermeier, Christy Negele, Martina Nordstrand, Michael O'Brien, Mariam Ohanjanyan, Araks Ohanyan, Carolyn Ohl, Dale Ohl, Tira Overstreet, MaryAnn Parsons, Randy Pinkston, David Provencher, Virginia Rettig, Molly Richard, Cecilia Riley, Michelle Romy, Forrest Rowland, Dave Rudemiller, Cathy Rudzinski, Chris Runk, Bill Sain, Laura Sare, Bill and Julie Schneider, Tyler Scott, Willie Sekula, Letha Slagle, Brooke Smith, Eric Smith, Ryan Smith, Mike and Yvette Stewart, Hank Taliaferro, Karen Tanquist, Andrew Theus, Barbara and Dennis Trujillo, Jeanine Tumbleson, Greg Vassilopoulos, Larry Waddell, Rodney Wedel, Timothy White, Ben Wieland, Jay and Judy Wilbur, Erik Wolf, Gary Yoder, Barry Zimmer.