

Trans-Pecos region of Texas - Winter 2021-2022 (1 December 2021 - 28 February 2022)

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

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

Sub-regional compiler: Jim Paton

El Paso area Seasonal Summary: It was generally a mild winter with few major weather systems and limited precipitation. As in the fall, montane irruptives across the spectrum were essentially a no-show, with good numbers of Lewis's Woodpeckers the notable exception. Something was clearly up with Clay-colored Sparrow with a handful of records across both counties; prior to this winter there were fewer than ten well-documented winter records for the El Paso checklist area. Likely due to the mild weather, good numbers of "Solitary" Vireos were reported, particularly early in the period. Explorations of a private ranch in north-central Hudspeth Co produced interesting records of Sprague's Pipit and several species of sparrow. High quality grassland is limited around El Paso and access is generally unavailable. A mystery hummingbird first spotted in late January in El Paso prompted considerable speculation. It looked and sounded most like a White-bellied Emerald, but some aspects of plumage and bill length seemed at odds with that, and various hybrid combinations were suggested. The bird was ultimately netted, with measurements and feathers taken before its safe release, so hopefully a DNA analysis can result in a conclusive identification. Notable rarities included Black-chinned Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Snowy Plover, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Gull, Pacific Loon, White Ibis, Townsend's Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, and Blue Grosbeak.

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

SNOW GOOSE - The Snow Goose from fall at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co was joined by a second 5 Jan with both remaining through the period (m. ob.). An impressive total of 4204 white geese were carefully counted from photos at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 24 Jan (ph., Jim Paton) with the breakdown

about 60/40 Snow/Ross's. Away from McNary Reservoir white geese occur only unreliably and in small numbers around El Paso.

ROSS'S GOOSE – A rare blue-morph Ross's Goose was in with the large white goose flock at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec (ph., Barry Zimmer) for just the fifth county, and local, record of this form.

RING-NECKED DUCK – 800 Ring-necked Ducks at Jonathan Rogers Wastewater Treatment Plant, El Paso Co 30 Jan (Matt Brady, Oscar Johnson, Ryan Shaw) was a record high tally for the El Paso area.

GREATER SCAUP – A female Greater Scaup was at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 21 Dec+ (ph., John Groves, m. ob.) where one or two have been regular in recent winters; another female at the Ft. Hancock sewage ponds, Hudspeth Co 25 Feb (Victor Emanuel, Barry Zimmer) was more unexpected.

INCA DOVE – Thirteen Inca Doves in Ft. Hancock 14 Dec (Jim Paton) was a very high total for Hudspeth Co.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD – A Black-chinned Hummingbird in an El Paso, El Paso Co yard 5-23 Jan (ph., Barry Zimmer) was just the second in winter for the El Paso area; the species is typically absent from late Oct until about the third week of Mar.

COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD – An immature male Costa's Hummingbird was in an El Paso, El Paso Co yard 20 Feb+ (ph., Barry Zimmer).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD – A Rufous Hummingbird that popped in on an El Paso, El Paso Co yard 27 Feb (Barry Zimmer) was felt to be a spring migrant, small numbers of which have been noted in recent years; Rufous Hummingbird is casual in winter in El Paso.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD – An immature male Broad-billed Hummingbird visited a feeding station near Arroyo Park, El Paso, El Paso Co 28 Jan – 9 Feb (John Groves, Tom Johnson, ph., m. ob.).

Mystery hummingbird – The avian event of the season was a mystery hummingbird at a feeding station near Arroyo Park, El Paso, El Paso Co 25 Jan – 9 Feb (ph., Janiece Ward, m. ob.). The bird looked and sounded much like a White-bellied Emerald, but some felt that bill length and some aspects of the plumage were not correct for that species. The bird was extensively photographed with photos shared online, but no consensus was reached and multiple hybrid possibilities were speculated. The bird was netted 1 Feb, was photographed and measured, and feathers were taken for DNA analysis (Michael Harvey) before its safe release. Hopefully DNA and sonograms will allow it to be conclusively identified.

BLACK-NECKED STILT – As has been the norm in recent years, Black-necked Stilts wintered at both Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co (John Sproul, m. ob.) and along the Rio Grande in west El Paso, El Paso Co near the confluence of TX, NM, and Mexico; 69 at this latter site 2 Jan (Marcy Scott, Jimmy Zabriskie) was a very good total. More unexpected were two Black-necked Stilts at the Ft. Hancock sewage ponds, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec (ph., Jim Paton) and then at Ft. Hancock Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 17 Jan (Jim Paton).

SNOWY PLOVER – Four Snowy Plovers were near Salt Flat in northeastern Hudspeth Co 5 Dec (ph., Matthew Grube, Christopher Lindsey, Michael Woodruff, Roger Woodruff) for just the second county record in winter.

STILT SANDPIPER – Two Stilt Sandpipers at Ft. Hancock Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 5 Feb (Jim Paton) were the first winter record for the El Paso area.

DUNLIN – Rare in winter, a Dunlin was at Ft. Hancock Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 5 Feb (Jim Paton)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER – 300 Long-billed Dowitchers at Ft. Hancock Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 5 Feb (Jim Paton) was an excellent winter total.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS – The two Lesser Yellowlegs from fall at Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso Co continued through 21 Dec with one remaining through 6 Jan (m. ob.) and two were near McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec (Michael Harvey). Lesser Yellowlegs is casual and less than annual in the El Paso area in winter.

SHORT-BILLED GULL – An adult Short-billed Gull was seen repeatedly at Keystone Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 5 Dec – 2 Jan (ph., Matthew Grube, Christopher Lindsey, Michael Woodruff, Roger Woodruff, m. ob.).

CALIFORNIA GULL – California Gull made a good showing in the El Paso area. The first-cycle bird from fall at Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso Co continued through 8 Jan (m. ob.) and one or two were at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec – 10 Feb (Barry Zimmer).

ICELAND GULL – An apparent Iceland (Thayer's) Gull was photographed at Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso Co 26 Dec (ph. Kevin Floyd) for a rare county record.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Lesser Black-backed Gull continues to increase in the El Paso area. One or two first-cycles were at Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso Co 5 Dec – 8 Jan (Ad Konings, m.ob., ph.); a first-cycle was in Horizon City, El Paso Co 23 Jan (ph., Michael Harvey); and three different birds (two first-cycle and one adult) were between Ft. Hancock Reservoir and McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec – 5 Feb (Jim Paton, Barry Zimmer).

PACIFIC LOON – A Pacific Loon was at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 2-5 Jan (ph., Barry Zimmer, m. ob.).

WHITE IBIS – An adult White Ibis photographed in a flying flock of White-faced Ibis at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 27 Dec (Keir Randall) was just the third ever for the El Paso area.

GLOSSY IBIS/WHITE-FACED IBIS – Some uncertainty surrounds the one or two dark *Plegadis* ibis seen repeatedly at Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso Co through 9 Feb. Most observers reported them as the expected White-faced Ibis, but a 17 Dec photo of one (Pablo Quezada, Gabriel Wiltse) looks to be a Glossy Ibis, very rare in the El Paso area.

BALD EAGLE – An adult Bald Eagle at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 25 Feb (Victor Emanuel, ph. Barry Zimmer) was an excellent find; nearly all of the few local records are of subadult birds.

TURKEY VULTURE – A Turkey Vulture by Dell City, Hudspeth Co 1 Dec (ph. Jim Paton) was late and a kettle of sixteen at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 21 Feb (ph. Judy Lazarus Yellon) was several weeks early for such a large group. As expected in the last decade, small numbers (one to three mostly) overwintered in eastern El Paso Co with most sightings from Rio Bosque Wetlands Park and a few from Horizon City.

RED-TAILED HAWK – Two Red-tailed "Harlan's" Hawks were at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 16 Jan (ph. Oscar Johnson) with at least one remaining through the period, and another was near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 17 Jan (Jim Paton).

LONG-EARED OWL – A Long-eared Owl in El Paso, El Paso Co 20 Dec (Oscar Johnson) was a surprise.

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER – Up to three Lewis's Woodpeckers from the fall continued through the period in west El Paso, El Paso Co (m. ob) and one was at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 13 Dec – 18 Jan (John Sproul, m. ob.).

DUSKY FLYCATCHER – A Dusky Flycatcher was at the Indio Mts Research Station in extreme southeastern Hudspeth Co 5 Feb (Matt Brady, Michael Harvey, Oscar Johnson). Any winter *Empidonax* is unusual in the El Paso area with the majority having been Hammond's Flycatcher.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER – Rare to casual in winter, an Ash-throated Flycatcher was at the Indio Mts Research Station, Hudspeth Co 5 Feb (Matt Brady, Michael Harvey, Oscar Johnson).

WESTERN KINGBIRD – A decently described Western Kingbird at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 27 Feb (Glenn Kincaid) was unfortunately not photographed or corroborated. There is only one prior Feb record and this is about four weeks ahead of expected arrival dates.

“Solitary” Vireos – The mild fall and winter likely contributed to an above average number of records of “Solitary” type Vireos, especially early in the winter. Plumbeous Vireo is the most likely in winter (especially late in the season), and at least five were reported from three El Paso, El Paso Co sites in early Dec. Additionally, later El Paso records were at Memorial Park 2-29 Jan (ph. Kevin Floyd), and separate west side locations 14-30 Jan (Jim Paton) and 11Feb (Michael Harvey). More unusual was a Plumbeous Vireo near Ft. Hancock 14 Dec (ph. Jim Paton) for just the second Hudspeth Co winter record. At least three Cassin's Vireos were reported in El Paso, El Paso Co 5-16 Dec (ph. Michael Harvey) and others 26 Dec (Oscar Johnson) and 26 Dec- 1 Jan (Jim Paton) were not seen well enough to be identified to species. Separating Cassin's and Blue-headed continues to be an under-appreciated problem.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW – A Violet-green Swallow at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 24 Jan (Jim Paton) was several weeks early and the first for Jan for the county.

CAVE SWALLOW – Once again up to ten or so Cave Swallows were frequently reported all winter from Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co (John Sproul, m. ob.); more unexpected were two on the west side of El Paso 30 Dec (Jim Paton).

BARN SWALLOW – Away from the few reports from Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, which has been typical in recent winters, lone Barn Swallows were at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 2 Dec (John Kiseda) and 11 Jan (John Groves). Thirteen at McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec (Barry Zimmer) was an excellent winter tally and two were seen there 24 Jan and 5 Feb (Jim Paton). Barn Swallow has increased in the El Paso area in winter in the last decade.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH – Red-breasted Nuthatch, typically one of the most regular of the montane irruptives, was basically absent this winter with three in west El Paso, El Paso Co 4 Dec (Oscar Johnson) the only report of multiple birds.

WINTER WREN – McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co is the only semi-reliable site for Winter Wren in the El Paso area. Two were there 14 Dec (ph. Barry Zimmer) with another nearby near Ft. Hancock Reservoir on the same date (Jim Paton).

GRAY CATBIRD – Two records of Gray Catbird was above average for winter: one at Ascarate Park, El Paso Co 13 Jan – 25 Feb (Chris Loscalzo, Marianne Vahey, m.ob., ph.) and one at Cornudas, Hudspeth Co 17 Jan (Doug Gochfeld).

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT – Surveys of a private ranch near Cornudas in north-central Hudspeth Co turned up one to three Sprague's Pipits 8-22 Feb (ph. Alyssa DeRubeis), the first reports for the El Paso area in a number of years. The species is very likely regular in these privately owned grasslands, but access is difficult.

Waterthrush species – A waterthrush in west El Paso, El Paso Co 21 Feb (Patricia Russell) was identified as a Northern; the description was perfectly good for waterthrush species but did not allow separation of Northern from Louisiana.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER – Rare to casual in winter, a Townsend's Warbler was at Memorial Park, El Paso Co 15 Jan (David Bradford, Brandon Percival) and two independent reports 2 Dec (Jeff Shenot) and 21 Dec (Nick Komar) suggest another was present in west El Paso, El Paso Co.

WILSON'S WARBLER – A male Wilson's Warbler was in El Paso, El Paso Co 19 Feb (ph. Oscar Johnson) for a rare winter record.

SPOTTED TOWHEE – A tally of 23 Spotted Towhees from the slopes of Anthony's Nose in the northern Franklin Mts, El Paso Co 15 Jan (Michael Harvey) was an excellent one site total.

CASSIN'S SPARROW – Surveys in north-central Hudspeth Co near Cornudas 8-23 Feb turned up as many as four Cassin's Sparrows in a day (Alyssa DeRubeis); the species is presumably resident there but winter reports are few.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW – There was an unprecedented showing of Clay-colored Sparrows this winter in the El Paso area with seven near McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth Co 14 Dec (ph. Barry Zimmer) two records of singles near Dell City, Hudspeth Co 15 Dec (Sheridan Coffey, Matt Hale, Martin Reid, Michael Retter); two in the Franklin Mts, El Paso Co 15 Jan (David Bradford, Brandon Percival); two near Dell City 17 Jan (Jim Paton); and several at Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site, El Paso Co 13 Jan – 26 Feb (Kevin Floyd, Ryan Twedt). Prior to this winter there were only a handful of documented winter records for the El Paso area, in contrast to the central Trans-Pecos where the species is much more regular. These records lend more credence to some weakly documented Nov 2021 reports.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – A Grasshopper Sparrow in northeastern Hudspeth Co 29 Jan (ph. Michael Harvey) and up to three in a day on a ranch by Cornudas, Hudspeth Co 9-23 Feb (Alyssa DeRubeis) added to the few previous county records, mostly a reflection of limited access to good grassland habitat.

FOX SPARROW – A very well-described "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow was near Anthony's Nose in the northern Franklin Mts, El Paso Co 15 Jan (Michael Harvey) was one of very few local records of this form, with "Red" Fox Sparrows being the typical one.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW – A dark-lore*d oriantha* White-crowned Sparrow at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 16 Jan (Oscar Johnson) was casual for winter. This form is almost entirely a migrant in the El Paso area.

SUMMER TANAGER – A Summer Tanager at the El Paso Zoo 20 Dec (Vicki Milne) was just the second in winter for El Paso Co.

NORTHERN CARDINAL – Male Northern Cardinals at Anthony Gap, Franklin Mts, El Paso Co 15 Jan (ph. Michael Harvey) and at Keystone Wetlands Park, El Paso Co all period (m. ob., ph.) added to those at more expected locations – a male at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 24 Dec+ (m. ob., ph.) joined by a female 22 Feb (John Sproul) and five at Indio Mts Research Station, Hudspeth Co 5 Feb (Matt Brady, Michael Harvey, Oscar Johnson). Rio Bosque Wetlands Park is the only reliable year-to-year site in El Paso Co.

BLUE GROSBEAK – A male Blue Grosbeak in west El Paso, El Paso Co 2 Jan (ph. Oscar Johnson) was the first local winter record.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD – Ten or more Rusty Blackbirds were at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, El Paso Co 16 Jan – 18 Feb (Oscar Johnson, m.ob., ph.) with 2-10 seen on any given visit.

COMMON GRACKLE – At least fourteen and perhaps as many as 24 Common Grackles were roosting with other blackbirds in west El Paso, El Paso Co 15 Feb+ (ph. Michael Harvey, m. ob.). Common Grackle is rare in El Paso but flocks of this size or larger (up to about fifty) have occurred previously.

HOODED ORIOLE – The three female Hooded Orioles that overwintered in an El Paso, El Paso Co yard where the species has overwintered multiple times before were joined by an early male 23 Feb (ph. Barry Zimmer), a good ten days ahead of expected arrival dates.

El Paso area cited observers: David Bradford, Matt Brady, Sheridan Coffey, Alyssa DeRubeis, Victor Emanuel, Kevin Floyd, Doug Gochfeld, John Groves, Matthew Grube, Matt Hale, Michael Harvey, Oscar Johnson, Tom Johnson, Glenn Kincaid, John Kiseda, Nick Komar, Ad Konings, Christopher Lindsey, Chris Loscalzo, Vicki Milne, Jim Paton, Pablo Quezada, Keir Randall, Martin Reid, Michael Retter, Patricia Russell, Marcy Scott, Ryan Shaw, Jeff Shenot, John Sproul, Ryan Twedt, Marianne Vahey, Janiece Ward, Gabriel Wiltse, Michael Woodruff, Roger Woodruff, Judy Lazarus Yellon, Jimmy Zabriskie, 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

Eastern Trans-Pecos Seasonal Summary:

It was a relatively cold and dry winter across the region. Decent monsoon rains in at least some areas the previous summer and early fall resulted in more surface water, herbaceous cover, and (presumably) food resources being available than the previous drought-dominated year. Most observers, however, complained of a general scarcity of birds continuing since late summer-early fall 2021. Whether this was due to actual population declines, or more birds remaining to the north of the region, or birds being

more dispersed instead of concentrated at feeders and water sources, is anyone's guess.

Texas Bird Records Committee (TBRC) species in bold.

Notable Species observed during the period:

SNOW GOOSE – Out-of-place lone Snow Geese visited the B. J. Bishop Wetlands, Presidio Co 30 Dec (Will Britton, Jojo Morelli) and Terlingua, Brewster Co 15-22 Jan (ph. Bruce Cramer, ph. Stephen Falick). Also of interest was a flock of 10 at Amistad Reservoir, Val Verde Co 14 Jan (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE – Very rare in the Trans-Pecos, a flock of 25 Greater White-fronted Geese at Amistad Reservoir, Val Verde Co 14 Jan had increased to 34 individuals on 16 Jan (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood).

EURASIAN WIGEON – An adult male Eurasian Wigeon present since mid Nov 2021 and back for its third winter at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co was reported to 27 Jan (ph. Chris Bailey, ph. Bob Friedrichs, Stephen Falick et al.).

NORTHERN SHOVELER x MALLARD HYBRID – A drake puddle duck believed to be a hybrid Northern Shoveler x Mallard was observed at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 13 Dec (Donna L. Dittmann, Steven W. Cardiff). Unfortunately, the bird was too distant for photos.

CANVASBACK – A male Canvasback at Lajitas, Brewster Co 30 Dec and 14 Feb (ph. Stephen Falick, Tom VandenBerg) was likely the same bird present since 8-14 Nov 2021.

LONG-TAILED DUCK – A well-described Long-tailed Duck was a good find at Red Bluff Reservoir, Reeves Co 14 Jan (Angela Bailey, Mariann Golden, Dina Perry, Chris Bailey, Karen Moulder, Christine Turnbull). There are only about ten or so previous occurrences for the region.

RUDDY DUCK – Up to 1,000 Ruddy Ducks estimated at Red Bluff Reservoir, Loving/Reeves Cos 11-16 Dec (Alan Troyer, Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) was an impressive concentration for the region.

LEAST GREBE – Least Grebe reports included one at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 1 Feb (Kevin Ebert, Noah Price, Chris Waas) and two at Terlingua-Study Butte WTP, Brewster Co 18 Feb (Sherri Hanson).

INCA DOVE – The latest Inca Dove incursion back into Jeff Davis Co involved 1-2 individuals about 7 mi. SE of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 12-28 Dec (Alyssa DeRubeis, Stephen Falick, ph. Carolyn Ohl, Dale Ohl).

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT – A spectacular concentration of White-throated Swifts was witnessed near Alpine, Brewster Co 20-25 Feb (ph. Colin Shackelford), with an estimated minimum of 2000 individuals congregating near presumed evening roost sites.

AMERICAN AVOCET – Unusual in winter, three American Avocets were at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 3 Jan (Andy and Ellen Stepniewski) and another was found at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 6 Jan (Brandon

Nooner).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW – Possibly a first winter occurrence for Val Verde County was a Long-billed Curlew at Amistad Reservoir 16 Jan (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER – A Solitary Sandpiper at Candelaria Wetlands, Presidio Co 14 Feb (Tom Forwood) provided one of very few winter occurrences.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Rare gulls were in short supply during winter 2021-22. The lone individual of interest was an immature Lesser Black-backed Gull at Amistad Reservoir, Val Verde Co 14 Jan (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood).

RED-THROATED LOON – A Red-throated Loon was a nice bonus at Amistad Reservoir, Val Verde Co 16 Jan (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood). There are only about a dozen previous regional occurrences.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK – A Zone-tailed Hawk at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 4 Jan (Brandon Nooner) was the only report and made for the second consecutive winter appearance at that location.

BURROWING OWL – Burrowing Owls generally vacate the region during the colder months but there are occasional winter reports. This season, a pair was found near Saragosa, Reeves Co 19 Dec and were still present 18 Mar (ph. Donna Dittmann, Steve Cardiff).

GREEN KINGFISHER – A Green Kingfisher at Candelaria Wetlands, Presidio Co 22 Jan (ph. Tom Forwood, Joshua Covill) was the second observation there in just over a year.

WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER – Possibly a first for Reeves Co, a male Williamson's Sapsucker was at Balmorhea 19 Dec (ph. Steven W. Cardiff, Donna L. Dittmann).

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER – Reports of Lewis's Woodpeckers were confined to Culberson Co and included singles in Guadalupe Mountains NP at Frijole Ranch 13 Dec (Cary Atwood) and Smith Springs Trail 28 Dec (Sarah Swallow) and 25 Feb (ph. Linda Headrick), plus one farther south near Van Horn 6 Jan (ph. Stephen Falick).

DOWNY WOODPECKER – A male Downy Woodpecker about 7 mi. southeast of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 12–16 Dec (ph. Alyssa DeRubeis, Stephen Falick, Steven W. Cardiff, ph. Donna L. Dittmann, ph. Carolyn Ohl et al.) was possibly just the second occurrence for the county and added to the handful of previous regional occurrences.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER – A Dusky Flycatcher at McKittrick Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains NP 17 Jan (ph. Michael McCloy, Corina Giron) was possibly a first winter occurrence for Culberson Co.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD – Possibly representing the region's first photo-documented "winter" occurrence was a Cassin's Kingbird lingering at Davis Mountains SP, Jeff Davis Co 13 Dec (ph. Michael Retter, Matt Hale, Sheridan Coffey, Martin Reid).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER – Up to two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 29 Jan–11 Feb (ph. Troy and Marla Hibbitts, ph. Brandon Nooner) made for another possible first photo-documented winter occurrence for the region.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW – Northern Rough-winged Swallows lingering into early winter

included one at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 11 Dec (ph. Jon McIntyre, Jeff Shenot) and 75 at Del Rio, Val Verde 16 Dec (Jeremy Webster).

TREE SWALLOW – Unprecedented numbers of early spring migrant Tree Swallows frequented the vicinity of B. J. Bishop Wetlands, Presidio Co beginning in early February, with dozens 5–20 Feb and then a whopping 2,800 estimated on 22 Feb (ph. Tom Forwood).

BARN SWALLOW – A Barn Swallow at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co was completely unexpected on 3–4 Jan (Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, Stephen Falick). Two at the same location on 28 Feb were undoubtedly early spring migrants (ph. Caley Thomas).

WINTER WREN – Possibly a first for Reeves Co was a Winter Wren at Balmorhea Lake 19 Dec (ph. Stephen Falick). Also of interest was one at the Davis Mountains Preserve, Jeff Davis Co 8 Feb (Cecilia Riley) with likely the same bird detected on 26 Feb (Christopher Pipes).

SEDGE WREN – Five Sedge Wrens at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 19 Dec (ph. Stephen Falick) was a surprisingly high count for this generally rare visitor.

BROWN THRASHER – The lone Brown Thrasher reported was an individual about 7 mi. southeast of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 14 Dec (Carolyn Ohl, Donna L. Dittmann, Steven W. Cardiff) that was subsequently found dead (vehicle collision) later the same day (*fide* Christopher Pipes).

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH – A well-documented Clay-colored Thrush was in the Davis Mountains west of Fort Davis 5 Dec (ph. Beth McBroom). It was the second found in Jeff Davis Co after the first was documented fairly close by on 5 Jun 2021, and it was just the second regional winter occurrence away from the vicinity of Del Rio, Val Verde Co.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT – A concentration of 30 Sprague's Pipits at Laughlin Air Force Base grasslands, Del Rio, Val Verde Co 14 Feb (Brandon Nooner) was by far the highest count ever for the region.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW – Exceptional numbers of Clay-colored Sparrows were reported across the western portions of the region through the period. The species is normally a scarce winter visitor.

DARK-EYED (WHITE-WINGED) JUNCO – Somewhat surprising given the relative scarcity of juncos this winter, a Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco was documented in the Davis Mountains west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 9–11 Dec (ph. Donna L. Dittmann, Steven W. Cardiff). There are only about three previous occurrences for the region.

HARRIS'S SPARROW – A Harris's Sparrow along the Pecos River northeast of Orla 16 Dec (Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey) was the only report of the season and may have been a first for Loving Co.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW – White-throated Sparrows were more numerous than normal, at least in Jeff Davis Co, with at least eight reported during the period.

NELSON'S SPARROW – One of the best finds of the season was a Nelson's Sparrow at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 19 Dec (ph. Stephen Falick). There is only one previous regional occurrence.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE – Rare in winter, two separate Scott's Orioles were observed in the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co– at the Mule Ears Overlook trail 20 Jan (Nathaniel Young) and at Chisos Basin Campground 10 Feb (ph. Marissa Buschow).

BRONZED COWBIRD – A male Bronzed Cowbird at Balmorhea Lake, Reeves Co 13 Dec (Donna Dittmann, Steve Cardiff) was possibly the first county occurrence from between mid Oct and late Apr.

NORTHERN PARULA – A Northern Parula was well-documented at Daniel's Ranch Road, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 30 Dec (ph. Stephen Falick, D. D. Currie, Dell Little). There are only a few other winter occurrences for the region, also from southern Big Bend NP.

PRAIRIE WARBLER – A Prairie Warbler at Chisos Basin, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 15 Jan (ph. Johnny Stutzman, ph. Alyssa DeRubeis, Emily Card) and 6 Feb (ph. Tom Forwood) was assumed to be the same bird first reported there on 26 Nov and would appear to represent the first winter occurrence for the region.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER – A Black-throated Gray Warbler at Del Rio, Val Verde Co 5–6 Jan (Corey Ellingson, ph. Jack Lefor, Brandon Nooner) was the only report of the season.

HEPATIC TANAGER – A well-documented female Hepatic Tanager at the McDonald Observatory, Davis Mountains, Jeff Davis Co 2 Jan (ph. Andy Stepniewski), and adult males visiting feeders at nearby locations in the Davis Mountains 30 Jan–9 Feb (Marc Eastman, ph. Maryann Eastman) and 12 Feb (ph. Mike Dixon, see iNaturalist <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/106782482>) and were possibly just the second to fourth well-documented winter occurrences for the region.

BLUE GROSBEAK – Single Blue Grosbeaks located in Jeff Davis Co south of Kent 13 Dec (ph. Michael Retter, Matt Hale) and about 7 mi. southeast of Fort Davis 15 Dec (ph. Carolyn Ohl) were possibly just the fifth and sixth to be found in the region in winter and the first north of southern Brewster Co.

INDIGO BUNTING – One of very few ever found in the region in winter, an Indigo Bunting was located at Chisos Basin, Big Bend NP, Brewster Co 25 Dec (ph. Alyssa DeRubeis).

VARIED BUNTING – A presumably wintering female Varied Bunting found about 7 mi. southeast of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis Co 27 Dec (ph. Justin Bosler) would appear to be the first well-documented north of the Big Bend NP area.