

Central Texas – Winter 2020 (1 December 2020 – 28 February 2021)  
Noteworthy Bird Sightings

**Compiled by Eric Carpenter**

Counties Covered: Andrews, Bandera, Bell, Bexar, Blanco, Borden, Brown, Burnet, Caldwell, Callahan, Coke, Coleman, Comal, Comanche, Concho, Coryell, Crockett, Dawson, De Witt, Eastland, Ector, Edwards, Erath, Fisher, Gaines, Gillespie, Glasscock, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hamilton, Hays, Howard, Irion, Jones, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Lampasas, Lavaca, Llano, Martin, Mason, McCulloch, Medina, Menard, Midland, Mills, Mitchell, Nolan, Reagan, Real, Runnels, San Saba, Schleicher, Scurry, Shackelford, Sterling, Sutton, Taylor, Tom Green, Travis, Upton, Uvalde, Williamson, Wilson

Notable Species observed during the period:

**Mexican Duck** - Most sightings of Mexican Duck in the region are of interest as we are still learning the extent of this species range; one visited Midland, Midland Co 15 Feb (ph. Ismael Perez).

**Surf Scoter** - A lone Surf Scoter on Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir, Bell Co 2 Jan (Barry Lyon, Brooke Smith) was the only winter sighting in the region.

**White-winged Scoter** - A White-winged Scoter visited Lake Georgetown, Williamson Co 20 Dec (Chuck Sexton et al.) while up to five were on Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir, Bell Co 2-3 Jan (Barry Lyon, Brooke Smith, Randy Pinkston).

**Black Scoter** - An impressive five Black Scoters lingered at Lake Georgetown, Williamson Co 17-23 Dec (ph. Tim Fennell, m.ob.).

**Long-tailed Duck** - A Long-tailed Duck was enjoyed by many birders at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 15 Dec - 8 Jan (ph. Justin Foucart, m.ob.).

**Common Merganser** - Up to five Common Mergansers were a couple miles west of Roosevelt, Kimble Co 21-23 Feb (Greta Ramsdell) while one made it as far east as Canyon Lake, Comal Co 2 Feb (ph. Mike Crownover).

**Band-tailed Pigeon** - Well out of range was a Band-tailed Pigeon about 8 miles west of Hunt, Kerr Co 30 Dec (ph. Jimma Byrd).

**White-tipped Dove** - A pioneering northerly White-tipped Dove a few miles west of Kyle, Hays Co 20 Dec (ph. Romey Swanson) was in an area where individuals have been found previously.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** - Single Ruby-throated Hummingbirds lingered at four different locations into the last week of Dec or first week of Jan with one in Salado, Bell Co 31 Dec - 1 Jan (ph. Daniel Kelch) being the northernmost sighting.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** - Lone Black-chinned Hummingbirds at separate locations in north San Antonio, Bexar Co both lasted until 31 Jan (ph. Andy Garcia, ph. Keith Bartels).

**Anna's Hummingbird** - The Anna's Hummingbird numbers described in the fall season continue through at least mid-winter; at least four individual birds endured and survived Uri (m.ob.).

**Black-chinned x Anna's Hummingbird** - An apparent Black-chinned x Anna's Hummingbird visited Mico, Medina Co 8-18 Feb (ph. Laura Keene).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** - Broad-tailed Hummingbird numbers continued from the fall season though perhaps only a couple made it through Uri (m.ob.).

**Rufous Hummingbird** - The extraordinary number of Rufous Hummingbirds stayed through the winter; a few individuals survived Uri though many were thought to have left or more likely perished during that weather event (m.ob.).

**Allen's Hummingbird** - As with Rufous Hummingbirds, Allen's Hummingbirds numbers continued into mid-winter with a drop off of sightings after Uri.

**Calliope Hummingbird** - At least four different Calliope Hummingbirds were still being seen up until Uri but none of them were seen afterwards (m.ob.).

**Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird** - A presumed Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird lingered through the period and survived Uri in north San Antonio, Bexar Co until at least 22 Feb (ph. Keith Bartels).

**Broad-billed Hummingbird** - Travis Co's first Broad-billed Hummingbird from the fall in northwest Austin was seen by many through 8 Feb (m.ob.) while the county's second record in west Austin remained loyal to feeders 8 Dec - 14 Feb (ph. Michael Curren, m.ob.).

**Buff-bellied Hummingbird** - A Buff-bellied Hummingbird was an unseasonal visitor to a Wimberley feeder, Hays Co 17-18 Jan (Tom Toporowski).

**King Rail** - At least one King Rail heard on Fort Hood, Bell Co 17-20 Dec (Charlie Plimpton, Randy Pinkston) was a real prize for central Texas.

**Whooping Crane** - Surprising was a lone Whooping Crane just east of Stith, Jones Co 6-17 Dec (ph. Brad Banner et al.).

**Black-bellied Plover** - A Black-bellied Plover on the shores of Granger Lake, Williamson Co 5 Jan (ph. Rich Kostecke) was an unusual mid-winter find.

**Snowy Plover** - Also surprising for mid-winter was a Snowy Plover at O.C. Fisher Lake, Tom Green Co 13 Jan (ph. Jeffrey Roth).

**Mountain Plover** - Up to 13 Mountain Plovers roughly 5 miles southeast of Wingate, Runnels Co 13-14 Jan (ph. Tony Leukering, Kathy Dunning, Drew Harvey) was a nice find, as was a lone bird in the snow about 5 miles northeast of Brackettville, Kinney Co 18 Feb (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts).

**American Woodcock** - Seldom detected on the Edwards Plateau, an American Woodcock found dead in Kerrville, Kerr Co 19 Jan (ph. Chris Distel) was one of very few records for the county.

**Black-legged Kittiwake** - A first-cycle Black-legged Kittiwake lingered at Granger Lake, Williamson Co 7-12 Dec (Chuck Sexton, ph. m.ob.).

**Laughing Gull** - An unusually large flock of 30 Laughing Gulls visiting a small lake 5 miles west of Ottine, Gonzales Co 24 Jan (ph. Florence King, Elaine Cowley) was a head-scratcher; a lone bird in Kerrville, Kerr Co 31 Jan (ph. Ruth King, ph. Ruth Hoyt) was also unseasonal.

**Mew Gull** - An amazing one-day wonder, a first-cycle Mew Gull was the highlight of the Abilene CBC at Nelson Lake in Abilene, Taylor Co 3 Jan (ph. Jay Packer).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** - At least one first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull stayed the entire winter on the lakes in San Angelo, Tom Green with 2 individuals definitely present 25 Jan (Dorothy Tate). Up to two first-cycle birds were on Granger Lake, Williamson Co 4-11 Dec (Lynn Chapman, ph. m.ob.), a second-cycle bird was there 19 Feb (ph. Sean Mecredy), and another was spotted at Lake Fort Phantom, Jones 20 Feb (ph. Brad Banner).

**Magnificent Frigatebird** - A female Magnificent Frigatebird on Kirby Lake, Taylor Co 30 Dec (ph. Sam Sikes et al.) was as inexplicable as those central Texas sightings from the fall season.

**Brown Pelican** - As many as 4 Brown Pelicans from the fall on the south San Antonio lakes, Bexar Co remained through the season with at least one still being detected at the end of the period (m.ob.).

**Reddish Egret** - Unseasonal was an immature Reddish Egret on Lake Travis, Travis Co 16 Jan - 11 Feb (ph. Jeff Osborne, ph. Janet Davis, m.ob.)

**Roseate Spoonbill** - Also odd for mid-winter was a Roseate Spoonbill below Longhorn Dam, Travis Co 1 Jan (Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis).

**White-tailed Hawk** - The northernmost White-tailed Hawk was one near Granger Lake, Williamson Co 8-9 Jan (ph. Tim Fennell, Rich Kostecke).

**Zone-tailed Hawk** - Individual Zone-tailed Hawks pushing against the eastern edge of their range include one in Falls City, Karnes Co 1-3 Jan (ph. Willie Sekula, Derek Muschalek), another six miles southeast of Cuero, DeWitt Co 14 Jan (Maggie Carpenter, ph. Eric Carpenter), and one more in Calaveras, Wilson Co 27 Feb (Willie Sekula).

**Ferruginous Hawk** - A Ferruginous Hawk lingered near Granger Lake, Williamson Co 1 Jan - 19 Feb (ph. Kenneth Bader, m.ob.).

**Burrowing Owl** - A Burrowing Owl near Knippa, Uvalde Co 18 Jan - 19 Feb (ph. Kay Pergrem, Tripp Davenport) was a nice find.

**Long-eared Owl** - As many as five Long-eared Owls returned to their roost site from the previous winter in Ballinger, Runnels Co 26 Jan - 20 Feb (Jean Martin, Nick Glover); elsewhere, singles were found in Kyle, Hays Co 30 Dec (ph. Mike Davis) and in the woods around Granger Lake, Williamson Co 8 Feb (ph. Tim Fennell).

**Ringed Kingfisher** - Good finds were lone Ringed Kingfishers in Fredericksburg, Gillespie Co 2 Dec (John Curcuruto) and along the Llano River 10 miles west of Llano, Llano Co 25 Jan (ph. Jesse Huth).

**Red-headed Woodpecker** - Outlier Red-headed Woodpeckers included one in Brownwood, Brown Co 22-27 Dec (Erich Fickle, Luella Fickle, ph. Tyler Miloy), and up to three continuing near the community of Sloan, San Saba Co through at least 24 Jan (Jimma Byrd).

**Acorn Woodpecker** - Quite unexpected were two Acorn Woodpeckers along the Guadalupe River just northwest of Gruene, Comal Co 3 Jan+ (ph. Jesse Huth, m.ob.); another 10 miles southwest of Rocksprings, Edwards Co 12-10 Dec (ph. Joanna Roberts) was likely part of the small population in that area.

**Least Flycatcher** - Lingering Least Flycatchers included one at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 19 Dec - 2 Jan (ph. Justin Bosler et al.) and another near the Medina River in south San Antonio, Bexar Co 20 Dec (Dawn Smith et al.).

**Hammond's Flycatcher** - Adding to the growing number of wintering Hammond's Flycatchers detected in central Texas, one was in far south San Antonio, Bexar Co 17 - 30 Jan (ph. Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey, m.ob.) and another was along Pulliam Creek about 6 miles northwest of Camp Wood, Edwards Co 16 Jan (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts).

**Pacific-slope Flycatcher** - At least one of the Pacific-slope Flycatchers at Southside Lions Park in San Antonio, Bexar Co continued to 9 Jan (m.ob.) while one of the birds in Falls City, Karnes Co was last detected 1 Jan (Willie Sekula).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** - Individual Ash-throated Flycatchers still northward in early winter included one on Fort Hood, Coryell Co 17 Dec (ph. Scott Summers) and another near Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 20 Dec (Linda White).

**Great Kiskadee** - A Great Kiskadee in Robert Lee, Coke Co 5 Dec (Jane Tillman) was a northward outlier.

**Western Kingbird** - A Western Kingbird at Mitchell Lake, Bexar Co 30 Jan - 6 Feb (ph. Ardell Winters et al.) was an unexpected mid-winter find so far from the coast.

**Hutton's Vireo** - On the edge of what is now their core range on the Edwards Plateau, single Hutton's Vireos were a bit unexpected 10 miles west of Roosevelt, Sutton Co 7 Dec (Jane Tillman), on Fort Hood, Coryell Co 17 Dec (Nick Glover), and on the northeast side of Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir, Bell Co 19 Dec (ph. Charlie Plimpton).

**Gray Catbird** - A Gray Catbird that frequented a feeder in Midland, Midland Co during Uri 15-19 Feb (ph. Bill Lupardus) was rather unseasonal.

**Sage Thrasher** - Sage Thrashers that irrupted in the fall continued to be seen through mid-winter, though only a couple of birds were seen after Uri (m.ob.).

**Western Bluebird** - Western Bluebirds continued from the fall irruption, perhaps peaking in mid Dec (m.ob.). The only ones noted after Uri were one just north of Shiner, Lavaca Co 24 Feb (ph. Rich Kaskan) and five northwest of San Marcos, Hays Co 23 Feb (ph. Bob Friedrichs).

**Mountain Bluebird** - Mountain Bluebird numbers from the fall also exploded in Dec - Jan with many locations reporting several dozen birds; the most impressive counts being upwards of 260 near Briggs, Burnet Co 2 Feb (ph. Rich Kostecke) and an estimate of 140 near Knippa, Uvalde Co 13 Feb (ph. Tripp Davenport). After Uri passed, there was a significant decrease and only a small handful of birds remained in easterly locations from prior to the cold blast.

**Townsend's Solitaire** - Townsend's Solitaires were found in a couple locations but did not irrupt as hoped for; one made it to far west Travis Co 20-26 Dec (ph. Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis) and another was near Walter E. Long Lake, Travis Co 17 Jan (Owen Moorhead).

**Phainopepla** - Easterly ranging Phainopeplas included one about six miles east of Tuscola, Taylor Co 18 - 19 Feb (Amy Packer, Jay Packer, ph. Brad Banner), and another 10 miles northwest of Uvalde, Uvalde Co 21 Feb (ph. Tripp Davenport).

**Purple Finch** - Purple Finch numbers increased a bit on the southwest edge of the minor fall irruption though they did not really penetrate much deeper than what was reported in the fall. As many as 11 birds in far northwest Austin through the period (Kent Jones et al.) was a good count while three in Kerrville, Kerr Co 16 Feb (ph. Dale Bargmann) were as far west as individuals were detected.

**Cassin's Finch** - Wayward Cassin's Finch include up to three about 15 miles southwest of Rocksprings, Edwards Co through the period with one still remaining 28 Feb (Joanna Roberts), one continuing near Buffalo Gap, Taylor Co through 4 Dec (Jayton Carroll), five at Kickapoo Caverns SP, Kinney Co 31 Jan (ph. Cin-Ty Lee), and one near Mico, Medina Co 21-23 Feb (ph. Laura Keene).

**Red Crossbill** - A flyover group of four vocalizing Red Crossbills at Southside Lions Park in San Antonio, Bexar Co 26 Jan (Steve Glover) was a real outlier given there wasn't really much of a crossbill irruption.

**Clay-colored Sparrow** - Small numbers of Clay-colored Sparrows persisted into mid-winter with the most northerly individual being one 10 miles west of Llano, Llano Co 24 Jan (Jesse Huth).

**Brewer's Sparrow** - The Brewer's Sparrow irruption tapered off a bit in December though one was still as far north/east as 10 miles west of Llano, Llano Co 25 Jan (Jesse Huth).

**Lark Bunting** - Lark Buntings continued steady into mid-winter at their easterly locales, including 45 still present south of San Marcos, Hays Co 23 Jan (Doug Booher, Amy Bishop).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** - Unusual were several reports of Yellow-headed Blackbird remaining on the Edwards Plateau and points northward into mid and late winter. Among the noteworthy reports was one in Burnet, Burnet Co 4 Jan (ph. Bill Reiner), another southeast of Midland, Midland Co 8 Jan (ph. Ismael Perez), one in Hamlin, Jones Co 8 Feb (ph. Rosemary Joganic), another 6 miles east of Santa Anna, Coleman Co 14-15 Feb (Susan Smith), one in Comfort, Kendall Co 16-22 Feb (ph. Barbara Pankratz), up to 2 in Merkel, Taylor Co 16 - 28 Feb (Jay Packer, Amy Packer, Brad Banner), and one in Roby, Fisher Co 27 Feb (Jay Packer)

**Orchard Oriole** - A female Orchard Oriole was rather unseasonal near Thrall, Williamson Co 28 Jan (ph. Tim Fennell).

**Audubon's Oriole** - The northernmost Audubon's Orioles included two north of Canyon Lake, Comal Co 21 Jan+ (ph. Janene Rowan), another north of Blanco, Blanco Co 23 Dec - 3 Mar (ph. Jay West), and one near Mountain Home, Kerr Co 18 - 30 Dec (Paul Sellin, Pamela Goolsby).

**Baltimore Oriole** - A Baltimore Oriole was apparently wintering at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 9 Dec - 16 Jan (Tyler Miloy, ph. m.ob.).

**Scott's Oriole** - Scott's Orioles sometimes linger into winter and this season there were three: one north of Boerne, Kendall 4 Jan (Richard Park), another 6 miles southeast of Bertram, Burnet Co 22 Jan (ph. Chris Landherr) and another northeast of Jonestown, Travis Co that was present through 3 Jan (ph. Douglas Williams).

**Rusty Blackbird** - Two Rusty Blackbirds ventured south to Mitchell Lake, Bexar Co 9 Jan (ph. Marion Tyler) while seven made it to Abilene SP, Taylor Co 24 Jan (Jay Packer) and two more were in north San Antonio, Bexar Co 16 Feb (Christine Turnbull).

**American Redstart** - A female American Redstart along Onion Creek just south of McKinney Falls SP, Travis Co 19 Dec (ph. Lance Felber) was a nice find as was a male near the Medina River in far southwest San Antonio, Bexar Co 30 Dec (ph. Christian Fernandez).

**Palm Warbler** - A Palm Warbler at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 6 Dec - 6 Feb (ph. Jason Garcia, m.ob.) was enjoyed by many; one in San Angelo, Tom Green Co 20 Dec (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts) was a nice find there.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** - The extraordinary Black-throated Gray Warblers numbers from the fall seem to taper off by mid-winter and none were seen after Uri passed.

**Townsend's Warbler** - A Townsend's Warbler on the south side of Canyon Lake, Comal Co 16 Jan (ph. Ed Hickl) was the only one reported in central Texas during the winter after a small handful were detected in the fall.

**Western Tanager** - Wintering Western Tanagers included one north of Centerpoint, Kerr Co 8-14 Jan (ph. Sherry Collins, Tom Collins), another at Aquarena Springs, Hays Co 18-22 Jan (ph. Anna Jones, Chris Gardner), one northeast of Concan, Uvalde Co 5 Feb (Mickey Redus) and one more in northwest San Marcos, Hays Co 14 Feb (ph. Amanda Moore).

**Black-headed Grosbeak** - Outstanding was as many as 17 Black-headed Grosbeaks noted at various locations, including a couple spots that held two birds (m.ob.), with a couple birds continuing through the end of the period.

**Blue Bunting** - A male Blue Bunting at Concepcion Park just south of downtown San Antonio, Bexar Co 24 Feb+ (ph. Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey, m.ob.) was the major highlight of the season for central Texas and one of the northernmost records ever for Texas and the United States.

**Lazuli Bunting** - Quite unseasonal and unexpected was a female Lazuli Bunting on the shores of Lady Bird Lake in Austin, Travis Co 11-12 Dec (ph. Nick Komar Jr.).

**Painted Bunting** - A male Painted Bunting spent much of the winter west of Loyal Valley, Llano Co until 12 Feb (ph. Hal Livings) while a female in Comfort, Kendall Co 19 Feb (Barbara Pankratz) was also unexpected.

**Dickcissel** - Rather unseasonal was a female Dickcissel coming to a Brackettville feeder, Kinney Co 13-14 Feb (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts).

**Morelet's Seedeater** - Six Morelet's Seedeaters 10 miles southwest of Brackettville, Kinney Co 20 Dec (ph. Bryan Calk, Kathy Bader) was a nice find away from the immediate Rio Grande corridor.

*Cited observers and contributors:*

Kathy Bader, Kenneth Bader, Brad Banner, Dale Bargmann, Keith Bartels, Amy Bishop, Doug Booher, Justin Bosler, Jimma Byrd, Bryan Calk, Eric Carpenter, Maggie Carpenter, Jayton Carroll, Lynn Chapman, Sheridan Coffey, Sherry Collins, Tom Collins, Elaine Cowley, Mike Crownover, John Curcuruto, Michael Curren, Tripp Davenport, Janet Davis, Mike Davis, Chris Distel, Kathy Dunning, Lance Felber, Tim Fennell, Christian Fernandez, Erich Fickle, Luella Fickle, Justin Foucart, Bob Friedrichs, Andy Garcia, Jason Garcia, Chris Gardner, Nick Glover, Steve Glover, Pamela Goolsby, Drew Harvey, Marla Hibbitts, Troy Hibbitts, Ed Hickl, Ruth Hoyt, Jesse Huth, Rosemary Joganic, Anna Jones, Kent Jones, Rich Kaskan, Laura Keene, Daniel Kelch, Florence King, Ruth King, Nick Komar Jr., Rich Kostecke, Chris Landherr, Cin-Ty Lee, Tony Leukering, Hal Livings, Bill Lupardus, Barry Lyon, Jean Martin, Tyler Miloy, Amanda Moore, Owen Moorhead, Derek Muschalek, Jeff Osborne, Amy Packer, Jay Packer, Barbara Pankratz, Richard Park, Ismael Perez, Kay Pergrem, Randy Pinkston, Charlie Plimpton, Greta Ramsdell, Mickey Redus, Martin Reid, Bill Reiner, Joanna Roberts, Jeffrey Roth, Janene Rowan, Willie Sekula, Paul Sellin, Chuck Sexton, Sam Sikes, Brooke Smith, Dawn Smith, Susan Smith, Romey Swanson, Dorothy Tate, Jane Tillman, Tom Toporowski, Christine Turnbull, Marion Tyler, Jay West, Linda White, Douglas Williams, Ardell Winters.