

Central Texas – Spring 2021 (1 March 2021 – 31 May 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:

Fulvous Whistling-Duck - Eight Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 14 Mar (ph. Adam McInroy, m.ob.) was a good number well north of usual haunts; one wonders if the seven Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Pedernales Falls SP, Blanco Co 9 May (ph. David Braun) were the same wandering flock.

Long-tailed Duck - A Long-tailed Duck stayed briefly at Walter E. Long Lake, Travis Co 11-14 Mar (Erik Sauder, ph. Jeff Osborne, ph. Richard Kaskan).

Red-breasted Merganser - Rather late was a Red-breasted Merganser at Walter E. Long Lake, Travis Co 13-16 May (ph. Matthew Law).

Least Grebe - Least Grebes seem to take a hit with Uri though there were still some northerly ranging birds with one at Eldorado WTP, Schleicher Co 10-29 Mar (ph. Suzanne Johnson), another at Enchanted Rock SNA, Llano Co 10 Apr (Tam Tran), and one more at Fort Hood, Coryell Co 2 May (Nick Glover).

Western Grebe - A Western Grebe at Walter E. Long Lake, Travis Co 10 Mar - 11 Apr (ph. Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis, m.ob.) was enjoyed by many; two on Granger Lake, Williamson Co 4 Apr (ph. Rich Kostecke) was also a nice find along the eastern edge of their expected range.

White-tipped Dove - Pioneering White-tipped Doves included two along the Blanco River 5 miles west of Kyle, Hays Co 13 May (Ben Archer) and one south-southeast of Stonewall, Gillespie Co 28 May (Romey Swanson).

Groove-billed Ani - Surprising for so far north was a Groove-billed Ani at Berry Springs Park, Georgetown, Williamson Co 6 May (Byron Stone, ph. Tim Fennell et al.).

Black-billed Cuckoo - A Black-billed Cuckoo wandered west to Utopia, Uvalde Co 16 May (Mitch Heindel).

Mexican Violetear - A Mexican Violetear visited feeders in Boerne, Kendall Co 22-30 May (ph. Tim Handren) while another was southeast of Calaveras Lake, Bexar Co 22-24 May (ph. Linda Mortensen).

Anna's Hummingbird - One of the Anna's Hummingbirds that made it through Uri unscathed remained in north San Antonio, Bexar Co until at least 28 Mar (ph. Brad Wier).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - Unusual for late spring was a female Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Devine Lake Park, Leander, Williamson Co 26-27 Apr (ph. Jack Cochran, Tim Fennell).

Broad-billed Hummingbird - On the heels of the two fall/winter Broad-billed Hummingbirds in Travis Co, a male near Spring Branch, Comal Co 14-18 Apr (Mike Davis, ph. Cat Chang) made for another great central Texas record.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird - Northerly ranging Buff-bellied Hummingbirds included one in New Braunfels, Comal Co 10-24 May (Rebekah Rylander) and another ~15 miles west of that location, still in Comal Co 24 May (ph. Deb Brown).

Purple Gallinule - A cooperative Purple Gallinule ranged to the Mueller Development in east Austin, Travis Co 6 Apr - 14 May (ph. Carrie Roszell, m.ob.).

Piping Plover - Always a tough spring migrant in central Texas, Piping Plovers made a good showing with one at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 10 Apr (ph. Vincent O'Brien), 1-2 at Windy Point on Lake Travis, Travis Co 15-18 Apr (ph. Jane Tillman et al.), another at Belton Lake, Bell Co 16-18 Apr (ph. Randy Pinkston et al.), and an impressive three at Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 22-24 Apr (ph. Christopher Daniels et al.).

Whimbrel - An impressive six Whimbrels were tallied at both Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 5 May (ph. Randy Hesford) and Belton Lake, Bell Co 17 May (ph. Doug Orama).

Marbled Godwit - No less than 65 Marbled Godwit were counted in a single flock at Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 17 Apr (ph. Bill Lupardus et al.).

Ruddy Turnstone - A stunning 17 Ruddy Turnstones stopped at Windy Point, Lake Travis, Travis Co 22 May (ph. Andy Filtness et al.).

Sanderling - Nine Sanderlings at Windy Point, Lake Travis, Travis Co 4 May (ph. Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis, Adam McInroy) was a notable tally for central Texas.

Wilson's Phalarope - A Wilson's Phalarope at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 14-16 Mar (Robert Ayres et al.) was a bit early.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - A first-cycle Lesser Black-backed Gull on the lakes in San Angelo, Tom Green continued until at least 3 Apr (m.ob.) while a late adult was at Granger Lake, Williamson Co 2 May (ph. Rich Kostecke).

Common Tern - Rarely documented in central Texas and usually only as single birds, three Common Terns at Windy Point, Lake Travis, Travis Co 19 May (ph. Andy Filtness et al.) were an outstanding find.

Sooty Tern - Defying explanation, an inland Sooty Tern was picked up between New Braunfels and Canyon Lake, Comal Co 22 May (ph. *fide* Dan Tharp); it later died.

Common Loon - Late was an alternate-plumaged Common Loon at Lake Sweetwater, Nolan Co 28 May (ph. Ben Sandstrom); two in basic plumage were on Lake Travis, Travis Co for much of May with at least one remaining at the end of the period (ph. m.ob.).

Tricolored Heron - An adult Tricolored Heron was unseasonal at Lake Nasworthy and nearby Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 18 Apr - 2 May (Peggy Trosper, ph. Lawrence Haller et al.).

Reddish Egret - An immature Reddish Egret at Onemile Lake in Big Spring, Howard Co 13 May (ph. Justin Bosler) was also unexpected, especially for the spring season.

White-tailed Kite - A White-tailed Kite that lingered at Commons Ford Park in far west Austin, Travis Co 26-29 Mar (ph. Caleb Helsel, m.ob.) was a nice locale find.

Swallow-tailed Kite - Late for migrants and out of normal migration routes, single Swallow-tailed Kites near China Grove, Bexar Co 23 Apr (ph. Roel Loera) and at Cedar Park, Travis Co 3 May (ph. Celeste Treadway) might have been pioneering birds looking for possible breeding locations.

Harris's Hawk - Harris's Hawk sightings at various locations in north Austin, Round Rock and Pflugerville, Travis and Williamson Co until at least 10 May (ph. Richard Kaskan et al.) seemed to pertain to the same adult bird.

White-tailed Hawk - A White-tailed Hawk roughly 12 miles southeast of Garden City, Glasscock Co 11 May (ph. Justin Bosler) was exceptionally north and west of usual haunts.

Flammulated Owl - A Flammulated Owl was a surprise visitor to a Midland backyard, Midland Co 2 May (ph. Greg Palko).

Acorn Woodpecker - The two Acorn Woodpeckers along the Guadalupe River just northwest of Gruene, Comal Co remained until at least 8 Apr (m.ob.); single birds 10 miles northeast of Leakey, Real Co 18 Mar (Jean Martin) and 10-11 Apr (ph. Jon Reinhard, Robin Reinhard) was likely part of the small population in that area.

Black Phoebe - A Black Phoebe was present at Floresville River Park, Wilson Co 6 Apr (Andrew Dickinson) where it is semi-regular and has successfully nested previously.

Brown-crested Flycatcher - Brown-crested Flycatchers pushing the northern edge of their range included one just east of Menard, Menard Co 27 Apr (Justin Bosler) and another north of Cedar Park, Williamson Co 8-15 May (Brush Freeman).

Great Kiskadee - A Great Kiskadee was a nice find at Kerr WMA, Kerr Co 4-7 Apr (John Prentice, Linda Prentice, ph. Paul Sellin).

Cassin's Kingbird - A Cassin's Kingbird at Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 1 May (ph. C. A. Maedgen) was east of its typical migration path.

White-breasted Nuthatch - Sporadic in central Texas, a White-breasted Nuthatch at Fabis Primitive Park, Brownwood, Brown Co 30 May (ph. Shelia Hargis) was surprising.

Long-billed Thrasher - A Long-billed Thrasher at Onion Creek Metropolitan Park in south Austin, Travis Co 27 Mar - 6 Apr (ph. Nick Komar Jr. et al.) was an outlier a bit north of expected range.

Sage Thrasher - Sage Thrashers had an exceptional fall and winter in central Texas but one just west of Von Ormy, Bexar Co 1 May (Christine Turnbull, Dina Perry) was still quite late.

Wood Thrush - Westerly Wood Thrushes included one in Boerne, Kendall Co 22-25 Apr (Craig Hensley) and another in Uvalde, Uvalde Co 25 Apr (Ken Rosenberg).

Clay-colored Thrush - A Clay-colored Thrush in San Antonio's Alamo Heights, Bexar Co 28 Apr (ph. Keith Godwin) was well north of typical range.

Cassin's Finch - A Cassin's Finch near Buffalo Gap, Taylor Co 10-11 Mar (ph. Jayton Carroll) was at a location where one was present in early Dec while the small group about 15 miles southwest of Rocksprings, Edwards Co continued, with as many as six present as late as 18 Apr (ph. Joanna Roberts) and one still there 8 May (Joanna Roberts). As many as 6 Cassin's Finches were present at South Llano River S.P., Kimble Co 25 Mar - 10 Apr (ph. Matthew Louder, m.ob.) with one still there on the last date.

Olive Sparrow - An outstanding find, an Olive Sparrow at Lockhart SP, Caldwell Co 20 May (ph. Richard Kaskan) was perhaps a pioneering bird as it pushed the northeastern limit of where this species has been seen.

Brewer's Sparrow - Brewer's Sparrows had an outstanding fall and winter that continued into early spring but single birds 10 miles southeast of Gillett, DeWitt Co 27 Apr (Derek Muschalek) and along the Barton Creek greenbelt in southwest Austin, Travis Co 3 May (ph. Caleb Helsel) were well east and quite late.

Baird's Sparrow - A highlight of the season in central Texas, a Baird's Sparrow at Pace Bend Park in far west Travis Co 2 May (ph. Bill Reiner) was in the right migration time-frame though much farther east than they are typically found.

Bobolink - As many as 20 Bobolinks about 10 miles east of Salado, Bell Co 3 May (Pam Cummings, ph. Steve Synder) was a good sized flock for central Texas.

Hooded Oriole - Northerly wandering Hooded Orioles included one 20 miles southwest of Llano, Llano Co 12 Mar (ph. Hal Livings) and another near Meadow Lake in Round Rock, Williamson Co 24 May (Andrew Dickinson).

Audubon's Oriole - At least one of the two Audubon's Orioles north of Canyon Lake, Comal Co remained until 26 Mar (ph. Janene Rowan).

Scott's Oriole - A male Scott's Oriole near the northern reaches of Belton Lake, Bell Co 18 Mar (ph. Gil Eckrich) was well northeast of the species main haunts on the Edwards Plateau.

Rusty Blackbird - A lone Rusty Blackbird strayed to the Leon Creek Greenbelt in northwest San Antonio, Bexar Co 19 Apr (ph. Curtis McCamy).

Golden-winged Warbler - A Golden-winged Warbler was a bit west at Utopia, Uvalde Co 30 Apr (Mitch Heindel).

Prothonotary Warbler - A Prothonotary Warbler wandered west to Fort Clark Springs, Kinney Co 18 Apr (Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey).

Swainson's Warbler - A singing Swainson's Warbler southwest of Spicewood, Burnet Co 15 May (audio Lee Kothmann) was well west of known breeding areas.

Virginia's Warbler - A Virginia's Warbler was an exceptional find in northwest San Antonio, Bexar Co 24 Mar (Sheridan Coffey, Martin Reid).

Kentucky Warbler - A Kentucky Warbler wandered west to San Angelo, Tom Green Co 11-12 May (ph. William Carlson).

Hooded Warbler - A bit west was a Hooded Warbler in Abilene, Taylor Co 10 Apr (Jay Packer, ph. Jayton Carroll).

Cape May Warbler - Exceptional for central Texas was three Cape May Warblers with one 12 miles northeast of Pandale, Crockett Co (ph. Sonia Duran), another at Fort Clark Springs, Kinney Co 30 Apr (ph. Bryan Calk et al.), and one more at James Kiehl River Park east of Comfort, Kendall Co 5 May (ph. Nancy Devlin).

Cerulean Warbler - A westerly Cerulean Warbler reached Neal's Lodge in Concan, Uvalde Co 24 Apr (ph. Ken Rosenberg) while another was nearby at Utopia, Uvalde Co 27 Apr (Mitch Heindel).

Bay-breasted Warbler - Also ranging farther west than usual, a Bay-breasted Warbler visited Fort Clark Springs, Kinney Co 14 May (ph. Troy Hibbitts).

Black-throated Blue Warbler - A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was a surprising find in Sonora, Sutton Co 11 May (ph. Bob Friedrichs).

Townsend's Warbler - Townsend's Warblers along the eastern edge of their migration route included one in San Angelo, Tom Green Co 25-26 Apr (ph. Tim Vasquez et al.) and another in Abilene, Taylor Co 11 May (Jay Packer, Amy Packer, Lance Barnett).

Western Tanager - The easternmost Western Tanager was in north San Antonio, Bexar Co 12 Apr (ph. Amanda Mutschler).

Blue Bunting - The male Blue Bunting at Concepcion Park just south of downtown San Antonio, Bexar Co from late Feb was present until at least 26 Mar (m.ob.).

Cited observers and contributors:

Ben Archer, Lance Barnett, Justin Bosler, David Braun, Deb Brown, Bryan Calk, William Carlson, Jayton Carroll, Cat Chang, Jack Cochran, Sheridan Coffey, Pam Cummings, Christopher Daniels, Janet Davis, Mike Davis, Nancy Devlin, Andrew Dickinson, Sonia Duran, Gil Eckrich, Tim Fennell, Andy Filtness, Brush Freeman, Bob Friedrichs, Nick Glover, Keith Godwin, Lawrence Haller, Tim Handren, Shelia Hargis, Mitch Heindel, Caleb Helsel, Craig Hensley, Randy Hesford, Troy Hibbitts, Suzanne Johnson, Richard Kaskan, Nick Komar Jr., Rich Kostecke, Lee Kothmann, Matthew Law, Hal Livings, Roel Loera, Matthew Louder, Bill Lupardus, C.A. Maedgen, Jean Martin, Curtis McCamy, Adam McInroy, Linda Mortensenm Derek Muschalek, Amanda Mutschler, Vincent O'Brien, Doug Orama, Jeff Osborne, Amy Packer, Jay Packer, Greg Palko, Dina Perry, Randy Pinkston, John Prentice, Linda Prentice, Martin Reid, Bill Reiner, Jon Reinhard, Robin Reinhard, Joanna Roberts, Ken Rosenberg, Carrie Roszell, Janene Rowan, Rebekah Rylander, Ben Sandstrom, Erik Sauder, Paul Sellin, Byron Stone, Romey Swanson, Steve Synder, Dan Tharp, Jane Tillman, Tam Tran, Celeste Treadway, Peggy Trosper, Christine Turnbull, Tim Vasquez, Brad Wier