

Central Texas – Winter 2021-2022 (1 December 2021 – 28 February 2022)
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 - A lone Fulvous Whistling-Duck was a surprising early winter visitor to Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 18-29 Dec (ph. Vincent O'Brien, m.ob.).

Surf Scoter - A handful of Surf Scoters wintered in central Texas with one at Lake Pflugerville, Travis Co 7 Dec - 26 Feb (ph. Adam McInroy, m.ob.), up to four near Windy Point on Lake Travis, Travis Co 20 Dec+ (ph. Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis, m.ob.), one on Lake Buchanan from Llano County Park, Llano Co 3 Jan (ph. Vincent O'Brien), and one on Granger Lake, Williamson Co 13 Feb - 4 Mar (ph. Jason Leifester).

Common Merganser - Three Common Mergansers on Lake Buchanan from Llano County Park, Llano Co 1-8 Jan (ph. Vincent O'Brien) were unexpected and an easterly outlier.

Western Grebe - The number of Western Grebes on E. V. Spence Reservoir, Coke Co was a bit shocking with 99 there 4 Dec (Jay Packer) and 140 carefully tallied 30 Jan (Jay Packer). That many birds in one spot might be the result of a large colony being displaced from elsewhere.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird - A Ruby-throated Hummingbird lingered in Hamilton, Hamilton Co until 27 Dec (ph. Mary Gardner).

Black-chinned Hummingbird - Also lingering into winter was a Black-chinned Hummingbird 5 miles south of Concan, Uvalde Co through 24 Jan (ph. Tripp Davenport).

Anna's Hummingbird - Single Anna's Hummingbirds were detected 10 miles south of Camp Wood, Uvalde Co 4 Dec - 21 Jan (ph. Tripp Davenport), 5 miles east of Mico, Medina Co 13-17 Dec (ph. Laura Keene), 5 miles south of Concan, Uvalde Co 19 Dec - 1 Jan (ph. Tripp Davenport), and in Alamo Heights in San Antonio, Bexar Co 4-5 Feb (ph. Keith Bartels).

Calliope Hummingbird - The only Calliope Hummingbird was an adult male in west Austin, Travis Co 13 Dec (ph. Michael Curran).

Allen's Hummingbird - Single Allen's Hummingbirds were found deep into winter at six different locations (ph., m.ob.).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - Broad-tailed Hummingbirds made a good showing with at least 10 individuals at scattered locations (ph., m.ob.).

Broad-billed Hummingbird - The Broad-billed Hummingbird from the fall near Cibolo, Guadalupe Co remained through the season with the last sighting coming 8 Mar (ph. Ken Harvey, m.ob.); another Broad-billed Hummingbird showed up 5 miles east of Mico, Medina Co 16-17 Dec (ph. Laura Keene).

Whooping Crane - A family group of 2 adults and 1 immature Whooping Cranes were unexpected and late stopovers in the fields north of Granger Lake, Bell and Williamson Cos 28 Dec - 2 Jan (ph. John Garrett, Cullen Hanks, Ash Ferlito, m.ob.).

American Avocet - Three American Avocets on a playa northeast of Loraine, Nolan Co 17 Jan (Jay Packer, Amy Packer) was an unexpected mid-winter find so far from the coast.

American Golden-Plover - An American Golden-Plover on Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir, Bell Co 7 Dec (Randy Pinkston) was a rather late fall migrant.

Mountain Plover - A bit west of some nearby traditional locations, 42 Mountain Plovers about 10 miles west of Brackettville, Kinney Co 8 Dec (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts) was a nice tally.

Marbled Godwit - Not expected away from the coast during winter, a Marbled Godwit at Mitchell Lake, Bexar Co 11-12 Feb (Christine Turnbull, Karen Moulder) may have been an early migrant.

Dunlin - A Dunlin at Kirby Lake, Taylor Co 2 Dec (ph. Jay Packer) was likely a late fall migrant while another at O. C. Fisher Lake, Tom Green Co 26 Feb (ph. Christopher Daniels) was either an over-wintering bird or a really early spring migrant.

Laughing Gull - Lone Laughing Gulls were at Granger Lake, Williamson Co 7-13 Dec (ph. Tim Fennell et al.) and near Windy Point on Lake Travis, Travis Co 8 Jan (ph. Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis, Andy Filtness, Ellen Filtness).

California Gull - Single adult California Gulls were at Granger Lake, Williamson Co 25-27 Jan (ph. Rich Kaskan et al.) and at Braunig Lake, Bexar Co 21-24 Feb (ph. Christine Turnbull et al.).

Lesser Black-backed Gull - Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found as singletons at five scattered locations (ph., m.ob.).

Glaucous Gull - Less than annual in central Texas, a Glaucous Gull at Llano County Park on Lake Buchanan, Llano Co 21 Jan (Vincent O'Brien) was the larid highlight for the region.

Tricolored Heron - Quite unseasonal for so far inland was a Tricolored Heron at Lake Colorado City SP, Mitchell Co 19 Dec (ph. Ruby Rolland, Nicholas Wiram).

Reddish Egret - The immature dark morph Reddish Egret at Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir, Bell Co from the fall remained until 28 Jan (m.ob.) while an immature dark morph was at E. V. Spence Reservoir, Coke Co 3-4 Dec (ph. Cinda Crosley, Jean Martin).

Roseate Spoonbill - A bit unseasonal was a flyover Roseate Spoonbill near Del Valle, Travis Co 22 Dec (Jeffrey Jackson).

Golden Eagle - A Golden Eagle was a nice find at Kerr WMA, Kerr Co 27 Feb (Kevin Aanerud).

White-tailed Hawk - A White-tailed Hawk northeast of Rogers, Bell Co 13 Dec - 8 Feb (ph. Mary Gardner, ph. Randy Pinkston) was the most northerly individual during the season.

Long-eared Owl - At least 2 Long-eared Owl were at their known roost location west of Ballinger, Runnels Co 26 Dec - 8 Jan (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts et al.) for their third consecutive winter.

Red-headed Woodpecker - The western-most Red-headed Woodpeckers were singles at Cross Plains, Callahan Co 14 Jan (Cinda Crosley, Jean Martin) and in Clyde, Callahan Co 27 Dec - 6 Feb (Leigh Larsen, Jay Packer, Amy Packer); another northeast of Falls City, Wilson Co 25 Dec - 26 Feb (ph. Willie Sekula) was at the species' southern limit.

Least Flycatcher - Perhaps expected less than Hammond's during winter, single Least Flycatchers along Barton Creek in southwest Austin, Travis Co 27 - 30 Dec (ph. John Garrett, ph. Cullen Hanks) and another southeast of Twin Buttes Reservoir, Tom Green Co 9-10 Feb (ph. Christopher Daniels).

Hammond's Flycatcher - Seemingly annual now in winter in central Texas, this season's Hammond Flycatcher was at Heart of the Hills Fisheries, Kerr Co 30 Jan - 19 Feb (ph. Lila Lewis, ph. Mark and Teri McClelland, ph. Paul Sellin).

Ash-throated Flycatcher - Northerly wintering Ash-throated Flycatchers included one at Lake Nasworthy, Tom Green Co 1 Jan (ph. Randy Hesford) and another 12 miles southeast of Sweetwater, Nolan Co 17 Jan (Jay Packer, Amy Packer).

Western Kingbird - Unusual away from the coast was an over-wintering Western Kingbird in far south San Antonio, Bexar Co 29 Dec - 30 Jan (ph. Christian Fernandez).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher - To the delight of many birders, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher spent a good part of the winter around Friendship Park on Granger Lake, Williamson Co 31 Dec - 2 Feb (Nancy Henderson, Belinda Avery, ph., m.ob.).

Gray Vireo - Unseasonal and away from known breeding areas, a Gray Vireo at Kenedy Park, O. H. Ivie Reservoir, Coleman Co 11 Dec (ph. Christian Walker, ph. audio Jay Packer, Amy Packer) was certainly one of the highlights of the season.

Warbling Vireo - Reasonable descriptions of a Warbling Vireo near Windy Point on Lake Travis, Travis Co 21 Dec (Aaron Balogh, Erik Saunder) and 9 Jan (Adam McInroy) were intriguing reports for a species rarely recorded in winter in Texas.

Northern Shrike - The Northern Shrike from the fall at Fox Park on the south shore of Granger Lake, Williamson Co remained there the entire winter season (ph. m.ob.).

Mountain Bluebird - In contrast to the huge irruption last winter, the only Mountain Bluebird east of Abilene was one just southwest of Leander, Travis Co 8 Feb (Brush Freeman).

Clay-colored Thrush - The Clay-colored Thrush from the fall along the San Antonio River south of Breckenridge Park in San Antonio, Bexar Co remained until 5 Feb (m.ob.). Another Clay-colored Thrush was a great yard bird 5 miles east of Mico, Medina Co 20 Jan+ (ph. Laura Keene).

Phainopepla - A Phainopepla near Andice, Williamson Co 18 Dec - 9 Mar (Jen Illingworth, ph., m.ob.) was a real outlier, well east of expected wintering areas.

Green-tailed Towhee - A Green-tailed Towhee at Russell Park in Georgetown, Williamson Co 6 Jan (Martin Byhower) was a nice find.

Yellow-headed Blackbird - A Yellow-headed Blackbird southwest of Miles, Tom Green Co 2 Jan (ph. Christopher Daniels) was a good find for mid-winter while three in Albany, Shackelford Co 26 Feb (ph. Scotty Lofland) either over-wintered or were very early migrants.

Bullock's Oriole - A Bullock's Oriole spent the winter at Cuero Municipal Park, DeWitt Co 27 Jan - 16 Feb (Derek Muschalek, ph. Byron Stone).

Baltimore Oriole - A Baltimore Oriole may have overwintered at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co with sightings 31 Dec (Jason Leifester) and 30 Jan (ph. Lisa Holmes) quite likely being the same individual.

Scott's Oriole - A Scott's Oriole was unseasonal and northeast of range at Fox Park at Granger Lake, Williamson Co 6-14 Dec (ph. Andrew Dickinson, ph. Kelly Holligan).

Rusty Blackbird - A handful of Rusty Blackbirds seem to wander west most winters but some surprisingly large groups were found well west of range with 20 in Andrews, Andrews 29 Dec (Doug Raybuck), up to 15 at Rotan, Fisher Co 23 Jan - 27 Feb (Jay Packer), and up to 16 at Abilene SP, Taylor Co 30 Jan - 21 Feb (ph. Lance Barnett, audio Jay Packer).

Ovenbird - An Ovenbird was a surprising over-wintering bird in Yorktown, DeWitt Co 7-25 Jan (Derek Muschalek).

Tennessee Warbler - A Tennessee Warbler near Jollyville, Williamson Co 3 Dec (ph. Steven McDonald) was late.

Cape May Warbler - Quite surprising and a first county record, a Cape May Warbler in Temple, Bell Co 18 Dec (Randy Pinkston) was a real prize for the Bell Co CBC.

Tropical Parula - Tropical Parulas had a great showing with singles just outside Palmetto SP, Gonzales SP 27 Dec (ph. Dennis Palafox), at Hornsby Bend, Travis Co 20 Feb (ph. Caleb Heisel), and in Cedar Park, Williamson Co 28 Feb (ph. Bryan Cotter).

Chestnut-sided Warbler - A surprising mid-winter Chestnut-sided Warbler was at Helton Nature Park in Calaveras, Bexar Co 23-25 Jan (Chet Burrier, Derek Muschalek, Willie Sekula).

Palm Warbler - A "western" Palm Warbler was a nice find at Reagan County Park in Big Lake, Reagan Co 10 Feb (ph. Rick Roche).

Black-throated Gray Warbler - The only Black-throated Gray Warblers were one in northwest San Antonio, Bexar Co 10 Dec and 22 Feb (both Aaron Boone) and another at Brackenridge Park, Bexar Co 29 Dec (Christine Turnbull).

Wilson's Warbler - A nice find so far from the coast, a Wilson's Warbler spent at least the early part of winter in Midland, Midland Co 14-27 Dec (ph. Carol Bailey).

Flame-colored Tanager - A state-wide highlight and the first record for central Texas was a Flame-colored Tanager at San Antonio's Brackenridge Park, Bexar Co 17 Dec - 8 Jan (ph. Becca Taylor, m.ob.).

Black-headed Grosbeak - Black-headed Grosbeaks had a nice showing with one in far northwest Austin, Travis Co 19 Dec (ph. Lance Felber) and another at Jackson Nature Park southwest of Stockdale, Wilson Co 20 Feb (ph. Steven Self).

Blue Grosbeak - A Blue Grosbeak at Lago Vista, Travis Co 26-27 Feb (ph. Virginia Williams) was either an early migrant or a bird that had overwintered locally.

Painted Bunting - A female-type Painted Bunting in New Braunfels, Comal Co 22 Jan (ph. Lynda Meyers) was an unexpected mid-winter visitor.

Morelet's Seedeater - Two Morelet's Seedeaters along Pinto Creek northwest of Bracketville, Kinney Co 17 Jan (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) were in an area where the species has been found in recent years.

Cited observers and contributors:

Kevin Aanerud, Belinda Avery, Carol Bailey, Aaron Balogh, Lance Barnett, Keith Bartels, Aaron Boone, Chet Burrier, Martin Byhower, Bryan Cotter, Cinda Crosley, Michael Curran, Christopher Daniels, Tripp Davenport, Janet Davis, Andrew Dickinson, Lance Felber, Tim Fennell, Ash Ferlito, Christian Fernandez, Andy Filtness, Ellen Filtness, Brush Freeman, Mary Gardner, John Garrett, Kim Garwood, Cullen Hanks, Ken Harvey, Caleb Heisel, Nancy Henderson, Randy Hesford, Marla Hibbitts, Troy Hibbitts, Kelly Holligan, Lisa Holmes, Jen Illingworth, Jeffrey Jackson, Rich Kaskan, Laura Keene, Leigh Larsen, Jason Leifester, Lila Lewis, Scotty Lofland, Jean Martin, Mark McClelland, Teri McClelland, Steven McDonald, Adam McInroy, Lynda Meyers, Karen Moulder, Derek Muschalek, Vincent O'Brien, Jeff Osborne, Amy Packer, Jay Packer, Dennis Palafox, Randy Pinkston, Doug Raybuck, Rick Roche, Ruby Rolland, Erik Saunder, Willie Sekula, Steven Self, Paul Sellin, Byron Stone, Becca Taylor, Christine Turnbull, Christian Walker, Virginia Williams, Nicholas Wiram.