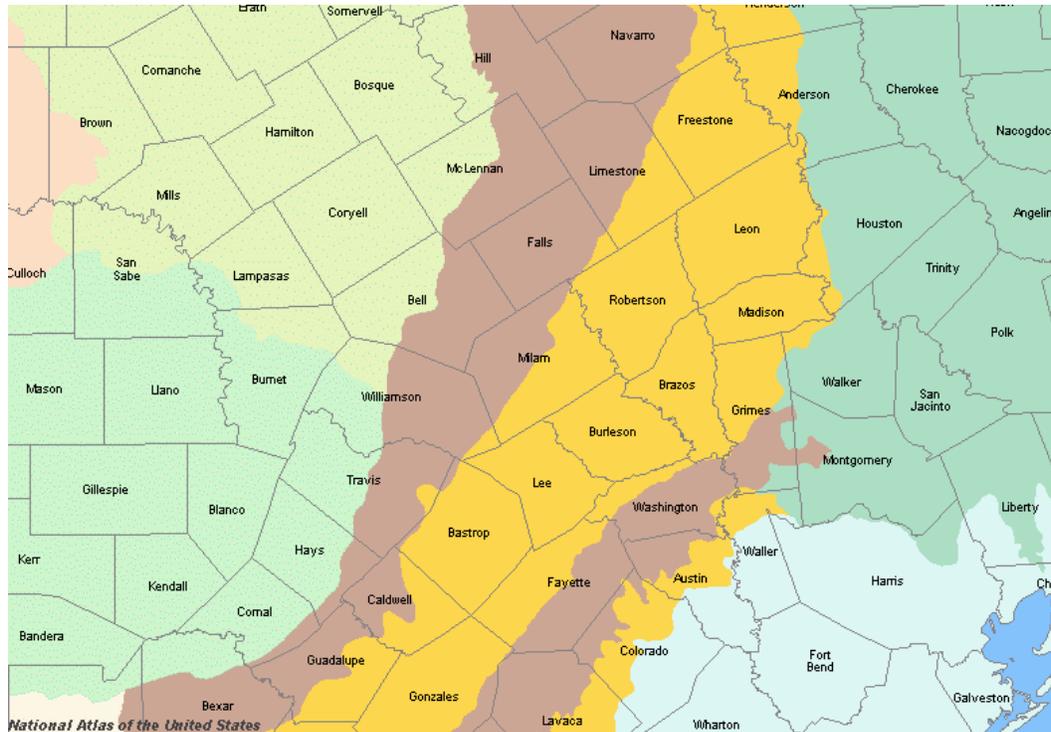


Summer 2021: Central Oaks & Prairies of Texas

By Bert Frenz

This report is from 1 June to 31 July 2021. It includes sightings from the following counties: Bastrop, Bell, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Limestone, McLennan, Madison, Milam, Navarro, Robertson, and Washington.



MOST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS:

Gadwall – Lingering Gadwall included four at Alcoa Lake, Milam Co 1 Jun (Michael McCloy) and a pair at Lake Somerville SP Birch Creek Unit, Burleson Co. 19 Jun (Sandy Dillard).

Redhead – A female Redhead resident at Witter Lane ponds, Bell Co since at least summer 2020 remained this summer season also (Randy Pinkston).

Wild Turkey – Only the fifth record for Freestone Co, a Wild Turkey was walking across the road by the check-in kiosk at Richland Creek WMA 5 Jul (Annika Lindquist).

Sora – Summer records for Sora are quite rare in the central oaks and prairies region and Sora are found most often in Brazos Co and Richland Creek WMA; a fifth record for Brazos Co since 1973, two were at Sims Lane, Bryan 15 Jul (Meredith Anderson).

Purple Gallinule – Purple Gallinules again nested at Carlos Lake, Grimes Co this season, producing at least four juveniles 18 Jul (ph. Greg Page, Greg Yoder). This location is the only known nesting site in the Central Brazos Valley.



© Greg Page, 18 Jul 2021, Grimes County

Willet – Only the second summer record for Brazos Co, two Willets were at Lake Bryan 28 Jun (ph. Rhet Raibley).



© Rhet Raibley, 28 Jun 2021, Brazos County

Least Tern – A Least Tern at Lake Bryan provided the first June record for Brazos Co on 12 Jun (Bill Eisele).

Wood Stork – Kettles totaling 200+ Wood Storks 26-29 Jun (Bill Eisele, Rhett Raibley) at Sulphur Springs Road were substantial numbers for Brazos Co.

Cooper's Hawk – Adding to a very short list of breeding information for Cooper's Hawks in Bastrop Co, two "squealing/screaming" juvenile birds were recorded at Paint Creek Road 17 Jul (ph. audio Jason Leifester).

American Kestrel – The only nesting pair of American Kestrels in Brazos Co again produced fledglings 3 Jun, mated again 17-18 Jun, and were on the nest again 5 Jul (Linda Hale). A pair at Alcoa Lake 24 Jun and a family group there 21 Jul (Sean Mecredy, Autumn Russell) suggested another successful brood at

Milam Co. Although there has been no direct evidence of kestrels nesting in McLennan Co, this season a single kestrel was territorial at Baylor Camp Road 8 Jun—30 Jul (Randolph King).

Couch's Kingbird – The second McLennan record of Couch's Kingbird dates to 1 Nov 2019 and has been seen periodically at the Baylor University campus ever since, last reported 11 Jun (Anand Chaudhary).

Eastern Phoebe – Although often reported on BBS routes in Limestone Co, a sighting of multiple adults and four nestlings at Fort Parker SP 6 Jun (Nathaniel Watkins, Nick Varvel) is apparently the first concrete evidence of breeding in the county.

White-breasted Nuthatch – Rare in Bastrop Co. and not reported since 2013, a White-breasted Nuthatch was photographed 4 Jun (ph. Brian Burgoyne) near Camp Swift.



© Brian Burgoyne, 4 Jun 2021, Bastrop County

Yellow-headed Blackbird – An early migrating Yellow-headed Blackbird was in a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds 9 Jul (Albert Manterola) near Calvert, Robertson Co.

Bullock's x Baltimore Oriole – An oriole first reported as Baltimore was extensively photographed 3 Jun (ph. Chris Holmes) and confirmed to be a hybrid Bullock's x Baltimore Oriole. It was present on the Baylor University campus 13 May—20 Jun (m.ob.). McLennan Co. is essentially at the dividing line between Bullock's and Baltimore species.



© Chris Holmes, 3 Jun 2021, McLennan County

Swainson's Warbler – Only the third record for Limestone Co, a Swainson's Warbler was photographed at Fort Parker SP 9 Jun (ph. Richard Kaskan) and apparently was singing on territory, a breeding location not previously known.



© Richard Kaskan, 9 Jun 2021, Limestone County

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