

North American Birds
Fall 2020
South Texas

It was a fall to remember due to the amazing incursion of western species into the region. Except for a wet spell in September the drought continued unabated.

Notable Observations:

Cackling Goose – A lone Cackling Goose visited Knolle Ranch, *Nueces* 16 Nov+ (Daniel Horton et al).

Canada Goose – Two Canada Geese seen in *Nueces* 18 Nov (Jon McIntyre) provided for a now modern day record for the Coastal Bend.

Canvasback – A female Canvasback observed at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* 30 Oct (ph. Daniel Horton; Mary Beth Stowe) was early for the LRGV.

Black Scoter – A female Black Scoter was present at Goose Island State Park, *Aransas* 22-26 Nov (m.obs.).

Common Goldeneye – Two Common Goldeneyes observed near Inez 14 Nov (Brent Ortego, Dora Ann Ortego) provided for a notable *Victoria* record.

Eared Grebe – An Eared Grebe seen at Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, *Colorado* 1 Oct (ph. Chuck Minero) was on the early side.

Ruddy Ground Dove - A male Ruddy Ground Dove brightened Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park, *Hidalgo* 15 Nov+ (ph. Jessica Tanguma et al).

Black-billed Cuckoo – The only Black-billed Cuckoos reported this fall included single birds at Laredo, *Webb* 11 Sep (ph. Layla Huntsinger), Salineno, *Starr* 11 Sep (ph. Erin Bowen, Derik Bowen) and Port Aransas, *Nueces* 17 Oct (Mel Cooksey).

Green-breasted Mango – A Green-breasted Mango visited a Weslaco, *Hidalgo* yard 2-3 Aug (ph. Bill Supulski).

Anna's Hummingbird – Very likely a result of the megadrought gripping the Western U.S. was the literal invasion of Anna's Hummingbirds into South Texas. Birds were reported from a number of counties.

Anna's x Rufous Hummingbird – An apparent Anna's x Rufous Hummingbird visited a Harlingen, *Cameron* yard 8-9 Sep (ph. Stephanie Bilodeau, Justin LeClaire).

Allen's Hummingbird – An adult male Allen's Hummingbird visited a Raisin, *Victoria* yard 18-21 Aug (Brent Ortego, Dora Ann Ortego).

Calliope Hummingbird – At least five different Calliope Hummingbirds were reported from *Cameron* this fall.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird – A Broad-tailed Hummingbird seen in a Raisin, *Victoria* yard 2 Aug (Brent Ortego, Dora Ann Ortego) was very early perhaps a refugee from the horrific drought conditions out West while another Broad-tailed Hummingbird observed in Palacios, *Matagorda* 26 Nov (ph. Bob Friedrichs) was also noteworthy.

Broad-billed Hummingbird – A handsome immature male Broad-billed Hummingbird visited South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* 16-20 Oct (ph. Gustavo Valero et al).

American Golden-Plover – Seven American Golden-Plovers reported from *Matagorda* (Greg Cook, Steve Glover) 24 Oct was a noteworthy number for this scarce fall migrant.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – An impressive 1080 Buff-breasted Sandpipers were counted in *Matagorda* 18 Aug (Brent Ortego, Dora Ann Ortego). A late bird was seen near Bay City, *Matagorda* 20 Nov (Gary Byerly, Benjamin Byerly).

American Woodcock – An American Woodcock seen at Aransas NWR, *Aransas* 23 Nov (ph. Brigid Berger) was a good local find.

Parasitic Jaeger – A Parasitic Jaeger was reported from Port Aransas, *Nueces* 16 Oct (Bayard Nicklow).

Sabine's Gull – The only Sabine's Gull reported from South Texas this fall was a bird seen offshore from South Padre Island, *Cameron* shoreline on 3 Oct (Nick Glover).

Bonaparte's Gull – Totally inexplicable was a Bonaparte's Gull reported from the Falfurrias Gravel Pits, *Brooks* on the amazingly early date of 30 Aug (Jean Martin, Cinda Crosley).

Little Gull – A juvenile Little Gull was found at Packery Channel, *Nueces* on the shockingly early date of 13 Oct (ph. Lorie Carnes).

Sooty Tern – A Sooty Tern observed at Powderhorn Ranch, *Calhoun* 21 Sep (ph. Daniel Walker) was likely due to Tropical Storm Beta. One Sooty Tern was seen offshore from Port Aransas, *Nueces* 23 Aug and six birds were reported in these offshore waters 25 Oct (Jon McIntyre).

Bridled Tern – A Bridled Tern seen offshore from Port Aransas, *Nueces* 25 Oct (ph. Jon McIntyre) was especially noteworthy since no organized pelagics took place due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Common Loon – An impressive count of 67 Common Loons was made at Goose Island State Park, *Aransas* 28 Nov (Jon McIntyre).

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel – Band-rumped Storm-Petrels seen offshore in *Nueces* waters included a single bird 25 Oct (Jon McIntyre) and three birds 12 Nov (ph. Jon McIntyre).

Cory's Shearwater – Three Cory's Shearwaters were seen offshore in *Nueces* waters 25 Oct (ph. Jon McIntyre).

Audubon's Shearwater – A lone Audubon's Shearwater was reported from a fishing boat in offshore *Nueces* waters 25 Oct (Jon McIntyre).

Masked Booby – A lone Masked Booby was reported offshore from Port Aransas, *Nueces* on 15 Aug while two birds each were seen on 25 Oct and 12 Nov (ph. Jon McIntyre). An immature bird was seen on North Padre Island, *Nueces* 8 Aug (ph. Andrew Orgill).

Brown Booby – Of note were six Brown Boobys reported offshore from Port Aransas, *Nueces* 12 Nov (ph. Jon McIntyre) while four birds were reported from Aransas Bay, *Aransas* 22 Nov (Todd White) and another four birds from Fulton Harbor, *Aransas* 27 Nov (ph. Mary McKeown-Moak).

Brown Pelican – A Brown Pelican present at the Falfurrias Gravel Pit, *Brooks* 30 Aug (Jean Martin, Cinda Crosley) and 26-27 Nov (Steve Glover et al) was noteworthy for an inland location with a very limited number of bodies of water.

American Bittern – An American Bittern reported from Zapata Library/City Park, *Zapata* 19 Oct (James Muller) was noteworthy for the location and date.

Golden Eagle – At the Hazel Bazemore Hawkwatch, *Nueces* two Golden Eagles were reported 18 Sep (Tucker Davidson) along with a single bird 22 & 23 Sep (Daniel Horton, Tucker Davidson).

Common Black Hawk – The Brownsville, *Cameron* Common Black Hawk returned to its resaca winter home 30 Nov (ph. Nate Crane, Matthew Winkler).

Broad-winged Hawk – The highest count of Broad-winged Hawk at the Hazel Bazemore Hawk Watch, *Nueces* was an impressive 68,468 birds tallied on 24 Sep and 55,606 birds tallied on 28 Sep (Tucker Davidson, Daniel Horton).

Elegant Trogon – A female Elegant Trogon discovered at Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 23 Nov (†Troy Hibbits, Marla Hibbits, Wayne Alford) was perhaps the highlight of the fall. It continued into the winter season.

Red-headed Woodpecker – An adult Red-headed Woodpecker observed in *Jackson* 10 Nov (Ron Weeks) was noteworthy.

Red-naped Sapsucker – A male Red-naped Sapsucker was reported from Falfurrias Cemetery, *Brooks* 24 Nov+ (ph. Tira Overstreet et al).

American Kestrel – A tally of 129 American Kestrels made at Hazel Bazemore Park, *Nueces* 5 Oct (Daniel Horton, Tucker Davidson) was impressive for this declining small falcon.

Prairie Falcon – A Prairie Falcon seen on a tall building on South Padre Island, *Cameron* 23 Nov+ (ph. Marianne Taylor) was unusual for the barrier island.

Rose-throated Becard – It was a fall to remember for Rose-throated Becard in South Texas. A handsome male was present at Falfurrias Cemetery, *Brooks* 20 Nov+ (ph. Willie Sekula; Kim Garwood), another male was reported from Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* 22 Nov (ph. Geoff Butcher) and a female seen at Salineno, *Starr* 28 Nov (ph. Greg Cook; Steve Glover).

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet – A Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet was present at Falfurrias Cemetery, *Brooks* 21-23 Nov (Willie Sekula et al).

Dusky-capped Flycatcher – Single Dusky-capped Flycatchers set up shop for the winter at six different *Hidalgo* locations. Normally only a single bird or two will winter in the LRGV.

Great Crested Flycatcher – A Great Crested Flycatcher spotted at Bentsen RGV State Park, *Hidalgo* 26 Nov (ph. Tim Hoffman, Jennifer Hoffman et al) was exceedingly late.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher – A handsome Fork-tailed Flycatcher was found at Eagle Lake, *Colorado* 4 Nov (ph. Sean Mecredy) and another bird was present near Edna, *Jackson* 11 & 12 Nov (ph. Bob Friedrichs; Ron Weeks).

Hammond's Flycatcher – A Hammond's Flycatcher visited Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 23 Nov (ph. Dan Jones et al).

Gray Flycatcher – A Gray Flycatcher made a rare visit to South Padre Island, *Cameron* 30 Sep (Javi Gonzalez, Britney Marchan).

Pacific-slope Flycatcher – A Pacific-slope Flycatcher present in Goliad, *Goliad* 14 Nov+ (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) along with a bird at Quinta Mazatlan, *Hidalgo* 21 Nov + (fide Marty Gustafson) added to the literal plethora of records of this rare species for the state this fall.

Cassin's Vireo – A Cassin's Vireo was reported from Green Hill Cemetery, *Jim Hogg* 3 Oct (ph. Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey).

Plumbeous Vireo – A Plumbeous Vireo visited Falfurrias Cemetery, *Brooks* (Willie Sekula) 20 Nov.

Cliff Swallow – Impressive were 1,800 Cliff Swallows reported from Hazel Bazemore Hawkwatch, *Nueces* 11 Sep (Daniel Horton, Tucker Davidson).

Cave Swallow – The 600 Cave Swallows tallied at the Hazel Bazemore Hawkwatch, *Nueces* 17 Oct (Daniel Horton) were thought to be migrants.

Red-breasted Nuthatch – Of note were single Red-breasted Nuthatches that made it to Valley Land Fund Lots at South Padre Island, *Cameron* 16 & 21-23 Sep (Thomas St. Pierre; ph. Kristy Baker et al) and Hazel Bazemore Hawkwatch, *Nueces* 10 & 24 Oct (Brian Berry; Daniel Horton, Clay Taylor).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – Impressive was a count of 335 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers was made from the Hazel Bazemore Hawkwatch Platform, *Nueces* 11 Sep 9 (Tucker Davidson, Daniel Horton).

Clay-colored Thrush – An amazing 30 Clay-colored Thrushes were seen at Quinta Mazatlan, *Hidalgo* 30 Nov (Nate Crane, Matthew Winkler) and 27 were tallied at Frontera Audubon, *Hidalgo* 18 Nov (Ezekiel Dobson).

Sage Thrasher – Sage Thrashers showed up in unusual spots this fall: one was at South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* 29 Oct (ph. Javi Gonzalez, Britney Marchan) and another bird at Rosehill Cemetery in Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 27 Nov (ph. Jon McIntyre).

American Pipit – Two calling flyover American Pipits at Formosa-Tejano Wetlands, *Jackson* 29 Sep (Ron Weeks) were a bit early.

Purple Finch – A female Purple Finch showed up in *Matagorda* 16 Nov (ph. Robyn Savage).

Botteri's Sparrow – Quite interesting were at least two singing Botteri's Sparrows reported from Boca Chica Road near Brownsville, *Cameron* 17 Sep (Timothy Freiday).

Lark Bunting – A Lark Bunting reported from Lamar, *Aransas* 27 Oct (ph. Patricia Wright) was early.

Brewer's Sparrow – A Brewer's Sparrow seen at Falcon State Park, *Starr* 16 Nov (Michael Emenaker) was an indicator of the dire drought conditions further west.

Dark-eyed Junco – Of note were single Dark-eyed Juncos seen on South Padre Island, *Cameron* at the Convention Center 31 Oct (Bill Beaty) and at the Convention Center 31 Oct (ph. Gustavo Valero et al).

Henslow's Sparrow – A Henslow's Sparrow seen at Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, *Colorado* 17 Nov (ph. James Rieman) was a noteworthy find for the westerly location.

Green-tailed Towhee – Green-tailed Towhees made a push into coastal South Texas with up to four birds present in *Cameron* with the most notable seen at the Convention Center at South Padre Island 29 Oct (ph. Javi Gonzalez; Britney Marchan).

Baltimore Oriole – An impressive tally of 225 Baltimore Orioles was made from the Hawkwatch Platform at Hazel Bazemore Park, *Nueces* 11 Sep (Daniel Horton, Tucker Davidson).

Scott's Oriole – A Scott's Oriole discovered at the South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* 6 Oct (ph. Dan Jones) provided a rare record the LRGV.

Bronzed Cowbird – Hazel Bazemore Park, *Nueces* seemed to be the epicenter for Bronzed Cowbird this fall with 367 birds seen there on 13 Oct (Tucker Davidson, Daniel Horton) while an amazing 500 birds were reported 29 Oct (Jon McIntyre).

Brewer's Blackbird – A count of 545 Brewer's Blackbirds made in Victoria, *Victoria* 19 Nov (Brent Ortego, Dora Ann Ortego) was noteworthy for the easterly location.

Golden-winged Warbler – The only Golden-winged Warblers reported this fall from South Texas were a bird present at Blucher Park, *Nueces* 20 Sep (ph. Willie Sekula; Kim Garwood, Mel Cooksey) and a very late individual seen at Laguna Vista, *Cameron* 16 Nov (ph. Bill Beaty).

MacGillivray's Warbler – A nice male MacGillivray's Warbler was well described from Resaca de la Palma State Park, *Cameron* 4 Nov (Derek Hameister).

American Redstart – A female American Redstart observed at South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, *Cameron* 11 Aug (ph. Todd Fitzgerald) was on the early side.

Cape May Warbler – A Cape May Warbler was present in a Harlingen, *Cameron* yard 23 Nov+ (ph. Donna McCown).

Cerulean Warbler – A rare-for-fall Cerulean Warbler was found at Valley Land Fund Lots, *Cameron* 20 Sep (ph. Dan Jones et al).

Bay-breasted Warbler – The only Bay-breasted Warblers detected this fall included single birds on South Padre Island, *Cameron* at Valley Land Fund Lot 29 Oct – 3 Nov (Agnieszka Skuza et al) & at the Convention Center/Birding and Nature Center 7-15 Nov. In addition, a very late bird was reported from Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 26 Nov (Jeff Sexton).

Chestnut-sided Warbler – A female Chestnut-sided Warbler seen near Delta Lake, *Hidalgo* 23 Nov (ph. Huck Hutchens) was late.

Black-throated Blue Warbler – A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was reported at Blucher Park in Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 30 Sep (Geneva Pigott) while single spiffy males were seen at Valley Land Fund Lot on South Padre Island, *Cameron* 1 Nov (ph. Dan Jones) and Slaughter Park in Laredo, *Webb* 11 Nov (Pullen Watkins).

Prairie Warbler – A Prairie Warbler dropped in at the Convention Center, South Padre Island, *Cameron* 7 Sep (ph. Nick Komar).

Black-throated Gray Warbler – This fall a literal invasion of Black-throated Gray Warblers took place in South Texas with at least 16 different individuals reported from several locations (m.obs.). In a typical fall, maybe 1-2 birds are detected.

Hermit Warbler – A male Hermit Warbler graced the South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center, *Cameron* 20 Oct (ph. Gabriel Rodriguez et al). A female was present at the McAllen Nature Center, *Hidalgo* 16 Nov+ (ph. Tiffany Kersten et al).

Golden-crowned Warbler – A Golden-crowned Warbler was present at Brownsville's Gladys Porter Zoo, *Cameron* 27 Nov+ (Dennis Edgar).

Painted Redstart – A Painted Redstart brightened the day at South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center, *Cameron* 5 Oct (ph. Lynn Chapman et al).

Crimson-collared Grosbeak - Crimson-collared Grosbeaks staged a mini-invasion into South Texas late this fall: a female visited a yard in Port Aransas, *Nueces* 17 & 18 Nov (Joan Holt, Scott Holt), up to three birds were at Quinta Mazatlan, *Hidalgo* 27 Nov+ (m.obs.) and another bird at Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 25 Nov+ (m.obs.).

Black-headed Grosbeak – At least nine different Black-headed Grosbeaks were reported from South Texas this fall. Normally only a couple of individuals are seen in typical falls but this year the species was more prominent probably due to the horrific drought out West.

Blue Bunting – A smart looking female Blue Bunting visited the Birding & Nature Center at South Padre Island, *Cameron* 4 Nov (ph. Javi Gonzalez et al).

Blue Grosbeak – A tardy female Blue Grosbeak detected at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron* 15 Nov (Brad Lirette).

Lazuli Bunting – A male Lazuli Bunting was found in a flock of Indigo Buntings in *San Patricio* 25 Oct (Skip Cantrell). Another male seen at Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 10 Nov (ph. Melissa McMasters).

Dickcissel – Of note was a count of 1,830 Dickcissels made at the Hazel Bazemore Hawkwatch, *Nueces* 11 Sep (Daniel Horton, Tucker Davidson).

Cited Observers

Wayne Alford
Kristy Baker
Bill Beaty
Brigid Berger
Brian Berry
Stephanie Bilodeau
Derik Bowen
Erin Bowen
Geoff Butcher
Benjamin Byerly
Gary Byerly
Lorie Carnes
Lynn Chapman

Sheridan Coffey
Greg Cook
Mel Cooksey
Nate Crane
Cinda Crosley
Tucker Davidson
Dennis Edgar
Michael Emenaker
Todd Fitzgerald
Timothy Freiday
Bob Friedrichs
Kim Garwood
Nick Glover
Steve Glover
Javi Gonzalez
Mary Gustafson
Derek Hameister
Marla Hibbits,
Troy Hibbits
Jennifer Hoffman
Tim Hoffman
Joan Holt
Scott Holt
Daniel Horton
Layla Huntsinger
Huck Hutchens
Tiffany Kersten
Nick Komar
Justin LeClaire
Brad Lirette
Jon McIntyre
Donna McCown
Mary McKeown-Moak
Melissa McMasters
Britney Marchan
Jean Martin
Sean Mecredy
Chuck Minero
James Muller
Bayard Nicklow
Andrew Orgill
Brent Ortego
Dora Ann Ortego
Tira Overstreet
Geneva Pigott
Martin Reid

James Rieman
Gabriel Rodriguez
Thomas St. Pierre
Robyn Savage
Jeff Sexton
Mary Beth Stowe
Bill Supulski
Agnieszka Skuza
Jessica Tanguma
Clay Taylor
Marianne Taylor
Gustavo Valero
Daniel Walker
Pullen Watkins
Ron Weeks
Todd White
Matthew Winkler
Patricia Wright