

North American Birds
Spring 2020
South Texas
Willie Sekula

The weather was generally dry in South Texas with no major fallouts occurring. The season was pretty lackluster with no major fallouts and a couple of rarities.

Notable Observations:

Garganey – A stunning male **Garganey** was discovered on Jones Lake at Aransas N.W.R., *Calhoun* 11 Apr (ph. Kenneth Bader). Birders searched for this ultra-rarity without luck for a couple of days. Then, it was refound several miles away at Heron Flats, *Aransas* 16 Apr (ph. Tira Overstreet). It continued to the delight of at least 75 birders through 21 Apr (m.ob.).

Black-billed Cuckoo – A tardy Black-billed Cuckoo was observed in Rockport, *Aransas* 25 May (Susan Foster).

Chuck-will's-widow – A Chuck-will's-widow flushed at Estero Llano Grande S.P., *Hidalgo* 11 Mar (Rick Snider) was early while 20 birds at Blucher Park 23 Apr (Skip Cantrell) was a high count.

Eastern Whip-poor-will – The Eastern Whip-poor-will reported from Goose Island S.P., *Aransas* in late Feb was present to at least 7 Mar (John & Kathy Keagle).

Calliope Hummingbird – A male Calliope Hummingbird that wintered at a Nursery, *Victoria* feeder was reported to 13 Apr (ph. Janice Weigand).

American Golden-Plover – A tally of 203 American Golden-Plovers northeast of Eagle Lake, *Colorado* 24 Mar (Dennis Shepler) was a good count.

Wilson's Plover – A nice count of 55 Wilson's Plovers was made at the Texas 48 Shrimp Basin Bridge, *Cameron* 16 Mar (Colin Dobson, Nate Shipley).

Ruff - A Ruff near Magnolia Beach, *Calhoun* 25 Apr (ph. John Maresh) was an exceptional find.

Baird's Sandpiper – Three Baird's Sandpipers reported from Superior Turf Farms, *Cameron* 4 Mar (Gaylee & Richard Dean) were early.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – A very early Buff-breasted Sandpiper was detected near San Benito, *Cameron* 3 Mar (ph. Rick Nirschl, Anne Mayeville).

Pomarine Jaeger – A sub-adult Pomarine Jaeger was found working the Port Aransas Jetties, *Aransas/Nueces* 31 May (ph. Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood).

Mew Gull – The 1st winter Mew Gull continued at Port Aransas, *Nueces* till 6 Apr (Mel Cooksey).

Sooty Tern – A Sooty Tern returned to Rockport Beach Park, *Aransas* 17 Mar (Susan Foster). It was seen until at least 28 Mar. Another Sooty Tern was found on the Boca Chica beach, *Cameron* 2 May (ph. Justin LeClaire).

Black Tern – An early, especially for an inland location, Black Tern was detected at Progresso Lakes, *Hidalgo* 20 Mar (ph. Dan Jones).

Pacific Loon – A beached Pacific Loon found at the high tide line at the Port Aransas Jetty, *Nueces* 19 May was taken in for rehabilitation (*vide* Andrew Orgill).

Magnificent Frigatebird – An early Magnificent Frigatebird was spotted at Rockport, *Aransas* 17 Mar (Susan Foster).

Masked Booby – In *Nueces*, a Masked Booby was picked up on a Mustang Island beach and taken in to rehab 7 May (ph. Andrew Orgill) while another immature bird was on the Port Aransas Jetty 24 May (ph. Cindy Vigil).

American Bittern – An American Bittern reported from *Matagorda* 2 May (Robyn Savage) was late.

Swallow-tailed Kite – At least 5 Swallow-tailed Kites returned to Dever's Creek Park in Ganado, *Jackson* this spring (m.ob.) where they started nesting activities.

Bald Eagle – A pair of Bald Eagles produced an eaglet at Aransas N.W.R., *Aransas* this spring (m.ob.).

Common Black Hawk – The Common Black Hawk that spent its second winter at a resaca in Brownsville was last reported 8 Mar (m.ob.).

Zone-tailed Hawk – An immature Zone-tailed Hawk reported from Goliad S.P., *Goliad* 24 Mar (ph. Jon McIntyre) may have been a wintering bird.

Short-eared Owl – A Short-eared Owl lingered at Chapman Ranch, *Nueces* to 30 Mar (Jon McIntyre).

Pileated Woodpecker – A Pileated Woodpecker seen in flight over a ranch pasture in *Kenedy* 11 Mar (Tom Langschieid et al.) shocked the observers since the species normally occurs only as close as 150 miles to the north. Interestingly, a Pileated Woodpecker was reported from the same ranch two years ago.

Prairie Falcon – A Prairie Falcon was reported from *Jim Wells* 12 Apr (Larry Persico).

Rose-throated Becard – Both of the Rose-throated Becard at Resaca de la Palma S.P., *Cameron* this winter lingered into spring, with at least one there until 21 Mar (Wendy Williams). The female at Bentsen Rio Grande Valley S.P., *Hidalgo* (ph. Annie Meyer) was last seen 21 Mar.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher – The wintering "Lawrence's" Dusky-capped Flycatcher at Resaca de la Palma S.P., Cameron was last reported 4 Mar (m.ob.).

Great Crested Flycatcher – A Great Crested Flycatcher found at Resaca de la Palma S.P., *Cameron* 14 Mar (Mike Waldhuber) was a bit early.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher – Continuing the trend from winter a Fork-tailed Flycatcher was found southeast of San Manuel-Linn, *Hidalgo* 17 Mar (ph. Kevin Cochran, Dave Allen).

Gray Flycatcher – The wintering Gray Flycatcher at Knolle Ranch, *Jim Wells/Nueces* 31 Dec stayed to at least 13 Mar (Tony Frank, Mike Austin).

Black-capped Vireo – A Black-capped Vireo that visited Estero Llano Grande S.P., *Hidalgo* 6-7 Mar (ph. Brian Plath, m.ob.) and another bird seen on South Padre Island, *Cameron* 1 Apr (ph. Kathy Morales, Eric Julson, Marianne Taylor) provided for rare L.R.G.V. records.

Cassin's Vireo – The wintering Cassin's Vireo at Rosehill Cemetery, *Nueces* stayed until 31 Mar (m.ob.).

Plumbeous Vireo – The wintering Plumbeous Vireo at Roselawn Cemetery in McAllen, *Hidalgo* was reported to 1 Mar (m.ob.). Another Plumbeous Vireo was spotted at Rose Hill Cemetery in Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 16 Mar (ph. Mel Cooksey).

Yellow-green Vireo – A Yellow-green Vireo was detected in a mixed flock on the Rail Trail at Aransas N.W.R., *Aransas* 19 Apr (ph. John O'Brien).

Clay-colored Thrush – A Clay-colored Thrush was present near Benavides, *Duval* 28-31 Mar (ph. Bob Friedrichs). Two birds were at Lake Findley in Alice, *Jim Wells* 22 Mar (Tom Langschied).

Black-throated Sparrow – A Black-throated Sparrow present at Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve, *Nueces* 3-5 Mar (Richard & Gaylee Dean et al.) was probably on the hunt for food due to drought conditions.

Eastern Towhee – An Eastern Towhee visited Rockport, *Aransas* 2 Mar (Larry & Jan Kraemer).

Orchard Oriole – A male Orchard Oriole seen at the South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* 5 Mar (Fran Holmes et al.) was likely a very early migrant since no wintering Orchard Orioles were reported from deep South Texas.

Bullock's Oriole – A male Bullock's Oriole seen at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., *Cameron* 7 Mar (ph. John & Cathy Harrington) was probably an early spring arrival.

Baltimore Oriole – A count of 425 migrating Baltimore Orioles an astonishing 117 birds in one tree made on Padre Island National Seashore, *Kleberg* 18 Apr (Jon McIntyre) recalled days of old.

Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler – At least four different Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler hybrids were seen in South Texas this spring when normally may be only one bird is reported.

Swainson's Warbler – A late Swainson's Warbler was found at Blucher Park, *Nueces* 17 May (ph. Willie Sekula).

Virginia's Warbler – A Virginia's Warbler that visited Packery Channel 28-29 Apr (Dave Grise; ph. m.ob.) provided for a rare *Nueces* and South Texas record.

MacGillivray's Warbler – A notable MacGillivray's Warbler was reported from Port O'Connor, *Calhoun* 19 Apr (Tira Overstreet).

Cape May Warbler – Normally Cape May Warbler is a species usually found only on the coastal barrier islands in migration so a well-described male at Knolle Ranch, *Jim Wells* 10 May (Rik Brittain) was notable for the inland location.

Bay-breasted Warbler - Thirty Bay-breasted Warblers seen at Rose Hill Cemetery, *Nueces* 9 May (Matt Heindel, Willie Sekula) was a good number.

Blackpoll Warbler – A Blackpoll Warbler that hit a window on North Padre Island, *Nueces* 28 May was kind of late (ph. Stephen Cook)

Black-throated Blue Warbler – A male Black-throated Blue Warbler visited a *Cameron* yard 29 Apr (Britney Marchan) while another male was spotted eating grapes at Packery Channel, *Nueces* 3-4 May (ph. Kevin Cochran, Dave Allen et al.).

Palm Warbler – A well described Palm Warbler seen at the South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* 5 Mar (Tracy Zervos et al.) may have been early migrant.

Pine Warbler – A Pine Warbler reported from Estero Llano Grande S.P., *Hidalgo* 31 Mar (Tracy Zervos) was quite late for the southerly location.

Townsend's Warbler – The only Townsend's Warbler this spring was a bird at Packery Channel, *Nueces* 26-27 Apr (ph. Will Puryear et al.).

Hermit Warbler – A male Hermit Warbler that decided to check out one of few good sized trees at Padre Island National Seashore, *Kleberg* 8 Apr (ph. Timothy Thompson) provided a rare and exciting find for an otherwise dull spring migration.

Rufous-capped Warbler – A singing Rufous-capped Warbler found near Benavides, *Duval* 28 Mar (ph. Bob Friedrichs) was well away from Southwest Texas where most records are from. It was present the next day. It was seen again 12 May (Bob Friedrichs).

Black-headed Grosbeak – Single male Black-headed Grosbeaks were reported from Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., *Cameron* 23 Mar (ph. Marianne Taylor) and in *Nueces* in a Corpus Christi backyard 1 Apr (Kent Taylor) & Packery Channel 30 Apr-1 May (Mel Cooksey).

Lazuli Bunting – Single Lazuli Buntings were reported from San Juan, *Hidalgo* 16 7 20 Apr (ph. Bert Wessling), in *Nueces* at Pollywog Pond 15 Apr (ph. Nancy Devlin, Dennis Devlin) & Mustang Island 26 Apr (Ben Horstmann et al.) and in *San Patricio* 9 Apr (Skip Cantrell).

Varied Bunting – Of note was a male Varied Bunting found in a flock of Painted Buntings on Mustang Island, *Nueces* 19 Apr (Keith Bartels, Matt Heindel, ph. Willie Sekula).

Cited Observers

Dave Allen
Kenneth Bader
Keith Bartles
Rik Brittain
Skip Cantrell
Kevin Cochran
Stephen Cook
Mel Cooksey
Gaylee & Richard Dean
Nancy Devlin
Dennis Devlin
Colin Dobson
Susan Foster
Bob Friedrichs
Kim Garwood
Dave Grise
John & Cathy Harrington
Matt Heindel
Fran Holmes
Ben Horstmann
Dan Jones
Eric Julson
John & Kathy Keagle
Larry & Jan Kraemer
Tom Langschied
Britney Marchan
John Maresh
Anne Mayeville
Jon McIntyre
Annie Meyer
Kathy Morales
Rick Nirschl
John O'Brien

Andrew Orgill
Tira Overstreet
Brian Plath
Will Puryear
Robyn Savage
Dennis Shepler
Nate Shipley
Rick Snider
Kent Taylor
Marianne Taylor
Timothy Thompson
Cindy Vigil
Mike Waldhuber
Janice Weigand
Bert Wessling
Wendy Williams
Tracy Zervos