

North American Birds
Summer 2020
South Texas
Willie Sekula

The typical heat and drought of summer set in and magnified the on going drought in the region. However, Hurricane Hanna disrupted the heat and drought with its arrival in South Texas in late July. Tropical storms can and usually fling seabirds well inland. While Hanna produced a good number of frigatebirds inland it didn't give birders any other pelagic birds of note except for terns.

Notable Observations:

Surf Scoter – A Surf Scoter found in a weakened condition at Mustang Island State Park, *Nueces* 5 Jun was brought into a rehab facility (*fide* Andrew Orgill).

Green-breasted Mango – An immature Green-breasted Mango visited a Weslaco, *Hidalgo* yard 27 Jul (ph. Bill Supulski).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird – A Ruby-throated Hummingbird seen at Aransas NWR, *Aransas* 7 Jun (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) may have been a late spring migrant while four birds (two males & two females) reported from Tuleta, *Bee* 25 Jul (Linda Vegh) were likely early fall migrants.

King Rail – A King Rail was reported from the Viola Turning Basin, *Nueces* 3 Jun (Clay Taylor).

Upland Sandpiper – An early fall migrating Upland Sandpiper was found at a *Jackson* turf farm 5 Jul (ph. Ron Weeks).

Whimbrel – Of note was a Whimbrel present along the NAS Causeway, *Nueces* 5 Jun – 3 Jul (ph. Larry Jordan), two birds in Oso Bay, *Nueces* 9 Jul (Mel Cooksey) and a single bird at Sunset Lake, *San Patricio* 12 Jul (Willie Sekula).

Hudsonian Godwit – In *Nueces* four Hudsonian Godwits reported from Corpus Christi Bay/Ship Channel 1 Jun (Jon McIntyre) along with two birds seen at the Robstown turf farm 6 Jun (ph. Willie Sekula; Kim Garwood) were late migrants.

Marbled Godwit – Four Marbled Godwits reported from Saturday Beach, *Calhoun* 14 Jun (Brigid Berger) along with a single birds at Matagorda Island – Pass Cavallo, *Calhoun* 16 Jun (Tira Overstreet) & Padre Island National Seashore, *Kenedy* 15 Jun (ph. Lindi Lagman). Up to 15 birds seen on South Padre Island, *Cameron* 13 Jun (Thomas St. Pierre) were likely non-breeding lingerers.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – A late Buff-breasted Sandpiper was seen at a Robstown, *Nueces* turf farm 6 Jun (ph. Willie Sekula; Kim Garwood).

Solitary Sandpiper – A Solitary Sandpiper present at Tiocano Lake, *Cameron* 19 Jun (Zeke VanZante et al) was an early fall migrant.

Sabine's Gull – An immature Sabine's Gull reported from Chapman Ranch, *Nueces* in a flock of Laughing Gulls 26 Jul (Jon McIntyre) was likely a result of Hurricane Hanna.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – A 1st summer Lesser Black-backed Gull present at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center in Port Aransas, *Nueces* 21 Jun+ (ph. Willie Sekula; Kim Garwood) provided for a rare summer record.

Sooty Tern – An injured Sooty Tern was picked up along the roadside at Aransas Pass Wetlands, *Nueces* 27 Jul and turned in to a rehab facility (*vide* Andrew Orgill).

Royal Tern – Hurricane Hanna produced inland Royal Terns with six birds at Delta Lake, *Hidalgo* 26-28 Jul (ph. Justin LeClaire, Stepanie Bilodeau et al), two birds at Zapata, *Zapata* 26 Jul (ph. Willie Sekula; Kim Garwood), one bird near Santa Elena, *Starr* (ph. Liam Wolff), three birds at Falcon Lake Dam, *Starr* 26 Jul (Justin Bosler) and a lone bird at Lake Casa Blanca State Park, *Webb* 26 Jul (Justin Bosler).

Sandwich Tern – Hurricane Hanna pushed Sandwich Terns well inland. Up to three were at Delta Lake in *Hidalgo* 26-28 Jul (ph. Justin LeClaire, Stepanie Bilodeau et al). A lone bird was seen near Santa Elena, *Starr* 26 Jul (Liam Wolff)

Black Skimmer – Seven Black Skimmers seen at Falcon State Park, *Starr* 26 Jul (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) were likely the result of Hurricane Hanna. Six birds were reported from Lake Casa Blanca State Park, *Webb* on the same date (Justin Bosler).

Red-billed Tropicbird – An immature Red-billed Tropicbird found on a Port Aransas, *Nueces* beach 26 Jul (ph. Noreen Baker) was very likely a result of Hurricane Hanna.

Common Loon – A Common Loon found in the surf at Malaquite Beach on Padre Island national Seashore, *Kleberg* 16 Jun (ph. Lindi Lagman) appeared to be healthy and likely a late lingerer. Another Common Loon was seen on the bay side of Mustang Island State Park, *Nueces* 4 Jun (Joan Holt). Further south a well worn Common Loon spotted from the Birding and Nature Center on South Padre Island, *Cameron* 10 Jul (ph. Javi Gonzalez) was likely a summering bird.

Manx Shearwater – A Manx Shearwater was picked up struggling in the surf at Mustang Island State Park, *Nueces* 27 Jul. It was taken to the rehab facility in Port Aransas 28 Jul (ph. Andrew Orgill).

Magnificent Frigatebird – Hurricane Hanna pushed Magnificent Frigatebirds into South Texas 26 Jul. In the LRGV birds were reported from Delta Lake in *Hidalgo* westward to Falcon Lake in *Starr & Zapata*. Even further west up to seven birds were reported from Lake Casa Blanca State Park in *Webb* (Justin Bosler). Near Rio Grande City in *Starr* ranchlands and a group of 77 birds (ph. Liam Wolff) was an astounding sight along a rural highway! Further north up to eleven birds were seen at Lake Corpus Christi, *Live Oak* (ph. Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey).

Masked Booby – A well described sub-adult Masked Booby was seen feeding with Brown Pelicans just offshore from Malaquite Beach Padre Island National Seashore, *Kleberg* 14 Jun (Mike Baker). One was photographed after Hurricane Hanna at Port Aransas, *Nueces* 26 Jul (ph. Barbara Pankratz, Crystal Ledezema).

Brown Booby – A Brown Booby was reported from Lydia Ann Channel, *Aransas* 2 Jun (Jon McIntyre).

Double-crested Cormorant – A lateish Double-crested Cormorant was observed at Wright's Pond, *Nueces* 2 Jun (Skip Cantrell).

Brown Pelican – A group of 13 Brown Pelicans seen on a private ranch near El Sauz, *Starr* 26 Jul (ph. Liam Wolff) was likely due to Hurricane Hanna.

Least Bittern – A Least Bittern was seen flying across the Rio Grande River at Chapeno, *Starr* 21 Jul (Ryan Rodriguez).

Osprey – Four Osprey seen at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron* 28 Jun (Orangevale Birding Club) were likely oversummering birds. Also of note were two birds reported from Lake Casa Blanca State Park, *Webb* 26 Jul (Justin Bosler).

Swallow-tailed Kite – Swallow-tailed Kites delighted birders again at Devers Creek Park in Ganado, *Jackson* this spring and summer. Up to eight birds were reported along with three young in two different active nests (m.obs.).

Cooper's Hawk – Four nestling Cooper's Hawks were found at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* 8 Jun (ph. Mike Stewart).

Broad-winged Hawk – A Broad-winged Hawk reported from Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* 8 Jun (Tim Brush) was likely a late migrant.

Swainson's Hawk – A group of 66 roosting Swainson's Hawks seen in a plowed field near La Joya, *Hidalgo* 9 Jun was composed of mostly immature birds indicating lingering/wandering non-breeders (Mary Gustafson).

Zone-tailed Hawk – A Zone-tailed Hawk spotted near Penitas, *Hidalgo* 24 Jun (Mary Gustafson) was a surprise considering that the species doesn't breed anywhere in or near the LRGV.

American Kestrel – An American Kestrel reported in *Atascosa* 19 Jun (Gary Yoder) may have been a local breeder.

Ash-throated Flycatcher – An Ash-throated Flycatcher seen along Old Port Isabel Rd., *Cameron* 8 Jun (ph. Mary Beth Stowe) was at an odd location for the date.

Eastern Wood-Pewee – An Eastern Wood-Pewee reported from *Kleberg* 12 Jun (Jason Loghry) was running late.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher – A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher seen at Alamo Cottage Bird Sanctuary, *Hidalgo* 9 Jun (Pat Heirs) was late for the southerly location.

Least Flycatcher – A Least Flycatcher seen at Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve, *Nueces* 14 Jun (Stephen Cook) was quite late.

Warbling Vireo – A Warbling Vireo seen at Pollywog Pond, *Nueces* 19 Jul (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) was probably an early fall migrant.

Red-eyed Vireo – A Red-eyed Vireo detected at Aransas NWR, *Aransas* 7 Jun (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) may have been a late migrant since it was well away from any known breeding locales. Also late single Red-eyed Vireos were seen in a Progreso Lakes yard, *Hidalgo* 3 Jun (ph. Dan Jones) and Port Mansfield, *Willacy* 7 Jun (Ryan Shaw).

Yellow-green Vireo – A Yellow-green Vireo was present on Cannon Road, *Cameron* 24 & 28 Jun (ph. Mike Stewart). Three birds were in the area 9 Jul (ph. Mike Stewart, Yvette Haughney).

Tree Swallow – A Tree Swallow seen at Hazel Bazemore Park, *Nueces* 19 Jul (Roy Tiemeyer) may have been a post breeding wanderer since the species nests at Choke Canyon Reservoir, *Live Oak/McMullen*.

Blue-and-white Swallow – Possibly an indirect result of the COVID 19 pandemic (due to birders staying home) was a **Blue-and-white Swallow** that was found from a Progreso Lakes backyard in *Hidalgo* 20 Jul (ph. Dan Jones). Fortunately it was still present the next day so more photographs were obtained (ph. Dan Jones, Mary Beth Stowe) to help document the first record of this South American bird for North America and Texas.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher seen in *Bee* 19 Jun (Cinda Crosley, Jean Martin) along with a single bird at Live Oak Park in Ingleside, *San Patricio* 2 Jun (Skip Cantrell) and two birds seen along Cannon Road, *Cameron* 24 Jun (Mike Stewart) may have been local breeders. Perplexing was a lone bird seen at Blucher Park in Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 6 Jun (Willie Sekula).

Yellow-headed Blackbird – A female Yellow-headed Blackbird spotted at Alamo Cottages Bird Sanctuary, *Hidalgo* 25 Jun (Pat Heirs) was odd for the date and location. Another bird was reported from Chapeno, *Starr* 21 Jul (Ryan Rodriguez).

Yellow Warbler – A Yellow Warbler observed at Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 7 Jun (John Yochum) may have been a late spring migrant while one at Pollywog Pond, *Nueces* 19 Jul (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood) was an early fall migrant.

Golden-cheeked Warbler – A migrating Golden-cheeked Warbler that dropped in briefly at the Birding and Nature Center, South Padre Island, *Cameron* 17 Jul (ph. Javi Gonzalez) was a great find.

Summer Tanager – A female Summer Tanager present at Blucher Park, *Nueces* 19 Jul (Willie Sekula) was at an odd location for the date.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – A late Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported from Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Hidalgo* 3 Jun (Debra Anderson, Norma Friedrich).

Cited Observers

Debra	Anderson
Noreen	Baker
Mike	Baker
Brigid	Berger
Stephanie	Bilodeau
Justin	Bosler
Tim	Brush
Skip	Cantrell
Sheridan	Coffee
Stephen	Cook
Mel	Cooksey
Cinda	Crossley
Norma	Friedrich
Kim	Garwood
Javi	Gonzalez
Mary	Gustafson
Yvette	Haughney
Pat	Heirs
Joan	Holt
Dan	Jones
Linda	Lagman
Justin	LeClaire
Cyrstal	Ledezema
Jason	Loghry
Jean	Martin
Jon	McIntyre
Andrew	Orgill
Tira	Overstree
Barbara	Pankratz
Martin	Reid
Ryan	Rodriguez
Willie	Sekula
Ryan	Shaw
Thomas	St Pierre
Mike	Stewart
Mary	
Beth	Stowe
bill	Supulski

Clay	Taylor
Roy	Tiemeyer
Zeke	VanZante
Linda	Vegh
Ron	Weeks
Liam	Wolff
John	Yochum
Gary	Yoder