

Texas Region

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We often report on the quirkiness of weather patterns; dry regions getting rain, wet regions in the midst of droughts. This season, within tolerable limits, each region seemed to be its "normal" self. A succession of rainy cold fronts paraded through eastern and coastal Texas; the Trans-Pecos was very dry. In between, it was . . . in-between. We recount discussions in two areas that illustrate interesting aspects and opinions of the migration. Ken Seyffert wrote that folks in the northern Panhandle were ready to describe the migration as "horrible" when reports arrived from Lubbock, a short ways to the south, where observers used adjectives like "spectacular!" Seyffert astutely concluded that spring bird migration is "much like a game of hop-scotch" and "lucky for you if you are situated at the right hop at the right time."

Disparate opinions were also in evidence on the upper Texas coast. It was rightfully described as one of the best migrations in years there. Diversity was excellent and the appearance of hundreds of warblers on some days at heavily birded spots prompted many observers and even some of the bird alert tapes to describe an "outstanding" migration.

Veteran observers like Jim Morgan, however, quickly chimed in to remind us that what constitutes an "outstanding" day nowadays pales by comparison to the thousands of birds witnessed on the best days in decades past. For many of us, our perceptions of each new season unwittingly seem to be warping, or perhaps our expectations are shrinking, either from the diminution of our collective institutional memory of such events or out of self-defense.

Abbreviations: Ft. Bliss (*Fort Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mountains Nat'l Park*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); S.S.W.T.P. (*South Side Water Treatment Plant, Dallas*); T.B.R.C. [*Texas Bird Records Committee (Texas Ornithological Society)*]; U.T.C. (*Upper Texas Coast*); V.C.D.B. (*Village Creek Drying Beds, Arlington*). *The following are shortened names for the respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges, etc.*: Anahuac, Aransas, Bentsen, Big Bend, Laguna Atascosa, and Santa Ana.

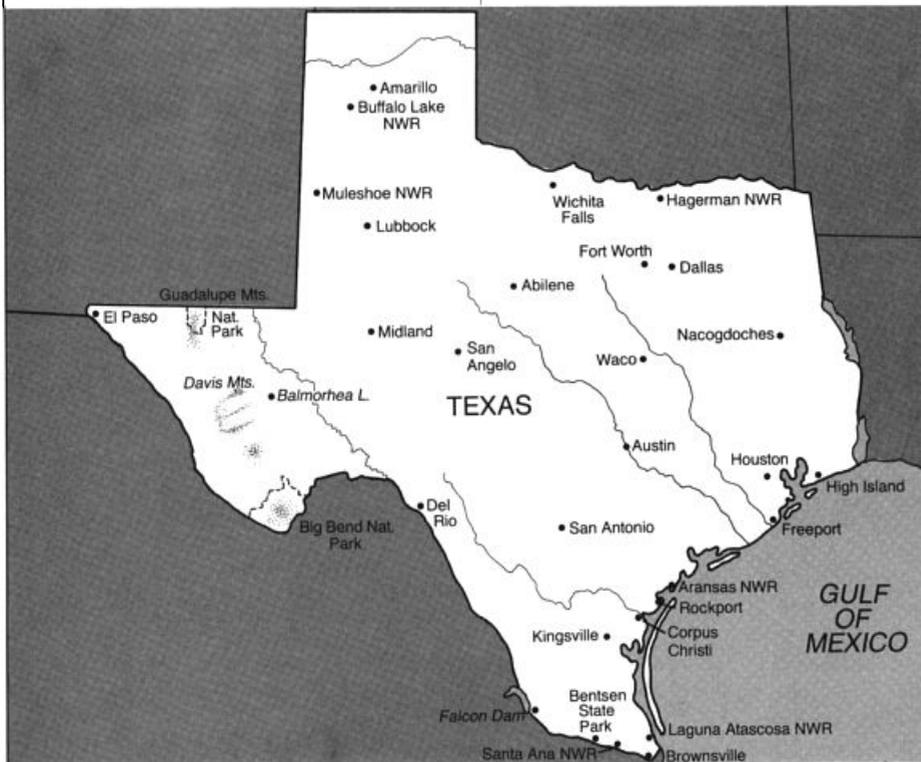
Loons to Ibises

The Red-throated Loon at L. Balmorhea last season remained through Apr. 25 (m.ob.), while another was at Surfside, *Brazoria* Apr. 27 (TE, JM). Two Pacific Loons were on Aransas Bay Mar. 13–20 (†BO), while singles were at L. O'The Pines Mar. 20–26 (†KN, GDL, GLu, m.ob.), Rockport Mar. 30 (†JH, JBo) and L. Livingston May 7 (†AW). A Horned Grebe at Ft. Hancock Mar. 12 (BN, DE) was the only spring report

in the Trans-Pecos. The Red-necked Grebe at L. Tawakoni lingered until Mar. 5 (RK, GH, JN). A W. Grebe at Palmetto Dam, *Jackson* Mar. 2 (NH) was somewhat a surprise, while a Clark's Grebe was in *El Paso* Apr. 19 (BZ). Observers' interests in Texas pelagics continued to grow, spurred on by the efforts of Peake, Elwonger, Carroll, and others. A deep-water pelagic off Port O'Connor May 28 was one of the best ever in Texas, with reports of one **Greater Shearwater**, 16 Audubon's Shearwaters, four **Leach's Storm-Petrels** and 25 **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels** (DPe, ME, m.ob.). Excellent videotape and photos were obtained on most of these species. The Blue-footed Booby remained at Lake L.B.J. through the period, having been seen by over 5000 people by season's end. An ad. Brown Pelican joined the booby at Lake L.B.J., May 31 (GL), while another was on L. Balmorhea Apr. 30–May 4 (TJ, m.ob.). A Double-crested Cormorant, listed as hypothetical in Big Bend, was at Rio Grande Village Apr. 30 (GL, AW, BM). Snowy Egrets, a rarity in the Panhandle area, were more plentiful than normal, with one–two in Lubbock Apr. 10–May 13 (L.E.A.S.), two in *Briscoe* May 5–6 (JR), and one at L. Tanglewood, *Randal* May 14 (TLJ). Unusual heron sightings in the Trans-Pecos included an ad. Little Blue at Feather L., El Paso Apr. 24 (JS) and a Tricolored at Ft. Hancock May 14 (CB); both species are accidental in that area. Glossy Ibis reports continued to mount; at least six different individuals were reported on the U.T.C., Apr. 16–May 7 (m.ob.). A Glossy Ibis was at Eagle Mt. Fish Hatchery, *Tarrant* May 7 (†GK, EW), another was in *Kenedy* the same date (†ML), and one–two were at San Antonio's Mitchell L., May 17–31 (†ph., WS).

Waterfowl

The goose migration in n. c. Texas was outstanding, with higher than normal numbers of Canadas and Greater White-fronteds reported from several localities during March (RR). Muscovy Ducks continued to be seen in small numbers along the Rio Grande in *Starr*, but a count of 22 Mar. 12 between Chapeña and Fronton (TB) was noteworthy. Two pairs of Wood Ducks in *Crosby* Apr. 20 (KR) were unexpected. One of the best rarities of the season was an ad. ♂ **Garganey** discovered at the Presidio sewage treatment ponds Apr. 29 (†ph., AW). The bird appeared unhealthy and was found dead May 6 (AD, BG, * to Dallas Museum of Natural History) providing only the 2nd documented Texas record. A Cinnamon Teal lingered at S.S.W.T.P. at least until May 27 (RR), while a presumed N. Shoveler x Blue-winged Teal in *Harrison* Mar. 14–15 (GLu, DBro) was a surprise. An Eur. Wigeon was at Tornillo Lakes,



El Paso Mar. 13 (LJ). Two Com. Mergansers at Ft. Bliss Apr. 19 (BZ) were very late and at an unusual location. The Masked Duck "invasion" that began in the winter of 1992–1993 continued, with ≤ 25 at a private *Kenedy* location Mar. 19–Apr. 5 (JGo *et al.*), several along Hwy 77 in *Kenedy* during March (m.ob.), two at Brazos Bend S.P. through at least Apr. 20 (m.ob.), two at Brazoria N.W.R., Apr. 3 (†ph., JBu), one at Laguna Atascosa Apr. 20+ (†ph., BM) and one at Santa Ana during late May (*vide*JI). Increased numbers of exotic waterfowl were seen flying free in the Flour Bluff area of Corpus Christi, with others reported in Austin and San Antonio. Among the more conspicuous species were White-cheeked Pintail, West Indian Whistling-Duck, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Ringed Teal, and Egyptian Goose. These birds are escapees from various waterfowl collectors and observers should not be deceived into thinking they are wild vagrants.

Raptors

Single Black Vultures in *Clay* Mar. 20 and Apr. 3 (D&TMc, GJa) provided a first, overdue county record. After several seasons of strong, if not conclusive, evidence for nesting Swallow-tailed Kites in Texas, a nest was found Mar. 31 near Spurger, *Tyler* (RB). By season's end the proud parents had a half-grown young in the nest (ph. CSh, RB), providing the first documented nesting record in the state since 1911. A White-tailed Kite Mar. 27 in Fort Worth (GK, ph. CH) provided a very rare n.c. Texas record. A Mississippi Kite arrived early in Lubbock Apr. 10 (LSm) while a migrating flock of 1500 over w. Corpus Christi Apr. 16 (GS) was the largest flock reported. Two pairs of Sharp-shinned Hawks were discovered nesting in *Jasper*, providing the first nesting records for the piney-woods (CSh, m.ob.). Gabbert photographed a hawk perched in a backyard tree Mar. 16 in Gillett, *Karnes*, as it kept a careful eye on her birdfeeder. She sent the photos to Muschalek, who was stunned to see that the bird was an ad. **Northern Goshawk!** This record represented the 6th documented in Texas and only the 2nd documented by photographs. Another N. Goshawk was described in the Davis Mountains May 7 (†BO, m.ob.). Several Com. Black-Hawks were seen away from their normal haunts including one Mar. 10 at Arroyo Colorado, *Cameron* (JI), one Mar. 20 at Hot Springs, *Hudspeth* (TBa), and another May 11 over the bowl in G.M.N.P. (†ph., GL, CJ). Most unexpected was another Com. Black-Hawk at Colorado Bend S.P., *San Sabal Lampasas* Mar. 30–May 17 (†ML, BA, DB, GO). A Harris' Hawk nest was discovered in Lubbock Mar. 16 (MBI) providing

the first nesting record for the s. plains. Nesting Gray Hawks were present in the usual L.R.G.V. locations as well as in Rio Grande Village in Big Bend. The only sizeable movement of Broad-winged Hawks reported was 15,000 over Calallen, *Nueces* Apr. 3 (GS). A single Broad-winged in *Castro* Apr. 19 (CDL) was rare. Providing only the 2nd documented Texas record was an ad. light-morph **Short-tailed Hawk** soaring over Bentsen Mar. 8 (†ph., BM). An increasingly common summer resident in e. Texas, 6 pairs of Swainson's Hawks (1 pair in *Brazoria*, 5 pairs in *Harris*) were exhibiting nesting behavior by late in the season (*vide* GDL, PG). Single Zone-tailed Hawks at Colorado Bend Mar. 28–30 and Government Canyon, *Bexar* May 5 (ML) were away from their expected range. A "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk near Post, *Garza* Mar. 19 provided an unexpected record for the s. plains (ph. ML). A Crested Caracara seen Apr. 2 on N. Padre I. (AC) was interesting as the species seldom frequents barrier islands, while a pair of Crested Caracaras in *Johnson* Mar. 20 (CE) was a rare find. Six Panhandle area records of Peregrine Falcons during the season was more than normal, with a bird seen May 14 at Buffalo L. (KS) representing the latest spring record there.

Prairie-Chickens to Shorebirds

The precipitous drop in the Attwatter's Prairie-Chicken population continued and it seems inevitable that the subspecies cannot survive. A few were seen during March at two *Refugio* locations (CCo, LHu, A&MC). Texas birders turn up Black Rails in more locations each year; as many as three were calling on N. Padre I., Apr. 21–May 9 (A&MC) and five were observed in *San Patricio* Apr. 22 & 28 (A&MC, CCo, LHu). Three more Black Rails were reported from Matagorda I., Apr. 23 & 30 (BO). King Rails put in rare appearances at Grand Saline Marsh, *Van Zandt* May 1 & 22 (RK), while a single calling King Rail at L. Balmorhea May 7 (GL, CJ) provided continuing evidence of a possible nesting population in that Trans-Pecos location. A Purple Gallinule at Lubbock May 6 (JC) provided an outstanding record, as did one in San Angelo Apr. 16–17 (ph. M&AU). The Sandhill Crane migration in the w. areas of n.c. Texas was considered exceptional (RR), with a peak of 700 Mar. 17 over V.C.D.B. (MP, JWS, EW). Up to 65 Sandhills were in *Jefferson* Mar. 6–7 (J&JW), where the species has not been recorded since 1978. A migrant Whooping Crane made a rare appearance in *Smith* April 16 (LG). Ten Black-bellied Plovers near Amarillo, *Randall* May 8 (KS) was an unusual number there, and 466 at Laguna Atascosa May 14 (TB) was notable.

An Am. Golden-Plover at Imperial Res., *Pecos* Apr. 8–May 1 (BJP) was a good find, while ≥ 75 were at S.S.W.T.P., Apr. 1 (BG, RR) and at L. Tawakoni Apr. 9 (RK *et al.*) Another 75 Am. Golden-Plovers were in *Bastrop* Apr. 10 (JSu). A late Snowy Plover was at Miller's Creek Res., *Throckmorton* May 31 (KN), while a rare record in n.e. Texas was provided by 11 Mt. Plovers in *Delta* Mar. 19 (MWh). A N. Jacana was at Santa Ana April 5–May 10 (†ph. BM). A count of 32 Spotted Sandpipers at Ft. Bliss May 4 (BZ) was an impressive number for the Trans-Pecos. Three Marbled Godwits at the same location Apr. 19 were a surprise Hudsonian Godwits were reported in typical numbers at many locations near the coast, but inland observations across the e. half of the state were rare. Texas' fifth **Surf-bird** was on N. Padre I., *Kleberg* Apr. 15–21 (†ph. A&MC, m.ob.). A Red Knot May 1 and a Sanderling May 17 at Imperial Res. (BJP) provided rare spring inland records for this underbirded area. Another Sanderling at Buffalo L., May 7 (KS) was noteworthy. A count of 7660 W. Sandpipers was made at Laguna Atascosa Apr. 1 (TB), while 5933 Dunlins were counted there May 14. A gorgeous, breeding-plumaged **Curlew Sandpiper** was at Santa Ana May 3–7 (†TB, ML, ph. BM, MPaw *et al.*), providing only the 4th record for the state. Continuing with the rare shorebird records, a Ruff was near Anahuac, *Chambers* Apr. 21 (†JHu), and four Red-necked Phalaropes were in *Calhoun* May 15 (JT).

Jaegers to Murres

A probable Long-tailed Jaeger passed by Beaton and Peake Apr. 23 at Bolivar Flats. A Laughing Gull in Midland Apr. 30 (RMS, m.ob.) provided a 2nd record for that area. Rare gulls abounded this season. Single imm. California Gulls were reported at L. Balmorhea May 7–8 (CC, †BO, ME) and Cooper L., *Delta* May 26–31 (†MWh) while an ad. Thayer's Gull was at High I., Apr. 16 (†BB) and a first-year Thayer's was in *Jefferson* Apr. 24 (†ph., GDL). At least three individual ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were between High I., and Sea Rim Mar. 27–Apr. 26 (m.ob.), with another near Port Aransas May 6 (A&MC). Four Glaucous Gulls were documented on the U.T.C., Apr. 16–May 22 with another at Boca Chica Mar. 31–Apr. 26 (†ph., BM, MPaw). A 3rd-winter Great Black-backed Gull was described from *Jefferson* Mar. 20 (†BG). Four Least Terns at Imperial Res., May 13–20 (BJP) showed signs of courtship. Bridled Tern was officially added to the Texas list in 1988, but as the work on deep-water pelagics continues our records keep mounting. The May 28 pelagic off

Port O'Connor turned up 18 Bridled Terns (ph. DPe, ME, m.ob.) for the 11th documented Texas record (of almost 100 individual birds). F. Williams commented that there was one Black Tern reported at Midland. In previous years ≤ 75 per spring were expected, but in recent years rarely more than five are seen.

SA Never did we expect to use the word "murres" in a paragraph on Texas birds, but this state continues to generate surprises. A Common Murre was described at L. O'The Pines, Marion Mar. 19–20 (†KN, HB). The initial observers studied the bird from approximately 300 yards and were convinced of the specific identification. Observers the next day (†FB, JMu, GDL *et al.*) were farther from the bird and were only comfortable with an identification as murre species. Unfortunately, no photos were possible and it was hard to keep track of the bird as it constantly fled from numerous pleasure craft operating on the lake. This is the first report of an alcid in Texas.

Doves to Nightjars

White-winged Doves continued to make news with their expansion to the north; two were seen in Lubbock May 12+ (DSt), while the species continued to increase in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. A White-winged in Henrietta, Clay Apr. 30 (GJa) provided the first record for that area. A Com. Ground-Dove in Lubbock May 15 (DSt) was a rare find while an Inca Dove at L. Tawakoni Apr. 22 (JN) was a first for Rains. A late Black-billed Cuckoo was at Packery Channel, Nueces May 28 (WS, A&MC). A migrant Flammulated Owl was at Hueco Tanks Apr. 14–16 (SS, WW); though probably a regular migrant in that area, this species is rarely detected there in the spring (*vide* BZ). A calling N. Pygmy-Owl was at Dog Canyon, G.M.N.P., May 29 (†LS *et al.*). There are currently only 2 accepted records of this species in Texas, although it is likely to be a rare migrant or resident of the Trans-Pecos mountains.

Spotted Owls are resident but very rare, seldom seen, and local in G.M.N.P. A pair was seen Apr. 26+ in that park. Six Long-eared Owls were flushed from oaks at Hueco Tanks Mar. 6 (BN, DE), one of the few areas in the state where numbers of this species can occur. Another rare and often overlooked owl is the N. Saw-whet; a calling bird was seen and recorded May 11 in the bowl in G.M.N.P. (†GL, CJ). A Com. Nighthawk Apr. 23 at Buffalo L. tied the earliest ever record in that area (RS).

Hummingbirds to Woodpeckers

Single Green Violet-ears made brief appearances in c. Texas. The first wandered into Connell's mist net May 14 at Driftwood, Hays (†ph. DC, JA), while the 2nd briefly visited a feeder in Helotes, Bexar May 16–17 (†RH). Single Broad-billed Hummingbirds were reported from Ft. Davis Mar. 4–5 (KB) and from Nursery, Victoria Apr. 17 (†GG). Single Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were at different *Bastrop* locations Mar. 26 and Apr. 6 (*vide* BF). A new early date for Black-chinned Hummingbird in the Panhandle was established at Amarillo Apr. 6 (JPr), while an ad. ? Anna's was photographed in Calhoun Mar. 24–28 (LN); another Anna's was at Corpus Christi Mar. 1–Apr. 1 (GS). A Green Kingfisher near Lajitas Apr. 29 (AW) provided a rare Trans-Pecos record. A Red-bellied Woodpecker at Lorenzo, Crosby Mar. 21 (ML) constituted the first record for that county, while a Williamson's Sapsucker in El Paso Mar. 21–24 was unexpected (SH). A Pileated Woodpecker in Bell was slightly out of place (CoJ).

Flycatchers to Wrens

A Gray Flycatcher at Hueco Tanks Apr. 2 (BN, DE) was early, while an E. Phoebe there on the same date was rare. Great Kiskadees wandered W and N, with one at Lajitas May 29 (BJP) and another at L. Grapevine May 4 (GH). Tropical Kingbirds are becoming regular, although very local, in Cameron. McKinney discovered another nesting pair in Port Isabel for a total of 4 known nesting pairs currently in that county. Whether this increase in Tropicals represented an actual increase in birds or more alert observers is a matter of speculation. A pair of Cassin's Kingbirds were found nesting at Big Bend Ranch, Presidio May 2 (GDL, JPe); this location is at a lower elevation than the species

typically inhabits. A Violet-green Swallow in Castro Apr. 26 (CDL) provided an unexpected record for that area. Bank Swallows were nesting again in San Marcos (DH), where they had been noted several years ago; this species is an uncommon Texas nester. A group of >50 Bank Swallows in Midland Apr. 30 (FW) was a large concentration there. Small numbers of Cave Swallows again nested at Sea Rim (m.ob.), while 25 others were seen n. of Austin in Williamson May 12 (BF). Most remarkable were five Cave Swallows and a probable nest in Shackelford (KN), a first for n. Texas. Fish Crows, first documented in n.c. Texas last year, were observed again as two–four were in n.e. Fannin Apr. 24 and May 1 (PB, RR, MWh) In nearby Delta, two Fish Crows were at Cooper L., May 4 (MWh) for a first county record. The first documented Texas nesting record of Red-breasted Nuthatches occurred in G.M.N.P. last year. Interestingly, up to eight territorial males were in the same general area May 11 (GL). Based on recent reports of a declining Cactus Wren population in the w. portion of n.c. Texas, the report of a nesting pair in Stephens May 21–28 (BG, PB, RR) was noteworthy. Carolina Wrens continue to maintain a small outpost in the Panhandle, with a bird in Lubbock Mar. 26–Apr. 14 (L.E.A.S.), Vega May 3–9 (RS), and Amarillo Apr. 2 (PT). A late Winter Wren was on the Rio Grande in Presidio Apr. 28 (AW).

Dipper to Shrikes

One of the most surprising birds of the season was an American Dipper discovered below Longhorn Dam on the Colorado R. in Austin Mar. 5 (†ph. R&NA, CS, m.ob.) Unfortunately, it did not remain to be seen

Table 1. Unusual warblers in North and West Texas, spring 1994

Species	Dates	Location	Observer
Blue-winged	May 2	Midland	WWi
Blue-winged	May 2	Vega	RS
"Lawrence's"	Apr. 19	Lubbock	AB
N. Parula	May 29	G.M.N.P.	LS
Tropical Parula	Apr. 30–May 1	Big Bend	AW <i>et al.</i>
Black-throated	Blue May 3	Lubbock	RL
Black-throated Gray	May 7	Buffalo	Lk.KS
Townsend's	Apr. 23	Buffalo	Lk.RS
Black-throated Green	May 3	Vega	RS
Yellow-throated	Apr. 27–28	Lamb	CDL
Palm	May 7	Lubbock	SM
Palm	May 11	Amarillo	RS
Blackpoll	Apr. 23	Lubbock	PK
Prothonotary	Apr. 29–May 4	Lubbock	JC, DSt
Worm-eating	Apr. 19	Lubbock	JC
Worm-eating	May 4	Castro	CDL
Louisiana Waterthrush	May 4 & 11	Vega	RS
Louisiana Waterthrush	Apr. 13 & May 4	Lubbock	JC, SM
Kentucky	May 4 & 6	Lubbock	PK, SM
Ovenbird	May 6–7	Lubbock	JC, SM
Hooded	Apr. 22	El Paso	SH

by the scores of observers assembled at dawn the next day. This bird provided only the 6th record for Texas and was by far the easternmost of any previous reports. Gray-cheeked Thrushes can be common migrants in April along the coast, but a single bird described in Midland Mar. 26 (DHu, RMS) and another at Lubbock Apr. 20 (CSt) were farther west than normal; the Midland bird was remarkably early but well described. Two Wood Thrushes in Lubbock Mar. 21 were at an unusual location (JC). A Long-billed Thrasher was well described from Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* Apr. 19 (†JW); the species is a very rare vagrant on the U.T.C. Another Long-billed Thrasher was in Cedar Creek, *Bastrop* May 7 (*fide* BF). A N. Shrike at Palo Duro Canyon Mar. 4 (KS) provided one of few March records in Texas.

Vireos to Warblers

A Bell's Vireo Apr. 3 on N. Padre I. was unusual for a barrier island (A&MC). A surprising 14 Bell's Vireos were observed during May in n.c. Texas; 2 territorial pairs were found in *Hunt* May 4 (*fide* RR). Two Black-capped Vireos were at the extreme n. edge of their Texas range in *Palo Pinto* May 31 (KN). Unusual w. records of Yellow-throated Vireos included one in Lubbock May 1 (NO) and one in Midland May 1-3 (J&DMe). Several observers thought that Philadelphia Vireos were more numerous on the U.T.C. than in recent years, while a Red-eyed at Buffalo L., May 7 (KS) was unexpected. A pair of Warbling Vireos returned to Midland to nest for the 3rd consecutive year (*fide* FW). A Blue-winged Warbler in *Refugio* Mar. 18 (BO) was quite early. Blue-winged Warblers were more common than usual during April at several coastal locations; McKinney counted eight on S. Padre I., Apr. 14. Like the Blue-winged, Golden-winged Warblers were fairly common during April on the U.T.C., several observers felt they were more conspicuous than they had been in several years. A "Lawrence's" hybrid was on S. Padre I., Apr. 13-14 (MPaw). At least three "Brewster's" were on the U.T.C. during April. Territorial Virginia's Warblers were very common in the high country of G.M.N.P., May 10-12 (GL), while single migrants in the Panhandle at Lubbock Apr. 30 (L.E.A.S.), and Buffalo L., May 7 (KS) were unusual. A "Sutton's" Warbler (Yellow-throated x N. Parula hybrid) was well described from N. Padre I., Apr. 12 (CCo, LHu). Well out of range, a singing Tropical Parula was at Big Bend's Rio Grande Village Apr. 30-May 1 (ph. AW, GL, m.ob.) providing the first documented record for the Trans-Pecos. Nashville and Yellow warblers were noted in good numbers in n.c.

Texas. Cape May Warblers were in greater numbers than usual on the U.T.C., with at least 8 separate records, the earliest Mar. 31 at Sea Rim (ph. JH, JBo). Another Cape May was on N. Padre I., Apr. 30 (CCo, LHu). There were at least 5 reports of Black-throated Blue Warblers on the U.T.C., while four more were in *Victoria* and *Calhoun* from March-May (NH, LV); this species can be missed during spring in Texas. Unexpected Townsend's Warblers included one on S. Padre I., Apr. 17-18 (BM, MPaw), and one along Cibolo Creek, *Bexar/Comal* May 14 (ReW). Most unusual was a Hermit Warbler netted on Galveston I., May 1 (GW, ph., J&BMa), one of very few photographed records in the e. half of the state. A Grace's Warbler at Hueco Tanks May 1 was only the 2nd *El Paso* record in a decade (BJ). Fort Bliss hosted a Palm Warbler Apr. 11 (AO), while individuals Apr. 17 & 28 (RMS *et al.*) visited Midland. A Palm was at L. Tawakoni Apr. 29 (RK) while another was at L. Wichita, *Wichita* May 3 (DMc, TMc); both provided rare records for their areas. Black-poll Warblers seemed more common than in recent years on the U.T.C., and made a good showing in n.c. Texas with 6 records Apr. 23-May 11 (*fide* RR). Two Cerulean Warblers, one Apr. 23 at L. Tawakoni (RR) and one May 1 in *Hunt* (MWh), were the first n.c. Texas records since 1976. A Louisiana Waterthrush was photographed in *Irion*, w. of San Angelo, Mar. 30 (D&MT) for a first spring record there. A Connecticut Warbler was well described from Jefferson, *Marion* Apr. 26 (HB, † T.B.R.C.).

Buntings to Orioles

Lazuli Buntings were reported as far more numerous than normal in the e. half of the state, with more than 25 records from the c. coast, and c. and n.c. Texas. A White-collared Seedeater was found on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande across from Fronton May 7 (TB), while others continued to be seen at Zapata and San Ygnacio. A Baird's Sparrow was at Buffalo L., Apr. 30 (KS), the first reported there since 1984, while a Grasshopper Sparrow at Hueco Tanks Apr. 24 (JP) was rare for that area. Up to three Henslow's Sparrows were in *Smith* through March (N.E.T.F.O.), while one or more LeConte's Sparrows at Midland Mar. 12 and Apr. 2 provided locally unusual records (*fide* FW). Extremely rare away from the coast were five Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Cooper L., *Delta* May 21 (MWh). Locally rare were single Fox Sparrows at Ft. Bliss Mar. 9 (BZ) and at Calallen Mar. 11-13 (GS). Late White-

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throated Sparrows lingered in *Aransas* until Apr. 20 (CC) and at Calallen until Apr. 27 (GS); this species normally departs the c. coast by early April (*fide* MC). The Golden-crowned Sparrow at Hueco Tanks from the winter season lingered until at least May 2 (m.ob.). A Dark-eyed Junco at Buffalo L., May 14 (KS) was the latest date the species has been recorded in the Panhandle. A flock of 80 Bobolinks in *Delta* Apr. 30 (MWh) was an extraordinary inland concentration. A flock of 50 Com. Grackles frequented El Paso in early March (BJ, DE, BN), while Bronzed Cowbirds seemed to be increasing there and at Midland. We had six–seven 3rd-hand reports of Shiny Cowbirds at various U.T.C. locations as well as a report of two captured in cowbird traps at Ft. Hood. To date, however, the only written documentation received was for a single bird Apr. 16 at Port Bolivar (LS *et al.*). There are only 2 currently accepted records of this species in Texas and observers are requested to thoroughly document any record. Amazing was a Hooded Oriole at Palo Duro Canyon May 18 (KS), far north of its normal Texas range.

Cited observers (Subregional Editors in boldface): Ben Archer, Rich & Nanette Armstrong, Nina & Eddie Arnold, John Arvin, Peter Asman, Mike Austin, Tom Baker (TBa), Sue Barton, Giff Beaton, Bob Behrstock, Alice Bell, Peter Billingham, Marge Blackburn (MBI), Hazel Bluhm, Doug Booher, Julie Boone (JBo), Bill Bowler, David Bradford, Craig Braginton, David Brotherton (DBro), Ray Brown, Tim Brush, Kelly Bryan, John Buckman (JBu), Frank Bumgardner, Marjorie Byrant, Ronnie Carroll, Charlie Clark, Jeremy Clark, Don Connell, Arlie & Mel Cooksey, Chris Corbin (CCo), Charles Crabtree, Wesley Cureton, Arch Dillard, Jon Dunn, Charles Easley, John Economidy, Mark Elwonger, Doug Emkalns, Archie Engleman, Ted Eubanks, Tony & Phyllis Frank, Brush Freeman, Jody Gabbert (JGa), **Tony Gallucci** (Central Texas: P.O. Box 6, Camp Verde, TX 78010), Brian Gibbons (BGi), Elaine Giessel, Peter Gifford (PGi), Jeff Gordon (JGo), Peter Gottschling, Bill Graber, Lynn Gray, Gerry Green, Karl Haller, Hap Hamous, Carl Haynie, Tom & Jo Heindel, Dick Henderson, Gary Hodnee, Norman Holgerson, Jim Holmes, Sallie Homan, Ron Huffman, Lisa Hug (LHu), Don Hunter (DHu), James Hunter (JHu), Joe Ideker, Gayle Jack-

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Idaho/ Western Montana Region

**DAN SVINGEN AND
THOMAS H. ROGERS**

The mild winter was followed by a mild spring, with little weather-related news to mark the transition. The biggest change bird-wise was the widespread influx of "winter finches." Cassin's Finches began showing up at feeders throughout northern Idaho during early March. In northwest Montana, Red Crossbills finally descended to the valleys, and quickly fledged young. Evening Grosbeaks moved into the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and Libby, Montana areas in large numbers, after being absent all winter.

Several rare species first noted last season remained until spring, and one (Northern Hawk Owl) even nested. Most observers felt migration was early. In the Salmon, Idaho area for example, long-time observer Hadley Roberts obtained record-early arrival dates for no fewer than 17 species!

Loons to Waterfowl

One of two **Yellow-billed Loons** first noted in January at Harrison, ID was still present Mar. 13 (DS). The Double-crested Cormorant on the Clearwater R. near Lewiston, ID Apr. 22 (C.Bi.) was expected, while singles at St. Maries, ID May 5 (*fide* DS) and on the Salmon R. by North Fork, ID in May (LH) were not. A Great Egret near Salmon Apr. 22 was a latilong 2nd (HR). Four White-faced Ibis were at Lee Metcalf N.W.R., *Ravalli*, MT May 14 (PW), where they are rarely seen.

Greater White-fronted Geese are uncommon and local throughout Idaho, so the flock of 3000 at Fort Boise W.M.A., *Canyon* Mar. 12 (JG), and seven by Harrison Mar 13 (DS) were noteworthy. Six–eight Snow Geese at McArthur L., *Boundary*, ID Apr 12–25 (PC) was unusual. A small, mixed flock of Snow and Ross' geese was at Mann L., *Nez Perce*, ID for the last half of April (KD, MH, m.ob.), where both have been regularly found in recent years. Lewiston's **Brant**, first noted last season, was still present Mar. 5 (ph. DH).