

## Vireos to Finches

A Solitary Vireo Jan. 31 in *McCurtain*, OK (BH) continued the recent pattern for wintering birds for this area. An Orange-crowned Warbler wintered n. to *Douglas*, KS (MW).

A Yellow-rumped Warbler in *Seward*, NE Feb. 8 & 15 (JG) provided only the 4th February record for Nebraska (*fide* WRS). An "Audubon's" was noted Dec. 8 and Jan. 8 in *Wyandotte*, KS (LM), e. of most records even during migration. Extralimital Pine Warblers were noted n. to *Geary*, KS Dec. 10–Jan. 29 (DLS), and w. to *Rogers*, OK Feb. 19 (DLR, BG). A Com. Yellowthroat weathered it to at least Feb. 21 in *Tulsa* (AR).

A *Pyrrhuloxia* Feb. 5 in *Sedgwick*, KS Feb. 5 (DR) was only the 5th reported for Kansas. A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** in *Osage*, KS Jan. 9 (JB) will undergo review by the Kansas Bird Records Committee. Up to nine Chipping Sparrows were noted in *Tulsa* Dec. 17 (SS *et al.*), with other December reports from *Cleveland*, OK (JAG), *Comanche*, OK (JDT), and *Johnston*, OK (CG, JK). For Snow Buntings, only 4 reports of up to five birds were received from n. Nebraska, a low number of reports and birds (*fide* WRS).

Five Brown-headed Cowbirds persisted n. to *Lancaster*, NE Jan. 21 (LE), with others noted Feb. 5 in *Hall*, NE (RH, LR) and Feb. 27 in *Buffalo*, NE (LR, RH). Two Com. Redpolls occurred in *Grant*, KS Jan. 7 (MMc); another was seen briefly in *Cleveland*, OK Dec. 3 (JAG).

Cited observers (area editors boldfaced):

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# Texas Region

**GREG W. LASLEY, CHUCK SEXTON, WILLIE SEKULA, AND MARK LOCKWOOD**

"Due to the mild winter..." You point to a record, you highlight the trend, you ask the question, and you'll get the same answer from us. Species after species, we're afraid this column will sound like a broken record. This was the warmest winter Seyffert could recall in the Panhandle; Bryan suggested that "for all practical purposes, there was no winter season in the Trans-Pecos." The southern third of the state had no freezing weather at all; Dallas had a record high of 82°F in early February. There was sufficient moisture in north, central, and east Texas (and curiously in El Paso), but most of far west and deep south Texas continued with harsh drought conditions. This latter effect, coupled with the mild temperatures, added the only significant wrinkles to our otherwise monotonous seasonal tale. The drought left little or no food resources in the Big Bend region; no food meant no seed-eating birds and no rodents; no rodents meant no raptors. Bryan described the low desert areas (and even the few water sources) as being devoid of all but the hardy Black-throated Sparrow and a few Sage Sparrows. He wrote: "You couldn't even find a Cactus Wren out there!" Nonetheless, although the rest of us were generally robbed of robins or we pined for Pine Siskins, we took consolation in a set of wintering birds whose composition was dominated by reluctant neotropical migrants that just didn't feel like heading any farther south.

We mourn the passing of our friend Andy O'Neil, who died February 10 after a year's illness. No summary of Texas birds and birders would be complete without voluminous reference to the contributions of this dedicated South Texas observer. Dr. O'Neil, former president of the Texas Ornithological Society, set a standard against which we should all strive for thoroughness and persistence in researching the avifauna of our home stomping grounds. The passing from the scene of this unassuming, gentle man will leave a huge gap. We miss him greatly. With respect, we dedicate this column to his memory; the initials "AO" will be reserved and retired from this forum henceforth.

Abbreviations: Ft. Bliss (*Fort Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mountains N.P.*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); S.S.W.T.P. (*South Side Water*)

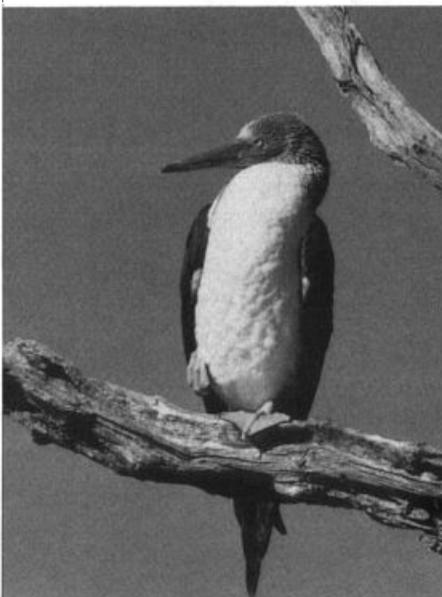


**Male Pyrrhuloxia at Wichita, Kansas, February 5, 1995. Notably far northeast for this species. Photograph/Dale Roark.**

*Treatment Plant, Dallas*); T.B.R.C. (*Texas Bird Records Committee/Texas Ornithological Society*); T.C.W.C. (*Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection/Texas A&M University*); U.T.C. (*Upper Texas Coast*); V.C.D.B. (*Village Creek Drying Beds, Tarrant Co*). The following are shortened names for the respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges, etc.: Anahuac, Aransas, Attwater, Bentsen, Big Bend, Brazoria, Hagerman, Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, Palo Duro, Santa Ana, and Welder.

### Loons to Ibises

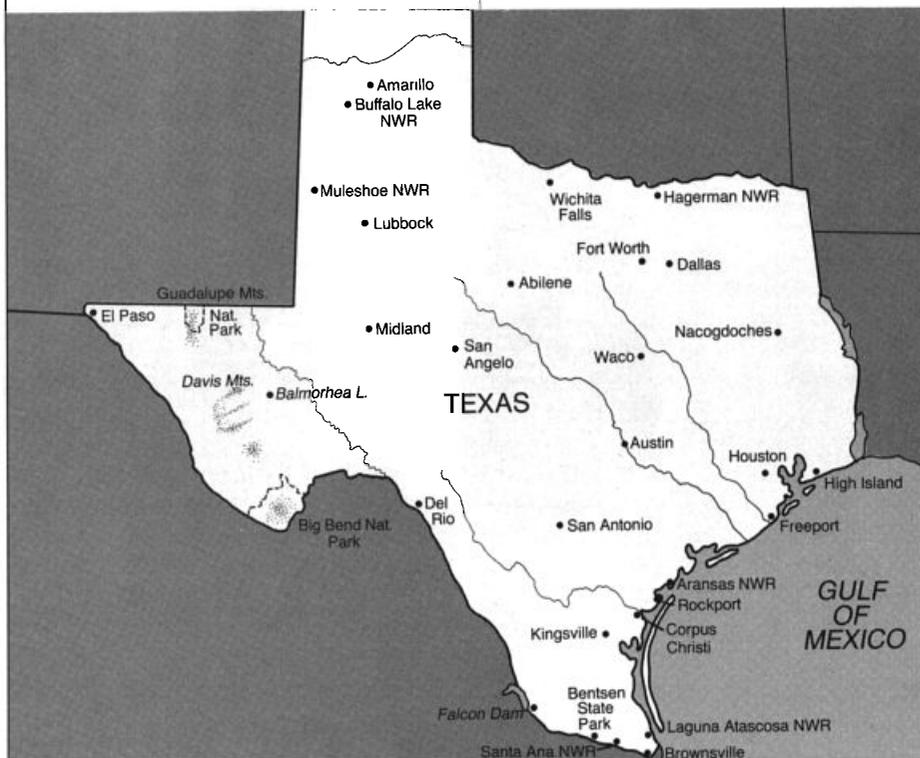
Two Red-throated Loons were at Comanche L., *Comanche* Dec. 4 (first county record; †CH) while others were at L. Tawakoni Dec. 26–Feb. 12 (†KN, MW, J&BR, RK *et al.*), Lake O'The Pines Jan. 2 (†KN *et al.*), L. Bob Sandlin Jan. 21 (G&JLu), and San Luis Pass Jan. 22 (TG). In the past 15 years, accepted Pacific Loon records in Texas have gone from 5 to over 60. The species is now expected in low numbers virtually statewide during winter. This season there were a total of six individuals documented in *Hudspeth*, *Reeves* (two), *Marion*, *Galveston*, and *Aransas* (m.ob.). Common Loons were thought to be in above-average numbers in the s. two-thirds of the state. Least Grebe numbers in s. Texas were declining from the 2 previous years' high counts (*fide* PP), while four wintered at Attwater this season. Horned Grebes were in above-average numbers in n.c. Texas and the Panhandle, while five at McNary, *Hudspeth*, Dec. 30–Jan. 28 pro-



**The infamous Blue-footed Booby that had remained on Lake LBJ in central Texas for over a year disappeared in October 1994—only to appear about 90 miles away at Lake Bastrop, where it stayed at least through February 1995. Photograph/Mark Lockwood.**

vided a rare record for the El Paso area (BZ *et al.*). A Red-necked Grebe made a one-day appearance at Lake O'The Pines Jan. 2 (†MW, KN). It was a banner winter for both Western and Clark's grebes over many areas of the state. Unusual records of W. Grebes included one at Kurth L., *Angelina*, Dec. 17–18 (AB, NB *et al.*), one in *Matagorda*

Dec. 19, and one at L. Bob Sandlin Jan. 12 (DO). In the Trans-Pecos at least 15 W. Grebes wintered at McNary, while 20 were at L. Balmorhea. Clark's Grebes were present in the best numbers ever in the El Paso area with seven birds present at McNary all season and others at Ft. Hancock (*fide* BZ). The notorious booby from Lake L.B.J. pulled up stakes (and feet of blue) Oct. 6 and apparently tried to head toward the nearest ocean. It made it about 90 mi down the Colorado R. toward the Gulf of Mexico to L. Bastrop, where it was rediscovered Dec. 17 by 2 fishermen. The booby remained there through the season. There were two inland Brown Pelicans this season; one was at L. Livingston Nov. 20–Dec. 15 (RBL) and another was at Laredo Feb. 4 (WS). An Am. White Pelican near Lubbock Jan. 19–21 represented one of a few winter records for that area (LMK, JSm, DSte). Neotropical Cormorants were scattered in small numbers almost statewide; a single bird that lingered in Lubbock until Dec. 15 (CSt *et al.*) was the northwestern-most, while four more were noted in the El Paso area (*fide* BZ). An Anhinga below the dam at L. Tawakoni Jan. 1 (TG) was a rare winter find for n. Texas. Also a Regional rarity, an Am. Bittern was at Amarillo Jan. 8 (RSc). The mild winter allowed several heron and egret species to winter farther inland than usual; a Little Blue Heron was in *Gregg* Feb. 6 (PHa), while a single Tricolored Heron was at a couple of locations in the Longview area Dec. 19–31 (BC, PHa, DMet). A count of 92 Great Egrets at McNary Dec. 30 (BZ, GL, CJ) was an unprecedented number for the El Paso area. Another lingerer at Amarillo was a Black-crowned Night-Heron Jan. 10 (PA). With increasing records of spring and summer Glossy Ibises in Texas, observers are scrutinizing winter *Plegadis* flocks more carefully. Documentation submitted on reported Glossies this season—one at Brazos Bend Jan. 21–22 (FB, EGW, †TG) and one at Anahuac Jan. 27 (ph. GDY)—will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C. A pale, unbanded Greater Flamingo at Laguna Atascosa all season (†KE, TP, m.ob.) added to the confusing array of flamingo records in Texas. In the early 1990s, a single banded flamingo, purportedly from the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, spent several winters at Laguna Atascosa. Currently the only accepted record of this species in Texas is from the early 1980s near Corpus Christi.



### Waterfowl

Reports of six Tundra Swans were about normal; five were in the Panhandle area and another was at San Antonio. A banded ad. Trumpeter Swan, presumably escaped or released from a captive breeding program in

Minnesota or Wisconsin, was at Brazoria Nov. 21–Jan. 20 (m.ob., ph.). Research by Ortego and others continued to demonstrate an increase in Ross' Geese in Texas in the winter. As an example, a record 42 were at Hagerman in December and an unprecedented 150 were near Raymondville Feb. 2 (DSi). Unheard of were 3 reports of Brants this winter: one at Anahuac Dec. 8–13 (†JoH, BL), one off the Port Aransas jetties Jan. 15 (†PH), and another in w. Harris Feb. 21+ (T. Lewis, †DB, m.ob.). The highest count of Muscovy Ducks this season was 15 at Salineño Jan. 22 (GDY), but most observations were of far fewer birds. An observation of 60 Wood Ducks at Welder, *San Patricio*, Dec. 19 (CC) was impressive. The Eur. Wigeon at Laguna Atascosa from the Fall report was seen at least through Dec. 26 (m.ob.). Another Eur. Wigeon was at Amarillo Dec. 20+ (†EK *et al.*); conceivably, this could have been the L. Marvin bird seen in November, although these localities are nearly 150 mi apart. Yet another Eur. Wigeon was at Ft. Hancock/McNary/Tornillo Jan. 17+ (†BZ, JGo, m.ob.). While birding the dam at L. Tawakoni, *Van Zandt*, Jan. 5, M. White was stunned to see a pair of **Harlequin Ducks** foraging in the rocks at the spillway. The birds were observed for about an hour but could not be relocated on later days. If accepted by the T.B.R.C., this will represent only the 2nd state record. There were 7 coastal and 2 inland records of Oldsquaw this season, a bit more than we normally expect. The most notable Com. Merganser records were three birds on the Mad Island CBC (*Matagorda*), three more at Aransas Feb. 7, and two at Canyon L., Jan. 28 (B&JR) providing a rare c. Texas record. Two Hooded Mergansers at McNary Dec. 30 (BZ, GL) were unexpected, as were six Red-breasted Mergansers there through the period. Since Winter 1992–1993 there have been loads of Masked Ducks along the entire coast. With the drying conditions occurring recently in s. Texas, it will be interesting to watch the numbers and distribution of the remaining Masked Ducks. This season Masked Ducks continued to be seen at Attwater (through Dec. 4) and Brazos Bend (through the season). One was at Brazoria in mid-December (†PDH, ph. GL), four were reported at Sinton Dec. 25 (†MQ), and one was at Santa Ana Dec 26 (TG).

### Raptors

A rare White-tailed Kite was observed near Ben Franklin, *Delta*, Feb. 11–15 (MWh *et al.*) providing only a 2nd county record. A Bald Eagle at L. Balmorhea Jan. 18 (GDY), another at Davis Mountains S.P., Feb. 5 (MG) and a third at Ft. Hancock Feb. 11 (WS, B&JR) all provided rare Trans-Pecos

records. Reports of single N. Goshawks—one at V.C.D.B., Feb. 16–17 (PM), an emaciated imm. male picked up in Plano, *Collin* (no date), and another seen briefly at Sunray, *Moore*, Feb. 3 (BF, PH)—will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C. An increase in Harris' Hawks on the U.T.C. was evident (m.ob.), including a first *Jefferson* record Feb. 18 (BG). A Harris' Hawk in Carrollton Dec. 17–Jan. 8 (DR, m.ob.) provided a first *Denton* record, while another in Ft. Worth Jan 24–Feb. 28 (T&HN, m.ob.) was a first for *Tarrant*. Following on the Fall report in the South Plains, five Harris' Hawks were seen in *Cochran* Jan. 23 (LeS) and three were in Lubbock throughout the period (DCu). A burned area adjacent to Cooper L., *Delta*, attracted an imm. White-tailed Hawk Feb. 15 (†MWh), providing a first area record and the northernmost for the state. Out-of-place Zone-tailed Hawks included one in *Victoria* Dec. 17, one at Stillhouse Hollow Res., *Bell*, Dec. 20–Jan. 5 (GrC, m.ob.), another at Choke Canyon Jan. 11 (*fide* ME), and a final bird seen occasionally at Bastrop during the season (JW *et al.*). The most noteworthy Ferruginous Hawk record was one seen in *Delta* Jan. 15 (MWh). Rough-legged Hawk is an extremely rare bird on the c. coast, so one seen at Corpus Christi Dec. 18 (*fide* A&MC) and another at Rockport Jan. 2 (CC) were significant finds. Two n.c. Texas counties, *Throckmorton* and *Bosque*, got their first Golden Eagle records this season. Four Crested Caracaras near Mason Dec. 11 (BoF) provided a rare Hill Country record.

### Rails to Shorebirds

Up to two Black Rails heard on the shore of Nueces Bay December–February (*fide* CC) were at the s. edge of the known regular winter range; McKinney was surprised to hear a Black Rail on S. Padre Is., *Cameron*, Feb. 26, a first documented (tape-recorded) L.R.G.V. record. Two birds were seen later and were heard very periodically into the spring. A count of 18,000 Am. Coots at Amistad Res., Dec. 30 was a rather large bunch. Sandhill Cranes were tallied in larger-than-normal numbers in their regular wintering haunts and showed up in unexpected numbers elsewhere in the w. two-thirds of the state. For example, 15,000–20,000 wintered in *Gray* (KS); 250 were in *Archer* (BGi, RR); eight were at Ft. Hancock, *Hudspeth*, in January; four were at Tornillo, *El Paso*, in January; and, finally, a high count of 2160 was tallied on the Kingsville CBC (*fide* PP). The wintering Whooping Crane flock at Aransas peaked at 133 birds, down three from the previous year (TS). Laguna Atascosa had a peak count of only 11 Piping Plovers (*fide* TB), but observers suggested good numbers wintered elsewhere on the lower Texas coast. Mountain Plover reports included eight in *San Patricio* Dec. 4, four at a different *San Patricio* locality Dec. 6, 64 in *Guadalupe* near the New Braunfels Airport Jan. 31, and eight on S. Padre Is., *Cameron*, Feb. 26 (m.ob). Small numbers of Black-necked Stilts wintered in the El Paso area for the 4th consecutive winter (BZ). An amazing 50 Am. Avocets wintered between Ft. Hancock and



**Male Masked Duck in breeding plumage at Brazos Bend State Park, Texas, February 4, 1995. Photograph/John Whittle.**

Tornillo reservoirs, far more than expected in a typical year (BZ). Greater Yellowlegs do not normally winter in the n. Panhandle; small numbers were found from *Hemphill* to *Potter* (*fide* KS). A single Lesser Yellowlegs, casual in the Trans-Pecos in winter, was found Jan. 28 among a flock of Greater's at El Paso (BZ). An unexpected 20 Long-billed Curlews were in *Castro*, Jan. 21 (KS), and a single Long-billed was at Miller's Creek Res., Feb. 18, was either wintering or was an early migrant (RR). Western Sandpipers were found in far w. Texas, where they are casual in winter: One was Ft. Hancock Jan. 17-28 and two were at Tornillo Dec. 30-Jan. 28 (m.ob.). Also unexpected Regionally were nine Least Sandpipers in *Hutchinson* Feb. 3 (BF, PH). Single Pectoral Sandpipers were very early in *Van Zandt* Feb. 24 (MWh) and in *Dallas* Feb. 25 (PS). Dunlin surprised observers in the far n. Panhandle (*Randall*; GF, JH) and in the El Paso area (m.ob.). A report of over 4000 wintering Stilt Sandpipers at Laguna Atascosa is believed to be the largest concentration ever noted in winter in the United States (JRu, *fide* TB). *Hutchinson* also harbored five Long-billed Dowitchers Feb. 3 which were wintering well to the n. of their normal range (BF, PH). Rare Am. Woodcocks showed up in Lubbock Dec. 5-10 (CA, DSt), Midland Feb. 11 (JHe, m.ob.), and in El Paso Jan. 25 (*fide* KK; \* to Univ. of Texas at El Paso).

### Gulls

Fifteen Franklin's Gulls in *McLennan* Dec. 21 was a sizable early winter flock at an inland county; one-three birds are more typically found at such sites. A single ad. Franklin's Gull stayed through the season in the El Paso area (*El Paso/Hudspeth*; BZ, WS), where the species is virtually unheard of in the winter. For the first winter in quite some time, there were no Little or Com. Black-headed gulls reported. Mew Gull, a very rare visitor to the state, was much in evidence in c. Texas this season. A first-winter Mew Gull was at a San Antonio landfill Dec. 10-30 (†ph., WS, m.ob.) while another (or the same?) was at an Austin landfill Jan. 20-26 (†J&MGo, m.ob.), providing the first record for that area. Remarkably, what was thought to be the same bird returned yet again to San Antonio Feb. 19-Mar. 11 (WS). California Gulls turned up all over the place; a 2nd-winter bird was at Cooper L., Dec 7, while a 3rd-winter bird was there Dec. 23-January (†MWh). In Austin, two first-winter California Gulls were seen periodically from mid-December+ (JS, †BF, B&JR, WS), providing a first record for that area. Also in Austin, Gallucci reported an ad. California Gull Feb. 26. One ad. California Gull was at San Antonio Jan. 2-Feb. 18 (†ph., WS),

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## 1995 BIRDING TOURS

**INDONESIA #1:** Halmahera/Sulawesi

19 July-13 August

**INDONESIA #2:** Lesser Sundas

Flores, Timor, Sumba

Komodo, Sumbawa  
13 August -1 September

## 1996 BIRDING TOURS

**THAILAND**

6-28 January

**SOUTH INDIA**

5-27 January

**SRI LANKA**

27 January-12 February

**PHILIPPINES**

2 February-4 March

**BHUTAN**

26 April-19 May

**MANCHURIA/  
INNER MONGOLIA**

19 May-13 June

**MALAYSIA**

29 June-21 July

**INDONESIA #1**

Sumatra Expedition

5-26 July

**INDONESIA #2**

Java, Bali, Borneo

26 July-18 August

**CHRISTMAS ISLAND**

16-25 August

leading to speculation about these birds cruising back and forth between c. Texas landfills. A first-winter Thayer's Gull was seen irregularly at Cooper L., Dec. 23-Feb. 28 (†MWh, KN). Details on an Iceland Gull reported Dec. 18 near Sabine Pass, *Jefferson* (†PSu, LSe) will be reviewed by the T.B.-R.C.; there is currently only one accepted record of this sp. in Texas. Including the Mustang I. bird back for its 12th consecutive year, there were 11 Lesser Black-backed Gulls at coastal locations between Galveston and Brownsville. More unexpected was a first-winter Lesser Black-backed at San Antonio Feb. 17-Mar. 4 (†ph., WS) and another at Austin Mar. 4 (†BFr, WS, J&BR). A Great Black-backed Gull was reported at Aransas Feb. 19-24 (†CBr, WP, m.ob.); there are fewer than 15 solid records for this species in Texas. The most remarkable gull record of the season was an imm. Sabine's Gull at L. Tawakoni Dec. 17-26 (†ph., PB, RK, GH *et al.*); the latest ever in Texas.

### Doves to Nightjars

Red-billed Pigeons were more in evidence in the L.R.G.V. this winter, with as many as 16 seen at Santa Ana Dec. 17-Feb. 4 (*fide*

TP, BM) and others reported at Falcon Heights and Salineño (m.ob.). Inca Doves continued to expand into the Panhandle with new records for *Roberts* and *Donley* (*fide* KS). In the exotic bird category, two Monk Parakeets were in Kingsville in early February (*fide* PP). Larger than normal



Remarkably late as a migrant was this juvenile Sabine's Gull at Lake Tawakoni, Texas, December 19, 1994. Photograph/George Harmon.

flocks of both Green Parakeets and Red-crowned Parrots (some flocks over 150 birds) were seen at numerous locations in McAllen, Brownsville, and elsewhere in the L.R.G.V. Of interest were two Green Parakeets and two Red-crowned Parrots in Kingsville during the season (*vide* PP). A Groove-billed Ani at Choke Canyon, *Live Oak*, Dec. 31 was farther away from the coast than typical wintering birds (*vide* ME). An injured W. Screech-Owl was rehabilitated in El Paso in January, providing a very rare area record (*vide* BZ). Long-eared Owls are unexpected anywhere in the e. half of the state; this season one was in Delta Dec. 18–19 (KN, MWh) and four were at San Antonio's Mitchell L. from late January+. Very encouraging were 6 reports of Short-eared Owls in n.c. Texas, the highest number of sightings there in many years. On the U.T.C., a total of 50 Short-eared Owls were tallied on 5 CBC's during December, a noteworthy number. El Paso got its 5th record of N. Saw-whet Owl when an injured bird was found Jan. 9 (*vide* MWh). A few Com. Nighthawks lingered on the coast into mid- and late December, which happens occasionally. We were surprised, however, by a report of one–two Com. Nighthawks in Victoria Jan. 17–24 and Feb. 1 (ME).

### Hummingbirds to Woodpeckers

Hummingbird reports abounded from all regions, with most of our regional editors reporting record winter numbers. Three species (Black-chinned, Anna's, and Broad-tailed) found in the Panhandle in January were indicative of the sympathetic winter conditions. There were literally scores of hummingbirds of at least 7 species on the coastal plain; Rufous and Black-chinned were perhaps the most numerous species there. Notable individuals records included the Broad-billed overwintering in Llano (*see* Fall report; B&JMa), Buff-bellieds at High Island and in *Jefferson* December–January, and Calliopes at High Island, San Antonio, Castroville, and *Victoria*. We hope to receive documentation on a possible ♂ Costa's observed in El Paso Jan. 3; there are only 4 documented Costa's records for the state. A *Selasphorus* sp. in Canton, *Van Zandt*, expired Jan. 1; initial examination of the specimen suggested it may be an Allen's. The specimen has been sent to L.S.U. for identification. The Ringed Kingfisher reported near Kingsville in the Fall report was a first county record; the bird remained to be tallied on the local CBC. Green Kingfishers have made a notable comeback in the Hill Country since being nearly extirpated by harsh winters in the 1980's (*vide* TG, BF, m.ob.). An Acorn Woodpecker at Aransas

Dec. 20–25 (TS, JMa, DHer, ph. JT) was a remarkable occurrence, at least 200 mi away from any known population. A Red-naped Sapsucker Dec. 30–Jan. 6 at Victoria provided a new area record (NH). *El Paso* had a Hairy Woodpecker Jan. 8–Feb. 28, the first in 15 years (DE, BN, ph., BZ, m.ob.).

### Flycatchers to Swallows

Two *Empidonax* sp. were remarkable for the Panhandle: A Gray Flycatcher was at Muleshoe Dec. 18 (JCL, m.ob), and an unidentified empid (but not a Gray) was at Palo Duro Dec. 10–25 (CG, m.ob.). Small number of Black Phoebes moved a bit e. of their expected winter range in c. Texas and on the c. coast. Tropical Kingbirds continued to be noted at 3 *Cameron* locations and were noted at at least one new locality, Sabal Palms, Jan. 20 (†GDY). Numerous Scissor-tailed Flycatchers lingered in s., s.e., and c. Texas through December; a remarkable nine were tallied on the Choke Canyon CBC. Unheard of in winter were two Scissor-taileds in Amarillo, *Randall*, Feb. 20 (JJ). An undocumented Rose-throated Becard was noted at Santa Ana Dec. 1–7. Tremendous numbers of Horned Larks wintered in the Ft. Davis area, estimated to be upwards of 10,000 birds (KB). Three Tree Swallows at L. Balmorhea Jan. 1 (GL, CJ) provided a rare winter Trans-Pecos record. One N. Rough-winged Swallow was in *Angelina* Jan. 2+ (m.ob.), a first winter record for that area. As we have come to expect, modest numbers of Cave Swallows overwintered in s. Texas. Of more significance, about 20 Cave Swallows wintered for the first time in *Travis* in c. Texas (ML).

### Jays to Shrikes

The jay invasions from last Fall's report continued into the winter. The southern-most Blue Jays were two reported in *Brooks* Feb. 18 (PP), while Scrub Jays expanded into low elevations throughout the Trans-Pecos. A Tamaulipas Crow was found "off the reservation" at Port Isabel, *Cameron*, Jan. 28 (*vide* JI, PP). A congregation of 34 Chihuahuan Ravens, rare in winter in the n. Panhandle, were at Vega, *Oldham*, Jan. 25 (RSc). A Bushtit at L. Marvin, *Hemphill*, Feb. 3 (PH) furnished only the 3rd record for that area. A small group of Pygmy Nuthatches and four White-breasted Nuthatches were in the country club area of El Paso Jan. 9–mid-February; the first records for each there in several years (*vide* BZ). Brown Creepers were notably sparse this season. *Archer* got its first Rock Wren Jan. 7 (BGi, RR). A Carolina Wren in El Paso Jan. 9–22 provided the first documented county record (ph., BZ, DE), while a House Wren in Amarillo, *Potter*, Feb. 4 was unexpected (BF, PH). Another indicator of the mild winter were wintering Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in the Davis Mts. and in *Hudspeth* (KB, BZ, JPa). A Clay-colored Robin was reported from Bentsen Jan. 15 (*vide* TP). Very few Am. Robins moved into s. Texas this winter, but Aransas reported a record high 13,000 Dec. 20 (*vide* TS). Gray Catbirds were reported more frequently at inland localities, with at least 6 reports ranging n.w. to Lubbock. Rare in w. Texas, a Sprague's Pipit was flushed at L. Balmorhea Dec. 17 (KB). Muschalek had a surprising 23 Sprague's Feb. 11 in *DeWitt*. Cedar Waxwings were almost entirely absent from s. Texas (*vide* PP). A Gray Silky-flycatcher



**Furnishing only a second record for Texas (and only a second well-documented record for the United States), this Gray Silky-flycatcher stayed in El Paso from January 12 into March 1995. Photograph/Tony Leukering.**

shocked Emkalns in El Paso Jan. 12 for a 2nd Texas record. This cooperative bird lingered there until at least Mar. 5, and was seen by hundreds of observers (†ph., m.ob.). Three N. Shrikes in the Panhandle (*Hansford*, *Potter*, and *Moore*) were about the expected number.

### Vireos to Finches

A White-eyed Vireo was apparently on a winter territory at Devil's River, *Val Verde*, Dec. 11 (KB); there are few sightings in that area in the winter. Orange-crowned Warbler is rarely found in the n. Panhandle in winter, and never before as far n. as one at L. Meredith, *Moore*, Jan. 25 (EK, PT). Several Black-throated Green Warblers wintered in the L.R.G.V.; these were more expected than one at San Antonio Jan. 2 (WS) and another at Victoria Jan. 10 (DMu). Well away from the coast was a Palm Warbler at Mexia Feb. 25 (FB). Unexpected was a Black-and-white Warbler that wintered in Big Bend (CEd). Extraordinary in winter was a Prothonotary Warbler in *Nueces* Jan. 17 (CC). A Louisiana Waterthrush was a rare winter find in *Gonzales* Dec. 24 (PH). A single Pyrrhuloxia, extremely rare in n.c. Texas, was in *Throckmorton* Jan. 16 (PB, BGi); however, numbers of this sp. were thought to be far lower than normal in deep s. Texas. Curiously, one-two Lazuli Buntings again showed up at a feeder in Calallen, *Nueces*, in January and February (GS), the only locality where the sp. is noted in winter away from far w. Texas. Another curiosity was a solitary Dickcissel which spent the winter on the trailer loop at Bentsen (BM). Extralimital records of Canyon Towhees included one at Acton, *Hood*, Dec. 22 (CE) and another at *Throckmorton* Jan. 16 (PB, BGi). American Tree Sparrows were perhaps more numerous in n. Texas this winter; eight near Ben Franklin provided a first *Delta* record Jan. 28 (MWh, KSa). A Clay-colored Sparrow in *Bastrop* Dec. 25 (BF) provided a rare Austin area winter record. Their cousin Brewer's were noted far to the n. of their regular winter range in Palo Duro Feb. 4 (PH) and at Caprock Canyons Feb. 5 (BF). Yet another sparrow wintering "too far north" was a Vesper in *Moore* Feb. 3 (BF, PH). With more focus by many observers, Henslow's Sparrows are finally being turned up regularly in small numbers in appropriate bluestem habitats in e. Texas. LeConte's Sparrows were particularly numerous in c. and coastal Texas. A nice record was provided by a Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Big Creek L., *Delta*, Feb. 19 (MWh). The Golden-crowned Sparrow at Hueco Tanks, remaining for its 2nd winter, was reported through the season (m.ob.). We were disappointed that other Golden-crowns reported in January and

February in *Uvalde* and *Brewster* by many observers went completely undocumented. Chestnut-collared Longspurs seemed a bit more conspicuous in the e. part of their range, for instance providing new county records for *Throckmorton*, *Comanche*, and *Delta* (m.ob.). Very local rains around Ft. Davis provided a good seed crop, which attracted concentrations of Chestnut-collared and McCown's longspurs in an otherwise rather dry region. A few Yellow-headed Blackbirds in the L.R.G.V. were not unexpected; however, single birds near Attwater Dec. 24 (PDH) and at Anahuac Jan. 12 (BG) were rare finds. For the 2nd winter a flock of about 40 Com. Grackles frequented the country club area of El Paso; the species is an accidental visitor in that area (BZ). Five N. Orioles were scattered along the coast this season; this superspecies is unexpected at any given locality during winter. An ad. Scott's Oriole was unseasonable at Mason Dec. 10 (BoF). Purple Finches were virtually absent in all areas this season; the only one reported in the Panhandle was a single bird near Canadian Feb. 3 (BF, PH). An amazing 82 Lesser Goldfinches were a surprise in *Kerr* Dec. 20 (E&SWie).

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