

August reports of Song Sparrows at 4 sites in Lancaster, NE and with Swamp Sparrows along the Platte R. in s.c. Nebraska likely represented summering birds for both species (*fide* WRS).

Eastern Meadowlarks at Crescent Lake Sept. 27 and Oct. 24 (LKM, MF) were beyond the w. limits of their normal range. For Brewer's Blackbirds, a count of 75,000–100,000 was impressive from Barton, KS Nov. 5 (GP *et al.*). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were still present in Scotts Bluff, NE Nov. 21 (LKM) and Lincoln, NE Nov. 25 (RCR, DJR). Among the only noteworthy finches, a Com. Redpoll at Douglas, NE Oct. 31 (JJ) was early.

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# Texas Region

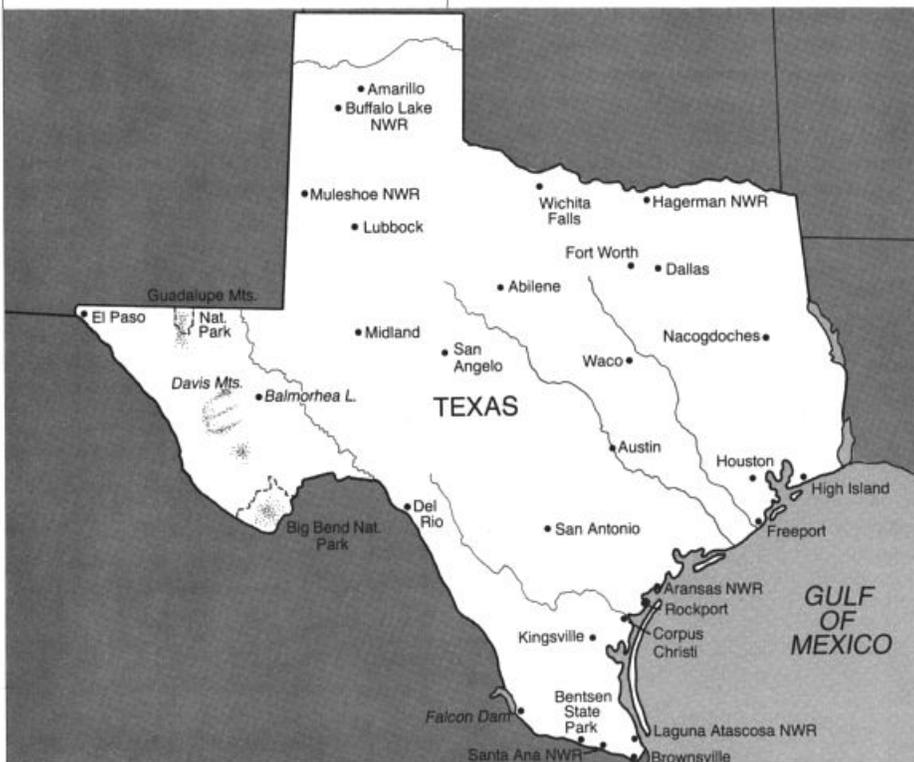
## GREG W. LASLEY AND CHUCK SEXTON

There was a little bit of everything weatherwise. Torrential rains came here and there in association either with cold fronts or remnants of tropical storms. Despite such rains, drought conditions persisted in much of north and west Texas. Temperatures were unseasonably warm early, mild well into the season, and unseasonably cool in the last days of November. In the first few days of the season, tropical storm *Dean* brought rains but little avian fallout to east Texas. Hurricane *Gabrielle's* landfall in northeast Mexico August 11–13 began to relieve the drought conditions in adjacent parts of south Texas, and brought heavy rains as far west as El Paso. While much of the active Atlantic storm season passed by the Gulf of Mexico, the remnants of tropical storm *Ismael* from the Pacific brought lots of rain to west and north Texas September 14–16 and interacted with the season's first strong cool front September 18–20 to put a charge into migration movements. As the latter front spun off the Texas coast September

19–23, major pushes of hawks, hummingbirds, and other species were much in evidence. The landfall of hurricane *Opal* in Florida October 4 also seemed to enhance the strength of an on-coming cool front, which brought windy conditions to Texas. Hurricane *Roxanne* in the southern Gulf of Mexico fizzled out in mid-October without much of a meteorological or ornithological punch in Texas. We could only speculate on which birds blew in with the various storm systems through September and October.

A preponderance of observers described this as a rather dull migration season, although folks in the Panhandle and in El Paso were blessed with numbers of interesting regional rarities. Having just bemoaned the lack of hummers in the summer, we were deluged with one of the most diverse hummingbird influxes in recent years. It was a season in which Red-breasted Nuthatches abounded while Lark Buntings hid from us; winter finches, kinglets, and bluebirds teased with possible invasive movements, but then withdrew or dispersed. Most observers' attention seemed occupied by the pleasant combination of early arriving winter residents in October and a diversity of neotropical migrants which lingered well into November.

A new wetland restoration project at Balmorhea State Park showed early success when it was visited by migrant Black Terns in September and a pair of Wood Ducks



in October and November. At the same time, conservationists entered into detailed discussions with City of Austin staff to ameliorate potentially deleterious changes proposed for the operations of Austin's Hornsby Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant, one of the most productive birding sites in central Texas.

We had the generous help of our Central Texas subregional editor Willie Sekula in preparing our report this season. If it seems at times like Brush Freeman (BFr) was everywhere at once as you read this column, you're just about right. Stay tuned next season for news of Brush's phenomenal year of Texas birding. We are grateful to Brush and all our many contributors for keeping us posted on their observations.

**Abbreviations:** Ft. Bliss (*Fort Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mountains N.P.*); L.O.P. (*Lake o' the Pines*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); P.I.N.S. (*Padre Island National Seashore*); S.S.W.T.P. (*South Side Water Treatment Plant, Dallas*); T.B.R.C. (*Texas Bird Records Committee of the 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*). *The following are shortened names for the respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges, etc.: Anahuac, Aransas, Attwater, Balmorhea, Bazemore, Bentsen, Big Bend, Buffalo L., Caddo L., Dolan Falls, Gus Engeling, Hagerman, Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, Packery Channel, Palo Duro, Richland-Chambers, and Santa Ana.*



### Loons to Storks

A Pacific Loon was at Copano Bay, Aransas, Nov. 9 (†PWH, BFr). Another Pacific made a brief appearance at Balmorhea L., Nov. 11 (TJ) but could not be located. Perhaps it moved to Imperial Res., where one was discovered Dec. 2 (PWH, BFr). Least Grebes were less conspicuous in s. Texas than in previous seasons, but one–three were noted in the s.e. corner of the state at Beaumont Oct. 30+ (ph., JW). Eight W. Grebes in the Panhandle Oct. 15–Nov. 17 suggested a more e. dispersal for this species this year; an additional Western at Miller's Creek Res., Nov. 16 provided a first *Baylor* record.

The disheveled carcass of a *Pterodroma*

**Male Eurasian Wigeon [center, with American Wigeon] at Amarillo, Texas, November 24, 1995. Photograph/Peter Gottschling.**

sp. petrel was found washed up on the beach on Mustang I., *Nueces*, Sept. 15 (TA, \* to T.C.W.C.). Initial examination suggests it was probably a **Black-capped Petrel**, the sp. anticipated to occur in the Gulf of Mexico. This would represent a new genus and sp. for Texas. The following day, Sept. 16, a dead Sooty Shearwater was found on nearby San José I. (TA); this would constitute the 11th state record, 8 of which have been gathered in just the last 5 years. An astounding 206 Audubon's Shearwaters delighted pelagic birders out of Port O'Connor Sept. 30 (DP, BFr); this represents by far the largest group of the sp. noted off the Texas coast. Storm-petrels tallied on the 2 pelagic trips included eight Band-rumpeds Aug. 19 and two Leach's Sept. 30 (†DP, m.ob.). Late Magnificent Frigatebirds on the c. and s. Texas coast in the first half of October may have been driven N by late-season tropical weather to the south (BZ, ME); the last one reported was at Aransas Pass Oct. 28 (TA).

Despite being less numerous than normal in n. Texas (*vide* RR), Tricolored Herons showed up in interesting localities to the west: One in Abilene, *Jones*, provided a first area record (LBI), while another at Greenbelt L., *Donley*, Sept. 19 (KS) represented only the 3rd Panhandle record. Five imm. Tricoloreds found at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend, Aug. 14 were way out in left field (S&KSp). Cattle Egrets are still an "evolving story" in the Panhandle; 200 were noted in Lubbock Sept. 24 (C&DSt), and 42 more were at



**Very far north and east was this Least Grebe in Beaumont, Texas, November 15, 1995. Up to three were present in the area. Photograph/John Whittle.**

Miami, *Roberts*, Oct. 8 (A&MS). One and possibly two Glossy Ibises were at V.C.D.B., *Tarrant*, Aug. 26–Sept. 2 (MR, CH). There was clearly a major inland push of Roseate Spoonbills. Small hand-fuls were widely reported in c. Texas, where a few are expected occasionally. The sp. also got to n.e. Texas (e.g., 8 in *Van Zandt* Aug. 13 [TPo]) and n. Texas ( $\geq 30$  birds Aug. 5–Sept. 2, including birds as far north as Hagerman). Remarkable spoon-bill sightings included one at Lubbock Sept. 5–6 (JCI); another in the San Vicente area of Big Bend Aug. 20 (RSk, CSp) and three–seven more at Imperial Res., *Pecos*, Sept. 12–Oct. 6 (ph., BJP); the sp. is accidental in the High Plains and there had been but a single record previously in the Trans-Pecos. Wood Storks were rather numerous in c. Texas, with as many as 200 at Richland–Chambers Sept. 2 (*fide* EW) and 53 in *Dallas* Sept. 16 (F.W.A.S.).

### Waterfowl

A Tundra Swan, perhaps swept up in the spirit of things by a flock of southbound Am. White Pelicans with which it associated, showed up very early in Amarillo, *Potter*, Sept. 21 (KS). Ninety or more Ross' Geese at Hagerman by the end of November was a nice number (KH *et al.*). A single Ross' at Waco Nov. 15 provided a first county record (JMu). Increases in Wood Ducks in n.w. Texas were evident;  $\leq 12$  were at Midland Oct. 15–Nov. 30 (*fide* FW), and 23 were together on L. MacKenzie, *Briscoe*, Oct. 29 (JRe). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was discovered Nov. 13 at the same Amarillo lake where one wintered last year (†EK, m.ob.); this year's bird remained through the season. Only one Oldsquaw was reported, at L. Tawakoni Nov. 28 (MWh). While a few Surf Scoters arrived in widely scattered locations in late October, November is really the "scoter month." Two reports of Black Scoters came from the coast; more interesting was one at L. Tawakoni, *Rains*, Nov. 7 (MWh). Three Surf Scoters in the Panhandle and High Plains were more newsworthy than those elsewhere to the south (*fide* KS). White-winged were reported in *Travis* and *Calhoun*. Single Red-breasted Mergansers at 2 locations in Amarillo, *Potter*, Nov. 13–14 were good finds (EK, C&TFo, JJ).

### Raptors

The "Bird of the Year" in the Panhandle was a superb Swallow-tailed Kite seen soaring in the bright blue skies over Vega, *Oldham*, Sept. 18 (RS, D&PA, EK, KS), providing the 2nd record for the region.



**Only the second for the Texas Panhandle was this Swallow-tailed Kite over Vega, Oldham County, September 18, 1995. Photograph/Rosemary Scott.**

Two local residents remarked that it had been hanging around for at least a week. Reports of ten other Swallow-taileds came from more familiar haunts, the most inland of which were in *DeWitt* (DMu) and *Bastrop* (*fide* RA) and the latest of which was Oct. 3 at Rockport (*fide* GSw). A group of 1000–2000 Mississippi Kites at San Ygnacio Sept. 3 (BP, KM) was the largest concentration noted. An imm. N. Goshawk was carefully described Nov. 11 at Austin's Hornsby Bend Ponds (†AF). Grapevine, *Tarrant*, played host to a Harris Hawk from late July to Aug. 6 (*fide* EW). A daily total of about 100,000 Broad-winged Hawks Sept. 23 contributed substantially to the tally of >300,000 recorded through a season of hawk watching at Bazemore (*fide* JE). Five orders of magnitude fewer, but no less notable, were single Broad-winged in Lubbock Sept. 19 (PK), Plainview Oct. 3 (CM), and at Buffalo L., Oct. 5 (KS). The Bazemore hawk watchers detected 17 dark-morph Broad-winged, far more than expected even in a deluge of the species. Observers once again missed the major flights of Swainson's Hawks through the Region; the largest group noted anywhere was "several hundred" in Pampa, *Gray*, on the early date of Aug. 26 (JEl). A White-tailed Hawk in e. *Bastrop* Sept. 9–11 was notable for its inland location (KK, BFr). A Zone-tailed Hawk at Calallen near Corpus Christi Oct. 5 was the closest to the coast of several reported (*fide* GSw). Six Ferruginous Hawks was a record for the Bazemore hawk watches, and a single Rough-legged was a new sp. for that regional effort. The most interesting Ferruginous reported was one seen in n.e. Texas at Caddo L., *Harrison*, on the early date of Sept. 30 (PH). Quite surprising and out of typical habitat was an imm. Golden Eagle at S.S.W.T.P., *Dallas*, Nov. 11 (EW). Five sightings of single Prairie Falcons in the Corpus Christi region Aug.

26–Nov. 10 may have involved as few as one or two birds, but was a remarkable occurrence nonetheless (BO, GSw, JE, E&NA, A&MC). The origin of a "red-tagged" Peregrine at Vattmann, *Kleberg*, Oct. 21 (DWi) is being investigated.

### Rails to Shorebirds

A Virginia Rail at Greenbelt L., Aug. 26 (EK, RS) provided an overdue first *Donley* record. A Purple Gallinule with two young at Gus Engeling W.M.A., *Anderson*, Aug. 13 suggested local breeding (TPo). A Sandhill Crane in *Harrison* Nov. 13 added a very rare record for the Pineywoods (GLu, DWe). Hugh Brown had the good fortune of spotting a single Whooping Crane headed S with Sandhills in *Lee* Oct. 27. The final tally at the Whoopers' winter ground in and around Aransas was a record 149 adults and young (TS).

A single Snowy Plover at Cooper L., Sept. 2–3 (MWh) provided a first *Delta* record. However, Snowy Plover in the n. Panhandle "has become almost a sp. of the past" (KS). One Snowy in *Randall* Aug. 6 was the first reported since 1984 and another in *Deaf Smith* Nov. 3 (EK, RS) was the first November sighting on record. Six Piping Plovers noted in *Bexar*, *Dallas*, *Grayson*, and *Harrison* in August and September were the only ones reported away from the coast. Despite the lack of summer records this year, Mt. Plovers made a showing near Fort Davis, where  $\leq 9$  were seen at a small pothole basin through Oct. 20 (*fide* KB). Amos tallied 37 Am. Oystercatchers on his usual beach survey Sept. 20, his highest count in nearly 20 years; but that was eclipsed by a count of 45 found Oct. 3, probably a result of high tides from hurricane *Opal*, which inundated suitable oyster reefs in the nearby bays. A nice crowd of 150 Long-billed Curlews was found at Midland Oct. 24 (GG). Fifty Marbled Godwits on the U.T.C. at Bolivar Pen., Aug. 6 was an early concentration (JWh). Red Knots are rather sparse at inland localities; one–four were at Hagerman Aug. 2–4 (KH, LL). Details on a possible Curlew Sandpiper reported near Dawn, *Deaf Smith*, Sept. 8 (RS, EK) will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C. A few Am. Woodcocks were in evidence just w. of their normal range in n. Texas in November, but one in the Panhandle at Borger, *Hutchinson*, Oct. 31–Nov. 1 represented only the 3rd Regional record (BFo). "Awe-inspiring" was the phrase used to describe 10,000 Wilson's Phalaropes at Cactus L. near Etter, *Moore*, Aug. 10 (KS). A lingering Wilson's was at McNary Res., *Hudspeth*, Nov. 23 in far w. Texas (WS).

## Gulls to Terns

Tropical storm *Dean* may have transported a few Laughing Gulls up to n.e. Texas reservoirs this season. Of more interest, McNary Res. again hosted a single Laughing Gull, Oct. 20 (BZ). Single California Gulls were reported Nov. 20 at Austin (†BFr) and at Port Aransas Nov. 24 (CC). Our long-standing Lesser Black-backed Gull at Mustang I. did not return this year; in fact, we received reports of only two Lesser Black-backed on the coast, both in November. Three Glaucous Gulls were found: A very early individual was at San Luis Pass, *Galveston*, Sept. 28 (RK, ph., GHar); another was on Matagorda Pen., Oct. 22–23 (PWH, ph., BFr); and a final Glaucous was on Mustang and San José Is., Nov. 27 (TA). Details on a Black-legged Kittiwake at Rollover Pass, *Galveston*, Sept. 10 (JWh) will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C. If accepted, this would represent the earliest ever fall record for Texas. Another kittiwake at L. Bob Sandlin, *Titus*, Nov. 18–25 (†MWh, KSa, HBl) provided only the 3rd record for n.e. Texas. There was a good flight of Sabine's Gulls: Two adults and one immature at Imperial Res., *Pecos*, Sept. 10–11 (BJP) provided a stunning find. There was also one at L.O.P., Sept. 23–26 (GLu *et al.*), an immature at Odessa Sept. 27–Oct. 1 (CW, ph., DSm; a new *Ector* record), and another immature in *Harrison* Oct. 2 (†GLu).

There were some extraordinary concentrations of migrant terns on the Coastal Bend. On Sept. 8–9 flocks of up to 6000–7000 Com. Terns and >50,000 Black Terns inundated the beaches of P.I.N.S., *Kleberg* (M&AC, WS). Least Terns piled up on Mustang I., with "thousands" noted Sept. 13 (CC) and a definite count of 1300 by Amos Sept. 19. A total of  $\geq$ nine Com. Terns at various n. Texas sites Aug. 6–Nov. 11 (m.ob.) also represented a good showing. Most notable were four Commons documented by photograph in Lubbock Oct. 2–7 (CSt, PK). Up to 12 Bridled Terns were seen on the Aug. 19 pelagic off Port O'Connor (†DP, GL, m.ob.), with another 22 noted Sept. 30 (†DP). Tropical storm *Dean* was probably responsible for the occurrence of a Sooty Tern well inland at Cooper L., *Delta*, Aug. 4 (†MWh). *Dean* may also have been partly responsible for the high numbers of Sooties seen on the fall pelagic trips: 65 were encountered Aug. 19, and 28 were still present Sept. 30 (DP *et al.*).

## Doves to Nighthawks

The fact that a single White-winged Dove was noteworthy in College Station, *Brazos*, Nov. 28 (C&MC) points out a contrast

with areas just to the west. The sp. is common and increasing along the Interstate 35 corridor well to the north of the same latitude. We also noted reports of six birds this season in *Randall* up in the Panhandle (m.ob.). Perhaps the sp. is showing some reticence to invade the more heavily wooded e. Texas region. First county records of Com. Ground-Dove were gained in *Grayson* and *Delta* in late September (JMo, KH, MWh), and another near Clarendon, *Donley*, Nov. 22 provided only the 2nd record for the n. Panhandle (DSw).

A flock of 75 Red-crowned Parrots and 13 Green Parakeets was in La Feria Nov. 29 (TP), a location where large flocks had not been noted before. A very late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was in *Jefferson* Nov. 5 (JWh). A Groove-billed Ani was photographed at Ft. Bliss Oct. 14 for a 3rd *El Paso* appearance; some speculated that this was possibly the same bird seen in late July (BFr, GN, ph. BZ). A Barred Owl in Kingsville Nov. 24 was a surprise (TH). A single field in *Delta* hosted >20 Short-eared Owls in November (KSa, MWh). The unidentified *Chordeiles* nighthawk with the odd voice in West Lake Hills near Austin struck a wire while pursuing a Com. Nighthawk Sept. 15. The specimen will be delivered to a museum in hopes that a specific identification can be determined. Rare during fall passage, Whip-poor-will's were found in *Harrison* (three birds calling on Sept. 19, DWe) and *Rusk* Oct. 6 (GLu).

## Hummingbirds to Woodpeckers

Amos witnessed a remarkable migration of hummingbirds (probably mostly Ruby-throateds) on Mustang I., Sept. 19: Hummers were streaming by in the morning at a rate of up to 130 birds/minute along the vegetated dunes. Over the course of his standard 2-hr survey, he estimated 4,900 hummers had passed by. By afternoon, the flow of hummers had slowed to a trickle and on the next day none were found! Among a vast array of other interesting hummingbird reports, we had the following: A White-eared Hummingbird was well described near Fort Davis Aug. 27 (†BFr, †PWH), where one had been reported without documentation since late July. Buff-bellieds were in *Victoria* and *Matagorda* throughout the period and at least three were in Houston in November (m.ob.). A ♀ Blue-throated was a nice find on the Coastal Bend at the Swartz' residence in Calallen Nov. 21–29 (†GSw, CC). Another Blue-throated was in Pleasanton, *Atascosa*, Nov. 26–30 (GSchw, MSi). A few Lucifer's were again present in the Davis Mts. through Sept. 5 (*vide* KB).

Ruby-throated is rare in the Panhandle, this season one visited Amarillo, *Randall*, Aug. 7–9 (RS), another was at Lubbock Aug. 8 (RE), and yet another was near Lubbock up to Aug. 23 (C&DSt). Very rare on the U.T.C., a Black-chinned was seen at High I., Sept. 22 (PDH). Anna's Hummingbirds staged a real invasion Away from w. Texas where the sp. is regular,  $\geq$ 30 separate Anna's were reported from more than a dozen localities. Only the wooded n.e. portion of the state failed to produce any reports. Up to six different *Costa's Hummingbirds* frequented feeders in El Paso Oct. 28+ (B&DO, ph. BZ, m.ob.). This is more individuals than all previously accepted Texas records put together! Calliope's made news e. of their regular haunts; at least eight were reported from 6 Panhandle locations, and single birds were at 4 sites in c. Texas and e. and s. to Austin and Corpus Christi. Capping off the crowd of Calliopes, an imm. male in El Paso Nov. 25 (BFr, PWH) was the latest ever fall record for that area. *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were notably more abundant than normal in the e. half of the state; the numerous reports mostly pertained to Rufous. At least 10 Broad-taileds were sprinkled here and there in this rush, providing several new locality records. Most exciting was a possible imm. ♂ Allen's Hummingbird banded, photographed, and measured at Victoria Nov. 13 (BO, ME, PWH); we eagerly await the data on this individual.

A Ringed Kingfisher in Victoria Oct. 28–Nov. 7 added to our list of out-of-range occurrences (NH). Three Lewis' Woodpeckers made appearances in w. Texas: one at Lubbock Oct. 10 (DStev), one in El Paso Nov. 7 (ph. BZ), and a 2nd bird in El Paso Nov. 22 (JP). Both of the El Paso birds remained through the season. A Red-headed Woodpecker at Packery Channel Oct. 16 (M&AC) was a bit out of range; much farther afield was a Red-headed at Dugout Wells, Big Bend, Oct. 14 (KP). Also straggling out-of-range were an Acorn Woodpecker near Canyon, *Randall*, Sept. 27 (I&WD) and single Red-bellieds in Lubbock, Palo Duro, and Amarillo (m.ob.). Red-naped Sapsuckers were regarded as quite numerous in the Davis Mts. and Midland. Given this, a few extralimital occurrences are not surprising: One—two Red-naped were at Sarita, *Kenedy*, Nov. 8–28 (M&AC, N&PP, m.ob.) and a ♂ Red-naped was photographed on S. Padre I., Oct. 22 (LM, ph. SBen), perhaps the first documented record for the L.R.G.V. A Downy Woodpecker in El Paso Nov. 26 provided a 2nd area record (BJ).

## Flycatchers to Phainopepla

As skills develop, *Empidonaces* are being identified more frequently to sp.; this resulted in reports of six Dusky Flycatchers in 3 Panhandle locations in September (m.ob.) and a "Western" Flycatcher at Buffalo L., Sept. 22 (KS). Also at Buffalo L., a Black Phoebe Aug. 6 was a very good find (KS). A Great Crested Flycatcher wandered well to the w. at El Paso Sept. 3 (ph. BZ). Localities hosting Tropical Kingbirds included Brownsville, Rancho Viejo, and Villanueva (all *Cameron*), where two–seven birds were tracked at each site through the season (BM). Late *Tyrannus* sp. included a Cassin's in Lubbock Oct. 24 (PK), a Western at Boca Chica Nov. 11 (WS, JMu), another Western in *Galveston* Nov. 12 (JWh), and single Scissor-taileds as far n. as *Bell* in mid- to late November (RPi). Small handfuls of the latter sp. were evident in coastal s. Texas, also into late November (m.ob.). A single Cave Swallow at Cooper L., *Delta*, Sept. 1 (MWh) provided a first record for n.e. Texas.

A single out-of-range Blue Jay was at Edinburg in s. Texas Oct. 25 through November (TiB), but observations elsewhere suggested that this was not a jay invasion year as was last year (CS, m.ob.). Some observers seemed to think that Brown Jays were getting harder to find in their very local haunts in the L.R.G.V. (BZ); are they declining or just hanging out in other places? Red-breasted Nuthatches invaded the n. three-fourths of the state. Sixty Red-breasteds encountered in G.M.N.P., Aug. 31 (BFR, PWH) was a hint of things to come. By early to mid-October the sp. was conspicuous from El Paso to Big Bend, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and throughout e. Texas. A few nuthatches reached the L.R.G.V. in November. By early November there were suggestions that Golden-crowned Kinglets were also moving into the state in increased numbers (m.ob.). Rare thrushes included single Veeries in *Jefferson* Oct. 1 (JWh) and in *Vega*, *Oldham*, Oct. 11 (RS); a Gray-checked on S. Padre I., Oct. 20 (BM); Swainson's in *El Paso* Sept. 13 (BZ), at L. Wright Patman Oct. 21 (MD), and in *Jefferson* Nov. 9 (JWh); and a Wood Thrush, also in *El Paso*, Oct. 8 (BZ). Three Sprague's Pipits were reported in *Randall* Nov. 9 (EK). A juv.-plumaged Cedar Waxwing discovered Oct. 21 in Limpia Canyon in the Davis Mts. again suggested breeding (KB). A stray Phainopepla at Victoria Nov. 13 represented only a 2nd county record (PR).

## Vireos to Warblers

Notable fall Bell's Vireo reports included a single bird of the eastern *belli* race at El

Paso Sept. 8 (ph. BZ) and another at L. Tawakoni Oct. 7 (RR, rare in n.c. Texas). A Yellow-throated Vireo at Pampa, *Gray*, Sept. 9 (JEL) was out of place.

The great disparity of conditions and expected species across Texas suggest that we ought to separate warbler observations geographically:

**Central, East, and Coastal Texas:** Observers out in the first half of November found many lingering south-bound warblers; at least 13 species (excluding resident and wintering species) were noted. Single Blue-wingeds Sept. 17 in *Gregg* (CCx) and Golden-wingeds Sept. 20 at Cooper L. (MWh) were rare inland finds. A bit n. of its regular range, a Tropical Parula was at Nueces R. Park Nov. 12 (GSw). Chestnut-sideds were more in evidence with, for example, three individuals in n.c. Texas Sept. 20–Oct. 1. Single Cape Mays were in *Jefferson* Oct. 13 (BG) and at Port Aransas Nov. 10 (E&NA). A ♀ Black-throated Blue stayed at Victoria Oct. 7–Nov. 16. A Prairie Warbler at Cooper L., Aug. 12, provided a first *Delta* record (MWh). A Palm Warbler in *Dallas* Oct. 3 (BV) was also unexpected. Written details on single Gray-crowned Yellowthroats at Zapata Nov. 9 (†LG) and at San Ygnacio Nov. 9–12 (m.ob.) will be evaluated by the T.B.R.C. To date, there are but 4 accepted records of this species in Texas in the 20th century, all from *Cameron* or *Hidalgo*. A **Golden-crowned Warbler** turned up at Santa Ana Nov. 8, much to the delight of the participants of the 2nd annual Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival. The bird was seen by many through the season, providing the 9th documented Texas (and United States) record (ph., †BFR, †PWH, †LG, †JGo).

**West and Northwest Texas:** Lucy's Warblers were a bit late and out-of-place at Hueco Tanks Sept. 17 (AOI) and near El Paso Oct. 3 (DE). A Magnolia in Lubbock Oct. 10 (RE) was a very good find, as was a Black-throated Blue in El Paso Nov. 4–5 (JP). Despite its regularity in small numbers at Big Bend, a single Hermit Warbler at El Paso Sept. 22 is considered an accidental stray (BZ). Also very rare in w. Texas, Black-throated Greens showed up early at Big Bend Aug. 9 (CS) and late at El Paso Nov. 5 (BZ). A Blackburnian at Ft. Bliss Sept. 13–14 constituted a first *El Paso* record (BZ). A late Grace's Warbler was at Big Bend Oct. 1 (HE). *Hudspeth* hosted its first Prothonotary Warbler Sept. 22 at Fort Hancock Res. (BZ). An exceptional 13 N. Waterthrushes were in *El Paso* Aug. 21–Sept. 11, along with one Oct. 12. A Louisiana Waterthrush in Lubbock Sept. 9

was considered a rare vagrant (PK), as was a Hooded in Amarillo Sept. 11 (RS). A Red-faced Warbler visited Big Bend's Boot Canyon Aug. 13–14 (†S&KSp, DPu). The Rufous-capped Warbler in *Uvalde* was seen into mid-August, while another showed up at Dolan Falls, *Val Verde*, Aug. 30 (†WC).

## Tanagers to Finches

A ♂ Scarlet Tanager was totally unexpected at Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend, Sept. 17 (SL). Three W. Tanagers were detected on the coast Sept. 25–Oct. 22. Blue Buntings are mentioned on bird hotlines almost yearly in s. Texas, but reports are seldom well-documented; the last record accepted by the T.B.R.C. was in 1990. This season a ♀ Blue Bunting was carefully described from Santa Ana Nov. 11 (†WM). A single Clay-colored Sparrow in *Harrison* provided a rare Pineywoods record (MD), and another in College Station provided only a 2nd area fall record (JL). A well-described Baird's Sparrow was observed in *Jeff Davis* Nov. 28 (†BFR, PWH). Probably more common in migration in the Panhandle than generally thought, a LeConte's Sparrow was flushed Nov. 14 near Clarendon, *Donley* (KS). Freeman found Austin's first Sharp-tailed Sparrow Nov. 1 at Hornsby Bend. A Golden-crowned Sparrow returned for its 3rd winter at Hueco Tanks Nov. 13 (ph., †BZ, VE, m. ob.). Elsewhere, another ad. Golden-crowned Sparrow was found in *Jeff Davis* Nov. 28 (†BFR, PWH). A **Yellow-eyed Junco** was described from G.M.N.P., Nov. 5 (†DT); there are only 4 accepted records in Texas. Single ♀ Purple Finches surprised w. Texas observers at Fort Davis Oct. 10 (KB) and at Palo Duro Oct. 26–27 (KS *et al.*). A Lesser Goldfinch at Aransas Aug. 4 provided a first refuge record (JD, BB, HC). A single ♂ Evening Grosbeak netted at Davis Mts., Oct. 14–15 was a real treat; even more so was a flock of four–seven more which took up residence in Limpia Canyon Nov. 5+; a male out of the latter flock was banded Nov. 5 (KB).

## Addendum

We mistakenly omitted a well-described report of a **Thick-billed Kingbird**, seen Aug. 21, 1994 in *Presidio* (†D&EM), from our fall report last year. This provides the only accepted Texas record of this sp. outside of Big Bend.

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# Idaho-Western Montana Region

## DAN SVINGEN

Fall 1995 was unseasonably mild Region-wide, with above-average temperature and precipitation. Observers noted three trends: low gamebird populations (a result of last summer's cool, wet weather), high Northern Shrike numbers, and many lingering migrants.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (*American Falls Res., by American Falls, ID*).

## Loons to Hawks

An early Pacific Loon was on Pend O'reille L., Bonner, ID Sept. 1 & 8 (JW). A car-killed Pacific Loon near Wolf Creek, Lewis and Clark, Nov. 2, provided Montana's first specimen (PW, \*University of Montana). Last fall, Cascade Res., Valley, ID attracted about 30 Pacific Loons, doubling

