

numbers >100 in Nebraska; 112 were in Eckhardt Lagoon Mar. 16 (JGJ) and 110 in Lancaster Mar. 23 (JMo).

Another recent split, bringing back Baltimore and Bullock's orioles, will cause some problems for birders in the Region as a hybrid zone does exist here. The limits of pure birds are likely established by earlier workers, such as Jim Rising and Sievert Rohwer, among others; it will be both the vagaries of these birds and birders' identifications that will be punctuate further consideration. Those observing orioles should examine them for extent of orange onto neck and head, extent of white in wings, and extent of orange in the outer tail feathers; such details should be included in reports of birds observed (WRS, JAG).

Always of note are White-winged Crossbills. This season, three were present at North Platte Feb. 23– Mar. 6 (WW); a male was in *Sarpy*, NE Mar. 15 (BP, LP) and seven were photographed Mar. 17 at Lancaster, NE (JGJ). A Cassin's Finch in *Cimarron*, OK May 2 (JMc, JS) was tardy.

Cited observers (area editors boldfaced):
KANSAS - Steve Addinall, David Bryan, Linda Bryan, Chet Gresham, Chris Hobbs, Dan Kluz, Dan LaShelle, Mick McHugh, **Lloyd Moore**, John Northrup, Mike Rader, Mark Robbins (MRo), Scott Seltman, Phil Wedge, Mike Whited.
NEBRASKA - Roland Barth, Mark Brogie, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Claire Drenowatz, Larry Einemann, Carol Falk, Lawrence Falk, Marlin French, Sue Gentes, Ruth Green, Joe Gubanyi, Robin Harding, Thomas Hoffman, Mary Hunt, Bill F. Huser, Clyde Johnson, Jan Johnson (JJo), Joel G. Jorgensen, Paul Kaufman, Alice Kenitz, Lucy Koenig, Sandy Kovanda, Sandy Lemmon, Gary Lingle, Larry K. Malone, James Mountjoy, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Lanny Randolph, Neal Ratzlaff, Dorothy J. Rosche, **Richard C. Rosche**, Doug Rose, Roger Rose, **W. Ross Silcock**, Eric Volden, Jim Williams (JWi), Wilma Wyman.
OKLAHOMA: James W. Arterburn, Sandy Berger, Vicki Byre, Jeff Cox, Bill Carrell, Scott Dingman, Bonnie Gall, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Berlin Heck, Donna Horton, Doloris Isted, Bob Jennings, Martha Kamp, Kenn Kaufmann, Kerrie Kirkpatrick (KKi), Nathan Kuhnert, Douglas Lister, **Jo Loyd**, **Louis McGee**, Jeri McMahon (JMc), Kurt & Sharon Meisenzahl, John G. Newell, Bruce Nixon, Richard Sawin, Janet & John Slater, Pat Seibert, John Sterling, J. Tinsley, Jack D. Tyler, Bonnie Whitten, Bill & Ellie Womack, Jim Woodward, Robert Ziegler.

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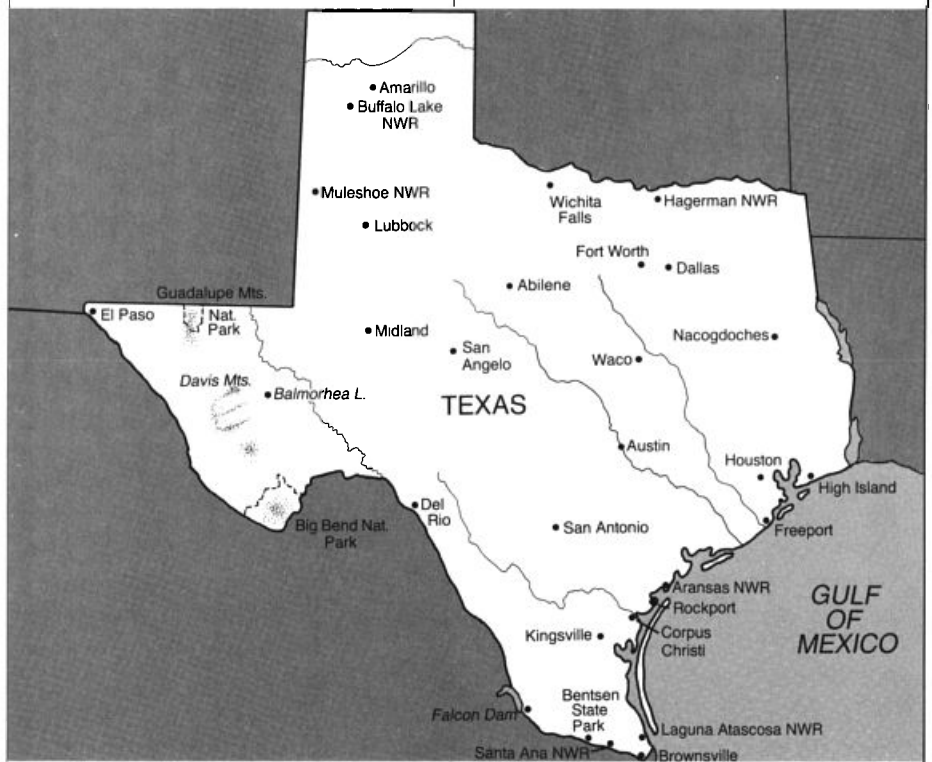
Texas Region

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

There were four subplots to the migration saga this season: The good migration, the bad migration, the drought, and—oh, yes—the drought. Every spring we are so intent on encountering birds which are “migrating” that our first reaction to a season such as this one might be to lambaste it as “a poor migration.” In fact, Ross Rasmussen reminded in better phrasing that it was a “poor [season] for birders searching for migrants,” which in fact was probably quite a good migration for the birds themselves. Relentless strong south winds through much of the season presumably allowed most of our feathered friends to move merrily and quickly on their way, right past (or over) us. There was only one really good grounding of migrants on the Upper Texas Coast (more on that in a moment) where the birding community relies on strong frontal passages to drop birds into their lap. Curiously, what was bad for central and east Texas birders was a

boon to west Texas, where a myriad of uncommon eastern migrants boosted the usually low diversity of the spring array. Francis Williams in Midland surmised that the winds simply “may have blown some of the vagrants our way.” But how are those populations of neotropical migrants doing, even with the benevolent winds of 1996? Jim Morgan included a detailed count not only of the single substantial fallout of this year (Apr. 6), but also a rigorous analysis of 20 years of migration data on the Upper Texas Coast. It paints a grave portrait of diminishing migrant populations observed under conditions which used to cause good groundings. We will defer recitation of the extensive quantitative data to a future publication by Morgan and his colleagues, but they conclude that: A) We continue to have fallouts, but they are fewer in number and, in general, much “lighter” than in the past; B) Fallouts in the 1990's are no longer as predictable as they were in the preceding 13 years; and C) We are witnessing a precipitous decline in the number of neotropical migrant songbirds that pass through the Upper Texas Coast. It is important to be cautious about making grander (and grimmer) generalizations beyond these statements at this point, but the data do not paint an optimistic portrait.

Did we mention the drought? Everywhere. Terrible. As we began speculating in spring 1995, the effects of such broad-scale, severe conditions are being manifest-



ed in a series of unprecedented vagrants (e.g., from northern Mexico) and, as Paul Palmer put it, "some uncommon behavior of some common birds." An example of the latter was an unexpected influx of Clay-colored Sparrows in urban yards as they passed through central and north Texas; the countryside was drought-ridden and the birds were apparently settling into the greenest niches apparent. We invite the reader to examine the remainder of the contributions to this column in this light.

Abbreviations: Ft. Bliss (*Ft. Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mountains N.P.*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); T.B.R.C. (*Texas Bird Records Committee/Texas Ornithological Society*); U.T.C. (*Upper Texas Coast*). The following are shortened names for the respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges, etc.: Balcones Canyons, Bentsen, Big Bend, Buffalo Lake, Colorado Bend, Garner, Hagerman, Honey Creek, Hueco Tanks, Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, Lost Maples, Santa Ana and Sea Rim.

Loons to Ibises

Single Red-throated Loons visited Galveston Mar. 28 (KMc) and L. Tawakoni Mar. 29 (MWh), while single Pacific Loons were at L. Tawakoni Mar. 3–May 12 (MWh *et al.*) and L. Balmorhea Apr. 17 (BQ). At least one of the Least Grebes mentioned in the last 2 reports at Beaumont lingered through the season (JW). A late Horned Grebe was at L. Tawakoni May 12 (RK, GH, JN). Unexpected *Aechmophorus* grebe records included two Westerns at Amarillo, *Potter*, May 18–19 (EK, KS) and three Clark's at Ft. Bliss Apr. 26 (BZ). Unexpected Brown Pelican records included one at Austin May 9–11 (m.ob.) and another at White River L., *Crosby*, May 11 (PK, JCl). Neotropic Cormorants made news at several locations. Most unexpected was the discovery of 4 nests at Ft. Hancock Res., *Hudspeth*, May 4 (JPa) representing the first nesting record for the Trans-Pecos; 12 young successfully fledged from these nests in June (*vide* BZ). Elsewhere, an impressive count of 2300 Neotropics were along the Rio Grande between Chapeno and Fronton May 25 (TB). Also of interest were single Neotropics at L. Livingston May 18 (CSh) and L. Tawakoni May 12 (RK *et al.*). Double-crested Cormorants constructed \leq 40 nests at Ft. Hancock and McNary Res., *Hudspeth*, during the season. Truly amazing was an Anhinga discovered at Lubbock May 10 (PK), only the 4th reported sighting for that region this century. A count of

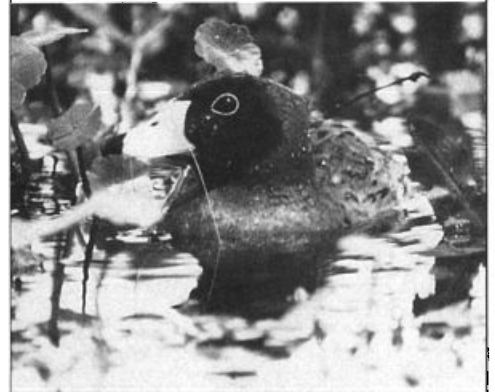
eight Am. Bitterns in *Harrison* in n.e. Texas Apr. 17 (GLu, DWe) was notable. A first county record of Least Bittern was established for *Midland* Mar. 17–20 (JAm, JCH), while one found dead in Lubbock May 15 (CSt) was also a surprise. A Reddish Egret was a surprise spring visitor to San Antonio May 20 (CCu, GSc). An imm. White Ibis at Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery May 19–21 provided a new area record (*vide* CS). We continue to rewrite the record book concerning Glossy Ibises. The first accepted Texas record of the sp. occurred in 1983. Since then records have increased yearly to the point that the T.B.R.C. removed the bird from its Review List in 1995. This season alone \geq 23 Glossies were reported from various central and upper coastal locations, while \geq six were reported inland from *Harrison* (two), *Travis* (one), *Bexar* (one), *Hidalgo* (one), and *Tarrant* (one).

Waterfowl

Two Fulvous Whistling-Ducks provided only the 3rd Panhandle area record May 12–16 near Plainview, *Hale* (MCol, TFe *et al.*). Lingering from the large number that wintered in the Panhandle were three–six Ross' Geese near Amarillo, *Randall*, until Apr. 3 (KS, EK). A (Black) Brant was in Lubbock Feb. 26–Apr. 20 (ph., CSt). Muscovy Ducks continue to be seen irregularly along the Rio Grande between Rancho Santa Margarita and Falcon; most unusual was one that landed on the Falcon Dam spillway Apr. 25 (BMc). The Eur. Wigeon at Amarillo remained through Mar. 21 (KS), while the one in *Grayson* remained through Mar. 22 (m.ob.). A Surf Scoter was at Ft. Bliss Mar. 31 (BJ) while another very late bird was at Fulton/Rockport May 31 (E&NA). A single White-winged Scoter was at Rockport Mar. 9 (DB), another was in Corpus Christi Apr. 20–21 (*vide* GS), and 11 were at Bay City Apr. 28 (BO). Twelve Buffleheads in Junction May 3 (E&SWie) were a little late. A ♀ Hooded Merganser with seven ducklings at the Texas Eastman property, *Harrison*, Apr. 24 (G&JLu) added another nesting record for this very rare Texas breeder. At least eight Masked Ducks remained at Brazos Bend through April. Another Masked Duck was on Santa Ana's Cattail L., Apr. 25 (TB).

Raptors

An Osprey visiting a historic nest site at Sam Rayburn Res., *Nacogdoches*, during the season led to speculation of nesting; however, low water levels later in the season prevented further observations (*vide* CSh). A White-tailed Kite, rare in n.c.



Male Masked Ducks at Brazos Bend State Park, Texas, March 31, 1996. Brazos Bend has been the best place to find this species north of Mexico in recent seasons. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley.

Texas, was seen in *Tarrant* Apr. 26 (EW). The Mississippi Kite migration went largely undetected; there were a few small concentrations noted, but no large numbers reported. A pair of Bald Eagles nested in *Walker* along the Trinity R., at a new nest site. A high count of 22 active Bald Eagle nests were tallied by Texas Parks and Wildlife in the Pineywoods and Post Oak areas of Texas. Another nest of a Sharp-shinned Hawk was located in a pure pine stand in *San Augustine*, in an area managed for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (CSh, RS); this record is the 3rd such report for the Pineywoods of Texas. Common Black-Hawks were unusually conspicuous at Big Bend (Rio Grande Village) Mar. 23–May 1 (m.ob.); a nest was discovered there near the end of May (BGi), but the single adult present was apparently unmated. Our spring reports often include huge numbers of migrant Broad-winged Hawks. Not so this season. Although a few minor concentrations were seen, this species, like the Mississippi Kite, apparently moved through mostly undetected. A high pressure dome over much of Texas during the season helped bring about constant strong south winds. Many observers suspect that the hawks mostly had a "free ride" at elevations undetectable by observers on the ground. A rare (for n.c. Texas) Golden Eagle was in *Denton* Apr. 7 (GHo). Crested Caracaras were observed in above-average numbers in several areas of n.c. and n.e. Texas (m.ob.). Unexpected were eight Prairie Falcons along a 22 mi stretch of road in *Oldham* May 2 (KM).

Prairie-Chickens to Shorebirds

The total known number of remaining Attwater's Greater Prairie-Chickens in the wild dwindled to 45 birds this season. The only ones visible to the public were about five birds near Vidauri, *Refugio*, seen daily



Purple Sandpiper at the Port Aransas Jetty, Texas, April 22, 1996. Photograph/Arlie S. Cooksey.

into April (m.ob.). Unexpected Yellow Rail reports included one at Santa Ana Mar. 13–Apr 7 (*fide* JI) and two on S. Padre I., *Cameron*, May 13 (J&VS). Up to three calling Black Rails were on N. Padre I., *Nueces*, Apr. 30–May 11 (MC, WS). A Purple Gallinule visited Midland Apr. 25–May 10 (BRD, JMe). American Golden-Plovers were especially common over the e. two-thirds of n.c. Texas this season (*fide* RR), with most observers reporting increased numbers in other areas as well. Incredible and unprecedented was a report of 41,000 Am. Golden-Plovers in rice fields near Port O'Connor, *Calhoun*, Mar. 25 (BF, PH). Unusual Snowy Plover records included one in *Harrison* Apr. 6 (GLu), one at Hagerman Apr. 9 (KH), and one at Ft. Bliss Apr. 29 (BZ). Very unusual for n.c. Texas were 3 observations of Mt. Plovers; three were near Henrietta, *Clay*, Apr. 9–10 (DMc *et al.*) and singles were at Hagerman Apr. 21 and May 21 (KH). A Solitary Sandpiper in Lubbock Mar. 14 was quite early (JHau). It was a good migration season for Willets, Marbled Godwits, and Stilt Sandpipers in El Paso. Totals of 38 Willets, seven Marbled Godwits, and 22 Stilt Sandpipers were tallied there during the season (BZ). Also unexpected were 15 Marbled Godwits in *Cochran* Mar. 10 (ST). In a more expected area, but in good numbers, were 800 Marbled Godwits at Rockport Mar. 8 (CC). Baird's Sandpipers were observed in higher-than-average numbers in n.c. and parts of n.e. Texas; several observers reported personal regional-high counts. Very rare

for spring, an alternate-plumaged Purple Sandpiper was at Port Aransas Apr. 16–28 († ph., AC, PH, BF, m.ob.), representing the 13th well-documented state record. A count of 60 Dunlins at Cooper L., *Delta*, May 11 (MWh) was extraordinary for an inland location. A beautiful, alternate-plumaged Curlew Sandpiper was at Santa Ana's Willow L., May 22 († ph., SB, m.ob.), the 6th photographed state record. Another rare shorebird record was provided by a Ruff at Greenbelt L., *Donley*, Apr. 9 († KS); if accepted this will represent about the 20th state record. Totally unexpected was an ad. Red Phalarope May 11 at Cooper L. († ph., M&KWh), providing a first spring record for n. Texas.

Jaegers to Skimmer

This was a good spring for Pomarine Jaegers along the coast, with more reports than usual. A Laughing Gull at Lubbock May 15 (PK) was out-of-place. Other unusual Laughing Gull reports included one at L. Benbrook Apr. 21 (CH), four at Cooper L., Apr. 30–May 14, four at L. Tawakoni May 31 (MWh), and one in *Angelina* May 25 (CM, LD *et al.*). Franklin's and Bonaparte's gulls were far more common in the El Paso region than ever. Zimmer tallied 104 of the former and 21 of the latter in that area during the period. A Little Gull, very rare in spring, was at L. Arlington, *Tarrant*, Mar. 15–16 († CH). The Black-headed Gull at Cooper L. from the previous report was last seen Mar. 25 (MWh). A first-winter Mew Gull was discovered at an Austin landfill

Mar. 12–16 († AF, BL, BMc, ph., WS), providing a 2nd record for that area and about the 10th for the state. California Gulls are being identified in Texas with increasing regularity. An ad. California Gull was at Galveston's East Beach Mar. 7 († DPe, LV), while a 2nd-winter bird was at Corpus Christi Mar. 8 († ph., WS). Also at East Beach, one–three first-winter California Gulls were reported Apr. 19 (JD, BB, † GMc). An ad. Thayer's Gull was photographed at Corpus Christi Mar. 8 († WS) probably the same individual reported there Feb. 28. Six Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported from the U.T.C. and c. coast. The Glaucous Gull at Galveston's East Beach from the winter remained into the spring and was joined by a 2nd Glaucous Apr. 13 (ph., GL, CJ); one or both of these birds remained at least into late April.

SA The Kelp Gull saga continued this spring. The Galveston bird reported in our last column remained faithful to its East Beach location until mid-April. Thereafter there were scattered reports [with no documentation or photos] that the bird had moved to Bolivar Flats and that it was later seen up the coast as far as Sea Rim Apr. 19. Adding to the puzzle, was another [or the same?] probable ad. Kelp Gull photographed from a distance on Matagorda I., *Calhoun*, Apr. 16 by Bill Howe. Not content to leave well enough alone, Sekula photographed yet another [or the same?] probable ad. Kelp Gull on N. Padre I., *Kleberg*, May 4. All of these records will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C.

The first-winter Great Black-backed Gull at Galveston from the winter remained through the spring. Another first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was on N. Padre I., *Kleberg*, Apr. 27 (ph., MC). A imm. Black-legged Kittiwake was at Port Aransas Apr. 20 (TA). A count of 33 Caspian Terns May 7 and two Com. Terns May 14, both at Cooper L. (MWh), were notable, as were a Caspian and two Least terns at Abilene's Kirby L., May 21 (LB). A Least Tern at Ft. Bliss May 2 (BZ) provided a very rare *El Paso* record. Totally unexpected was a Black Skimmer at Hagerman May 21 (KH, DTr).

Doves to Nightjars

White-winged and Inca doves continue their march northward, with increasing records both in the Panhandle area and n.c. Texas. Eurasian Collared-Doves are known to be spreading from the east, and

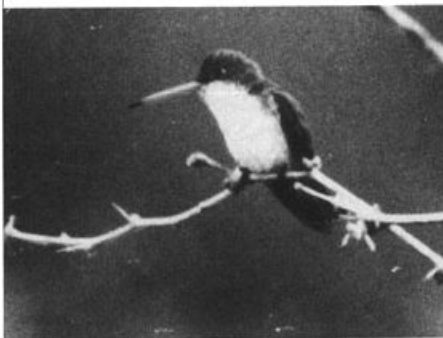
records in Texas are to be expected. We are also aware of reports of birds being released in Texas by several dove fanciers. There are, however, but two records of this sp. in Texas that have been documented by photograph, and the sp. is not yet accepted on the state list. This spring the sp. was reported without documentation at Crystal Beach, Galveston, and Smith Pt., Chambers. A Com. Ground-Dove, rarely reported on the South Plains, was in Lubbock May 18 (CSt). A pair of Com. Ground-Doves was banded in *Nacogdoches* Apr. 23, another unexpected location. A pair of Ruddy Ground-Doves was in w. El Paso Apr. 20–23 († JPa, ph., BZ), providing the 10th Texas record.

SA One of the stellar finds of the season was a male Ruddy Quail-Dove discovered at Bentsen Mar. 2 († ph., BrJ & CPI), a first for Texas. The bird was attracted to an area where seed had been scattered to attract other birds. The quail-dove was quite skittish and could be difficult to observe, but it remained to be seen and photographed by a good number of observers through Mar. 6. There are 5 previous reports of this sp. in the United States, all in Florida. The sp. occurs in s. Tamaulipas, approx. 250 mi s. of Bentsen, but this was a species few would have predicted would show up here.

Unexpected for n. Texas were 2 records of Groove-billed Ani. One was photographed May 25 in *Collin* (ph., SC, JPe) and another was found the next day in nearby *Grayson* (JCh). Another Groove-billed Ani was discovered at Midland May 27–31 (GG). A Chuck-will's-widow found in *Donley* May 9 (KS) added to the evidence that the sp. may be more common in the e. Panhandle than previously thought. More unexpected was a Whip-poor-will at Buffalo Lake May 3 (KS), providing only the 4th sighting for the Panhandle region.



Ruddy Quail-Dove at Bentsen State Park, Texas, March 3, 1996. First Texas record of this widespread tropical species, and only about the sixth for the United States. Photograph/Steve Bentsen.



Violet-crowned Hummingbird at Big Bend National Park, Texas, March 31, 1996. Photograph/Bernard Heyman.

Hummingbirds to Woodpeckers

A large hummingbird, thought to be a Green Violet-ear, was observed at Packery Channel, *Nueces*, Apr. 13 († BL). An ad. Green Violet-ear was in rural *Bastrop* at a feeder May 12–23 († BF, ph., B&JRI). Brief details were received on a White-eared Hummingbird at G.M.N.P., May 31 (GrG). If accepted, this would represent about the 9th Texas record. A Buff-bellied Hummingbird surprised Freeman in *Bastrop* May 7. Certainly the hummingbird rarity of the season was the 2nd documented Violet-crowned Hummingbird, at Big Bend near Boquillas Canyon Mar. 30–31 († MD, AL, FWo, HW, BGi, ph., BH). In Texas, Lucifer Hummingbirds can be regularly found only in Big Bend. During the past several years, however, Bryan and Lockwood (*et al.*) have documented the sp. in small numbers in the Davis and Glass Mts. as well. This spring a pair was observed in Devil's Hall, G.M.N.P., May 30 (GrG). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds made news in the Panhandle area with a male in Amarillo Apr. 29 (RSc), a male in Canyon Apr. 29–May 1 (HS), and male in Lubbock Apr. 29–May 11 (RE). There were several spring records of Anna's Hummingbirds, probably birds that had overwintered; one was in Ft. Davis Mar. 4–5 (D&LH), and three were in Corpus Christi Mar. 12–15 and Apr. 8 (A&MC, J&VS). A late pair of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds was in Amarillo May 27–29 (RSc). Ringed Kingfishers continue to surprise us, with reports well away from the L.R.G.V. This season a Ringed Kingfisher was in Victoria Mar. 3 (NH), one was in *Bastrop* Mar. 25 (BF) and May 1 (JPr), and one was in Ker-ville May 3 (SWie). A Hairy Woodpecker at Abilene Apr. 15 (ML) was considered rare. A Red-naped Sapsucker was well-described from High I., Mar. 15–17 (DSa, JRa).

Flycatchers to Swallows

We are awaiting documentation of a reported Greater Pewee at Big Bend's Rio Grande Village Apr. 26 (AB); currently

there are but 5 accepted Texas records of this sp., with another 20 or so undocumented reports. A W. Wood-Pewee was identified by call at Bentsen May 11 (JSt). Seldom reported away from far w. Texas, a Dusky Flycatcher was at Falcon Apr. 26 (DSi). A Dusky-capped Flycatcher was discovered in Big Bend's Pine Canyon Apr. 23 († ph., BGi), where it remained through at least May 8 (ph., m.ob.); in a pattern similar to Greater Pewee, Dusky-capped only have 6 accepted Texas records, with another 20 or so undocumented reports. Unusual for spring, single wandering Ash-throated Flycatchers showed up at Sea Rim Apr. 21–27 (JW, ph., JHe, m.ob.) and *Dallas* (first county record) May 11 (PB, RR). A Great Kiskadee near Port O'Connor May 3 (PH) and another in *Wilson* Mar. 27 (WS) were at unusual locations. Four–five pairs of Tropical Kingbirds remained at various *Cameron* locations, while the bird reported at Santa Ana in February was apparently joined by a second in March, but the pair departed soon thereafter. A Cassin's Kingbird in Midland May 27 (JCH, RMS) was the first for that area since 1989. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Anthony, *El Paso*, May 13 (JZ) was unusual. The Rose-throated Becard reported last season at Santa Ana was last seen Mar. 14. Out-of-range Violet-green Swallows included one reported at Kingsville in April (*fide* PP) and three at Salineno May 8 (JSt). A wandering Cave Swallow was at Cooper L., May 31 (M&KWh).

Jays to Shrikes

A Blue Jay (probably the individual reported in the past 2 seasons) was in Edinburg Mar. 15 (TB). Well away from its typical range was a reported W. Scrub-Jay Mar. 21 in *Bosque* (GC). Red-breasted Nuthatches from the winter irruption lingered in many locations. Among the more notable late reports were one in *Rusk* Apr. 30 (G&JLu), one in *Bastrop* May 4 (BF), one in Colorado Bend May 7 (ML), and one in Waco until mid-May (FB). Furnishing only the 2nd May record for the Panhandle, a Brown Creeper was at Buffalo Lake May 11 (KS). Not known to breed in the area, a late House Wren was at Lost Maples May 28 (DB), while several observers in n.c. Texas (RR, CH, RK) thought that the spring migration had fewer numbers than usual. A rather late Winter Wren was at Santa Ana Apr. 23 (TB). Late kinglet records were provided by a Golden-crowned in *Bastrop* Apr. 8 (BF, PH) and a Ruby-crowned at Kickapoo May 19 (ML, GL, ph.). Three April Hill Country records of Townsend's Soli-

taire were of interest: one at Lost Maples Apr. 2, one at Honey Cr., Apr. 4, and one at Colorado Bend Apr. 19. (DB).

SA While tending mist nets at Laguna Atascosa Apr. 8, Papish *et al.* were stunned to discover an Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus aurantiirostris*), representing a first United States record. The bird was carefully examined, measured, and photographed in the hand. A detailed description was also prepared [RPa, DBr, GSch, SL, JMa]. After the bird was released it could not be found again. This sp. breeds in the mountains of s. Tamaulipas, approximately 250 mi s. of Laguna Atascosa, and was very recently found [breeding?] in c. Nuevo Leon, even closer to Texas. Through the years, this refuge and nearby areas have shown an inexplicable tendency to be a magnet for wandering montane species, presumably from n.e. Mexico, including Red-faced Warbler, Painted Redstart, White-throated Robin (Laguna Vista, just outside Laguna Atascosa), and Gray Silky-flycatcher. There was no evidence that the nightingale-thrush had been in captivity and we suspect a natural origin is likely.

A "western mountain" Hermit Thrush was observed Apr. 29 with a few other migrants at S. Padre I. (DSi). In the Panhandle, Hermit Thrushes were described as being unusually common (*fide* KS). An early Wood Thrush was at Stillhouse Hol-



Representing a first documented record for the United States was this Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush captured by banders at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Texas, April 8, 1996. Photograph/David Brewer.

low Res., Bell, Mar. 3 (EGW). Elsewhere, Wood Thrushes made news out w. with three seen in Big Bend between Apr. 27–May 7 (MF *et al.*). The Clay-colored Robin at Santa Ana last season remained at least until Apr. 8 († BZ). Another stunning thrush record for this season of rarities was provided by an imm. ♂ Aztec Thrush in Corpus Christi May 16–20 († ph. BS, AC, WS, SB, T&PF, B&Jri *et al.*). This represented the 4th Texas record of this sp., and the 2nd from the coast. A Sage Thrasher at Balcones Canyonlands Mar. 21 provided a first Williamson record (CS). A Long-billed Thrasher was at Big Bend's Dugout Wells Apr. 22 (HW). Extremely late was a singing N. Shrike at Palo Duro Canyon Mar. 27 (KS).

Vireos to Warblers

Very local in e. Texas, a Bell's Vireo was singing in *Nacogdoches* Apr. 25 (CSh). A Philadelphia Vireo, rare in w. Texas, was at Big Bend May 2 (MD, FWo). More expected, but still rare, were four Red-eyed Vireos in Big Bend Apr. 13–May 12 (m.ob.) and one at Buffalo Lake May 14 (KS). A Yellow-green Vireo was discovered at High I., Apr. 15–23 († DW, m.ob., ph. JHe) for only the 2nd documented record for the U.T.C. The strong S winds that blew across most of Texas virtually all season resulted in very few concentrations of warblers being seen. The only grounding of any significance on the coast occurred Apr. 6 from the U.T.C. south to S. Padre I. There was, however, an amazing array of e. warblers in w. Texas this season, particularly at Big Bend. Records not discussed in this text will be listed in Table 1. Single unexpected Tropical Parulas were observed in Big Bend Apr. 26–27 (MF), Choke Canyon May 18 (RW), and at Garner May 9 (ph., ML). There have been several reports over the years of this sp. in the Hill Country, but the Garner record is the first ever documented by photo. Wauer observed a pair of copulating Yellow Warblers at Choke Canyon May 17; the sp. is not currently known to nest anywhere in Texas. Single Black-throated Gray Warblers at San Antonio Mar. 6 (CCu), Victoria Mar. 21 (BBr), and Midland May 1 (RMS) were of interest. Single Hermit Warblers were at Midland Apr. 28 (RMS *et al.*) and at Lost Maples May 7 (DB). Among the most surprising e. warblers in the west were single Swainson's at Big Bend May 4 (RW *et al.*) and near Ft. Davis Apr. 27 (DHa). Seyffert reported that he observed more MacGillivray's Warblers this spring in the Panhandle than in the previous 30 years combined. The controversial "Gray-crowned Yellowthroat"



Aztec Thrush at Corpus Christi, Texas, May 18, 1996. Out of habitat, out of season, and far out of range, this was only the second individual ever to appear east of Big Bend in the United States. Photograph/Steve Bentsen.

remained at San Ygnacio through the period. It was apparently paired with a ♀ Com. Yellowthroat late in the season. This extensively documented and debated record is currently being reviewed by the T.B.R.C. A Canada Warbler at Buffalo Lake May 16 was the first Seyffert had seen in the Panhandle since 1967. A Red-faced Warbler was in El Paso May 12 († JPa), representing about the 13th state record, if accepted.

Tanagers to Finches

A Hepatic Tanager at Ft. Bliss May 21 provided a rare spring record for *El Paso* (BZ). There were scattered reports of Scarlet Tanagers over the w. third of the state, where they are rare. As is typical, there were a few W. Tanagers along the coast at migrant traps.

SA Many of us have predicted Flame-colored Tanager would eventually show up in Texas. This spring Big Bend had two! An ad. male was first discovered in Pine Canyon Apr. 14 († C&DO), where it remained until Apr. 19 († ph., AL, BGi, MD *et al.*). Surprisingly, an imm. male was discovered Apr. 20 in the Chisos Basin († ph., AL, BGi *et al.*), where it remained through Apr. 22.

A surprising eight Black-headed Grosbeaks was found in n.c. Texas, where the species is usually rare. Even more unexpected was a single Black-headed Grosbeak in Gregg, n.e. Texas, Apr. 27 (G&JLu). The ♀ Blue Bunting reported in the winter at Bentsen

Table 1. Unusual warblers in West Texas, spring 1996

Species	Dates	Location	Observer
Blue-winged	Apr. 24	Big Bend	AL
Golden-winged	May 6-11	El Paso	SaH
Golden-winged	May 16	Midland	D & JMe
Golden-winged (2)	May 6-9	Big Bend	BRi, BGi
"Brewsters"	Apr. 28	Big Bend	MD
Northern Parula	May 12	Hueco Tank	BJ
Chestnut-sided (2)	May 6 & 8	Big Bend	FWo <i>et al.</i>
Chestnut-sided	May 10	Lubbock	PK
Chestnut-sided	May 18	Amarillo	ER
Chestnut-sided	May 20	Buffalo Lake	KS
Magnolia	May 9	El Paso	BZ
Black-throated Blue	May 22	Midland	JMe
Black-throated Blue (3)	May 11-22	Big Bend	m.ob.
Black-throated Blue	May 4	<i>Hudspeth</i>	SaH, JoK
Black-throated Blue	May 16	Canyon	AS
Blackburnian	May 5	Davis Mts.	JD
Pine	Apr 17	Big Bend	MD
Palm	May 7	Big Bend	
Palm	Apr. 20	El Paso	SaH
Blackpoll	May 3	Big Bend	RW
Blackpoll	Apr. 27	El Paso	SaH
Prothonotary (3)	Apr.16-May 25	Big Bend	m.ob.
Worm-eating (2)	Apr.16, May 9	Big Bend	MF <i>et al.</i>
Ovenbird	May 4	<i>Presidio</i>	C&DO
Ovenbird (3)	Apr. 21-May 7	Big Bend	m.ob.
Louisiana Waterthrush	Mar. 27-Apr. 2	Midland	D&JMe
Kentucky (4)	Apr. 11-May 5	Big Bend	m.ob.
Kentucky	May 2	El Paso	RWa
Kentucky	Apr. 28-May 1	Pampa	KSu
Kentucky	May 10	Lubbock	PK
Hooded	Apr. 25	Amarillo	JHal
Hooded (3)	Apr. 23-May 14	Big Bend	MD, MF

was apparently joined by a male in March, and there were numerous reports as late as Apr. 29. Dozens of Lazuli Buntings were in *Bastrop*, *Hays*, *Travis*, and elsewhere in c. Texas, while one at Cooper L., May 8 (MWh) was the farthest east reported. A Varied Bunting was seen on S. Padre I., Apr. 6 (BMc). Green-tailed Towhees were especially numerous in the Panhandle and in parts of w. Texas. Lark Buntings were virtually absent from Texas during the past winter, but they were anything but absent in the Panhandle this season (KS). Literally thousands streamed across the n. plains during the first week of May. Single Baird's Sparrows were documented in *Dallas* Mar. 13 (PB) and in Big Bend (Panther Junction) May 1-2 (BMu, ph., CEK, m.ob.) and (Rio Grande Village) May 4-6 (AB, TG). There were several other reports of Baird's Sparrows without documentation. The Hueco Tanks Golden-crowned Sparrow (at this location for its 3rd winter) was last seen Apr. 13 (BJ). Very late was a White-crowned Sparrow in Canyon through May 31 (A&MS). A Harris' Sparrow photographed Apr. 24 at High I. (MH) was both very late and at an unusu-

al location. A "Gray-headed" Dark-eyed Junco in Vega, *Oldham*, May 2 was late (RSc). Three Bobolinks were reported in *Wichita* with no date; they are rare this far west (DMc). A Hooded Oriole in San Antonio Apr. 17 (SWie) was an unexpected surprise. A high count of 25 Purple Finches were in *Rusk* Mar. 13 (G&JLu). A House Finch on S. Padre I., Apr. 25 (BMc) was a surprise; the sp. has not yet become resident in the L.R.G.V. A Pine Siskin at Corpus Christi May 21 was very late (*fide* GS), while a Lesser Goldfinch at Bentsen May 31 (TB) was at a location where the sp. usually does not occur. Evening Grosbeaks lingered in the Davis Mts. until Apr. 4 (KB), while another visited a feeder near Lufkin Apr. 16 (BP, JP).

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Idaho-Western Montana Region

DAN SVINGEN

Spring 1996 was unusually cool, wet and soggy region-wide. It's perhaps not surprising then, that migration was reported as weak, with reduced numbers of both species and individuals. How much of this phenomenon was real vs. perceived is hard to determine. From observer comments, it's clear that the seemingly constant, cold, drizzle discouraged field exploration. An example of some birding opportunities that may have been passed up however, was the miniature "fallout" which occurred in Grangeville, Idaho May 16; when a rainstorm grounded 17 migrant species in one tiny suburban lot. Among the surprises were Marsh Wren, Townsend's Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. The only reason these birds were noticed at all was that the observers were standing at the kitchen window - lamenting the miserable weather!

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

Loons to Ducks

Common Loons nested at Kickinghorse Res., Lake, MT (PW) this spring. Although the species regularly breeds in nearby pristine mountain lakes, use of this low-elevation, agricultural reservoir was unusual.

American White Pelicans are unusual and local throughout the

region's northern half. Five such Pelicans were on Pend O'reille L., *Bonner*, ID Apr. 1 (EC), and up to 6 were on Coeur d'Alene L., *Kootenai*, ID in mid-May (m.ob.). A single Am. White Pelican was on the Bitterroot R. near Missoula, MT in late May (CB, VV), and may have been the same bird seen there in December. A single Double-crested Cormorant was near Sandpoint, ID Apr. 11 and May 23 (m.ob.). Other singles were near Riggins, ID May 26 (m.ob.), and on Thompson L., *Kootenai*, ID May 31 (JWN).

An Am. Bittern May 6 10 mi n. of Salmon, ID (HR), provided a first for Latilong 10. A Great Egret pair was found nesting on A.F.R., Apr. 21 (CT), a new location for this slowly increasing species. Wandering Great Egrets included singles near Priest River, ID Apr. 26 (DCa), and Kamiah, ID Apr. 29 (KD). Idaho's first **Tricolored Heron** was at Market Lake W.M.A., May 11 (R&RD, †CT). Over 50 birders participating in the annual "Birdathon" were able to enjoy the bird, which was not subsequently seen.

Up to five Greater White-fronted Geese were on Chatcolet L., *Benewah*, Mar. 14-18 (m.ob.). Although Ross' Geese are now regular in Idaho, the single which sat down in a small, suburban Moscow, ID pond Apr. 17 (PW) was still very unusual.

A Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal hybrid was near Moscow Mar. 24 (JH, MH). Idaho Eur. Wigeon sightings were numerous and included two at Lane Marsh,

