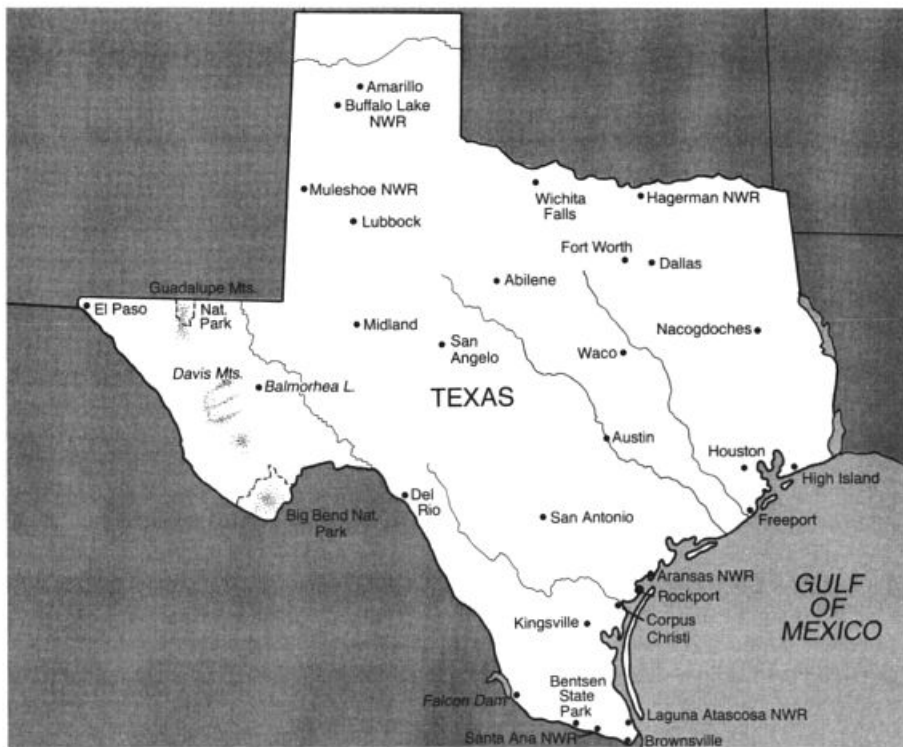


texas region



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Which way should we look? Where do we turn? The geographic influences on the migration through Texas this spring were both more evident and amazing than our usual hyperbole could describe. The mystery of the origin of any given migrant passing through one's favored birding spot is the ageless intrigue of the season. In Spring 1998, we had palpable evidence of contributions from such disparate regions as the eastern side of the Atlantic (two larks) and the low latitude tropics (Piratic Flycatcher), along with an unexpected visitor from a regular source (an eider from the high Arctic), and a heavier dose from the east and west coasts of the continent. Then, as if topping off a tasty layer cake, Mother Nature took a big butter knife and spread these goodies all across the state, blurring any pre-existing concepts of ecological boundaries or limits. Welcome to spring migration in Texas.

The season's weather ran the gamut, with snow in the northern Panhandle as

late as March 19 and hundred-degree weather by the end of the season southward. El Niño gave way rather quickly to La Niña: The wet winter over much of the state turned into a very dry spring. Nonetheless, a wet frontal passage April 17–19 caused an excellent migrant fallout on the entire coast, with remarkable results on the lower coast. The last few days of April, as the Great Texas Birding Classic was beginning, also had a good fallout, and a final flurry was noted with rains on May 14–15, with the central coast getting rave reviews. Noting that good weather brings dull migrations and vice versa, Kelly Bryan ironically noted that the worsening drought conditions in the Trans-Pecos were accompanied by “one of the most exciting spring migrations in memory” in that region. Recalling the story about three blind men trying to describe an elephant, Brent Ortego aptly offered: “Your sense of what is happening with migration is very much related to where you touch it.”

Abbreviations: Ft. Bliss (*Ft. Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mountains Nat'l Park*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); L.S.U.M.Z. (*Louisiana State Univ., Museum of*

Zoology); S.S.W.T.P. (*South Side Water 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, Anzalduas, Aransas, Balcones Canyonlands, Balmorhea, Bentsen, Big Bend (N.P.), Big Bend Ranch (S.N.A.), Buffalo Lake, Devil's River, Dinosaur Valley, Laguna Atascosa, Lost Maples, Palo Duro, Palmetto, Packer Channel, Sabal Palms, San Bernard, Santa Ana, and Taylor Lakes.

LOOKS TO IBISES

The Red-throated Loon at L. Tawakoni in winter stayed until Mar. 14 (MWh, ph., MG), while another was at Galveston's Offat's Bayou Apr. 1–May 3 (m.ob., ph.). Of 4 Pacific Loon reports, the most significant was one on S. Padre I., Cameron, April 23 (*vide* BMC) and a 2nd Austin record at Horns Bend May 23–24 (BRe, RF, ph., CS). A wintering Least Grebe in Calhoun remained until Apr. 15 (PH). The new San Solomon Cienega at Balmorhea produced its first significant nesting record: a brood of young Pied-billed Grebes in the first week of March (TJ, m.ob.). A Red-necked Grebe was well photographed at L. Lewisville Mar. 29–30 (LHa); the T.B.R.C. will review records of single Red-neckeds from Monahans and Imperial Res. Apr. 8 (BJP). An unusually high count of 71 Western/Clark's Grebes was made on El Paso area reservoirs Mar. 1 (JPa). A Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was found on N. Padre I., Kleberg, May 12 (*vide* TA *), while eight were seen on a boat trip off Calhoun May 16–17 (PH). About a dozen Masked Boobies, many of them in weakened condition, were found Apr. 27–May 30 on several c. coast barrier islands (TA, MC et al.). Six Brown Pelicans were scattered at 5 localities from Abilene and Lubbock w. to Hudspeth (m.ob.) during April and May. Of interest in n.e. Texas was a breeding colony of about 100 Neotropic Cormorants at L. Fork, Wood, in early May (MWh). A count of 29 Glossy Ibises in rice fields in Calhoun in early May (BFR, PH) was the highest count ever in Texas. Elsewhere, individual Glossies included one at Choke Canyon S.P. Mar. 19 (ML) and another in Kenedy Apr. 17 (BFR).

WATERFOWL

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was out-of-place at Ascarte Park, *El Paso*, May 9 (SP). Russell watched a male *Garganey* dart past in a flock of Blue-winged Teal on the Bolivar Pen. Apr. 17 (†WRu).

Leukering discovered an imm. drake **King Eider** attempting to feed in the surf at Quintana Beach Apr. 30. The bird was re-found May 1 during the Great Texas Birding Classic by Leukering and his team. The flight feathers of the bird were worn to the shafts and the bird was flightless. Its attempts to rest on the beach were frequently disrupted by cars, dogs, and pedestrians. Although numerous observers enjoyed a close look, the eider became weaker as the week progressed. Finally, on May 9, the bird was picked up by rehabilitator Dana Simon. After a period of rehabilitation, the bird was sent to Sea World of Ohio, an intermediate stop on its way home to the Arctic. This bird furnished the first documented occurrence in Texas. There is a previous sight record (without †) by Leonard Goldman and Connie Hagar at Rockport Oct. 23, 1968 (*Audubon Field Notes* 23:78, 1969). Photos of Louisiana's first King Eider a few years ago show a bird in virtually identical plumage.

A lingering Oldsquaw remained at Monahans until Apr. 8 (BJP). A female Black Scoter was at Possum Kingdom Res. May 3 (KN). Finding five Surf Scoters on the Rio Grande at Chapeño Apr. 17 (B&KFi) was unexpected. A single White-winged Scoter was in *Dallas* Mar. 6 (LHa). A late Com. Merganser was at L. Lewisville, *Denton*, May 1 (MG). The Masked Duck at Cullinan Park near Sugarland, *Fort Bend*, was last observed Apr. 4. Another Masked Duck was at a Riviera, *Kelberg*, pond during May; the only documentation was from May 17 (†A&MC).



RAPTORS

Swallow-tailed Kites were seen in numbers on the coastal plain from mid-March onward; most notable was a migrant in San Antonio Mar. 28 (CCu). A Texas Partners In Flight monitoring project for Swallow-tailed Kites produced a nesting record in *Orange*, the 4th known nest in Texas since ca. 1911 (*vide* CSh). A single-day tally of 18,000 Mississippi Kites at the Kenedy Ranch Apr. 18 (BFR) was one of the highest ever reported. Two Mississippi's in Ft. Davis May 23 (KB, D&LH) offered a very rare area record, as did a single bird the following day at Big Bend (MPec). Single Com. Black-Hawks were seen briefly at Santa Ana in April and over Bentsen in May, a bit late on their winter range. A pair of Com. Black-Hawks built a nest at Big Bend's Rio Grande Village, and there were reports on the w. side of the park Mar. 27 (MF) and May 24 (TMO, KW). Interesting records of Gray Hawk included a single bird in *Kenedy* Apr. 18 (BFR) and an adult on Limpia Cr. near Ft. Davis May 24 (PSu). A dark-morph imm. Short-tailed Hawk was reported by Andy Farnsworth's Birding Classic team at Bentsen Apr. 27, and a light-morph ad. Short-tailed was at Santa Ana from May 21 onward (†SBc, LM, JK). A White-tailed Hawk near High I. Apr. 30–May 1 (GMC, DY) was well e. of the species' regular range.

PRAIRIE-CHICKENS TO SHOREBIRDS

Two Lesser Prairie-Chickens were encountered in *Deaf Smith* Apr. 4, near where seen last spring (EK et al.). A migrant Yellow Rail in *Tarrant* was out-of-range and habitat in a garage in Fort Worth (it was released the next day at nearby V.C.D.B.). Observers heard vocalizing Black Rails at 6 locations in *Kleberg*, *Brazoria*, and *Calhoun*; the species is presumed breeding in the latter 2 counties. An early Purple Gallinule was found on campus at Texas A & M University in College Station Mar. 5 (*vide* KA). Common Moorhen appears to have become established as a resident (and breeding) species at Taylor Lakes, *Donley*, in the e. Panhandle (KS). A concentration of 70

Far from its usual Arctic haunts, this male King Eider was completely unexpected on the Texas coast at Quintana Beach, Brazoria County, where it was discovered at the end of April 1998. Texas had no previous documented records. Photograph/ Steve Bentsen

Snowy Plovers on a dry playa lake at Midland May 2 was remarkable. A count of 138 Snowies on San Jose I., *Aransas*, Apr. 7 was noteworthy; also present in the same area that day were 207 Piping Plovers (TA). Mountain Plovers remained near Granger into mid-April; another four–five were seen in e. Bexar Mar. 23–24 (*vide* GSc). The quest to discover nesting Mt. Plovers in the n. Panhandle continued: Three courting birds were found e. of Texline, *Dallam*, Apr. 7 (KM) and five were at the same field Apr. 15 (KS); subsequent visits in May failed to turn up any birds. A single Whimbrel at L. Balmorhea May 3 (JD) was eclipsed by 29 at Kirby L. near Abilene May 16 (JaP) and seven at Midland May 17 (GG). Small numbers of Hudsonian Godwits drifted through the w. half of the state (m.ob.); seven were at Imperial Res. Apr. 21, three were in *Gray* in the Panhandle Apr. 25, a single bird was in Lubbock May 10, and 17 were at San Angelo May 24. Marbled Godwit numbers were also somewhat higher west: Five were at L. Meredith, *Hutchinson*, Apr. 11 (EK et al.); nine were in *Randall* Apr. 21 (KS); and up to nine were at Imperial Res. Apr. 21–23 (BJP). Another good concentration was 27 Marbleds Apr. 21 at V.C.D.B. (RR). A Red Knot at L. Lewisville, *Denton*, Mar. 29–Apr. 5 provided perhaps only the 2nd spring record for n.c. Texas (ph., LHa, RR et al.). A concentration of 500 Buff-breasted Sandpipers inhabited a *Chambers* rice field in mid-April (Bbe † et al.). Another 1800 Buff-breasteds were in *Calhoun* Apr. 30 (TxB). A Reeve was described at the same *Calhoun* rice field on the latter date (BFR, PH). A pair of Com. Snipes were observed courting in the n. Panhandle in *Hemphill* Apr. 26, but could not be relocated in May (JHu). An Am. Woodcock with young at Palmetto Apr. 3 (PBo) offered a very rare nesting record for c. Texas. An extremely rare record for w. Texas was a woodcock at Monahans Apr. 21 (*vide* BJP, ph. RA).

We received written details from various experienced observers describing Eskimo Curlew (*Galveston* March 31), Eur. Dotterel (*Victoria* Apr. 13), Com. Ringed Plover (*Tarrant* Apr. 26), and Eur. Golden-Plover (*Chambers* Apr. 26). Any of these would be stunning records. All will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C.

GULLS TO SKIMMER

The Black-headed Gull wintering at V.C.D.B. gained breeding plumage in early March and remained until Mar. 23; a 2nd bird joined it Mar. 2 and stayed until Mar. 21 (MR et al.). Remarkably, the latter bird

was banded (no band info could be obtained); no individuals of this species have ever been banded in N. America (*vide* MGu). A first-winter Mew Gull (appearing to be a "Common Gull" type) remained at Galveston's E. Beach until at least Mar. 14 (TxB, ph., J&WRi, T&PF). Another first-winter Mew was at L. Grapevine, *Tarrant*, May 5–7 (†RR). A 2nd-winter California Gull was at S.S.W.T.P., *Dallas*, Mar. 6 (RR). Up to three California Gulls were reported from *Galveston* in April. One to three different Thayer's and an Iceland gull were reported in April and early May at Bolivar Flats and E. Beach, *Galveston* (m.ob.). There is currently only one accepted Texas record for the latter species. The Thayer's wintering at the Corpus Christi landfill was last reported Mar. 7 (A&MC). At least eight Lesser Black-backed and seven Glaucous Gulls were reported on the coast in March and April. A first-year Great Black-backed Gull was on Mustang I., *Nueces*, Apr. 28 (TA); a separate and confusing black-backed gull, perhaps a Great Black-backed, was reported at Bolivar Flats as late as May 1 (m.ob.).

Two reports of Roseate Tern will go through the T.B.R.C.: Four birds were near Matagorda I., *Matagorda*, Mar. 15 (†B&JFa) and a single bird was described at Brownsville Mar. 30 (†IF, MN, MPo). There are only 2 accepted Texas records of Roseate. Two Com. Terns at L. Balmorhea Apr. 29 constituted a rare w. Texas find; four Commons reported in n.c. Texas were also rare. An ad. Sooty was seen from the Bolivar Ferry May 2 (BP). A **Brown Noddy** in heavy molt was found s. on Padre Island N.S., *Kenedy*, May 26 (ph., †BSa), providing the 5th state record. A **Black Noddy** was discovered on Bolivar Pen. Apr. 15 (ph., †JD, BBe et al.); what appeared to be the same bird was rediscovered on Bolivar Flats by Birding Classic teams May 1 (ph., † m.ob.), although various observers on the latter date initially thought the bird to be a Brown Noddy. This will become the 2nd state record if accepted. An inland Black Skimmer was at Mitchell L., San Antonio, May 23 (S.A.A.S.).

DOVES TO NIGHTJARS

A single Red-billed Pigeon was reported at Santa Ana Apr. 15–18 (TxB) and again on May 27 (TB). A nest was found upriver in *Webb* (SCa). Reports of Eur. Collared-Doves on the coast continue to mount, including photo documentation of a nest near Port Lavaca (G&BMa, RW). Cardiff collected a Eur. Collared-Dove in *Atascosa*

May 10, a first county record (* to L.S.U.M.Z.). White-winged Doves extended their range in the n. Panhandle with a record in *Hansford* May 23 (MT); there were also interesting records in n.e. Texas in *Nacogdoches* Apr. 19 (CR) and *Texarkana* Apr. 23–30 (ShC, CMi). A Com. Ground-Dove in *Smith* Apr. 21 was exceptional for n.e. Texas (PeB, DHa), as was a pair far west at Indian Hot Springs, *Hudspeth*, May 16 (JPa).

A pair of Red-ored Parrots were seen battling a pair of Green Parakeets for a tree cavity in Brownsville Apr. 26 (TB). Among the hordes of eastern migrants in the Trans-Pecos were three Black-billed Cuckoos, all seen May 20 in widely scattered localities in the Big Bend region (m.ob.). Groove-billed Anis showed up in the Trans-Pecos at Rio Grande Village Apr. 29 (JoG) and in *Shafter, Presidio*, May 24 (AA). A first county nesting record was provided by a pair of Elf Owls at Davis Mountains S.P. (m.ob.), and a 2nd pair was at another *Jeff Davis* location (DH, m.ob.). Some Lesser Nighthawks on the U.T.C. were interesting: A female was at High I. Apr. 16 (JD et al.). Another female Lesser was at Texas Pt., *Jefferson*, May 2 (ML, GL). An early Com. Poorwill was in *Amarillo* Mar. 24–29 (RSc). A pair of Chimney Swifts in Ft. Davis repeated an occurrence of last year (KB).

HUMMINGBIRDS TO WOODPECKERS

A Green Violet-ear provided a new refuge record at Aransas May 21–26 (BJ, RWe, BF, ph., JT). A male Broad-billed Hummingbird showed up at Kelly Bryan's home in Ft. Davis May 23 and remained into the summer (†KB). A Buff-bellied Hummingbird was seen May 2 and another May 3 in *Brazoria* (RWe). A **Violet-crowned Hummingbird** was a one-day wonder at L. Jackson Mar. 2 (A&JWh, †T&SC), the first report of the species in the e. half of the state and a 4th for Texas if accepted. A Blue-throated Hummingbird was video-taped at Brownsville May 29 (ET, *vide* BMc). A female *Archilochus* nesting at Packery Channel, *Nueces*, May 22 represented the first known nesting attempt on N. Padre Island by any hummingbird. Adult male Ruby-throateds provided rare w. Texas spring records at Big Bend Apr. 17 (RHo) and Apr. 27–29 (MF), and in Canyon, *Randall*, Apr. 26–28 (A&MS, Tfo).

We received a remarkable 4 records of Ringed Kingfisher in the Texas Hill Country: One in Austin Mar. 17 (RF), a pair at Concan Mar. 18 (JHeng), one on the Me-

dina R. in *Bexar* Apr. 2 (BDo), and a male on Independence Cr., *Terrell*, Apr. 18 (JPa). We received photos of yet another Ringed at Junction from the previous fall, Nov. 25, 1997 (ALe). Green Kingfishers were present along the Rio Grande in the e. part of Big Bend (MF, RW). Well out-of-range was another Green Kingfisher in the Brazos Valley at L. Somerville Mar. 14 (SBr). After a winter with no reports, it was a surprise to see details of a Lewis's Woodpecker at *Mason* Mar. 10–14 (DFe, BoF). South Llano River S.P. hosted a Hairy Woodpecker, very rare for the Hill Country, Apr. 4 (LHo). A bit less out-of-range was a Pileated Woodpecker in San Marcos May 29 (*vide* DHe)

FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

Sightings of Greater Pewee were made in Big Bend Mar. 5 (MEn) and Midland May 30–31 (†FR, RMS), there are only 5 accepted records for the state. Two singing E Wood-Pewees were located at Big Bend Ranch May 21–22 (KB, DDi, SCa); additional reports came from Big Bend May 22–28 (TMo, KW, MF). Vermilion Flycatchers were away from their normal haunts at V.C.D.B. Apr. 1 (RCu); *Amarillo, Potter*, Apr. 11–13 (ph., A&MK, TG); and in Brazos Apr. 30 (*vide* BeF). A Great Crested Flycatcher provided a rare spring record at Midland May 16 (m.ob.). Great Kiskadees wandered N to Mitchell L. May 16 (SD) and Devil's R. May 22 (BA), more unusual were singles at Packery Channel Apr. 9 (PBe), *Fort Bend* Apr. 24 (HB), and at Port O'Connor Apr. 25–27 (PH).

Four English observers (A&RCo, B&PBu) visiting Big Bend in early April were surprised to find an unfamiliar flycatcher at Rio Grande Village Apr. 4, which they initially thought was a Sulphur-bellied, very rare in Texas. Fortunately, the bird was extensively video-taped (ACo). Still photos from the tape (and the video-tape itself) were later submitted to these editors, who were stunned to see that the bird was a **Piratic Flycatcher** (*Legatus leucophaeus*), a first for Texas and apparently the 3rd for the U.S. Excellent documentation by the original observers made all the difference!

Tropical Kingbirds made another appearance at Big Bend with up to four at Cottonwood Campground May 1 onward (TJ, MF, TMo, m.ob.). Out-of-range Couch's Kingbirds were located in s w *Bexar* Apr. 25 (KBa), Rio Grande Village May 1 & 21 (MPec, MF), and *Jefferson* May 10 (JWh). Eastern Kingbirds made an unprecedented appearance in the Trans-Pecos with 11 reported between May 21–24 (m

ob.). Tree Swallows breed very locally in Texas; a nesting pair was at L. Fork, Wood, May 4 (MWh). Unusual was a spring report of one–two Violet-green Swallows at Mitchell L. Mar. 6 (LG). Cave Swallows were nesting at 2 locations in Brazos (FC, KA) and nesting was suspected at Abilene (JaP).

JAYS TO SHRIKES

Up to four Blue Jays were in *Hidalgo* through the period (TB). Single Blue Jays were w. of the regular range in the Davis Mts. Mar. 10–Apr. 3 (D&LH, m.ob.) and Independence Cr. Apr. 19 (JPa). Unexpected was a Green Jay at a feeder in San Antonio Apr. 23–24 (*vide* KBa). Three Black-billed Magpies appeared in San Marcos Mar. 24–Apr. 18 (ph., Dhe, †et al.); origin is unknown. Tamaulipas Crows were observed at a nest in Brownsville Apr. 25–26 (TB, BMC). A Brown-headed Nuthatch strayed from the pineywoods to High I. Apr. 11. Cactus Wrens were found with increasing frequency in the w. Panhandle; reports came from 2 localities in *Oldham* and *Deaf Smith* (KS, EK, BiMc † et al.).

Sam Nail Ranch in Big Bend hosted a Veery May 24 (TMo, KW); others were at Buffalo Lake May 2 & 8 (TFer et al.). Gray-cheeked Thrushes were also at Buffalo Lake. Other w. Texas Gray-cheekeds were at Boot Springs, Big Bend, Apr. 24 (CN); in Midland May 7 (JMe); and another at Big Bend Ranch May 19 (SCa, DDi, KB). The Big Bend region also saw a major movement of Swainson's Thrushes in May, which often out-numbered Hermits (KB † et al.). The latter seemed to hang around late in c. and n Texas, the last to leave was in Amarillo May 29 (EK). Despite all the thrush activity in the Big Bend area, the only Wood Thrush report in w. Texas came from El Paso May 26 (BRo).

Our tropical robins from the winter were still in evidence well into spring. Several Clay-coloreds were reported from *Hidalgo* all season, with as many as four at Bentsen and two at Santa Ana; most notably, an active nest was discovered in McAllen Apr. 24 (PB, A&MC, BMC). Other potentially territorial Clay-coloreds were at Chapeño, *Starr*, Apr. 25 (TB) and at Anzalduas May 7 onward (IF, MN, RPr). The one–two **White-throated Robins** at Bentsen remained until at least Apr. 3 (m.ob.). Remarkably, another two White-throateds were discovered at Santa Ana Mar. 1 and remained until at least Mar. 12 (ph., †m.ob.). Five Gray Catbirds in the Trans-Pecos May 2–29 were another symptom of the W drift of eastern species. A Curve-

billed Thrasher discovered in *Hansford* Apr. 13 subsequently nested (MT).

Two Am. Pipits found late in the season in the Trans-Pecos were at the Cibolo Cr. Ranch, *Presidio*, May 22 (KB † et al.) and at Big Bend May 24 (MPec). A Phainopepla at Midland May 31 was a good find (RMS). A late N. Shrike was in Palo Duro Mar. 6 & 20 (EK, DR † et al.).

VIREOS AND WARBLERS

White-eyed Vireos in far w. Texas included singles at Big Bend Ranch Apr. 11 (KB, MAd, D&LH; first park record), near Boquillas in Big Bend Apr. 28–May 14 (RW), and at Midland Apr. 30–May 2 (JMe). Bell's Vireos on territory were on the blackland prairie in *Delta* in early May (MWh) and at Midland in late May (*vide* FW); one–two migrants were at V.C.D.B., *Tarrant*, in early May (MG, MR et al.). Very rarely recorded in migration, a male Black-capped Vireo was observed at Santa Ana Apr. 9 (†RRo et al.). Lockwood surveyed for nesting Black-cappeds at Dinosaur Valley in April but failed to find any. Adding to our sparse database on Plumbeous Vireo was a migrant at Midland May 2 (RMS, JAd). A Yellow-throated Vireo singing on the Canadian R. in *Potter* May 11 was not expected (KS). Seven Philadelphia Vireos and nine Red-eyeds in the Trans-Pecos, all in May, swamped the numbers of any previous spring (KB † et al.); perhaps most significant was a Philadelphia in El Paso May 26 (JPa). Yellow-green Vireos in the L.R.G.V. made appearances at Laguna Atascosa Apr. 19–24 (†PG, TxB) and Sabal Palms Apr. 21–22 (TxB, †BMc); much more surprising were Yellow-greens in Austin May 17 (†SM) and at Aransas May 25–26 (BFR, †BBr). Black-whiskered Vireos, formerly a super-rarity, are now just shy of being reported annually; a single Black-whiskered was photographed on Galveston I. May 28 (JiSt † et al.).

We were swamped with reports of unusual warblers, particularly from w. Texas and the Panhandle. Our traditional table of spring warbler sightings can't do it justice (Table 1); Kelly Bryan's report included an amazing 32 species, amassing no less than 118 records of birds normally rare to accidental in the Trans-Pecos. The numbers of Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Mourning, Hooded, and Canada Warblers were unprecedented. Even regular migrants, such as Townsend's, seemed overly numerous.

We will single out a few notable records around the state. Single Lawrence's Warbler



During March 1998, four White-throated Robins were present simultaneously in southern Texas; there had been only one previous record of one individual north of the border. This bird was at Bentsen–Rio Grande Valley State Park March 27, 1998.



Tropical Parulas, once considered specialties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, are now being found farther north in Texas. This male was at Lost Maples State Natural Area April 15, 1998. Photograph/ Mary Beth Stowe

hybrids were at High I. Apr. 19 (RRe, m.ob.) and in San Antonio May 17 (CCu). There were a few sightings of Lucy's Warblers upriver of their usual haunts in *Presidio*, such as single birds in El Paso Apr. 16 (BZ); Madden L., *Hudspeth*, May 6 (BZ); and others along the river in *Hudspeth* May 16 (TPe). Tropical Parulas pushed farther north; a male was at Lost Maples in the Hill Country Apr. 15 (ph., MBS), another not far away at Concan Apr. 29 (†M&CM); yet another on the U.T.C. at San Bernard May 16 (JoH); and two males were singing at Aransas May 23 (RWe, BF). Freeman found

yet another singing male Tropical in *Bee* the next day. The push of Townsend's Warbler in the west also brought at least 5 reports along the coast from S. Padre I. n. to Galveston I. Two Hermit Warblers in the Chisos Mts. of Big Bend Apr. 2 were early (RW). In recent years, Painted Redstarts have been very irregular in Big Bend; this season, singles were noted in Blue Cr. Canyon Apr. 29 (JDu, WRi) and in the Chisos Basin Apr. 30 (EH). The wintering Rufous-capped Warbler on L. Amistad near Comstock was last reported Mar. 6 (PSv, SBa); other Rufous-capped Warblers were written up at Hot Springs, Big Bend, May 1 (†BMA, DT), and in Midland May 10 (†JHe).

TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A female Hepatic Tanager at Palmetto Mar. 1 (DFI) fit a pattern of winter vagrancy in c. Texas, rather than being a migrant. Scarlet Tanager reports included an early male at Big Bend Mar. 31 (MBo) and a singing male in *Hemphill* May 12 (KS). Our usual smattering of coastal W. Tanagers was a small flood: At least 13 were reported at 10 localities the length of the coast from Apr. 11 to June 3. Some birds apparently remained at given locations for weeks. These were preceded by a Western in San Antonio Apr. 9 (KBa). The wintering Pyrrhuloxias in *Randall* remained as late as Apr. 15 (m.ob.), and one was seen in Amarillo Mar. 1 (CSt). A dozen Rose-breasted Grosbeaks passing through the Trans-Pecos provided a counterweight to the western avian influences in the east (m.ob.). Two male and one female Blue Buntings at Bentsen stayed from the winter until at least Mar. 15, when one male flew into a window, providing Texas with its first specimen (*fide* MQ, * to T.C.W.C.). A Lazuli Bunting reported in *Smith* May 7 provided only the 2nd record in the past few decades from the Pineywoods (PeB), and there was a hint of higher numbers through the c. third of the state.

The bulldozing of brush near the Zapata library created a stir in the birding community (coming as it did during the Great Texas Birding Classic in late April) and caused concern about the status of White-collared

Usually quite hard to find in Texas, Baird's Sparrows were reported regularly this spring in Big Bend National Park, evidently attracted to water being used for irrigation. This one was at Rio Grande Village in Big Bend May 8, 1998. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley

Seedeaters there. While at least one male was heard singing in late May (Bba † et al.), the long-term situation needs to be monitored. A handful of Clay-colored Sparrows were on the U.T.C. in April (m.ob.) and a large fallout reportedly occurred on S. Padre I. late in the month (*fide* WRu). A Brewer's Sparrow at Packery Channel Apr. 17 offered another rare barrier island record (RoB), and Brewer's were late at Big Bend Ranch May 21 and *Randall* May 30 (m.ob.). Migrant Baird's were much more conspicuous around irrigated areas in Big Bend; up to seven birds were seen Apr. 30 to May 21 and several were photographed (DO † et al., ph. GL). A Baird's was also in *Parker* May 21 (JMCH), providing rare documentation in n.c. Texas. Rare in the Panhandle, a Swamp Sparrow was at Taylor Lakes, *Donley*, Mar. 24 (KS).

The corridor for migrating Yellow-headed Blackbirds spread to the east this spring; numerous reports came from the U.T.C., and hundreds were in the e. portions of n. Texas, including 150 in *Delta* May 16 (*fide* MWh). A few Hooded Orioles were away from their normal haunts along the immediate Rio Grande corridor and s. Texas: A male was at Balmorhea May 12–18 (TJ) and a pair seemed to be on territory in the Davis Mts. May 13–27, but disappeared thereafter (E&PS, m.ob.). A Hooded at San Antonio May 19–20 was a good find (KBa) and sneaking ever farther north was a pair in San Marcos, also May 19 (DHe). A curious-looking oriole was at Santa Ana Mar. 1 and later suggested a possible Altamira × Hooded hybrid (TCL, GMC, ph., SBe). A mystery oriole at Devil's R. May 10–15 was at first thought to be an imm. male Altamira (BA), but recordings of its calls seem-

ed to rule out that species; the taped calls are still being studied. Unexpected Scott's Orioles in c. Texas included birds in *Mason* Apr. 6 (DFe, BoF), at Balcones Canyonlands May 5 (JKe), and in Midland May 16 (DHu). After a winter absence, it was curious to find Purple Finches in the Austin area Apr. 19 (banded, PK) and Apr. 22 (PR). A House Finch was at Riviera, *Kleberg*, May 28, where previously unrecorded (GPer). Single Red Crossbills were seen at Quitaque, *Floyd*, in March (TFer) and at L. Tanglewood, *Randall*, Apr. 26 (TLJ). Remarkably, crossbills were still present in the Pineywoods, holdovers from their invasion a year and a half ago: Two were in *San Augustine* Mar. 30 and nine were in Nacogdoches Apr. 20 (RiS). A Lesser Goldfinch was a barrier island rarity at Packery Channel May 16 (MC). An Am. Goldfinch in alternate plumage brightened up a feeder in *Victoria* May 29 (RW).

UNDOCUMENTED RARITIES

Little Gull, V.C.D.B., Mar. 2; Broad-billed Hummingbird, Big Bend, Apr. 7; Fork-tailed Flycatcher, *Cameron*, Apr. 10; Red-faced Warbler, El Paso, May 10; Shuny Cowbird, Corpus Christi, Apr. 28.

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Notable Warbler Records in W. Texas, Spring 1998

Species (no.)	Dates	Location	Observer
Blue-winged	May 6	Davis Mts.	JDa
Golden-winged	April 21	Big Bend	RHo
Golden-winged	May 8	Uvalde	ML
Golden-winged	May 25	Midland	RMS, FR
Tennessee (8)	April 5–May 25	Brewster, Presidio	m.ob.
Tennessee	May 8	Buffalo Lake	LS, RSc
N Parula	April 27–28	Lubbock	PKi
Chestnut-sided (13)	May 5–30	Presidio, Jeff Davis	m.ob.
Magnolia (8)	May 6–27	Trans-Pecos	m.ob.
Magnolia	May 21	Amarillo	BiMc, RSc
Black-throated Blue	April 7	Ward	BJP
Black-throated Green (13)	May 2–28	Trans-Pecos	m.ob.
Blackburnian (25)	May 15–28	Trans-Pecos	m.ob.
Blackburnian	May 22	Amarillo	BiMc, RSc
Blackburnian (2)	May 25	Midland	RMS, FR
Yellow-throated	April 5	Brewster	DO
Prairie	May 23	Big Bend	DEn
Palm	April 7	Ward	BJP
Palm	May 10	Big Bend	Gho, MPec
Bay-breasted	May 22–23	Big Bend	DEn, CW
Blackpoll (3)	May 1–21	Trans-Pecos	m.ob.
Blackpoll (2)	May 3–9	Panhandle	m.ob.
Blackpoll	May 10	Midland	GG, JHe
Cerulean	May 9	Dickens	GJ, PKi
Worm-eating (3)	April 20–May 10	Big Bend	m.ob.
Worm-eating	May 2	Midland	GKe
Ovenbird (9)	April 22–May 26	Presidio, Jeff Davis	m.ob.
Louisiana Waterthrush	May 9	Lubbock	BRa
Louisiana Waterthrush	May 14	Fort Davis	E&PS
Kentucky	April 28	Randall	TFo
Kentucky	May 21	Big Bend	MB
Mourning (5)	April 21–May 31	Big Bend, Davis Mts.	m.ob.
Mourning	April 29	Midland	JMe
Mourning	May 23	Randall	KS, TB
Hooded (7)	March 26–May 7	Trans-Pecos	m.ob.
Hooded (3)	April 13–May 24	Panhandle	m.ob.
Hooded (1–3?)	March 31–May 21	Tarrant	JMcH
Canada (10)	May 21–31	Trans-Pecos	m.ob.
Canada	May 26–27	Midland	DDo

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