

The winter produced events that under more normal circumstances would be headliners in this column.

Examples include the largest incursion of Purple Finches into the state in 20 years, outstanding grassland bird diversity in the Trans-Pecos (including numerous Baird's Sparrows), and outstanding numbers of Mountains Plovers found in many locations. However, these very noteworthy events went almost unremarked, as all eyes focused on the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where the invasion of vagrants from northeastern Mexico was unprecedented in our experience. Like kids in a candy store, birders were treated to 3 Roadside Hawks, an Elegant Trogon, a Social Flycatcher, 9 Rose-throated Becards, 7 White-throated Robins, 3 Golden-crowned Warblers, at least 15 Crimson-collared Grosbeaks, and 8 Blue Buntings. For some of the species, the numbers of individuals present this winter exceeded the number of sightings previously documented in the United States! Spectacular rarities were also found in many other areas of the state, including a state first Streak-backed Oriole on the upper coast, an American Dipper at Dallas, and an apparent male Lawrence's Goldfinch at Rockport, to name a few.

This winter's wave of rarities brought with it a large influx of birders from around the country and elsewhere. It is hard to quantify the number of people visiting the Lower Rio Grande Valley, but we can look at one very popular stop on the tour: the Frontera Audubon Sanctuary in Weslaco. The previous winter, the visitation during the winter (December through February) was about 600 people—a sharp contrast to the 6782 visitors during the same period this season. The economic impact of birding in this area is truly impressive, particularly when Mexican vagrants are present.

Abbreviations: L.R.G.V. (Lower Rio Grande Valley); T.B.R.C. (Texas B.R.C.); U.T.C. (Upper Texas Coast). The following are shortened names for the respective local, county, state, or national parks, and wildlife refuges, etc.: Anahuac, Bentsen, Big Bend, Big Bend Ranch, Buescher, Buffalo Lake, Caprock Canyons, San Bernard, Santa Ana, Sea Rim, and Trinity River.

LOONS THROUGH STORKS

Single Red-throated and Pacific Loons were found in *Calhoun* 19 Dec (BFR, PHo). Additional Pacific Loons included 3 each in *Rockwall* 16 Dec (BG et al.) and *Llano* 8–15 Jan (SAs, †TFe) and a single in *Comal* 28 Dec (BD). Rare for the Panhandle were 2–3 Common Loons in *Hutchinson* 4–19 Dec (*vide* BPI) and one in *Donley* 2 Jan (IO). Least Grebe was much in evidence on the U.T.C. after another wet year. A pair remained through 16 Jan in *Freestone*, where they

Texas



nested the previous summer (PBa). As was much in evidence this season, *Aechmophorus* grebes can breed through the winter, with many pairs with dependent young present at Balmorhea L., *Reeves*. Two Western Grebes at L. Tyler, *Smith* 19 Dec (A&CB) were very rare for the Pineywoods. Up to 18 Western Grebes were present on L. Buchanan, *Llano* 27 Feb (RBa).

An estimated 2000+ American White Pelicans on L. Livingston, *Polk* 28 Dec was impressive (TFe). A subad. Brown Booby located in Port Aransas, *Nueces* 26 Feb–4 Mar (JSi, CTa, †m.ob., ph.) furnished just the 4th winter record for the state. A very early Masked Booby was in *Nueces* 28 Feb (BFR, PHo). A Neotropic Cormorant in *Lubbock* 6–21 Feb (AH) represented the first Feb record for the High Plains. An American Bittern at Rio Grande Village 16 Dec–7 Feb (JHi, MF) represented a first winter record for Big Bend; others of note were 2 in *Reeves* 19 Dec (ML) and one in *Lubbock* 18 Dec–13 Feb (AH et al.). Two Least Bitterns were

Mark W. Lockwood

402 East Harriet Avenue

Alpine, Texas 79830

(mark.lockwood@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Randy Pinkston

913 Hillcrest Drive

Salado, Texas 76571

(pinkston@vvm.com)

Willie Sekula

7063 County Road 228

Falls City, Texas 78113

(wsekula@ev1.net)



This second-winter gull found at Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas 8 (here) through 22 February 2005 appears to have characteristics of Yellow-legged Gull. If the identification can be confirmed, it would mark a second consecutive winter for the species in Texas. Photograph by Martin Reid.

found in *Brazoria* 19 Dec (JWi, EH et al.). A Great Egret lingered in *Lubbock* throughout the season (AH), while single Snowy Egrets lingered in *Dallas* through 18 Dec (KC) and *Tarrant* until 28 Jan (Sje, DPo). Cattle Egrets lingered at scattered inland locales, most notably about 100 in *Smith* 15 Jan (fide JPu). Green Herons were unexpected in *Collin* 4 Dec (PA), *Wilson* 16 Dec (WS), and *Bexar* 8 Jan (RHi, GS). Single White Ibis at *Nacogdoches* and at *Longview*, both 18 Dec, were C.B.C. firsts there. Seven Wood Storks in *Cameron* 8 Dec (BMc) and 3 in *Chambers* 8 Jan (ph. AWo) provided unexpected winter records.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

As noted by Wolf, the season appeared to be an "off" winter for most waterfowl. Three Ross's Geese lingered in *Bell* through 6 Jan (RPi). The distribution of Cackling Goose is of great interest due to the recent split. Notable counts of Cackling Goose included 23 in *Bell* 13 Dec (RPi), 100 (compared to 200 *Canadas*) from *Carson* 4 Dec (BPi), 6202 (compared to 11,895 *Canadas* and 19,339 unidentified) in *Lubbock* 18 Dec (fide AH), and 28 (compared to 3499 *Canadas*) in *Hemphill* 29 Dec (fide SP). A Cackling Goose was also documented at *Tornillo Res.* 1 Dec (BZ), the 2nd *El Paso* record. A Eurasian Wigeon found in *Starr* 22 Feb represented a rare s. Texas record (†D&BF). Greater Scaup made a good showing in cen. Texas, with multiple sightings 30 Dec–19 Feb in *Bell*

(RKO, RPi) and *Williamson* (TFe, ByS). More than 100 Greater Scaup on L. Bob Sandlin, *Camp* was noteworthy for the *Pineywoods* (DBr). A Surf Scoter in *Bexar* lingered until 8 Dec (SCo, MRe); a White-winged Scoter in *Kleberg* 5 Jan was rare there (TL). Long-tailed Ducks were scattered statewide, with reports from *Bexar* through early Dec (MRe), *Aransas* 9 Dec (MM), *McLennan* 28 Nov–2 Dec (FB), *Travis* late Nov–21 Jan and possibly later (EC, m.ob.), *Rains* 11–21 Feb (RoB et al.), *Galveston* 28 Feb (CR), and *Hudspeth* 28 Dec–27 Jan (DaB, BPe). Single Masked Ducks were found in *Matagorda* 20–24 Dec (L&RS, ph. HS) and *San Patricio* 20–30 Dec (GB, †MRe).

Extralimital White-tailed Kites appeared near the *Presidio/Jeff Davis* line 2 Dec (ph. CMi) and in *Hardeman* 7 Jan (BBo et al.), *Brewster* 30 Jan (DEI), and *Kent* 26 Feb (AH et al.). Intriguing was an ad. Northern Goshawk from *Hardeman* 30 Dec–12 Jan (†SW, m.ob). Common Black-Hawks were reported from *Bastrop* 24 Dec (JC) and at *El Canelo*, *Kenedy* 14 Feb (KE, ph. RT). The Harris's Hawk at *Hermann Park*, *Harris* continued through the winter period. *Roadside Hawks* made an unprecedented incursion into the state. Single individuals were at *San Ygnacio*, *Zapata* 30 Jan–1 Mar (†DEN, †RT, m.ob.), near *Cannon Road*, *Cameron* 5–16 Feb (†JA et al.), and *Santa Ana*, *Hidalgo* 9 Feb+ (†BFi, †PiH, m.ob.). A Red-shouldered Hawk in *Big Bend* 20–27 Feb (BBe, AH, RKO, ML) provided possibly the first winter

record for the park. Another Red-shouldered in *Crosby* 1 Jan (PK) was notable. Rare in winter, Broad-winged Hawks were reported from *Galveston* 15 Dec (TC), *Brazoria* 17 Dec (BLi, ph. WSt), and *Starr* 5 Feb (BMc). There were sporadic reports of other Broad-wingeds in conservation lands in the L.R.G.V. Lingering or wintering Swainson's Hawks were noted in *Galveston* 11 Dec (SLe), *Chambers* 13 Dec (ph. JSt), *Jefferson* 25 Dec (ph. EC), *Bexar* 5 Jan and 21 Feb (SH, MRe, SCo), *Jefferson* 15–16 Jan (GD, SM), and *Frio* 21 Feb (WS). A juv. Swainson's Hawk spent Dec–Jan terrorizing gulls at *Elliott Landfill*, *Nueces* (MRe, WS). A Rough-legged Hawk was found in *Medina* 22 Jan (MHe). A Golden Eagle was a great find for the *Pineywoods* and a new species for the *Longview C.B.C.* 18 Dec (ERa). Crested Caracara was a significant find in *Gregg* 11 Feb (DBr). A Prairie Falcon in *Williamson* 31 Jan (ph. TFe) was rare for the *Blackland Prairies*.

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

A Black Rail surprised *Corpus Christi* (West) C.B.C. participants in *Nueces* 20 Dec (JSi). Two King Rails at *Balmorhea L.*, *Reeves* 19 Dec (JGe) represented a first area winter report. A King Rail in *Gregg* 18 Dec (PHA, DMe) was also regionally quite rare. A Whooping Crane near *Plainview*, *Hale* 2 Dec (KMo) was unexpected but well described by an experienced wildlife biologist.

It was a banner year for wintering Mountain Plovers in the state. The mother lode was apparently located sw. of *San Antonio*, with a seasonal total of nearly 900 birds: 100 in *Bexar* 4 Dec (BD), 152 near *Uvalde* 11 Jan (BH), 315 in *Dimmit* 30 Jan (BH), and 219 near *Pearsall*, *Frio* (MRe). Holliday reported 325 birds wintering near *Dell City* and nearby salt flats, *Hudspeth* and three groups totaling 162 birds in *Reeves*, *Midland*, and *Upton* 18 Feb. In addition, 90 were found n. of *Balmorhea*, *Reeves* 1 Jan (DaB, BPe). Fennell remarked that Mountain Plovers were generally hard to find in *Williamson*, with a high count of 34 birds 22 Jan. A Snowy Plover in *Denton* 27 Dec was notable (BG). Five Black-necked Stilts were in *El Paso* 16 Dec (BZ), and one was in *Big Bend* 18 Jan (SLi), the latter thought to afford a first winter record for the park. Three American Avocets at *McNary Res.*, *Hudspeth* 19 Dec (BZ) were unexpected; one in *Williamson* 30 Jan, and presumably the same bird in *Bell* 27 Feb (TFe), provided even rarer winter records. Two Lesser Yellowlegs in *Donley* 5 Dec (BPi) and 4 in *Crosby* 29 Jan (BBe et al.) were considered late, but the latter could have been early "spring" migrants. A Solitary Sandpiper in *Denton* 27 Dec was notable (BG, PBi). An Upland Sandpiper was well described from *Fort Bend* on the extremely late date of 26

Dec (†SLe). Holliday reported 2 Whimbrels with Mountain Plovers in *Zavala* 30 Jan and 8 Feb. Seven Least Sandpipers in *Donley* 11 Dec (BPI) and 4 in *Randall* 18 Dec (*vide* LSA) were notable for the Panhandle. Two Pectoral Sandpipers in *Nueces* 5 Dec were very late (LJo). A Pectoral Sandpiper seen in *Brazoria* 19 Dec (Bly, VE) provided one of very few winter records for the U.T.C. A Pectoral Sandpiper in *Waller* 27 Feb was early (TE). Long-billed Dowitchers were unexpected in *Titus/Camp* 12 Dec (MWh) and 23 Jan (DBr), as was one in *Rains* 4 Feb (RKi).

A breeding-plumaged Franklin's Gull at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* 2 Jan was a real shock for Carpenter. Three first-winter Little Gulls showed up in the state this season: Quintana Jetty, *Brazoria* 6–18 Jan (ph., †RW et al.), the spillway of L. Livingston, *Polk* 21–27 Dec (CMe, m.ob.), and L. Tawakoni, *Rains* 4 Dec (†MWh). In addition, a second-winter bird was found on L. Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* 16 Dec (†DH, †BG). An ad. Black-headed Gull on South Padre I., *Cameron* 12 Dec (†G&SC, ph. BMc) provided a new record for the L.R.G.V. A Heermann's Gull at Crystal Beach, *Galveston* 25 Feb (†DT) would be the 3rd for the state, if accepted. Up to 8 California Gulls were scattered throughout the state this season. A first-winter gull thought to be a California Gull × Ring-billed Gull hybrid spent the season at Elliott Landfill, Corpus Christi, *Nueces* (ph. MRe, WS). A Herring Gull with plumage characteristics of the Asian subspecies *vegae* was present along Bryan Beach, *Brazoria* 13 Jan–25 Feb (ph. RW). A second-winter gull identified as a Yellow-legged Gull was at Corpus Christi's Elliott Landfill 8–22 Feb (ph. MRe, WS); European experts concurred with the identification after reviewing photographs. Seven Thayer's Gulls were in the state this winter. Up to 3 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen in n.-cen. Texas in Dec. A first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was found in *Aransas* 28 Dec (ph., †JJ), while another first-winter bird was present near the Boca Chica jetty, *Cameron* 25 Jan+ (RT, †BMc et al.). An apparent ad. Kelp Gull × Herring Gull hybrid or backcross was studied at the Brownsville Dump, *Cameron* on 18 Feb (MJI). Two first-winter Black-legged Kittiwakes were found along the coast; one at Boca Chica jetty, *Cameron* 30–31 Dec (GCh;

ph. BMc) and another at Quintana Jetty, *Brazoria* 1 Jan (JO).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The pair of Ruddy Ground-Doves present from the fall continued at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend through the season (m.ob.). Groove-billed Anis made a good showing on five of the C.B.C.s on the U.T.C., with Freeport tallying a high of 12 individuals. A Burrowing Owl at Cement Creek L., *Tarrant* on 21 Feb was a good find (DPo). A Long-eared Owl was flushed near the Rio Grande in Laredo, *Webb* 16 Jan (WS, SCo, DMu). Short-eared Owls made a good showing in South Texas, where up to 9 were present on a ranch near Kenedy, *Karnes* (WS) and up to 6 were found near Granjeno, *Hidalgo* 25 Jan+ (BMc, m.ob.). Two *Chaetura* swifts observed in Houston 21 Feb (JMu) were thought to be early Chimney Swifts, but the date is more in line with Vaux's Swift, which has still not been documented in the state.

did a careful count of the birds in his El Paso yard in early Dec and tallied up to 3 Anna's, one Calliope, 4 Rufous/Allen's, and 3 Broad-tailed. By the end of the period, only one Broad-tailed remained, with most birds departing in Jan and/or Feb. An imm. male Anna's Hummingbird frequented feeders at Ft. Worth, *Tarrant* 11 Jan–8 Feb (LB), and another visited a *Brazos* feeder 1 Dec–22 Jan (KA). A male Broad-tailed Hummingbird was at Lubbock 18 Nov–18 Dec (BW et al.). Seven Allen's Hummingbirds were documented along the coastal prairies, but more unexpected was a first-winter female at Austin 28 Feb (SP). Lingering Allen's Hummingbirds included the male present in the fall in *Hays* through 11 Dec (SP) and the male in the Davis Mts. remaining until 10 Dec (M&ME).

An imm. male Elegant Trogon appeared at Weslaco, *Hidalgo* 14 Jan (STh, †m.ob.). The bird wowed hundreds of birders as it stayed through the season in Frontera Audubon's sanctuary. A Red-headed Woodpecker in a Muleshoe yard, *Bailey* 23 Dec (MD) and a Red-bellied Woodpecker at Rita Blanca National Grassland, *Dallam* 15 Jan (BFR, PS) were well w. of their respective normal ranges. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at El Paso 27 Dec (DBr, BPe) was a little farther w. than expected. Two Red-naped Sapsuckers were found on the Balcones Canyonland C.B.C. 20 Dec (CS et al.), while a male was found near Pearsall, *Frio* 12 Dec (SCo, WS, MRe). A Ladder-backed Woodpecker was seen along Beard Road, *Fort Bend* 18 Dec (TK), adding to the mounting records of this species on the w. U.T.C. A



This adult Black-headed Gull discovered on 12 December 2004 (here) at South Padre Island, Cameron County, Texas was the southernmost ever found in the state and the United States (except for Puerto Rico, a commonwealth dependency!). Photograph by Brad McKinney.

A male Green-breasted Mango present since fall remained faithful to its favored feeder at McAllen, *Hidalgo* until 25 Jan; it was reportedly briefly joined by another male in early Dec (*vide* JA). The male Broad-billed Hummingbird at Houston present since fall remained through the season. A female Broad-billed Hummingbird was banded at another Houston location 15 Feb (SP); it had apparently been present since mid-Nov. The 2 Broad-billeds present in the Davis Mts., *Jeff Davis* remained until 19 Oct (M&ME). An amazing record for the Pinewoods was a Buff-bellied Hummingbird that has been present sporadically at Ratcliff, *Houston* since May 2003 (ph. BBA). Zimmer

female Downy Woodpecker in w. El Paso 1 Jan (ph. MS, JZ) was a local rarity. A Hairy Woodpecker at the mouth of the San Bernard R., *Brazoria* 18 Dec (SAI, GCA et al.) was noteworthy. A westerly Pileated Woodpecker was reported near Katy L., *Montague* 4 Feb (JHo et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH JAYS

Up to 3 Hammond's Flycatchers were present through the period near Pearsall, *Frio* (ph. MRe, WS). One to 3 Gray Flycatchers were at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend, where they are more expected, but one at the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute near Ft. Davis, *Jeff Davis* 28 Dec (JGe,

MHa) provided a very good record for the cen. Davis Mts. A calling and tape-responsive Dusky Flycatcher at Ft. Bliss 28 Dec (BZ) was a winter first for El Paso. A Cordilleran Flycatcher spent the season along the Frio R. near Pearsall, *Frio* (MRe et al.). The Frontera Audubon Sanctuary hosted a Dusky-capped Flycatcher (subspecies *lawrenceii*) 18 Dec–1 Jan (†BMc, †DJ, m.ob.), while another was along Cannon Road, *Cameron* 22 Jan+ (†TFu, m.ob.). Arvin heard a calling Social Flycatcher just outside Bentsen, *Hidalgo* 7 Jan. The bird subsequently took up residence within the state park through 14 Jan, where it was documented with voice recordings and photographs, provided the first fully documented record for the state and the United States. There is a documented sight record from nearby Anzalduas County Park from 1990. An excellent find on the Dallas C.B.C. was a Tropical/Couch's Kingbird 18 Dec (ph. J&MK). The Thick-billed Kingbird returned for the 3rd consecutive winter to Selkirk I., *Matagorda* 20–31 Dec (†MAu et al.). A very late migrant Western Kingbird was seen in Panna Maria, *Karnes* 11 Dec (WS).

Rose-throated Becards staged an invasion into the state, with a total of 9 individuals seen at various L.R.G.V. locations. Up to 8 Northern Shrikes were seen at seven Panhandle locations this winter. Two White-eyed Vireos at L. Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* 19 (ph. BG, GCo, BoS) provided a first winter record for n.-cen. Texas. A Yellow-throated Vireo was found on the Guadalupe Delta C.B.C., *Calhoun* 15 Dec (BFR, PHo). The status of the various "Solitary" Vireo taxa is still being worked out in the state. Single Plumbeous Vireos were at Rosehill Cemetery in Corpus Christi, *Nueces* 11 Dec (MCo), Oyster Creek, *Brazoria* (NB, HT et al.), McAllen, *Hidalgo* 12 Feb (†RHo), and Davis Mts. S.P. 10 Jan (BS). Notable Cassin's Vireos were singles at Big Bend Ranch 7 Dec (ML) and Rosehill Cemetery, Corpus Christi 23 Dec (ph. MRe et al.), plus a wintering individual along the Frio R. near Pearsall, *Frio* (MRe; SCo, WS). Essentially accidental in winter in the South Plains, a Blue-headed Vireo was seen and heard on the White River Lake C.B.C., *Crosby* 1 Jan (TM, RKo). A Chihuahuan Raven was reported from Wimberley, *Hays* 5 Dec (SY). Common Ravens are increasingly being sighted below the Caprock Escarpment. This winter, up to 21 birds were reported from four different South Plain locations (AH et al.).

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Lingering Northern Rough-winged Swallows were in *Denton* on 1 Dec (GG) and at Greenbelt Res., *Donley* 5 Dec (BPi). Cave Swallows wintered in large numbers in the Central Brazos Valley, with 80 at College Sta-

tion, *Brazos* (EIR) and 89 in *Grimes* (DVo). Farther n., 6 Cave Swallows were discovered in *Clay* 8 Jan+ (BG, RR), providing a first winter record for n.-cen. Texas. A White-breasted Nuthatch wandered westward to Henrietta, *Clay* 3 Dec (DMc). Out-of-place wrens included a Rock Wren near Olney, *Young* 3 Dec (JHo) and Canyon Wrens at Dickens Springs, *Dickens* 29 Jan (AH) and San Ygnacio, *Zapata* 16 Jan+ (DMu, MI). A Sedge Wren was found near Buffalo Springs L., *Lubbock* 1 Dec–28 Jan (AH); a single individual wintered at the same location last year. A well-described American Dipper was at Prairie Creek Park, *Dallas* 23 Dec (†SAs). A pair of Black-tailed Gnatcatchers was e. of the known range near Choke Canyon, *Live Oak* 1 Jan (WS, MRe, SCo).

Five Western Bluebirds in *Hemphill* 29 Dec (SP) and one near White River L., *Crosby* 31 Dec (BBe, RKo et al.) were noteworthy. Mountain Bluebirds wandered eastward to *Bastrop*, where one was seen 21 Dec (PR) and 7 on 18 Jan (BFR). A first for the Trans-Pecos was a Clay-colored Robin at Big Bend's Sam Nail Ranch 27 Dec+ (CKe, KMc, ph. CLy). Other out-of-range Clay-colored Robins included singles on the King Ranch, *Kleberg* 15 Dec (TL), at Victoria, *Victoria* 18 Dec (DMu), and at Uvalde, *Uvalde* 4 Feb (ph. MHe). Single White-throated Robins were near Bentsen, *Hidalgo* 30 Dec (†JA), Weslaco 2 Jan+ (†FB, JoM, m.ob.), Inn at Chachalaca Bend, *Cameron* 24 Jan (†MRo), Cannon Road, *Cameron* 28 Jan–4 Feb (†DEn, †TFu et al.), Santa Ana 28 Jan–19 Feb (†m.ob.), Sabal Palm, *Cameron* 28–31 Jan (†JiP, et al.), and Bentsen, *Hidalgo* 10 Feb (JGo, †MP). There were only three previous records for the United States. The Blue Mockingbird present in Pharr, *Hidalgo* continued to appear sporadically. Four Bohemian Waxwings were found at Humble, *Harris* 11 Feb (†JWa), and although there were rumors of other sightings from around the state, no documentation was provided from other sites.

Lingering Blue-winged Warblers were at Galveston 10 Dec (BE) and Freeport, *Brazoria* 19 Dec (MAu). An outstanding record was furnished by a Tennessee Warbler at Austin, *Travis* mid-Jan–7 Mar (ph. KF). A Nashville Warbler at Cottonwood Campground, *Brewster* 12 Dec (ML) provided a first winter record for Big Bend. Two Northern Parulas wintered along the Frio R. near Pearsall, *Frio* (MRe, WS, SCo). Tropical Parula sightings of interest included singles at Utopia, *Uvalde* 29 Jan (MHe) and Green

Lake, *Calhoun* 15 Dec (ph. WS, DMu). Two lingering Yellow Warblers were at Choke Canyon Res., *McMullen* 1 Jan (ph. WS, MRe, SCo). A Magnolia Warbler was at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* through at least 5 Feb (EC, SM). Black-throated Gray Warblers wintered at Big Bend, with singles at Cottonwood Campground, Rio Grande Village, and Campground Canyon (m.ob.). Providing first area winter records were single Black-throated Green Warblers in n.-cen. Texas at L. Tawakoni 2 Jan+ (RKi, m.ob.) and in the Hill Country at Utopia, *Uvalde* 7 Jan (MHe). A Yellow-throated Warbler at Nacogdoches, *Nacogdoches* 6–8 Jan (CMo) provided a rare winter record for the Pineywoods. Two Black-and-white Warblers lingered through the season at White Rock L., *Dallas* (m.ob.). A Worm-eating Warbler at High I., *Galveston* 27 Dec (†L&BF) furnished the first winter record for the U.T.C. A Northern Waterthrush at Brazos Bend, *Fort Bend* 13 Feb (CTL) was a nice find; a Louisiana Waterthrush banded at Humble, *Harris* 8 Jan+ (LO, ph. DVo et al.) provided a first winter record for the U.T.C. The male Gray-crowned Yellowthroat present during much of 2004 at Sabal Palm, *Cameron* returned 8 Dec (†BMc, m.ob.). Lingering Wilson's Warblers in the Trans-Pecos included singles at McNary, *Hudspeth* 19 Dec (BZ) and Balmorhea S.P., *Reeves* 22–27 Dec (IJ). Single Golden-crowned Warblers were documented at three *Cameron* locations: the Los Ebanos Preserve 9 Jan–1 Feb (†TFu, m.ob.), Brownsville 18 Jan–4 Mar (†PW, m.ob.), and the Inn at Chachalaca Bend 23 Jan–17 Feb (†KHa). The male Rufous-capped Warbler reported in the fall from *Frio* remained through the season (MRe, m.ob.) Yellow-breasted Chats were noted near Damon, *Brazoria* 31 Dec+ (RW, C&OB) and Fort Travis, *Galveston* 7 Jan (CTL).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Summer Tanagers at separate *Harrison* locations 12 Dec (ERa) and 17 Dec (GLu) provided rare winter records for the Pineywoods. Similarly unexpected was a Summer Tanager in *Grayson* 28 Dec (BG, BoS). A Scarlet Tanager near Cibolo, *Guadalupe* 10 Dec (ph. SS) was very unexpected. A first-winter male Flame-colored Tanager at Pharr, *Hidalgo* 28 Feb (†MCA, ph. ScJ) represents the 6th record for the state. Two Rufous-crowned Sparrows made a surprising appearance at L. Worth, *Tarrant* 25 Jan (DPo et al.). Far s. of where they are expected, sin-

SA The Colleys' continuing investigations of mangrove stands surrounding South Bay of the Laguna Madre, *Cameron* have uncovered what appears to be a sizeable population of Mangrove Warblers. Up to 4, including 2 males, were found 2 Jan+. Subsequent searches revealed at least 8 individuals in the area. By the end of the season, males appeared to be on territory. This strongly suggests a resident population, and there are many miles of additional habitat extending from South Padre I. to Boca Chica that has not been surveyed.

gle American Tree Sparrows were found at North Padre I., *Nueces* 19 Dec (ph. MCo), *Bastrop* 2–10 Feb (BFR), and *Falls* 5 Feb (JR). Brewer's Sparrows at Whitsett, *Atascosa* 5 Dec (WS) and White River L., *Crosby* 31 Dec (DDC, DL) were notable. A Black-throated Sparrow was near Post, *Garza* 26 Feb (AH). It appears that *Baird's Sparrows* are regular winterers on the Marfa Plateau: up to 5 were near Marfa, *Presidio* until 6 Jan (†m.ob.), and 3 were in w. *Jeff Davis* 12 Dec–23 Jan (†MAU, †ML et al.). A *Golden-crowned Sparrow* was at Lubbock, *Lubbock* 18 Dec (†RL, TM). Wandering Harris's Sparrows included one at Laguna Atascosa, *Cameron* 19 Dec (MaH), 2 at Seminole Canyon, *Val Verde* 22 Dec–6 Jan (BS), and one on w. Galveston I. 16 Feb (JSt). A Slate-colored Fox Sparrow was well described at Sam Nail Ranch, Big Bend, *Brewster* 19 Feb (†RKO, BBe, AH); this form has not been fully documented in the state to date. A Gray-headed Junco near Kerrville, *Kerr* 26 Dec (TSc) provided a rare Hill Country record. A Smith's Longspur at Galveston Island S.P., *Galveston* 5 Dec (†DPe et al.) provided a first for the U.T.C. An extraordinarily large flock of 750–1000 Smith's Longspurs was noted near L. Tawakoni, *Rains* 16 Jan (MWh, DA).

Continuing the trend noted in the fall, *Crimson-collared Grosbeaks* showed up in unprecedented numbers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, with least 4 during the season at Weslaco (m.ob.), up to 3 at Pharr, *Hidalgo* through the period (AWi, †m.ob.), a window-kill at Brownsville, *Cameron* 10 Dec (†PBu, †JiP), at least 3 at Sabal Palm, *Cameron* 16 Dec+ (†BMc, m.ob.), one at the Inn at Chachalaca Bend, *Cameron* 30 Dec–23 Jan (†ABr et al.), and one at Laredo, *Webb* 16 Jan (†SCo). A male Northern Cardinal provided a rare El Paso record; it stayed through the period (BZ). Also of particular interest was a nesting record for Northern Cardinal from Santa Fe, *Galveston* (*vide* JSt), where the young fledged on the incredibly early date of 16 Feb. *Blue Buntings* were found in five locations, with 2 at Laredo, *Webb* 2–29 Jan (WP, †m.ob.), a female at Pharr, *Hidalgo* 6 Jan (AWi, †DBe), a male at Zapata, *Zapata* 16–20 Jan (†MRe et al.), 2 at Santa Ana 17 Jan+ (†m.ob.), and one at Bentsen, *Hidalgo* 28–29 Jan (RPe, †MP). Two female-plumaged Painted Buntings at Big Bend's Cottonwood Campground, *Brewster* 12 Dec (ML) provided a first winter record for the park. Lingered Dickcissels included singles in *Bexar* 3 Dec (HR) and San Bernard, *Brazoria* 11 Dec (JSt).

A Rusty Blackbird wandered westward to El Paso 2 Jan (ph. JPa). A Common Grackle in Ft. Hancock 7 Jan (BZ) was an overdue *Hudspeth* first. An Orchard Oriole at Rio Grande Village, *Brewster* 22 Feb (MF) and a Hooded at the same location 28 Jan (DPa)

furnished first winter records for Big Bend. The same was true for a male Hooded Oriole at Port O'Connor, *Calhoun* 30 Jan–23 Feb (BFR, PHo). Providing a state first, a *Streak-backed Oriole* was at Brazos Bend, *Fort Bend* 12 Dec+ (BGo, ph. BA, ph. †GLa, m.ob.). A Bullock's Oriole at Midland 12 Jan–3 Feb (D&JM) was unexpected. A lingering Baltimore Oriole was at L. Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* 19 Dec (DH, BG). Following an appearance in the same yard two winters ago, a male Scott's Oriole was in s. *Tarrant* 28 Jan (ph. EW). The invasion of Purple Finches into the state this winter was the largest in 20 years. The species showed up as far w. as Lubbock and Dalhart, *Dallam* and as far s. as Corpus Christi, *Nueces*. Apparent male Cassin's Finches were reported from near Canyon L., *Comal* 22 Jan (DPu, ph. CH) and L. Worth 20 Feb (DPo). Red Crossbills were reported in small numbers in the Trans-Pecos and High Plains, but a few wandered farther into the state to n.-cen. Texas and se. to *Bastrop* 1–25 Dec (MG, PR). An imm. male White-winged Crossbill was near Uteley, *Bastrop* 1 Dec (†BFR), providing only the 8th record for the state. One of the most astounding finds of the season was a Lawrence's Goldfinch at Rockport, *Aransas* 21–22 Feb (ph., †D&REd). Single Evening Grosbeaks were noted at Camp Wood, *Real* 11 Dec (ph. MHe), Lubbock 28 Jan (Sto), and Timbercreek, *Randall* 17 Feb (KHo).

Cited observers (subregional editors in boldface): Skip Almoney (SAI), Bud Alprin, Kitty Anding, David Arbour, John Arvin, Shawn Asbaugh (SAs), Peter Assmann, Mike Austin (MAU), Becky Baker (BBa), Ron Baltzegar (RoB), Lynn Barber, Peter Barnes (PBa), Robert Bates (RBa), Dedrick Benz (DBe), Brandon Best (BBe), Peter Billingham (PBi), Gene Blacklock, Nick Block, Bryan Box (BBo), David Bradford (DBr), Allison Briden (ABr), David Brotherton (DBr), Charles & Olivia Brower, Frank Bumgardner, Pat Burchfield (PBu), Alan & Chris Byboth, Gardner Campbell (GCa), Michael Carlson (MCa), Eric Carpenter, Jeff Chaney, Gary Chapin (GCh), Sheridan Coffey (SCo), George & Scarlet Colley, Tom Collins, Greg Cook (GCo), Mel Cooksey (MCo) (South Texas: 16 Townhouse Lane, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. email: ssi@stx.rr.com), Kelly Cotten (North-central Texas: 8626 Angora Street, Dallas, TX 75218. email: Schmoten@aol.com), D.D. Currie, Manuel DeLeon, Bob Doe, Gerald Duhon, Marc and Maryann Eastman, Kim Eckert, Dolores and Robert Edwards (D&REd), Bill Eley, David Elkowitz (DEI), Victor Emanuel, Dodge Engleman (DEn), Ted Eubanks, Ben and Linda Felmer, Tim Fennell (TFe), Brian Fitch (BFi), Mark Flippo, Dana & Bob Fox, Brush Freeman (BFR), Bert Frenz (BeF) (East Texas: 221

Rainbow Dr., #12190, Livingston, TX 77399-2021. email: bert2@bafrenz.com), Terry Fuller (TFu), Kathy Funk, John Gee (JGe), Brian Gibbons, Bill Godley, James Goltz (JGo), Mark Gray, Georgette Guernsey, Martin Hagne (MaH), Martha Hansen (MHa), Kay Hanson (KHa), Peggy Harding (PHa), Curt Harwerth, Steve Hawkins, Mitch Heindel, Anthony Hewetson (Northwest Texas: 4407 36th St., Lubbock TX 79414. email: terverts@yahoo.com), Derek Hill, Ron Hillstrom (RHi), Jim Hines (JHi), Petra Hockey (PHo), Bill Holliday, Karen Holman (Kho), Jimmy Hoover (JHo), Pierre Howard (PiH), Rich Hoyer (RHo), Ed Hunter, Marshall J. Iff, Jimmy Jackson, Simone Jenion (SJe), Scott Jennex (ScJ), Tom Johnson, Dan Jones, Larry Jordan, John and Molly Kaye, Chris Kellerman, Tracy Keltonic, Richard Kinney (RKi), Phillip Kite, Rich Kostecke (RKO), Tom Langscheid, Greg Lavaty (GLa), Cin-Ty Lee (CTL), Rob Lee, Sue Levy (SLe), Susan Lily (SLi), Brad Lirette (BLi), Dell Little, Mark Lockwood, Guy Luneau (GLu), Barry Lyon (BLY), Charlie Lyon (CLy), Mike Madson, Steve Mayes, Toby McBride, Kathy McCormick (KMc), Debra McKee (DMc), Brad McKinney (BMc), Chris Merkord (CMe), Don and Joann Merritt, Dorothy Metzler (DMe), Clay Miller (CMi), Carroll Moore (CMo), Keith More (KMo), John Muldrow (JoM), Jeff Mundy (JM), Derek Muschalek (DMu), Irene Oatman, John O'Brien, Lacey Ogburn, Brent Ortego, Daniel Paez (DPa), Jim Paton (JPa) (Trans-Pecos: 4325 Boy Scout Lane, El Paso, TX 79922. email: paton-jn@netzero.net), Michael Patrikeev, Jimmy Paz (JiP), Dick Peake (DPe), Brandon Percival (BPe), Rose Peterson, Barrett Pierce (BPi), Randy Pinkston (RPi), David Powell (DPo), Sumita Prasad, Warren Preuss, David Pueppke (DPu), Jane Purtle (JPu), Ross Rasmussen, Ellen Ratoosh (ElR), Eddie Ray (ERa), Martin Reid (MR), Helen Rejzek, James Restivo, Mike Rodegerdts (MRo), Phil Rostrom, Chris Runk, Laura Sare (LSa), Susan Schaezler, Tom Schulenberg (TSc), Georgina Schwartz, Marcy Scott, Bert Seeholzer, Willie Sekula (Central Texas: 7063 Co. Rd. 228, Falls City, TX 78113-2627. email: wsekula@ev1.net), Heather Serrill, Linda and Richard Serrill, Chuck Sexton (CS), Joel Simon, Wayne Stallberg, Jim Stevenson (JSt), Bob Stone (BoS), Byron Stone (ByS), Paul Sunby, Clay Taylor, Sandra Tholen (STh), Rob Tizard, Susan Tomlinson (STo), Darren Touchell, Heidi Trudell, Darrell Vollert (DVo), Pat Wade, Jerry Walls (JWa), Elaine Webb, Ron Weeks (UTC: 110 Indian Warrior, Lake Jackson, TX 77566. email: empidonax@sbcglobal.net), Steve Welborn, Bill Wenthe, Allen Williams (AWi), Jennifer Wilson (JWi), David Wolf, Adam Wood (AWo), Scott Young, Jimmy Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer. ☺