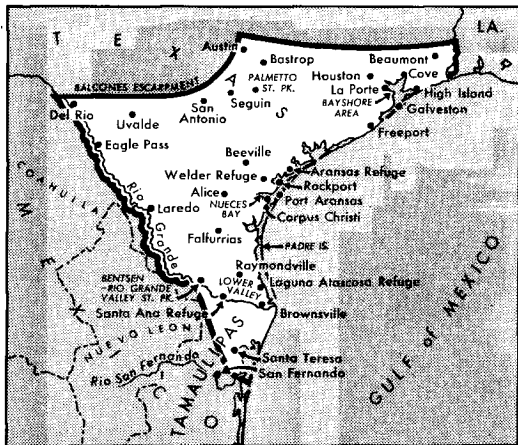


SOUTH TEXAS REGION / Fred S. Webster, Jr.

The severe drought of winter and spring gradually lost its grip on South Texas with good rains in most areas during the second half of June and early July, and again during the first half of August. By July the countryside had the



appearance of late spring rather than mid-summer; ponds were full, rangeland was freshly green, and insect populations were exploding. However, regeneration came too late to affect most nesting activity, with the result that those species dependent upon certain water levels or certain drought-reduced food and cover crops fared badly. For some species, late nesting could yet produce a good hatch. The following comments by Dr. Clarence Cottam, Director of Welder Wildlife Refuge, are especially pertinent in this regard. "There are a number of things about nesting that I did not discover until I moved to South Texas. With many species, much of the nesting season is spread out over a longer period in the south than it is in the north, and with some species it is later than in the north. For example, the tree ducks—both Black-bellied and Fulvous—generally nest much later in the south than in the north. Fulvous Tree Ducks generally nest over water, and if a period of drought occurs during the nesting season, nesting must be adjusted to the time of most favorable environment. In the rice-growing belt, the Fulvous Tree Duck has adapted its nesting period to the time when nature is producing the greatest abundance of food, and usually this is late in the summer. There have been a number of years when the best quail crop in this section of Texas came off in September, October and November rather than April, May and June. In the range of the White-winged Dove, very often there is a successful hatch in May 500 miles n. of where the most successful hatch comes off in late June or July. The season this year has not been favorable for nesting birds, including both

tree and ground nesters. One of the most extreme droughts in recorded history for four continuous months occurred from January through April in this section of Texas. As a result there was constant lowering of the water level. Water birds rarely nest in any abundance on a receding water line. Therefore, the birds either do not nest or they go to more favorable habitat during this period. We have had very few waterfowl produced in our section this year. In sixteen years of living in South Texas this has been the lowest in production of water birds that I have yet seen. Contributing to an abnormal year is the fact that we are suffering the consequences of the third most severe hurricane to strike the North American continent—Celia—which struck here on August 3, 1970. Most of the twigs, and often most of the limbs from the trees, were found lying on the ground the day after the storm. As a result, the trees are much more open than usual and there has been less nesting." Probably the nest-finding championship of this Region should be awarded to Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Bone of Falfurrias. The Bones had located 630 nests, compared to 619 last year, at the time their report was submitted; these were located in Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells and Zapata Co., which as a group and for the purpose of this report will be referred to as the "Bone census area". Nests were checked weekly until empty. Success of nesting birds in these counties was greatly curtailed by cowbird predation and from unknown causes; as the Bones explained, "very few of the nests are damaged—the eggs and young simply disappear from many nests, and frequently eggs are pecked or shells are found in the nest or on the ground."

GREBES, PELICANS, BOOBIES—Least Grebes failed to nest at Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana Nat'l Wildlife Refuges (WAS, et al.). In Corpus Christi Bay, 3 Brown Pelicans fledged from 3 nests and a total of 7 eggs. The number of adults in this area increased from 4 on March 25 to 30 on July 5; 41 pelicans, including the 3 young, were counted Aug. 22. The progress of this nesting (also, that of Sooty Terns) was recorded on color film by Emilie Payne and Earl Roper; these photographs are available to responsible persons for study purposes (EP, fide KM). A **Blue-faced Booby** was found on South Padre I. June 19. This bird appeared healthy, but permitted capture; it was released after identification was made (fide WAS). An imm. of this species was the only pelagic bird seen in seven trips from 30 to 35 mi. out of Galveston between June 26–Aug. 15 (JRS).

CORMORANTS, FRIGATEBIRDS—About 120 nests of the Olivaceous Cormorant were located on the Ving'un Islands sanctuary in Galveston Bay (JAL, JRS & AEW). Seven pairs were found at the Warren L. Ranch rookery in w. Harris Co. (DHH). Judging from the number of immatures present in the latter part of the season, this species may have had a good season in the Rockport area (DNM).

An unusual concentration of 25 Magnificent Frigatebirds was found perched on poles off Smith Pt., Chambers Co., in Galveston Bay July 17; all were in ♀ or imm. plumage (JAL & JRS). Seven birds, 3 ♂♂ and 4 ♀♀, were seen at Goose I. State Park July 9 (RW).

HERONS, STORKS, SPOONBILLS—The count of Little Blue Herons at Warren L. Ranch rookery jumped from 1 to 300 since last year, while the number at the Rosenberg heronry in Fort Bend Co. doubled to 250 over a 3-year period. Cattle Egrets increased from 250 to 3000 since last year at Warren L. Ranch, while numbers at the Rosenberg heronry remained at about 10,000 (DHH). Hardy remarked that "Cattle Egrets are crowding other species out of nesting space and are competing successfully in every feeding habitat available." About 200 pairs of Reddish Egrets were found nesting on North Deer I. in West Bay (JAL & JRS). This species did "extremely well" in the Corpus Christi area (KM). A total of about 1,710 nests of Com. Egrets, 2475 nests of Snowy Egrets, and 1505 nests of Louisiana Herons were found in lower Galveston Bay (JAL & JRS). Wood Storks apparently reached peak numbers in early July. Among the larger counts were 550 at Brazoria Nat'l Wildlife Refuge July 2 (RJF), 175 near Mission, Hidalgo Co., July 4 and 109 at Welder Refuge July 7 (RW), and 147 near Anahuac Nat'l Wildlife Refuge July 31 (JAL). The approximate number of Roseate Spoonbill nests in lower Galveston Bay area colonies was 1,000 at Ving'un Is. (JAL, JRS & AEW), 500 at North Deer I., 50 at Rollover Pass, and 10 at Redfish I. (JAL & JRS). The large number of immature birds observed after nesting indicated a successful season (DNR).

WATERFOWL—At Laguna Atascosa Refuge, Black-bellied Tree Ducks were low in numbers and no young were observed. Despite the drought, this species "nested successfully in numerous areas of Bee Co. and seem to be increasing in numbers" (AHG). The presence of juvenile Fulvous Tree Ducks in Waller Co. in early July (VLE) is taken as a hopeful sign that this species will again become established as a breeding bird on the upper coast. Mottled Ducks had a successful hatch on the upper coast, but depredation of young from alligators, raccoons, etc., was heavy as ponds dried up late in the season. (PBU). Eighteen broods were recorded on Brazoria Refuge, and an estimated 160 young reached flight stage (RJF). No young were noted at Rockport (DNM), and production was very low at Laguna Atascosa Refuge. The hatch of Blue-winged Teal, an erratic breeder on the upper coast, apparently was much heavier than usual (DNR & PBU).

HAWKS—After having been suspect for several years, the **White-tailed Kite** was found nesting in Galveston Co. in April (VLE, TBF, et al.); "this is the first nesting record and represents a significant range extension" (VLE). There was no evidence of kites nesting this season at San Bernard

or Brazoria Nat'l Wildlife Refuges (RJF). Three pairs nested at Santa Ana Refuge; 1 pair fledged 2 young (WAS). A **Zone-tailed Hawk** was carefully identified at Falcon Dam on the Rio Grande July 2 (RW). No Harris' Hawk nesting was observed in the Falfurrias area (OCB). Two pairs nested at Santa Ana Refuge; 1 pair fledged 2 young (WAS). Two pairs of Bald Eagles were observed nesting in Brazoria Co., and 1 pair each in Orange and Refugio Cos.; these pairs apparently brought off 2 young each. A pair nesting in Aransas Co. failed to produce (DNR).

GROUSE, QUAIL, TURKEY—Production of Greater Prairie Chickens was up somewhat on the c. coastal prairies (PBU). Bobwhites did very well on the upper coast and fairly well on the c. coast, but fared badly in drought-stricken areas w. and s. of the Coastal Bend (PBU). Good rains in mid-summer gave hope for a good late hatch. Turkey production was low (PBU). "The turkey is not as adaptable as the quail," Dr. Cottam commented, "and it may be too late for any nesting of turkeys here (Welder Refuge) this year."

RAILS, GALLINULES, JAÇANA—A **Black Rail** was seen at San Bernard Refuge June 14 (FA, fide RJF). On Aug. 27, in a burned-over area on Brazoria Refuge, Fleetwood found "one burned nest containing a shell fragment of the Black Rail"; it was in this same area that several nests were found on a "burn" in 1969. Unusually large numbers of Purple Gallinules were present at Santa Ana Refuge (WAS). Very few young Com. Gallinules survived depredation on the upper coast (DNR & PBU). According to a late report, a pair of Jaçanas nested in the Angleton area of Brazoria County, producing 3 young. These birds were observed from June 22 into August (JJJ, fide RJF). There is no previous breeding record for the upper coast, and the only nesting in recent years for South Texas was recorded in Kleberg Co. in 1968.

SHOREBIRDS—We have little information on this group of birds, and a fairly normal nesting season is indicated. A pair of Am. Oystercatchers with a grown young was seen at Goose I. State Park in early July (RW). Few Wilson's Plover were in evidence in the Corpus Christi area, but young fledged (KM).

GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS—An exhaustive search for gull and tern colonies in the lower Galveston Bay area revealed the following approximate number of nests: Laughing Gull, 2350; Gull-billed Tern, 13; Forster's Tern, 100; Least Tern, 70; Royal Tern, 2000; and Sandwich Tern, 500 (JAL & JRS). Because of inaccessibility of its preferred marsh grass habitat, the count of Forster's Terns is especially subject to upward revision. Sooty Terns nested in the Corpus Christi area again. As many as 8 adults were seen, but only 2 nests were found. On May 16 each nest contained an egg. On June 5 a dead ad. and a broken egg marked the end of one nesting attempt.

In the other nest, the young had hatched by June 13, and was beginning to fly by July 31 (EP, fide KM). Rockport Beach's once large breeding colony of Least Terns has dwindled to near zero in the face of human competition. Black Skimmers attempted to nest on flats off Galveston's south jetty but people and vehicles broke up all 30 nests (JAL & JRS). This species was scarce in the Corpus Christi area (KM).

PIGEONS, DOVES — A significant increase in the Red-billed Pigeon population was indicated in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. During mid-June, Shifflett located 18 different birds at Santa Ana Refuge, the most recorded in many years. Two were seen as far west as Falcon Dam, July 2 (RW). A breeding population of 525,000 White-winged Doves was estimated for the Lower Valley, down 15 per cent, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. personnel. Early production was sub-normal, but young birds were expected to double the population, and two hunting periods were authorized, Sept. 4-5 and 11-12. This year the season in Mexico opened late, Sept. 1, indicating a new spirit of cooperation between the United States and Mexican officials (PBU). The colony at Beeville has been deprived of old roosting and nesting areas by housing developments and highway by-passes, and its future is uncertain (AHG). Some decline in the Mourning Dove population in South Texas was noted, but this is in keeping with a 10-year state-wide decline (PBU).

ANIS, CUCKOOS — Yellow-billed Cuckoos did well in the Corpus Christi area (KM). The Groove-billed Ani population at Santa Ana Refuge was estimated at 150-200 pairs; by the end of the season the species was abundant (WAS). Only one nest was found in the 5-county area covered by the Bones; this nest, in Zapata Co., fledged 4 young.

HUMMINGBIRDS, KINGFISHERS — A ♂ Black-chinned Hummingbird was noted daily May 22–July 22 at Beeville (AHG). A Buff-bellied Hummingbird appeared often in Dr. O'Neil's yard in Falfurrias; it was netted June 15 & 16 (WP, fide AWO) and found to have a brood patch. A pair feeding a young out of the nest was observed at Southmost, e. of Brownsville, July 5 (RW). Ringed Kingfishers were again reported in the Falcon Dam area but we have received no record of nesting. Green Kingfishers were seen at Falcon Dam July 2 and at Garner State Park May 30 (RW). This species nested in the n. corner of Hays Co., w. of Austin; 1 young was seen (LTA, et al.). Near the Medina R., in the San Antonio area, a pair was observed at a gravel pit June 26, during a period of high water on the river (NJL). This species was "fairly common along the Medina and San Antonio Rivers many years ago," Bender commented, "but no breeding record has been noted in at least 20 years."

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS — One pair of Golden-fronted Woodpeckers near Falfurrias had 4 unsuccessful nesting attempts (OCB). At least

3 successful nestings of the W. Kingbird occurred at Victoria (JHP). A pair was feeding a large fledgling at Beeville July 27; breeding had been suspected there for several years (AHG). The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher nest count was down 40 per cent from last year in the Bone census area; 2 nests had dead young (OCB). The population was "way down" at Rockport (DNM). Kiskadee Flycatchers raised 3 young in a nest near Randado, Jim Hogg Co. (OCB). An active Acadian Flycatcher nest was found over Medina R. in Bexar Co. July 3 (NJL).

SWALLOWS, RAVENS, WRENS — Three Barn Swallow nests were found under a concrete bridge in Waller Co. July 6. "Previously it was believed that the only nesting Barn Swallows on the upper coast were on Galveston I." (VLE). Three pairs of White-necked Ravens summered in the "triangle" of salt flats, low brushy ridges, and salt grass prairies located between Port Brownsville, Port Isabel and Boca Chica; nesting was presumed (JCA). A pair of Carolina Wrens raised 2 broods in a hanging fern basket near Rockport; this species is uncommon in the area (DNM).

MOCKINGBIRDS, THRASHERS, ROBINS, BLUEBIRDS — The Mockingbird nest count in the five-county Bone census area was down 25 per cent from last year, while the Curve-billed Thrasher count was up 18 per cent (OCB). A Robin pair raised at least 3 young at Boerne (DS); this is the first nesting record for Kendall Co. (CRB). One nest was found at Beeville, s. of the species' usual range, July 30; 2 large fledglings were being fed Aug. 24 (AHG & JJJor). At Beeville, 2 nesting pairs of E. Bluebirds were found in areas not occupied in recent years (AHG).

GNATCATCHERS, STARLINGS — A pair of Bluegray Gnatcatchers, nesting near Zapata, Zapata Co., were parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds and all eggs were destroyed (OCB). Two pairs of Starlings nested in woodpecker holes in telephone poles at Leguna Vista, Port Isabel area; they were seen carrying nesting material in early April and food in early May (JCA). This may be a first nesting record for the Rio Grande Delta.

VIREOS, WARBLERS — Of 23 nests of the Bell's Vireo found in the Bone census area, 17 were parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds; only 2 nests fledged vireos (OCB). A very late and rare Blackpoll Warbler migrant was seen at Santa Ana Refuge June 11 (WAS).

MEADOWLARKS, ORIOLES — Of 4 E. Meadowlark nests found near Falfurrias, 3 fledged a total of 11 young, and the fourth was deserted with 4 eggs (LMS). As last year, 4 pairs of Black-headed Orioles were thought to have nested at Santa Ana Refuge. Two pairs of Hooded Orioles were located there, 1 pair probably nested in a palm tree next to the refuge residence. Fifteen Lichtenstein's Oriole nests were found at Santa Ana, compared to 18 last year (WAS). This species was seen at Falcon Dam July 2 (RW).

COWBIRDS, TANAGERS — Bronzed Cowbirds are parasitizing a large number of passerine species—including Green Jays, Long-billed Thrashers and Cardinals—in the Santa Ana Refuge area. In one instance, 10 cowbird eggs were discovered with 2 Green Jay eggs (WAS). This species has increased in the 5-county Bone census area out of Falfurrias, while the Brown-headed Cowbird is holding a high population level (OCB). Two pairs of Summer Tanagers were observed carrying nesting material at Anzalduas Park, Hidalgo Co., May 2. "This species has become very rare as a breeder in recent years" (JCA).

FRINGILLIDS — Fifty-eight Cardinal nests were located in the Bone census area, double the count of 1970; 3 nests held dead young. The *Pyrrhuloxia* nest count remained at 64 in the same area; 10 nests had dead young (OCB). The Painted Bunting population was much reduced in the Rockport area (DNM). Two pairs of White-collared Seed-eaters nested at Anzalduas with reportedly limited success (SJ, fide WAS). A juvenile Seaside Sparrow was being fed in a Rockport area marsh May 9 (DNM). For the Rio Grande Delta, Arvin reported Botteri's Sparrow scarce during spring due to lack of grasses on "the drought-stricken and overgrazed prairies, but coming into full song after 4-inch rains in late June brought back the grasses." In early July there seemed to be "approximately 1 pair per 5 acres of optimum habitat, while Cassin's Sparrow runs about twice that density, but only where the brush grows more thickly on the prairie edges." Field Sparrows nested in the same area as last year at Beeville (AHG).

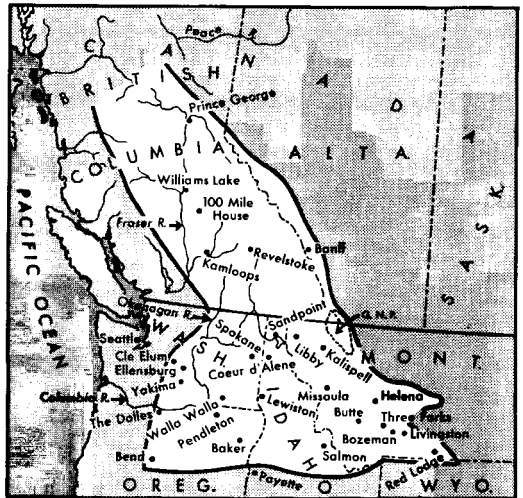
ADDENDUM — The "large all-white gull" referred to vaguely on page 769 of the spring migration report was found and photographed by Jerry R. Smith March 28. After exhaustive study and correspondence, Smith is satisfied to call the bird a Glaucous Gull.

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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN-INTERMOUNTAIN REGION / Thomas H. Rogers

For the great portion of the Region west of the Continental Divide temperatures for the summer reporting period followed a remarkably similar pattern. June was cold. Maximum temperatures at Spokane rose to or above normal on only six days and Baker, Ore. average temperatures for the month were six degrees below normal. June precipitation for much of this w. portion was decidedly above normal, from s. interior British Columbia s. through the more easterly part of Washington to e. Oregon. Farther e. (Missoula) and w. (Yakima and Wenatchee) rainfall was somewhat deficient.



July w. of the Divide continued the June trend, cool and wet except for the area in the immediate rain shadow of the Cascade Mts., which was very dry. At mid-month, after a brief but widespread rain on the 10th, the pattern changed drastically. Maximum temperatures leaped into the 90s and, in central Washington, frequently above 100°F. Walla Walla recorded 111° on the 31st. Little or no rain fell; these drought conditions continued through mid-August, the end of the reporting period.

East of the Divide during June, Bozeman escaped the extremes experienced elsewhere. Precipitation and temperatures were close to normal. However, July was moisture-deficient and August was both hot and dry.

A few reporters commented upon the effect of the season upon bird numbers. Warren Hall had the impression that the Spokane area probably had many nesting failures among most species of passerines but noted that waterfowl and marsh birds apparently had a good nesting season. Upland game species there had poor success, according to newspaper reports. Some reporters re-