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## Texas Bird Records Committee Report for 1990

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This report contains the decisions of the Texas Bird Records Committee (hereafter "TBRC" or "committee") of the Texas Ornithological Society reached during 1990. For information on previous actions of the TBRC see Arnold (1984 and 1985) and Lasley (1988, 1989, 1990). The TBRC requests and reviews documentation on any record of a Texas Review Species (see end of report) as well as any record of any species if requested to do so by a member of the TBRC. Some of the records submitted to the TBRC during 1990 were gleaned from old *American Birds* or Christmas Bird Count files, thus some portion of the work of the committee during 1990 was to catch up on older records. The TBRC reached a final decision on 151 records during 1990: 85 records of 50 species were accepted and 66 records of 43 species were not accepted, an acceptance rate of 56% for this report. There were 190 observers who submitted documentation (to the TBRC or to other entities) that was reviewed by the committee during 1990.

This report officially adds five species to the Texas state list: Trumpeter Swan, Short-tailed Hawk, *Anthracothorax* species hummingbird, Black Catbird and Gray Silky-flycatcher. In addition, the TBRC (at its annual meeting in March, 1990) voted to officially accept historical records of Passenger Pigeon and Carolina Parakeet as extinct species in Texas; these two species had not previously ever been listed on the state list. The committee also voted not to accept the 1876 reports of Rufous-tailed Hummingbird in Texas (since no specimen, photo, or accepted description exists) thus deleting that species from the Texas list. These actions brought the official Texas state list to 577 species in good standing at the end of 1990. There were several records that will complete circulation through the TBRC in early 1991 that will represent new Texas species.

The TBRC solicits reports of any species on the Review List as well as any species not previously accepted for Texas. We desire written descriptions as well as photographs and tape recordings if available. If anyone has information concerning a Review Species but is unsure how to submit that information please contact any member of the TBRC or the author of this report. There is a document available that lists every known record of the Review Species and gives the status (accepted, unaccepted, submitted/in circulation, or unsubmitted) of each record. If interested in this document, contact the author.

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following *The AOU Checklist of North American Birds* (AOU 1983) as currently supplemented. A number in parentheses after the species name represents the total number of accepted records in Texas for that species at the end of 1990. This number will be listed for all Review Species, but not for records of other species (see end of report). Within each species the records are listed chronologically. All observers who submitted written documentation or photos of accepted records are listed by initials. The initials of the original discoverers of any particular bird(s) are in **boldface** when that information was known to me (if the discoverer submitted a

description!). There has been no attempt to list all observers who saw a particular bird. The TBRC file number of each record will follow the observer(s) initials. This number consists of the year the record was originally submitted to the committee followed by a dash then a number. If photos are on file with the TBRC, the Texas Photo Record File (TPRF) (Texas A&M University) number is also given. If a tape recording of the bird is on file with the TBRC, the Texas Bird Sounds Library (TBSL) (Sam Houston State University) number is also given. Specimen records are denoted with an asterisk (\*) followed by the institution where the specimen is housed and the catalog number if available. The information in each account is usually based on the information provided in the original submitted documentation; however, in some cases I have supplemented this with a full range of dates the bird(s) was present if that information was made available to me later. All locations in *italics* are counties.

*TBRC Membership.*—Members of the TBRC during 1990 who participated in all decisions listed in this report are: Keith Arnold, Chairman, Greg Lasley, Secretary, Ted Eubanks, Jim Morgan, Barry Zimmer, Warren Pulich and John Arvin. In addition, Ken Seyffert retired from the committee during 1990 and Chuck Sexton was elected as a member. Both of these persons participated in many of the decisions listed in this report.

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*Acknowledgments.*—The TBRC is very grateful to the many contributors listed above, without whom this report would not be possible. We would also like to offer our sincere thanks to the following consultants who provided the TBRC with expert opinion, advice, or other information concerning records reviewed during 1990: Larry Balch, Richard Banks, Paul Buckley, Kimball Garrett, J. W. Hardy, Bill Harrington-Tweit, Peter Harrison, Dave Lee, Ron Naveen, Storrs Olson, Robert Ridgely, Ralph Schreiber, Tom Schulenberg, F. Gary Stiles, Peter Vickery, and Terry Wahl. The author would also like to thank Martin Reid and Chuck Sexton for reviewing earlier drafts of this article and making many helpful comments and suggestions.

*Additional Abbreviations.*—*AB* = *American Birds* magazine; *BBNP* = Big Bend National Park; *CBC* = Christmas Bird Count; *GMNP* = Guadalupe Mountains National Park; *LRGV* = Lower Rio Grande Valley; *NWR* = National Wildlife Refuge; *SP* = State Park; *TCWC* = Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection (Texas A&M University); *UTC* = Upper Texas Coast.

#### Accepted Records

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*) (25). The TBRC previously considered all records as Arctic/Pacific Loon since sight or photographic records are difficult to identify to species. The TBRC has now decided to list all records as Pacific Loon (which is the only one of the two species to have been documented in the lower 48 states) until proven otherwise. One was at the Texas City Dike, *Galveston* on 26 December 1981 (**DD**, **VM**; 1989-72). One was seen at Offat's Bayou, *Galveston* from 26 December 1988 until 8 April 1989 (**SW**, **TE**, **JB**; 1989-27). One was photographed on N. Padre Island, *Kleberg* on 28 October 1989 (**LDR**, **JG**; 1990-1, TPRF #836). One was photographed at the Texas City Dike 12–14 December 1989 (**GL**, **RU**; 1989-257, TPRF #834). One was at Offat's Bayou on 15 December 1989 (**GL**; 1989-258, TPRF #835). This bird was discovered before and remained after that date but no additional information was ever submitted to the TBRC. Another bird was at Sabine Lake, *Jefferson* on 20 January 1990 (**MA**, **PG**; 1990-17).

**Clark's Grebe** (*Aechmophorus clarkii*). One or two were at Lake Balmorhea, *Reeves* 15 September–16 December 1989 (**ML**; 1989-252, TPRF #832). One was at Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds, *El Paso* on 23 September 1989 (**BZ**, **ScW**; 1989-228). This species is now regarded as a rare but regular winter visitor to west Texas and is no longer on the regular Review List (see end of report).

**Cory's Shearwater** (*Calonectris diomedea*). One was seen and photographed at

the mouth of the Brownsville Ship Channel, *Cameron* from 25 June until 9 July 1988 (JL; 1989-151, TPRF #778). Five were photographed on a pelagic trip off of Port Aransas, *Nueces* on 7 October 1989 (PG, LA, GL, LH; 1989-207, TPRF #813). This species is now regarded as a regular late summer and fall visitor to Texas waters and is no longer on the regular Review List (see end of report).

**Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (*Oceanodroma castro*) (6). An exhausted bird landed on board a University of Texas research vessel approx 75 mi off of Port Aransas, *Nueces* on 11 June 1988 (TA; 1988-279, TPRF #817). The bird was later released. One was found dead 14 May 1989 at Port Aransas (TA; 1989-230, \*TCWC #12440).

**Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) (10). Three were at the Neuman Road Pond in *Waller* on 4 July 1989 (TE; 1989-174).

**Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*) (1). A group of seven cygnets from Alaskan eggs were released from a Trumpeter Swan recovery program in Wisconsin on 19 November 1989. These seven birds (identified from numbered neck collars) spent the period from 23 December 1989–5 February 1990 at two locations in *Dallas* and were also seen in *Collin* (T&BH; TPRF #798). This record was accepted by the TBRC at its annual meeting as the first documented record for Texas.

**Brant** (*Branta bernicla*) (8). One was shot near Vernon, *Wilbarger* on 28 December 1956 (JH; 1989-240, TPRF #818). This record had previously been considered a valid record but the TBRC was able to obtain complete documentation and a photo of the mounted specimen which is now in a private collection. See Henderson (1960).

**Muscovy Duck** (*Cairina moschata*). Two were seen at the Santa Margarita Ranch, *Starr* on 1 May 1989 (DR; 1989-183). One was photographed at the Santa Margarita Ranch on 11 July 1989 (BZ; 1989-198, TPRF #786). Up to nine were at Salineno, *Starr* from 27–30 December 1990 (RR, TS; 1990-14). This species is now considered to be an uncommon to rare permanent resident along the Rio Grande in the vicinity of Falcon Lake and has been removed from the main Review List (see end of report).

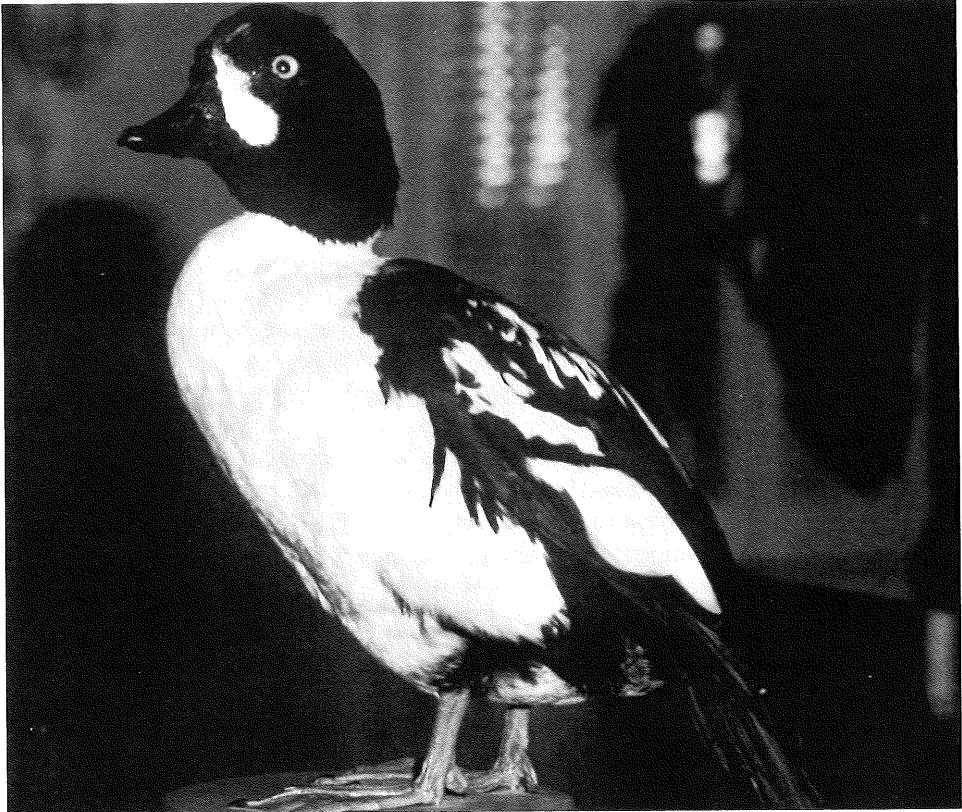
**Eurasian Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*) (7). One male was at the Santa Margarita Ranch, *Starr* from 30 December 1989 until 13 January 1990 (MP, GK, TS, JGo, CS; 1990-6, TPRF #846). This record also provided one of very few valid reports for Mexico.

**Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*) (1). One male was shot near Greenville, *Hunt* on 6 November 1958 (TC, FWM, GHarm, WP; 1989-202, TPRF #787). This record, the only one currently accepted in the state, was reviewed by the TBRC when photos of the mounted specimen (now in a private collection) were submitted. See Miller (1959).

**Masked Duck** (*Oxyura dominica*) (7). One male was seen at Brazoria NWR, *Brazoria* on 26 April 1989 (SCoI, AD; 1989-172).

**Northern Goshawk** (*Accipiter gentilis*) (5). An immature bird was at the El Paso Country Club, *El Paso* on 13 November 1989 (BZ; 1989-244, TPRF #812). This record represented the first time the species had been photographed in Texas to our knowledge.

**Common Black-Hawk** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*). A nesting pair was in Limpia Canyon in the Davis Mountains, *Jeff Davis* from 7 May until 27 July 1989 (ML; 1989-194, TPRF #783). This species has been taken off the main Review List by



The first and only currently accepted record of Barrow's Goldeneye in Texas is based on this specimen. This male was shot on 6 November 1958 in Hunt County by Tom Cole. Photo (TPRF #787F) was taken by George Harmon.

the TBRC but documentation is still solicited in order to study the status and distribution of the species within Texas (see end of report).

**Roadside Hawk** (*Buteo magnirostris*) (3). One was seen at the Santa Margarita Ranch, *Starr* on 7 January 1979 (TE, FC, DD, TG, AM; 1989-187).

**Short-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo brachyurus*) (1). One sub-adult was at the Santa Margarita Ranch, *Starr* from 22–28 July 1989, representing the first accepted state record (CH, TR, LH, KP, CB, RW; 1989-179, TPRF #833). A photo of this bird was published in *AB* 43:1339.

**Northern Jacana** (*Jacana spinosa*) (10). An immature bird was at Hornsby Bend Ponds, Austin, *Travis* from 12 November–11 December 1989 (BF, JS, GL, CJ, CS, LA, PG; 1989-239, TPRF #810).

**Purple Sandpiper** (*Calidris maritima*) (7). One was at Falcon Dam, *Starr* on 15–16 December 1975 (RPo, PJ; 1988-67). This record represented the first for the LRGV area and the second inland record for Texas.

**Curlew Sandpiper** (*Calidris ferruginea*) (3). One juvenile was at the Hornsby Bend Ponds in Austin, *Travis* from 1–9 September 1989 (ChrB, BW, PG, GL; 1989-196, TPRF #785).

**Pomarine Jaeger** (*Stercoraris pomarinus*). One was at Port Aransas, *Nueces* on

1 July 1989 (JMu; 1989-175, TPRF #780). One was at Port Aransas on 5 September 1989 (A&MC; 1990-16). Seven or eight were seen on a pelagic trip off Port Aransas on 4 November 1989 (MA, PG; 1989-242, TPRF #811). A photo of one of these birds was published in *AB* 44:123. This species has been removed from the regular Review List but documentation is still solicited (see end of report).

**Parasitic Jaeger** (*Stercoraris parasiticus*). One was at Bolivar Flats, Galveston from 10–18 September 1983 (BB, TE, JM; 1989-241, TPRF #720). One was found dead at Corpus Christi, Nueces on 27 September 1989 (JG; 1989-232, TPRF #816, \*TCWC #12815). Like the Pomarine Jaeger, this species has been removed from the regular Review List (see end of report).

**Little Gull** (*Larus minutus*) (9). One adult was at Lake Waco, McLennan from 7–12 January 1990 (JMu, RR, ML; 1990-5). This was likely the same individual present at the same location in 1989 (Lasley 1990).

**Common Black-headed Gull** (*Larus ridibundus*) (3). One adult was at Lake Waco, McLennan from 31 December 1989 until at least 4 February 1990 (JMu; 1990-4, TPRF #844).

**California Gull** (*Larus californicus*) (13). One adult was photographed on Mustang Island, Nueces on 13–14 February 1990 (GL, SBU; 1990-32, TPRF #843). A photo of this bird was published in *AB* 44:292.

**Thayer's Gull** (*Larus thayeri*) (8). One first-winter bird was at Bolivar Flats, Galveston on 23 April 1980 (BW, GL, LF; 1981-9, TPRF #772). This record was originally not accepted by the TBRC in 1981 but was resubmitted and accepted this year.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) (33). One adult was at San Luis Pass, Brazoria on 5 September 1989 (BoR; 1989-200) representing the earliest ever fall date for Texas. One immature (probably a second winter bird) was at Boca Chica, Cameron on 11 November 1989 (CS; 1989-261).

**Glaucous Gull** (*Larus hyperboreus*) (32). One immature (first or second winter) was at Galveston, Galveston on 31 January 1990 (MA; 1990-29).

**Great Black-backed Gull** (*Larus marinus*) (12). One first-winter bird was at San Luis Pass, Galveston on 18 December 1989 (TE, JM; 1990-12, TPRF #845).

**Sabine's Gull** (*Xema sabini*) (20). One adult was at Mitchell Lake, Bexar on 2 September 1989 (WS; 1989-199) representing only the second record ever for an adult in Texas. One juvenile bird was at Fort Bliss, El Paso on 17 September 1989 (BZ; 1989-227, TPRF #814).

**Bridled Tern** (*Sterna anaethetus*) (6). One immature was at Boca Chica, Cameron on 20 September 1988 following Hurricane Gilbert (BM; 1989-146).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** (*Aegolius acadicus*) (9). One was tape recorded at GMNP, Culberson on 18 June 1989 (BS; 1989-178, TBSL #203-01). This calling bird was recorded with a small pocket tape recorder with a built-in microphone illustrating that bird vocalizations can be documented without a lot of fancy and expensive equipment.

**Green Violet-ear** (*Colibri thalassinus*) (10). One was at Sinton, San Patricio from 22 June–11 July 1989 (V&GB, CH, PG, SB, JB, BZ, T&BH, JF, GB; 1989-177, TPRF #782). A photo of this bird was published in *AB* 43:1278.

**Mango species** (*Anthracothonax species*) (1). One female or immature was at Brownsville, Cameron from 14–23 September 1988 (MBa; 1988-272, TPRF #773). This record was submitted as a Green-breasted Mango and it very likely pertains



to that species. The TBRC was presented with expert opinion that indicated that several other similar *Anthracothonax* species could not be eliminated on the basis of the submitted photos. The TBRC voted to admit the bird on the Texas list as Mango species, the first record of its genus in the United States. A photo of this bird was published in *AB* 43:26.

**Lewis' Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes lewis*) (16). One was at Buffalo Lake NWR, *Randall* on 17 September 1989 (KS; 1989-205). One was at Lorenzo, *Crosby* from 24 Nov–5 Dec 1989 (ML, DS; 1989-249, TPRF #830). Two were at Midland, *Midland* from 3 December 1989–5 May 1990 (RMS, FW, GG; 1990-20, TPRF #839). One was at Balmorhea, *Reeves* on 16 December 1989 (ML; 1990-15, TPRF #837). Up to four were at Elephant Mountain, *Brewster* from 15 January–28 February 1990 (ML; 1990-25, TPRF #842).

**Williamson's Sapsucker** (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*). One female was at GMNP, *Culberson* on 3 October 1989 (RRe; 1989-219). One male was at GMNP on 6 October 1989 (RRe; 1989-220). One female was at Davis Mountains SP, *Jeff Davis* on 22 October 1989 (ML; 1989-248, TPRF #829). One male was at Madera Canyon, *Jeff Davis* on 23–26 November 1989 (RR; 1989-251). One male at Madera Canyon on 9 February 1990 (possibly the same bird as the November, 1989 record) (MA, PG, LA; 1990-30). This species has been removed from the main Review List but documentation is still requested (see end of report).

**Ringed Kingfisher** (*Ceryle torquata*). Although not a Review Species, the TBRC was requested to review this record as it provided the first report for the UTC area. One female was at Brazos Bend SP, *Ft. Bend* from 21 October until early December 1989 (RO, RRab, JM, TE, PG, GLaV, DP, BHo; 1989-250, TPRF #831).

**Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) (4). One was at Big Boggy NWR, *Matagorda* on 16 September 1989 (JHi, MaC; 1989-210).

**Thick-billed Kingbird** (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) (6). One was at Rio Grande Village, BBNP, *Brewster* on 11 April and 3 May 1989 (J&JRe, K&BCh, BBo; 1989-197). Up to 5 (2 adults and 3 juvenals) were at Cottonwood Campground, BBNP from 11 April until at least 29 July 1989 (WM, ML, CCa, DaMu, DPu, GL, PG, LA, BBo, RGu, RaH, RD, BZ; 1989-133, TPRF #774, TBSL #191-01) providing the first Texas nesting record for the species.

**Clay-colored Robin** (*Turdus grayi*) (30). One was at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* on 19 May 1989 (DaM, DPu; 1989-168). One was at Kingsville, *Kleberg* from 14–28 January 1990 (N&PP; 1990-18, TPRF #838). One was on N. Padre Island, *Nueces* on 14 January 1990 (J&BSu, JG, MC; 1990-24, TPRF #841). One was found dead outside a window on the King Ranch, *Kleberg*, on 1 February 1990 (LS, PP; 1990-22, TPRF #840, \*TCWC #12812). In addition to these reports, the resident pair at Bentsen SP continued to be seen.

**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*) (8). One was seen on the Tejas Trail, GMNP, *Culberson* on 3 October 1989 (MF1; 1989-209). One was in Fort Worth, *Tarrant* on 19 December 1989 (MJ, JAM; 1990-2).

**Black Catbird** (*Melanoptila glabrirostris*) (1). One was collected at or near Brownsville, *Cameron* on 21 June 1892 (FBA; \*Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences #42944). At the annual meeting of the TBRC on 3 March 1990 it was unanimously decided to add Black Catbird to the official Texas list based on the above specimen record. There has been a cloud over the origin of the specimen

from time to time (Oberholser 1974). In light of evidence concerning Armstrong's collections, the TBRC decided there was no valid reason to ignore this extant specimen. This record has now been submitted to the ABA and AOU for their consideration.

**Gray Silky-flycatcher** (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) (1). One was at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron* from 31 October–11 November 1985 (L&RG, JK, KE, TP, KA, NJ, MA, GL; 1989-37, TPRF #363). The specific identification of this record was never a question, but the origin of the bird has been debated by many birders, experts, and consultants alike. This record was thoroughly investigated by the TBRC and finally accepted when the preponderance of the evidence suggested that this was indeed a wild bird. This record has now also been accepted by the ABA and is being considered by the AOU. See Lasley and Pincelli (1986).

**Northern Shrike** (*Lanius excubitor*). One immature was at GMNP, *Culberson* on 2 January 1989 (ML; 1989-192). One immature was in *Dallam* on 27 October 1989 (BJR; 1989-234). One immature was in Amarillo, *Potter* on 10 December 1989 (KS; 1989-254). One immature was at Amarillo, *Randall* on 10 December 1989 (KS; 1989-255) (a different bird from the *Potter* record above). One immature was near Lake Tanglewood, *Randall* on 16 December 1989 (KS; 1989-260). One immature was at Buffalo Lake NWR, *Randall* on 18 February 1990 (KS; 1990-26). This species has been removed from the main Review List but documentation is still requested (see end of report).

**Yellow-green Vireo** (*Vireo flavoviridis*) (4). The previous report of the TBRC (Lasley 1990) listed five accepted records of this species. Three of those records involved alleged specimens that have not been located. Those records have been removed from the accepted list until those specimens are found. Presented here are two additional accepted records for a current total of only four currently accepted records for the state. A pair was present at Laguna Atascosa NWR from 25 May–10 September 1989 (MFa, TP, BZ, MK, JB, PG, LA; 1989-165, TPRF #779). This was likely the same pair that was present at the same location the year before (1988-224), and, as in 1988, the pair nested in 1989. A photo of one of these birds was published in *AB* 43:1279. Another singing bird was in Brownsville, *Cameron* from 22 June–10 July 1989 (M&RFa; 1989-166).

**Black-whiskered Vireo** (*Vireo altiloquus*) (5). Up to two were at High Island, *Galveston* from 20 August–2 October 1989 (MA, PG, LA, JBa; 1989-195, TPRF #784, TBSL #196-01). It was suspected that this pair of birds may have attempted to nest, but no conclusive nesting evidence was ever submitted.

**Golden-cheeked Warbler** (*Dendroica chrysoparia*). One was seen on west Galveston Island, *Galveston* on 3 August 1977 (DW; 1989-161). Although not a Review Species, this record was reviewed by the TBRC since it represented the first (and only) record for the UTC.

**Golden-crowned Warbler** (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) (7). One was at the Sabal Palm Sanctuary in Brownsville, *Cameron* from 23 October 1989–12 January 1990 (TP, M&RFa, CS, BM, PG, LH; 1989-236, TPRF #819). A photo of this bird was published in *AB* 44:29.

**Baird's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus bairdii*). Four were seen on 15 April 1989 in *Jeff Davis* (PL, SF; 1989-164). This species has been removed from the main Review List but documentation is still requested. See end of report.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) (7). One immature was at

Big Spring, *Howard* from 19–28 December 1983 (GW, SC; 1988-113, TPRF #792). One immature was seen at Caprock Canyons SP, *Briscoe* on 1 January 1990 (KS; 1990-3).

**Snow Bunting** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) (3). One adult male in breeding plumage was seen in the Chisos Basin at BBNP, *Brewster* on 9 May 1988 (T&HN, B&MBra; 1988-214).

**Pine Grosbeak** (*Pinicola enucleator*) (3). One was in Lubbock, *Lubbock* on 1 May 1988 (RoE; 1988-232). This large northern finch is extremely rare in Texas, but the Panhandle is one of the areas to hope to see one.

**House Finch** (*Carpodacus mexicanus*). One was in Houston, *Harris* on 26–27 March 1988 (F&KCo; 1988-212, TPRF #791). Although not on the Review List, this record was reviewed by the TBRC as it represented the first for the UTC.

**Back-vented Oriole** (*Icterus wagleri*) (4). One was near Kingsville, *Kleberg* from 17 June–4 October 1989 (JG, B&DBak, MA, PG, GL, CH, SB, MK; 1989-176, TPRF #781). The first three Texas records of this species all pertain to the same bird which frequented Rio Grande Village in BBNP in 1968, 1969 and 1970. See Wauer (1970). A photo of the *Kleberg* bird was published in *AB* 43:1279.

#### Unaccepted Records

A number of factors may contribute to a record being denied acceptance. It is quite uncommon for a record to not be accepted because the bird was obviously misidentified. More commonly, a record is denied acceptance because the material submitted to the TBRC was incomplete, insufficient, superficial, or just too vague to properly document the reported occurrence while eliminating *all* other similar species. Also, written documentation or descriptions prepared *entirely from memory* weeks, months, or years after a sighting are seldom voted on favorably. It is important that I stress here that the simple act of not accepting a particular record should by no means indicate that the TBRC or any of its members necessarily feels the record did not occur as reported. The non-acceptance of any record simply reflects the opinion of the TBRC that the documentation, as submitted, did not meet the rigorous standards appropriate for adding data to the formal historical record. The TBRC makes every effort to be as fair and objective as possible regarding each record. If the committee is unsure about any particular record, it prefers to err on the conservative side and not accept a good record rather than validate a bad one. All records, whether accepted or not, remain on file and can be re-submitted to the committee if additional substantive material is presented.

**Red-throated Loon** (*Gavia stellata*). One (1989-71) at Texas City, *Galveston* on 26 December 1981. One (1989-70) at Texas City on 13 March 1986. One to five (1989-84) at Texas City from 31 January until 15 February 1987.

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*). Two (1989-223) at Houston, *Harris* on 27 December 1962.

**Red-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps auritus*). Five (1988-287) at Boles Lake in Lubbock, *Lubbock* on 23 September 1988.

**Sooty Shearwater** (*Puffinus griseus*). One (1989-53) at Rollover Pass, *Galveston* on 27 April 1986. Photos of this bird have been identified as a White-chinned

Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), the first record for the United States (and possibly for the northern hemisphere). Full details will be published elsewhere.

Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*). One (1989-238) about 60 miles off Port Aransas, *Nueces* on 4 November 1989. Small shearwaters are usually very difficult to see well and even harder to well document. Only one observer submitted documentation on this bird that was apparently seen by many. The TBRC did not feel that several other small shearwaters could be confidently eliminated from the submitted description, although it is very likely that Audubon's was seen.

Ascension Frigatebird (*Fregata aquila*). One (1989-208) seen at Port Bolivar, *Galveston* on 29 April 1980. This interesting record of a bird photographed from the Bolivar ferry has been making the rounds with seabird experts of the world for several years. In the final analysis it was determined that although Ascension Frigatebird was certainly a possibility, that an immature Magnificent could not be ruled out from the photos or the description submitted.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*). One (1989-233) at Anahuac NWR, *Chambers* on 9 April 1989. Although this species is being documented more frequently in Texas in recent years (and may be actually occurring more often), all records should be thoroughly documented.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*). One female (1989-206) at Hornsby Bend Ponds, Austin, *Travis* from 26-29 November 1981. This bird was seen by many observers at the fall, 1981 TOS meeting in Austin. Photos of this bird were initially verified as being Barrow's by the U.S. National Museum. Several years later the museum withdrew this verification based on new information regarding immature goldeneyes.

Masked Duck (*Oxyura dominica*). One (1989-184) at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron* on 7 January 1975.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus socialilis*). One (1989-218) on South Padre Island, *Cameron* on 4 October 1971.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). One (1989-127) at San Bernard NWR, *Brazoria* on 23 March 1989. One (1989-173) at Bentsen SP, *Hidalgo* on 16 April 1989. One (1989-243) at GMNP, *Culberson* on 27 October 1989.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). Although not on the state Review List, the Texas Christmas Bird Count editor has requested the TBRC to review all records of this species submitted on CBCs. One (1989-190) at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron* 16 December 1988. One (1989-188) in *Brazoria* on 17 December 1988. One (1989-191) at San Antonio, *Bexar* on 18 December 1988. One (1989-189) in *Hidalgo* on 19 December 1988. Most descriptions of winter Swainson's Hawks submitted to CBC compilers are very superficial and vague and do not allow the committee to vote in favor of them.

Caribbean Coot (*Fulica caribaea*). One (1989-226) at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* on 15 March 1982. The field identification of "white-shielded coots" has been questioned as has the true status of this species. See Clark (1985) and Roberson and Baptista (1988).

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*). One (1989-215) at Rockport, *Aransas* on 16-17 April 1962. One (1989-216) at Rockport on 17-18 April 1969.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*). One (1989-217) near Laguna Atascosa NWR,

*Cameron* from 14–17 November 1977. One (1989-253) on 3–4 September 1989 at Corpus Christi, *Nueces*.

Surfbird (*Aphriza virgata*). One (1989-117) on 12 April 1980 at Bolivar Flats, *Galveston*.

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*). One (1989-41) at Galveston, *Galveston* on 29 March 1972. Two (1989-33) at Galveston from 22–25 January 1974. One (1989-225) at Galveston on 2 May 1982.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*). Two (1988-57) at Galveston, *Galveston* on 28–29 April 1968. These two birds were initially reported as accepted records by the TBRC (Lasley 1989) but were re-submitted during 1990 at the request of a member of the committee. Based on additional information the committee voted not to accept the record. One (1989-213) at Anahuac NWR, *Chambers* on 26 April 1971. One (1989-163) in *Galveston* from 24–26 April 1978. One (1989-246) near the mouth of the Colorado River in *Matagorda* on 10 April 1989. Records of this species should be carefully documented. Several records submitted to the TBRC (and even a set of photos) pertain to Pectoral Sandpipers in various plumages.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*). One (1989-108) at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* on 9 December 1988.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*). One (1989-88) at Lake Balmorhea, *Reeves* on 20–21 February 1989.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*). Two (1987-14) at Amarillo, *Randall* on 2 May 1987. This record was initially reported as unaccepted by the TBRC in 1987 (Lasley 1988). It was re-submitted to the committee after additional material was presented; it was again unaccepted.

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*). One (1989-44) at Lake Murvaul, *Panola* from 2–8 January 1989.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). One (1988-280) on Mustang Island, *Nueces* on 27 September 1988. There was not enough material presented to eliminate several other dark-backed gull species.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). One (1989-89) at Gilchrist, *Galveston* on 7 February 1985. One (1989-170) about 6 miles east of High Island in *Jefferson* on 15 April 1989.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). One second or third winter bird (1989-112) at Bolivar Flats, *Galveston* on 18 March 1975. One first winter bird (1989-113) at Freeport, *Brazoria* on 4 January 1976. One first winter bird (1989-224) in *Matagorda* on 12 December 1980. One third-winter bird (1989-259) at Boca Chica, *Cameron* on 2 October 1989.

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*). One (1989-182) at Bentsen SP, *Hidalgo* on 25 January 1989. Brightly plumaged Common Ground-Doves are often reported as Ruddy Ground-Doves. See Dunn and Garrett (1990).

Northern Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*). One (1989-104) in Boot Canyon, BBNP, *Brewster* on 7–8 August 1982. One (1988-114) in the Chisos Mountains of BBNP, *Brewster* on 28 December 1983. There is still only one currently accepted record of this species in Texas.

Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*). One (1989-193) at Lake Livingston, *Polk* on 21 December 1988. Ten (1989-180) at Lufkin, *Angelina* on 21–22 March 1989. There is still not an accepted record of this species in Texas although it almost certainly

occurs. The species has been documented in Louisiana on several occasions during winter months.

Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*). One (1988-272) at Brownsville, *Cameron* on 14–23 September 1988. Some hummingbird authorities questioned whether the submitted photos could eliminate other mango species. The TBRC voted to not accept this record as a Green-breasted Mango at this time, but did accept it as a Mango species. Refer to this record under the accepted category earlier in this report.

Violet-crowned Hummingbird (*Amazilia violiceps*). One (1988-194) at BBNP, *Brewster* on 7 November 1987.

Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*). Although not on the state Review List, it was requested that this record be reviewed by the TBRC since it would have represented a first for the UTC area. One (1989-162) at *Beaumont, Jefferson* on 27 November 1985.

Elegant Trogon (*Trogon elegans*). One (1988-72) at *San Benito, Cameron* on 23–24 September 1957. This record was initially reported as unaccepted by the TBRC in 1988 (Lasley 1989) but was re-submitted when some material was received from one of the original observers; again, it was not accepted.

Greater Pewee (*Contopus pertinax*). One (1989-221) on west Galveston Island, *Galveston* on 2 May 1964.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*). One (1989-231) at the Chisos Basin, BBNP, *Brewster* on 22 August 1986.

Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*). One (1989-39) at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* on 27 December 1958.

Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*). One (1989-203) at or near Coleyville, *Tarrant* from 2 August until 25 December 1989. The identification of this bird was not questioned. The TBRC expressed concerns over the origin of the bird and several members cited experiences in the Dallas area with captive magpies. Also of concern was the initial date of the discovery which would not typically coincide with a fall movement of this species. As with all TBRC records, this one may be re-submitted at a later date if additional evidence warrants. A photo of this bird was published in *AB* 44:125.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*). One (1989-204) at *Denton, Denton* on 24 July 1989.

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*). One (1989-120) in *Houston, Harris* on 20 February 1980. One (1989-181) at *Longview, Gregg* on 29 March 1989.

Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*). One (1989-51) at *Houston, Harris* on 7 October 1972. One (1989-169) at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* on 15 March 1989.

Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis poliocephala*). One (1989-214) at *Harlingen, Cameron* on 14 June 1959.

Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa parcellina*). One female (1988-126) at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo* on 5 January 1988. This was a different individual (different area of the refuge) from the 12 January 1988 accepted record (Lasley 1989). One female (1989-126) at *Bentsen SP, Hidalgo* on 20 December 1988. This was a different individual from the other accepted records of this species at Bentsen during the same period (Lasley 1989).

Orange-breasted Bunting (*Passerina leclancherii*). One (1989-167) at *San Juan,*

*Hidalgo* on 30 June 1986 was unaccepted on the basis of questionable origin. This west Mexican species is a common cage bird in markets in northern Mexico.

Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*). Three (1989-143) at Cottonwood Campground, BBNP, *Brewster* on 6 April 1989. There remains but one accepted record of this species in the state.

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#### TBRC Review List

The TBRC requests details, including descriptions and photos if possible, of all records of the following species.

*Review List A: Rarities.* These species, in general, include birds that have occurred four or fewer times per year anywhere in Texas over a ten year average. The TBRC requests documentation for any unsubmitted record of the species below no matter how long ago the record occurred. The TBRC also requests details on any record of a species not yet accepted on the Texas State List.

Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Yellow-billed Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Greater Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Manx Shearwater, Audubon's Shearwater, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Red-billed Tropicbird, Blue-footed Booby, Brown Booby, Red-footed Booby, Glossy Ibis, Jabiru, Greater Flamingo, Trumpeter Swan, Brant, American Black Duck, White-cheeked Pintail, Garganey, Eurasian Wigeon, Barrow's Goldeneye, Masked Duck, Snail Kite, Northern Goshawk, Crane Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Paint-billed Crane, Spotted Rail, Double-striped Thick-Knee, Northern Jacana, Eskimo Curlew, Surf-bird, Purple Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, Long-tailed Jaeger, Little Gull, Common Black-headed Gull, Heermann's Gull, Mew Gull, California Gull, Thayer's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Western Gull, Glaucous Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Sabine's Gull, Elegant Tern, Bridled Tern, Brown Noddy, Black Noddy, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Snowy Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Mottled Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, White-collared Swift, Green Violet-ear, Broad-billed Hummingbird, White-eared Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Elegant Trogon, Lewis' Woodpecker, Ivory-billed Woodpecker (presumed extirpated in Texas), Greenish Elaenia, Greater Pewee, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Thick-billed Kingbird, Gray Kingbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Rose-throated Becard, Gray-breasted Martin, Clark's Nutcracker, Black-billed Mag-

pie, American Dipper, Clay-colored Robin, Rufous-backed Robin, Varied Thrush, Aztec Thrush, Black Catbird, Bohemian Waxwing, Gray Silky-flycatcher, Black-whiskered Vireo, Yellow-green Vireo, Yucatan Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Red-faced Warbler, Golden-crowned Warbler, Rufous-capped Warbler, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, Blue Bunting, Henslow's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, Black-vented Oriole, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, Lawrence's Goldfinch.

*Review List B:* Species under special study by a subcommittee of the TBRC concerning their distribution and status in Texas. Records of these species will not be formally reviewed by the TBRC, but documentation is requested to assist in these studies.

Clark's Grebe, Cory's Shearwater, Muscovy Duck, Common Black-Hawk, Swainson's Hawk (December–January), Aplomado Falcon (reintroduction program in progress), Semipalmated Sandpiper (December–January), Pomarine Jaeger, Parasitic Jaeger, Spotted Owl, Williamson's Sapsucker, Northern Shrike, Baird's Sparrow.

#### Addendum to the 1990 Report

The TBRC held its 1991 annual meeting at Austin on 23 February 1991. Among the decisions reached during this meeting was to change the criteria for a species to be fully accepted on the Texas state list. In order to be recognized as fully accepted on the list of Texas birds, a species must have at least one record supported by: (1) An extant specimen identified by a recognized authority together with convincing evidence that the specimen was obtained within the state of Texas or adjacent ocean (as defined in the Bylaws of the TBRC), or (2) one or more photographs or tape recordings that clearly demonstrate definitive characters with convincing evidence that the photograph or recording was made within the state of Texas or adjacent ocean. In addition to the above requirements the record must be reviewed and accepted by the TBRC. Red-necked Grebe and Bohemian Waxwing are two species that have previously been considered accepted in Texas, yet neither of these species can meet the above criteria. If anyone is aware of the existence and location of photos or specimens of these two species in Texas please contact the author. Records of species not meeting the above criteria yet having accepted sight records will be placed in a special "presumptive" list. The TBRC also added Red Phalarope to the Review List. More information on these and other subjects will be published in the 1991 TBRC report.



## The Ornithology of Wise County, Texas, 1880–1900

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**ABSTRACT.**—An annotated bibliography of early Wise County ornithology is presented along with biographical information for Anna Houts, John Donald, Will Miller, Jr., and R. L. More. Anna Houts participated during 1884 in W. W. Cooke's study of bird migration. Additional county records were contributed by John Donald during 1889 to the Division of Economic Ornithology. The journals in which Donald, Miller, and More published their observations were soon discontinued and their work was further diminished by a failure to complete their twice-begun list of Wise County birds. Confirmation of some of the more interesting records of these pioneer observers has been hindered by the lack of, or inability to locate, voucher specimens or other supporting data.

Wise County, located NW of Fort Worth, was organized in 1865 with Taylorsville, later renamed Decatur, as the county seat. By 1882, the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad reached Decatur opening up a period of rapid settlement and agricultural development. The 856 square miles of the county are divided between the Western Cross Timbers (75%) and the Grand Prairie (25%) thus providing a diversity of avian habitat (Webb, 1952).

Dobie (1941) characterized the pioneer families of Wise County as containing "an unusually large percentage of individuals who might look with sympathy upon any scientific, literary or historical activity." This characterization may have been correct, for from this rural environment there emerged between the years 1880 and 1900 four persons—Anna Houts, John Donald, Will Miller, Jr., and Bob More—each of whom played their small role in the history of ornithology in Texas. The purpose of this paper is to provide biographical information on these four individuals and to give a historical perspective on their ornithological activities.

### Anna Glidden Houts

Anna Glidden Houts (1848–c. 1887) was born in Scioto County, Ohio. She was married around 1875 to Frank M. Houts and, in late 1879, they purchased a small farm in Wise County. In March 1884, Anna wrote to W. W. Cooke that she wished to participate in his study of bird migration in the Mississippi Valley. Disappointingly, her report of June 1884 contained the names of only nine species of birds! Anna admitted to Cooke that she had little actual knowledge of birds but indicated that she would do better next season and would soon begin collecting meteorological data (Houts 1884). There is no record of further reports and Cooke's published study contains only a single reference to Wise County, that being the occurrence of Eskimo Curlew on 2 April 1884. Anna Houts was, however, the only woman in Texas and one of only eight women in the entire United States to participate in the bird migration study (Cooke 1888). Anna's continuing interest

in natural history is evidenced by her inclusion in the 1887 edition of *Coale's Handy List of Ornithologists and Oologists in the United States and Canada*.

#### John A. Donald

John Donald (1869–1929) was born in Columbus, Texas. In 1875 his family moved to Decatur where they opened a land abstract office. In later years, John Donald worked as a surveyor and later assumed management of the family business. In 1887 he began keeping notes on local birds and continued this practice until at least the mid-1890's. His first two publications appeared during 1888 in *The Curlew*, the journal of the newly-formed Wilson Ornithological Chapter of the Agassiz Association. His third publication, co-authored in 1889 with Will Miller, listed fifty-eight species of birds from Wise County but was left incomplete due to the demise of *The Curlew*. The two young men had by this time mastered the skill of making study skins for they submitted voucher specimens of questionable species to the editor of *The Curlew* for verification.

During 1889 Donald also sent two small shipments of skins to the Division of Economic Ornithology for identification as well as submitting a report listing 106 species observed at Decatur. Records of particular interest include a skin verified as that of a Northern Shrike and the alleged breeding of the Black-billed Cuckoo and Long-eared Owl in Wise County.

Some of Donald's most valuable observations appear in the 1892 reports of the committee that was formed by the Wilson Chapter to study the natural history of the Fringillidae. Donald's contribution included commentary on the occurrence and migration of 26 species of fringillids as well as descriptions of the nesting habits of the Lark Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Painted Bunting, Dickcissel, and Blue Grosbeak.

Donald's best known paper, "A List of the Birds of Wise County, Texas," was published during 1894 in *The Naturalist* [Austin, Texas]. Although co-authored with Bob More, the letter of transmittal indicates that the projected list of 150 species was compiled mainly from Donald's notes (Donald 1894). Only the first four installments of the list were printed before *The Naturalist* discontinued publication in September 1894. John Donald published nothing after 1894 and his collection of eggs was reportedly acquired in later years by his friend Bob More (Dobie 1941).

#### Will Miller, Jr.

William Alexander Miller, Jr. (1871–1930) was born in Texarkana, Arkansas. In 1876 his family moved to Decatur where his father later organized a land company (Paddock 1906). Will Jr. was educated in the Decatur schools and later at the University of Texas from which he graduated in 1893. Will Miller's only publications, other than the list of Wise County birds co-authored with John Donald, are short notes in *The Curlew* on the Chuck-wills-widow (1888) and the Turkey Vulture (1889). Miller is credited by Oberholser (1974) with the collection of specimens from Herman Station, a small railroad stop about five miles SE of Decatur. Will Miller and John Donald were both associate members of the Wilson Chapter of the Agassiz Association.

#### Robert Lee More

Robert More (1873–1941) was born in Wise County where, at the age of 14,



ROBERT L. MORE AT THE NEST OF A MISSISSIPPI KITE

he began collecting the eggs of birds. John Donald reportedly introduced More to the ornithological literature and served as his mentor during these early years. This relationship eventually led to their joint-authorship of "A List of the Birds of Wise County, Texas" published in 1894. More left Wise County in 1900 but retained a life long interest in collecting, eventually acquiring more than 12,000 eggs representing about 750 species. This collection is now housed at Vernon, Wilbarger County, Texas, where it is maintained by More's grandson. Biographical details of More's life and ornithological activities have been provided by Dobie (1941) and Maxwell (1979).



WILL A. MILLER, JR.

### Historical Perspective

Interest in the study of natural history by amateurs was widespread before the turn of the century and the biographies of John Donald, Will Miller, and Bob More exhibit a pattern that was repeated in the lives of numerous young men. Each became intensely interested in ornithology during his teens and soon began to collect and keep notes on the birds of the local area. Eventually, each published his observations but Donald and Miller later abandoned their study of birds. Bob More was the exception for he continued to collect and, after leaving Wise County, co-authored a major article with J. K. Strecker as well as publishing several short notes in *The Oologist*.

Anna Houts was unique in the early history of ornithology in Texas. She is not remembered for her contributions to natural history but rather as a woman participant in a discipline that was dominated by men.

The significance of the work of John Donald, Will Miller, and Bob More is difficult to assess. Most, if not all, of the pre-1900 records for Wise County are attributable to these three men. Oberholser (1974) included many of their records in *The Bird Life of Texas*. More recently, the validity of some of these records has been questioned based on the lack of, or inability to locate, voucher specimens or other supportive data (Pulich 1988). Voucher specimens may perhaps be located in the Bob More collection and a final evaluation of the work of these pioneer observers should be withheld until this collection and accompanying catalogs and field notes have been thoroughly examined.

### Bibliography of Early Wise County Ornithology

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## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

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### Dew Bathing Near Surface Water

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Dew bathing has rarely been reported in the ornithological literature, but may be a common behavior (Van Tyne and Berger 1976:214; see also Skutch 1973: 54). Verbeek (1962) noted its occurrence in seven passerine species in mid-August at Vancouver, British Columbia. His observations were made following a dry summer in the area. Noting that Van Tyne (1953:423) had also made observations of dew bathing under very dry conditions, Verbeek hypothesized that the dew bathing he observed was in response to drought. Dow (1969), observing Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) following a dry period in June in Tennessee, noted dew bathing among birds without surface water on their home ranges. Baptista (1973) noted three species of passerine bathing in wet vegetation in coastal California in the summer, when water may be scarce. The following observations note the occurrence of dew bathing within 30 m (or less) of surface water.

During 16 August–15 October 1988 I mist netted and observed birds at the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Refuge near Sinton, Texas (ca. 48 km N of Corpus Christi). The study site was Hackberry Mott, an 11.4 ha forest in the Aransas River floodplain. The Aransas River passed within 4–15 m of the net plot, where observations were concentrated. Dawn and post-dawn observations were made on a total of 56 days; on 30 of these days an assistant (Karl Bardon) was also present. Although south Texas was drier than usual during and preceding this period (Welder Wildlife Foundation, unpubl. data), dew was present on most mornings. Observations of dew bathing were noted on 5 days: 27 August and 11, 21, 22 and 25 September. In each case, typical bathing motions were used (dipping motions of the head, wing fluttering, etc.) by individuals in the foliage of the canopy of the small woodland. Individuals of the following species were observed dew bathing: Wood-Pewee *Contopus* sp., Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*), and Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). The first two species are probably both transient migrants in the area, while the latter two are resident breeders (Rappole and Blacklock, 1985). Verbeek's (1962) observations also included both migrants and residents.

The Aransas River flowed in some cases not more than 5 m from dew-bathing individuals. Although the flow rate was sluggish, the river may have been unsuitable for bathing due to the presence of actual or suspected predators. Alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*) and cottonmouths (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*) were present in and near the river, and mullet (*Mugil cephalus*) frequently made sudden splashes. Observations of dew bathing on 21 and 22 September were made in the presence of surface puddles remaining from the passage of hurricane Gilbert.

Given the presence of surface water on these occasions, using dew for bathing may in some cases be a predator avoidance strategy, or may simply be done out of convenience when suitable moisture is encountered while foraging.

#### Acknowledgments

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**The First Nesting Record of the Hutton's Vireo  
(*Vireo huttoni*) East of the Pecos River, Texas**

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The Hutton's Vireo breeds from southwestern British Columbia, south along the Pacific coast west of the Sierra Nevada divide, to northern Baja California; and from central Arizona, southwestern New Mexico and extreme western Texas (Chisos Mountains) south through the highlands of Mexico to Guatemala (AOU 1983). Oberholser (1974) summed up the Texas distribution, listing the species as fairly common in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park, and uncommon to rare in other Trans-Pecos mountains. He cited records from Brewster, Jeff Davis, Culberson and El Paso counties.

On 20 April 1990 Rick Bowers and Beryl Armstrong discovered a singing Hutton's Vireo on a private ranch in the Hill Country of Texas in northern Real County. Bowers was also able to take several photographs of the bird. The next day Lasley, Cheryl Johnson and Victor Emanuel went to look for the bird, having been alerted to its presence by Bowers and Armstrong. Returning to the area of the previous day's observation, they soon heard the distinctive song of a Hutton's Vireo, and later observed two individuals that appeared to be a pair. The singing bird appeared to be territorial and sang persistently in the same area. Lasley made tape recordings of the singing bird and photographed it. The tape is on file with the Texas Bird Sounds Library at Sam Houston State University (TBSL #206-04) and the photos are on file with the Texas Photo-Record File at Texas A&M University (TPRF #801).

Between 28 April and 8 June, Gee and Armstrong visited the area regularly and encountered one or two Hutton's Vireos on each visit. On 13 June, Gee again visited the area and several times observed an adult Hutton's Vireo capturing and carrying large insects. After several hours of careful observation, he watched an adult feeding an insect to a begging fledgling, thus providing confirmation for this most unusual nesting record.

The Hutton's Vireos occupied a typical Texas Hill Country habitat of dry limestone hills with narrow riparian woodlands along waterways. Specifically, this location along the bank of the Frio River has a rich riparian woodland dominated by large pecans (*Carya illinoensis*), chinkapin oaks (*Quercus muhlenbergii*) and sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*). The understory is rather open (except around clearings and on the river bank) and is dominated by such plants as red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) and frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*); it obviously is occasionally flooded. The riparian woodland is bounded on the west by steep hillsides where the dominant trees are Ashe juniper (*Juniperus ashei*), Lacey, Bigelow, and plateau live oaks (*Q. laceyi*, *Q. sinuata* var. *breviloba*, and *Q. fusiformis*) and pinyon pines (*Pinus remota*). Where the hills meet the riparian woodland, as well as in the arroyos between the hills, occur quite large examples of the hillside species, as well as such species as spanish oak (*Q. buckleyi*), cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) and escarpment cherry (*Prunus serotina* var. *eximia*).



The riparian woodland is at about 570 m elevation, and it is believed that the nest site was at or close to this elevation near the junction of the hillside and the pecan bottom. The area on the hillside where the adult was observed feeding the fledgling is at about 610 m elevation, and the top of the hill above the pecan bottomland is at 685 m elevation. The Hutton's Vireos frequented all of these areas.

The nearest known localities for nesting Hutton's Vireos in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park are some 915 to 1,220 m higher than the Real County nesting site. This record extends the known range of the Hutton's Vireo some 355 km east of the closest known nesting population in the Big Bend country. There is also suitable Hutton's Vireo habitat in the Serranias del Burros of northern Coahuila, Mexico which are located approximately 105 km WSW of Del Rio, Texas (K. Bryan, pers. comm.). This location is about 210 km SW of the Real County site, but the status of Hutton's Vireos in the del Burros is not well known.

#### Acknowledgments

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## City of Dallas Water Treatment Plant Produces Three Unusual North Central Texas Nest Records

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In April of 1990, a heron rookery was observed at the Southside Water Treatment Plant east of Highway 175 and Beltline Road in southeast Dallas County. On 19 May 1990, I visited the rookery specifically to count numbers and species for the Texas Colonial Waterbird Survey. During that visit, I observed a White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) flying to and from the rookery. Since there were no nesting records of White-faced Ibis for Dallas County, several return visits by myself and others were made to confirm the nesting of that species.

On 6 June 1990, Chris Snook and Al Valentine banded three White-faced Ibis chicks at a nest in that rookery. That banding confirmed the first county record for that species and is only the second documented nest record for north central Texas (Pulich 1988). This confirmation began what was to be a series of surprises for Dallas County nest records at this location.

On that same date, an Anhinga (*Anhinga Anhinga*) was observed around the rookery. The last previous nest record for Anhinga in Dallas County was 1963 (Pulich 1988). That species also was confirmed nesting on 7 July 1990 by myself and Julie Peterson with the observation of two chicks in a nest. Following that confirmation, a Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) was also seen going to and from the rookery on 21 July, by myself and Bob Stone. This species is an unusual inland nester in Texas, and no nest records exist for Dallas County. The nesting status of this bird remains unconfirmed and will need to be substantiated. If Tricolored Heron is confirmed as nesting in Dallas County, it will become the northernmost inland Texas nest record of that species. Previously, the Tricolored Heron's range extended northerly in Texas only to Cedar Creek Lake in Henderson County (Runnels 1980).

On 21 July 1990, the same observers saw Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) with downy young (at least three separate family units) by the sludge ponds west of the rookery. Only one nest record of this species exists for Dallas County (Pulich 1988). Also observed were two separate sightings of Mottled Ducks (*Anas fulvigula*) in the ponds surrounding the treatment plant. Nest confirmation has not been established for Mottled Ducks which have only one previous nest record for Dallas County (Pulich, pers. comm.).

The question of why so many unusual nesters and suspected nesters were found at this location is not fully understood. There is no body of evidence that suggests that any of the above species are going through a period of range expansion with the possible exception of Mottled Duck. In the case of Anhinga, there are even arguments for range contraction (Oberholser 1974). A history of the water treatment plant area, however, does suggest that habitat changes are at least partly responsible.

Prior to 1986, several shallow water sludge ponds provided excellent habitat

for migrating shorebirds and dabbling ducks. No heron rookery was observed during that time. In the fall of 1986, landscape reconstruction and new building construction began. Several tons of dirt were moved, and a few of the shallow ponds were eliminated. According to several Audubon members who frequented the area before 1986, the variety of bird species dropped as construction picked up.

In 1989 construction was completed. Several new park-like ponds were created at the plant entrance to improve its image. The ponds were stocked by Texas Parks and Wildlife with a variety of native fish. The recent heron rookery was first observed in the summer of 1989 (within just a few feet of the stocked ponds), but the heronry was not fully evaluated until the spring of 1990 by myself and Kay Fleming of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

The known species composition of this heronry includes Anhinga, Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and White-faced Ibis. This heronry has above average species diversity compared to other inland heronries (TPWD Colonial Waterbird Survey, 1990). Cattle Egrets are the most abundant species at the site making up approximately 80% of the total number.

One theory for unexpected heronry diversity suggests that Cattle Egrets may be acting as "beacons" for species such as White-faced Ibis which are not common inland nesters (Telfair 1980). The idea that a loud, active heronry would act as a magnet for other species is likely in this case, particularly with species like the White-faced Ibis, whose shallow-water feeding habitat actually decreased at this rookery location. As for the Anhinga, however, the addition of new feeding habitat (stocked ponds with wooded borders) is probably the major cause of its arrival.

Besides the new stock ponds, the water treatment plant still contains a few shallow water sludge ponds that remain attractive to shorebirds and waders, particularly White-faced Ibis and Black-necked Stilt which were observed feeding more often in the sludge ponds than the deeper stock ponds. Access to the Trinity River and surrounding floodplain undoubtedly provides an added food source for the birds as do several agricultural fields in the area. Pools of standing water occur frequently in the surrounding fields during the spring which seem to invite several species of sandpipers. Even the drier fields have produced sightings of Lesser Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*) and several species of gulls.

Since 1989, the Water Treatment Plant has had 1,400 acres around the rookery completely enclosed with eight foot high fencing. Intrusions by people and domestic animals are kept at a minimum. The plant entrance now has an electronic gate, and personnel are on duty 24 hours a day at the new plant building. Maintenance around the rookery area includes only some light cleaning and mowing.

The water treatment plant habitat will probably continue to act as a magnet for several water-loving species of birds in north central Texas. Other sightings of birds not believed to be nesting but observed at this location include White Ibis (*Euodocimus albus*), American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*), and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) as well as some of the more common waders, ducks and shorebirds. Black-bellied Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) have also nested at this location in previous years.

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## NOTES AND NEWS

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