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TEXAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2002MARK W. LOCKWOOD¹*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, P.O. Box 1807, Fort Davis, Texas 79734*

The Texas Bird Records Committee (hereafter “TBRC” or “committee”) of the Texas Ornithological Society requests and reviews documentation on any record of a TBRC Review List species (see the end of this report or TBRC web page at <http://texasbirds.org/tbrc/>). Annual reports of the committee’s activities have appeared in the Bulletin of the Texas Ornithological Society since 1984. For more information about the Texas Ornithological Society or the TBRC, please visit www.texasbirds.org. The committee reached a final decision on 150 records during 2002: 116 records of 59 species were accepted and 34 records of 24 species were not



Lewis’s Woodpecker (*Melanerpes Lewis*) was recently removed from the Review List. Photo by Mark W. Lockwood

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accepted, an acceptance rate of 77.3% for this report. There were 171 observers who submitted documentation (to the TBRC or to other entities) that was reviewed by the committee during 2002.

In 2002 the TBRC accepted the first state record of Spotted Redshank and the Black-crested Titmouse was elevated to species status by the A.O.U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature (Banks et al. 2002) bringing the official Texas State List to 622 species in good standing. This total does not include the five species listed on the Presumptive Species List. In addition to the review of previously undocumented species, any committee member may request that a record of any species be reviewed. The numbers of accepted records are also listed for Red-throated Loon and Lewis's Woodpecker, which were recently removed from the Review List. The committee requests written descriptions as well as photographs, video, and audio recordings if available. Information concerning a Review List species may be submitted to the committee secretary, Mark Lockwood, 402 E. Harriet, Alpine, Texas 79830 (email: mark.lockwood@tpwd.state.tx.us). Guidelines for preparing rare bird documentation can be found in Dittmann and Lasley (1992). This paper can also be viewed at <http://www.greglasley.net/document.html>.

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the AOU Check-list of North American Birds (AOU 1998) through the 43rd supplement (Banks et al. 2002). A number in parentheses after the species name represents the total number of accepted records in Texas for that species at the end of 2002. All observers who submitted written documentation or photographs of accepted records are acknowledged by initials. If known, the initials of those who discovered a particular bird are in boldface but only if the discoverers submitted supporting documentation. The TBRC file number of each accepted record will follow the observers' initials. If photographs or video recordings are on file with the TBRC, the Texas Photo Record File (TPRF) (Texas A&M University) number is also given. If an audio 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. The information in each account is usually based on the information provided in the original submitted documentation; however, in some cases this information has been supplemented with a full range of dates the bird was present if that information was made available to the TBRC later. All locations in italics are counties.

TBRC Membership—Members of the TBRC during 2002 who participated in decisions listed in this report were: John Arvin, Chair, Keith Arnold, Academician, Mark Lockwood, Secretary, Kelly Bryan, Mel Cooksey, Brush Freeman, Petra Hockey, Terry Maxwell, and Barry Zimmer. During 2002, Maxwell's and Zimmer's second terms ended, Jim Paton and Randy Pinkston were elected, and the Academician, Chair, and Secretary were re-elected.

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Cooksey, **MCon** - Mark Conway, **MD** - Michael Duffy, **ME** - Mark Elwonger, **MF** - Mark Flippo, **MG** - Michael Gray, **MH** - Matt Hafner, **MI** - Marshall Iliff, **MKI** - Mark Klym, **MKr** - Mike Kryzwonski, **ML** - Mark Lockwood, **MM** - Mike Mathews, **MMo** - Mike Moore, **MO** - Mike Overton, **MR** - Martin Reid, **MV** - Matt Victoria, **MWh** - Matt White, **N&VR** - Nancy & Van Robinson, **NBa** - Noreen Baker, **NBI** - Nick Block, **PC** - Pat Culbertson, **PG** - Peter Ginsburg, **PH** - Petra Hockey, **PR** - Philip Rostron, **PS** - Paul Sunby, **PT** - Phil Taylor, **RBi** - Ray Bieber, **RDa** - Rich Damron, **RDo** - Robert Doster, **RGi** - Richard Gibbons, **RHa** - Ron Haaseth, **RHo** - Richard Hoyer, **RK** - Rich Kostecke, **RN** - Robert Norris, **RO** - Robert Ohmart, **RPa** - Richard Payne, **RPi** - Randy Pinkston, **RRa** - Ross Rasmussen, **RRe** - Roy Reinartzvr, **RRo** - Roy Rodriguez, **RRu** - Robert Russell, **RSi** - Richard Sims, **RWa** - Ro Wauer, **RWe** - Ron Weeks, **S&GC** - Scarlet & George Colley, **SB** - Steve Bentsen, **SBa** - Sue Bayley, **SCh** - Sandra Chandler, **SD** - Scott Downes, **SF** - Sam Fried, **SGa** - Sid Gauthreaux, **SGr** - Steven Gross, **SH** - Scott Haywood, **SK** - Sandesh Kadur, **SLa** - Sterling Lacy, **SLe** - Seymour Levy, **SM** - Sue Morris, **SS** - Sean Smith, **SY** - Scott Young, **TFe** - Tim Fennell, **TFr** - Tony Frank, **TJ** - Tom Johnson, **TK** - Tim Kasper, **TL** - Tom Lanschied, **TPa** - Tom Painting, **TPe** - Tommy Pedersen, **TPi** - Tom Pincelli, **TV** - Tom Vandenberg, **TVZ** - Tom Van Zandt, **WL** - William Lybarger, **WMc** - Wayne McAlister, **WP** - Warren Pulich, **WR** - Will Risser.

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Additional Abbreviations—AOU = American Ornithologists' Union; CCMS = Corpus Christi Museum of Science; NP = National Park; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; SHS = State Historic Site; SNA = State Natural Area; SP = State Park; TCWC = Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection (Texas A&M University); WMA = Wildlife Management Area.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) (47). One at Cooper Lake, *Hopkins*, from 15 November-9 December 1998 (**MWh**; 1999-4). One at Lake Tawakoni, *Rains*, on 3 February 2001 (**MI**, **BG**; 2001-46). One at Lubbock, *Lubbock*, on 2 April 2001 (**AF**; 2001-46). Red-throated Loon was removed from the Review List on 17 August 2002.

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) (5). One at South Padre Island, *Cameron*, on 22 December 2000 and from 25 February-26 May 2001 (**S&GC**, **JA**, **SB**; 2001-39; TPRF 1967). This appears to be the southernmost record for this species in the New World.

Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) (21). One off Port Isabel, *Cameron*, on 18 July 2001 (**BMc**; 2001-138).

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) (6). One off Port Isabel, *Cameron*, on 18 July 2001 (**PH**; 2001-107).

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (19). One at Port Isabel, *Cameron*, on 30 May 1974 (**WP**; 2001-100). One near a petroleum platform off North Padre Island, *Kenedy*, on 18 October 2000 (**AWo**; 2001-35). One at South Padre Island, *Cameron*, on 13 September 2002 (**MC**, **MAu**, **PH**, **EC**, **TFr**, **SS**; 2002-102; TPRF 2047).

Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) (4). One at Matagorda Island, *Calhoun*, on 28 April 2001 (**WMc**, **DJa**; 2001-92; TPRF 2024).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) (32). A male at Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR, *Hidalgo*, on 3 February 2001 (**DBI**; 2001-43). A male at Fort Worth, *Tarrant*, from 15-19 December 2001 (**DDC**, **MR**, **JWS**; 2002-3; TPRF 1979).

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) (4). A male at the King Ranch, *Kleberg*, from 4-7 April 2001 (**TL**, **GP**; 2001-88; TPRF 1968).

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) (6). A female at Village Creek Drying Beds, *Tarrant*, from 11-12 December 1998 (**MR**; 1999-01; TPRF 1980).

Masked Duck (*Nomonyx dominica*) (62). Up to eight at Brownsville, *Cameron*, from 4-6 September 1937 (**FL**; 2001-136; Loetscher 1956). One at Sabal Palm Sanctuary, *Cameron*, from 7-14 June 2001 (**RGi**, **TPi**;

2001–106). Up to two at Sabal Palm Sanctuary, *Cameron*, from 4 May–22 June 2002 (F&JD, RHo, PH, SB, CTL; 2002–71; TPRF 2048).

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) (15). One at Hueco Tanks SHS, *El Paso*, on 21 February 2001 (**BZ**; 2001–102).

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) (4). One at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, *Hidalgo*, from 11–15 December 2000 (**J&PC**; 2001–06; TPRF 1969).

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) (13). One adult at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo*, from 31 May–10 August 2002 (MAu, ML, PS, LD, RHo, DBr, BCl, RPi; 2002–68; TPRF 2049).

Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) (29). One at Brownsville, *Cameron*, on 4 September 1937 (**FL**; 2001–137; Loetscher 1956).

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*) (1). One adult molting from alternate to basic plumage at Hornsby Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Travis*, on 28, 29, or 30 September 2000 (**JJ**; 2001–129; TPRF 1983). This represents the first record for Texas and one of the few from interior North America.

White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*). One at Fort Worth, *Tarrant*, on 11 October 2000 (**MR**; 2001–24). White-rumped Sandpiper is not a *Review Species*, but a TBRC member requested that it be reviewed.

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) (14). One at Fulton, *Aransas*, from 2–28 April 2002 (CN, MH, MO, BFr, PH, BBa, JPac, Gbe, JPac; 2002–54; TPRF 1977).

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) (24). One at Brazoria NWR, *Brazoria*, from 4–7 April 2001 (RWe, JL; 2001–91; TPRF 1984).

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) (28). An alternate plumaged female at South Padre Island, *Cameron*, on 20 May 2002 (**SM**; 2002–62; TPRF 1971).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) (17). One near a petroleum platform off North Padre Island, *Kenedy*, on 3 November 2000 (**AWo**; 2001–37). One at Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant*, from 31 October–5 November 2001 (**MR**, JWS, CE, EC, BFr, CRu, FB, TK; 2001–133; TPRF 1985).

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) (36). One at Lake Worth, *Tarrant*, from 18–19 November 2001 (**JMc**, MR; 2002–2).

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) (21). One at Possum Kingdom Lake, *Palo Pinto*, on 23 December 2000 (**KN**; 2001–113).

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) (22). One at Imperial Reservoir, *Pecos*, on 19 November 2000 (**MAd**, **BG**; 2000–131). One at Lake Worth, *Tarrant*, on 3 December 2000 (**MR**; 2001–26). One at El Paso, *El Paso*, on 13 January 2001 (**JPa**; 2001–12). One at Galveston, *Galveston*, on 23 January 2001 (**MAu**; 2001–19).

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) (50). One at Galveston, *Galveston*, on 30 January 2001 (**MAu**; 2001–23). One in Dallas, *Dallas*, from 4–7 February 2001 (**RRa**, MR, BG; 2001–32; TPRF 1986).

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) (32). One at Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, from 3–12 March 2001 (**WS**, B&JR; 2001–53; TPRF 1987).

Elegant Tern (*Sterna elegans*) (3). Two at Galveston, *Galveston*, from 4–18 November 2001 (EC, BFr, PH, JLR, CE, MAu, JFa, SGr, RPi; 2001–134; TPRF 1988).

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) (12). A female at El Paso, *El Paso*, on 3 April 2001 (**JPa**; 2001–69; TPRF 1989).

Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) (37). One at Wimberley, *Hays*, from 18–26 May 2001 (**CRo**; 2001–95). One at Packery Channel, Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, from 2–3 April 2002 (**BZ**, **MI**, MC; 2002–48; TPRF 1972).

Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) (10). A male at McAllen, *Hidalgo*, from 1–8 February 2001 (LBi, RBi; 2001–48; TPRF 1991). A female or immature at Pharr, *Hidalgo*, from 10 July–15 August 2001 (**G&PHi**; 2002–1; TPRF 1992). A male at McAllen, *Hidalgo*, from 28 September–18 October 2001 (RRo, SB, NBa, JO, BMc; 2001–123; TPRF 1993).

Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*) (50). A male at Houston, *Harris*, from 3 November 2001–18 February 2002 (**MM**, JHi, RHa, MG; 2001–143; TPRF 1994). A female at El Paso, *El Paso*, from 28 November 2001–7 March 2002 (**BZ**, ML, PR; 2001–142; TPRF 1995). An immature male at Guadalupe Mountains NP, *Culberson*, on 9 April 2002 (**DBi**; 2002–41; TPRF 2025). A male at Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis*, from 25 April–27 May 2002 (**KBr**, GL, ML; 2002–60; TPRF 1973).



Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) at South Padre Island, Cameron County. Photo by Steve Bentsen

White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis leucotis*) (11). A male at the Davis Mountains Resort, *Jeff Davis*, from 20 June-25 August 2002 (**M&ME**; 2002-89; TPRF 2050).

Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*) (9). One in the Christmas Mountains, *Brewster*, from 10-11 December 2000 (**COK**; 2001-5; TPRF 1997). A male seven miles NW of Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis*, from 10 June-1 September 2001 (**N&VR**, **KBr**, **ML**, **BFr**, **MK**, **JO**; 2001-96; TPRF 1998).

Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) (23). An adult male¹ at San Antonio, *Bexar*, from September 1977-21 February 1978 (**DBra**; 2001-34; TPRF 129). An adult male¹ at Houston, *Harris*, from 15-23 February 1999 (**AWi**, **RO**; 1999-123; TPRF 1999). One banded at Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, on 3 September 2001 (**GS**; 2001-111). One banded at West Columbia, *Brazoria*, from 19 January-16 February 2002 (**CB**; 2002-27; TPRF 2000). One banded at Lake Jackson, *Brazoria*, on 25 January 2002 (**CB**; 2002-28). One banded at Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, on 13 February 2002 (**GS**; 2002-29; *TCWC 13861). One banded at Lake Jackson, *Brazoria*, on 27 February 2002 (**CB**; 2002-30; TPRF 2026). One banded at Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, on 24 August 2002 (**GS**; 2002-99; *TCWC 13908). One banded at Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, on 8 September 2002 (**GS**; 2002-107; *TCWC 13909). The specimens housed at the TCWC consist of tail feathers removed from captured individuals. ¹Identification based on photographs, diagnostic tail measurements not available.

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) (59). One at Guadalupe Mountains NP, *Culberson*, on 10 November 2000 (**AWo**; 2001-38). One nine miles south of Alpine, *Brewster*, on 16 November 2000 (**D&LE**; 2001-2). One at Grand Prairie, *Dallas*, on 30 November 2000 (**KN**; 2001-112). One at Marfa, *Presidio*, on 2 December 2000 (**RRA**; 2001-31). One near Quemado, *Maverick*, from 27 December 2001-13 January 2002 (**MC**, **CCu**; 2002-24; TPRF 2001). Up to two at Fredericksburg, *Gillespie*, from 28 December 2001-7 March 2002 (**SY**, **SGr**, **TFe**, **ML**, **RPi**, **RRe**; 2002-6; TPRF 2002). Up to two at Potosi, *Taylor*, from 3 February-30 March 2002 (**BFr**, **TFe**, **JFa**, **RDa**, **FB**, **LB1**, **BP**; 2002-40; TPRF 2003). Lewis's Woodpecker was removed from the Review List on 17 August 2002.

Red-breasted Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) (2). One at Big Bend Ranch SP, *Presidio*, on 3 December 2000 (**KBr**; 2001-30).

Greater Pewee (*Contopus pertinax*) (9). One on the Davis Mountains Preserve, *Jeff Davis*, on 5 May 2001 (**LH**; 2001-103).

Buff-breasted Flycatcher (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) (4). Up to four (two adults and two fledglings) at the Davis Mountains Preserve, *Jeff Davis*, from 9 June-7 August 2002 (**BFr, PH, KBr, CE, FB**; 2002-74; TPRF 2051).

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) (20). One at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, *Hidalgo*, from 21 December 2000-3 January 2001 (**PC, BMc, KE**; 2001-10; TPRF 2004). One at Sabal Palm Sanctuary, *Cameron*, from 28 December 2000-25 March 2001 (**BMc, KE, DBr, CJ**; 2001-9; TPRF 2005). One in the Chisos Basin, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, from 26 April-22 June 2001 (**JDu, TV**; 2001-76). Two at Boot Canyon, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, from 6-21 June 2001 (**MD, JO**; 2001-89; TPRF 2006). Up to four (two adults and two juveniles) at Boot Spring, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, from 26 April-1 September 2002 (MV, GL, SH, DH, BFr; 2002-56; TBSL 235).

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) (12). One at South Padre Island, *Cameron*, from 5-12 May 2001 (**CCo, B&JR, SB, SK**; 2001-78; TPRF 2007). One at Aransas NWR, *Aransas*, on 2 May 2002 (**JPr**; 2002-86; TPRF 2052).

Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) (4). One at Quintana, *Brazoria*, on 10 October 2001 (**RWe**; 2001-126).

Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) (28). A female at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo*, from 25 May-1 October 2002 (PH, ML, F&JD, RHo, FB, MC, BP, KeH; 2002-69; TPRF 2053).

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) (31). One at Port O'Connor, *Calhoun*, on 25 April 2001 (**BFr**; 2001-74). One at Sabal Palms Sanctuary, *Cameron*, from 7 June-22 July 2001 (**RGi, BP, PH, DP**; 2001-105). One near Realitos, *Duval*, on 15 September 2001 (**JHa**; 2001-118). Up to three at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, *Hidalgo*, from 1 June-29 July 2002 (F&JD, MH, RHo, ML, FB, PH, MC, KeH, SGr, DE, JPac; 2002-67; TPRF 2054; TBSL 235).

Black-whiskered Vireo (*Vireo altiloquus*) (18). One at High Island, *Galveston*, from 14-15 April 2001 (**PG, GM**; 2001-70). One at High Island, *Galveston*, on 30 April 2002 (**RPa, BAb**; 2002-78; TPRF 1974).

Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) (20). One at Wild Rose Pass, *Jeff Davis*, on 6 September 2001 (**BP**; 2001-116).

Tamaulipas Crow (*Corvus imparatus*). Up to four at Brownsville, *Cameron*, from 18 March-22 May 2001 (RDo, JA; 2001-65). Up to six at Brownsville, *Cameron*, from 13 March-11 July 2002 (JA, CMe, CN, TFr, BiB, JSi, PH, RHo, KeH; 2002-47; TBSL 235). The population of Tamaulipas Crow in the United States has dwindled to the point that this species was added to the *Review List* in 2000.

Rufous-backed Robin (*Turdus rufopalliatu*s) (11). One at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 30 December 2000 (**J&KR**; 2001-14; TPRF 2008).

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (20). One at Davis Mountains SP, *Jeff Davis*, from 30 November-1 December 2000, (**KBr**; 2001-4). One at Balmorhea SP, *Reeves*, on 24-25 October 2001 (**TJ, MAD**; 2001-127; TPRF 2009).

Yellow (Mangrove) Warbler (*Dendroica petechia bryanti*) (2). A male at Rockport, *Aransas*, on 26 May 1978 (**SCh**; 2002-10; TPRF 2010). A male at the mouth of the Rio Grande, *Cameron*, from 20 March-6 April 1990 (**GLa, MKr, GL, JFI, EG**; 2002-11; TPRF 2011).

Red-faced Warbler (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) (24). One in Pine Canyon, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 2 May 2000 (**TVZ, D&NL**; 2000-40). One at Matagorda Island SP, *Calhoun*, on 6 May 2001 (**BFr**; 2001-80). One in the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 3 August 2001 (**DJo**; 2001-130). One at Canyon Lake, *Comal*, on 15 September 2001 (**RN, RSi**; 2001-117). One at Boot Spring, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, from 23 July-25 August 2002 (TFe, EC, AH, DH, PR, MF, JDo; 2002-93; TPRF 2055).

Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) (4). One near Emory Peak, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 25 April 2001 (**PT**; 2001-75).

Golden-crowned Warbler (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) (14). One at Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron*, on 12 August 2001 (**MCon**; 2002-77; TPRF 1975). One at Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo*, on 29 March 2002 (**CMi**; 2002-38; TPRF 2012).

Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) (3). A male at Davis Mountains Resort, *Jeff Davis*, from 1-5 October 2001 (**M&ME, MAd, KBr**; 2001-122; TPRF 2014).

Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) (39). One near Fort Worth, *Tarrant*, on 1 May 1999 (**BT, JWS**;

1999–43). One at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 7 May 2000 (**RWa, JMu**; 2000–42; TPRF 2013). One at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 12 May 2002 (**KBr**; 2002–79; TPRF 1976).

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco (*Junco hyemalis aikeni*) (4). One collected near Quitaque, *Briscoe*, on 19 December 1968 (*USNM 531924). One at Palo Duro Reservoir, *Hansford*, on 24 January 2002 (**MI**; 2001–61; TPRF 2015). One at Wolf Creek Park, *Ochiltree*, on 24 January 2002 (**MI**; 2001–62; TPRF 1872).

Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa parcellina*) (27). One at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, *Hidalgo*, from 27 November 2000–23 February 2001 (BMc, KE, B&MCo, J&PC; 2001–13; TPRF 2017). One at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, *Hidalgo*, from 23 January–31 March 2002 (JA, B&MC, ML; 2002–23; TPRF 2018). One 2.5 miles southwest of Mission, *Hidalgo*, from 14 February–10 March and 12–13 April 2002 (**JA**; 2002–58; TPRF 2019).

Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) (8). One at Matagorda Island SP, *Calhoun*, on 1 April 2001 (**ME**; 2001–68). Two at Port O'Connor, *Calhoun*, from 15–22 April 2001 (**BFr, B&JR, RDa**; 2001–71).

Orchard (Fuertes's) Oriole (*Icterus spurius fuertesi*) (2). A male at Brownsville, *Cameron*, on 3 April 1894 (**FA**; *MCZ 258513; 2002–8; TPRF 2020; Dickerman 1964). A male at Arroyo City, *Cameron*, from 15 April–17 July 1998 and 11 April–17 July 1999 (**K&BB**; 2002–9; TPRF 2021).

White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) (4). A female at Lake Tanglewood, *Randall*, from 24–28 December 2001 (BP, KS; 2002–4; TPRF 2022).

Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*) (13). A male at Guadalupe Mountains NP, *Culberson*, from 5–7 June 2002 (**JW**; 2002–73; TPRF 2023). This represents a very unexpected first summer record for the state.

UNACCEPTED

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 not accepted because the material submitted 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 the simple act of not accepting a particular record should by no means indicate that the TBRC or any of its members feel 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 resubmitted to the committee if additional substantive material is presented.

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*). Balmorhea Lake, *Reeves*, on 15 December 2000 (2001–20).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*). Below Falcon Dam, *Starr*, on 18 September 1988 (2001–33). Port Isabel, *Cameron*, on 13 January 2001 (2001–18).

Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). Loma Alta Lake, *Cameron*, on 6 April 2000 (2000–51).

White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*). Brazoria NWR, *Brazoria*, on 11 September 1996 (1996–130).

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*). Santa Ana NWR, *Hidalgo*, on 26 December 2000 (2001–40).

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*). McAllen, *Hidalgo*, on 15 February 2001 (2001–50).

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, on 21 April 2001 (2001–73).

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*). Seabrook, *Harris*, on 16 December 2000 (2001–17).

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*). Brownsville, *Cameron*, on 6–7 March 2000 (2000–18). Bolivar Flats, *Galveston*, on 15 April 2000 (2000–24). Lake Lewisville, *Denton*, on 4 January 2001 (2001–41). East Beach, *Galveston*, on 6 March 2001 (2001–87).

Yellow-footed Gull (*Larus livens*). Surfside, *Brazoria*, on 24 September 1999 (2001–101).

Zenaida Dove (*Zenaida aurita*). Galveston, *Galveston*, on 5 May 2001 (2001–79).

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*). Laguna Atascosa NWR, *Cameron*, on 31 January 1999 (1999–14). Honey Creek SNA, *Comal*, on 26 January 2001 (2001–21).



Black-crested Titmouse (*Baeolophus atricristatus*) in Davis Mountains, Jeff Davis County. Photo by Mark W. Lockwood

Northern Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*). Fluvanna, *Scurry*, on 19 March 2001 (2001–67).

Mottled Owl (*Ciccaba virgata*). On FM 3013 in northern *Wharton* on 14 February 2001 (2001–63).

Cuban Pewee (*Contopus caribaeus*). Petroleum platform off North Padre Island, *Kenedy*, on 9 October 1999 (1999–120).

Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*). Near Victoria, *Victoria*, on 24 September 2000 (2000–115). This individual was mist-netted and identified using measurements. Consultation with authorities on the species revealed that the formula used is not believed to be reliable when the sex of the bird can't be determined with certainty.

Thick-billed Kingbird (*Tyrannus crassirostris*). One at Santa Elena Canyon, BBNP, *Brewster*, on 10 June 2001 (2001–104).

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*). Anahuac NWR, *Chambers*, on 30 April 1999 (1999–31). High Island, *Galveston*, on 8 May 2001 (2001–81).

Black-whiskered Vireo (*Vireo altiloquus*). Near Sea Rim State Park, *Jefferson*, on 29 April 1999 (1999–60). Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Cameron, on 23 April 2000 (2000–48). Galveston, *Galveston*, on 21 May 2000 (2000–65).

Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapilla*). Near Gene Howe WMA, *Hemphill*, on 15 February 2001 (2001–51).

Olive Warbler (*Peucedramus taeniatus*). Chandler, *Henderson*, on 8 May 2001 (2001–93).

Golden-cheeked Warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*). Plano, *Collin*, from 4–29 August 2001 (2001–108).

Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*). Plano, *Collins*, on 17 September 1983 (1999–93).

Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*). Rio Grande Village, Big Bend NP, *Brewster*, on 3 May 1980 (2000–17).

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TEXAS 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 review for any new or any previously unsubmitted record of the below species 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.

Yellow-billed Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Black-capped Petrel, Stejneger's Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Greater Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Manx Shearwater, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Red-billed Tropicbird, Blue-footed Booby, Brown Booby, Red-footed Booby, Jabiru, Greater Flamingo, Brant, Trumpeter Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, American Black Duck, White-cheeked Pintail, Garganey, King Eider, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Masked Duck, Snail Kite, Northern Goshawk, Crane Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Collared Forest-Falcon, Paint-billed Crake, Spotted Rail, Double-striped Thick-knee, Collared Plover, Northern Jacana, Spotted Redshank, Wandering Tattler, Eskimo Curlew, Surf-bird, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Purple Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, Red Phalarope, Long-tailed Jaeger, Little Gull, Black-headed Gull, Heermann's Gull, Black-tailed Gull, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Western Gull, Yellow-footed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Kelp Gull, Elegant Tern, Roseate Tern, Arctic Tern, Brown Noddy, Black Noddy, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Dark-billed Cuckoo, Snowy Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Mottled Owl, Stygian Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, White-collared Swift, Green Violet-ear, Green-breasted Mango, Broad-billed Hummingbird, White-eared Hummingbird, Berylline Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Elegant Trogon, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Greenish Elaenia, Tufted Flycatcher, Greater Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Piratic Flycatcher, Thick-billed Kingbird, Gray Kingbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Rose-throated Becard, Masked Tityra, Yellow-green Vireo, Black-whiskered Vireo, Yucatan Vireo, Clark's Nutcracker, Black-billed Magpie, Tamaulipas Crow, Gray-breasted Martin, Black-capped Chickadee, American Dipper, Northern Wheatear, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, White-throated Robin, Rufous-backed Robin, Varied Thrush, Aztec Thrush, Black Catbird, Blue Mockingbird, Bohemian Waxwing, Gray Silky-flycatcher, Olive Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Red-faced Warbler, Slate-throated Redstart, Golden-crowned Warbler, Rufous-capped Warbler, Flame-colored Tanager, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Baird's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, Blue Bunting, Shiny Cowbird, Black-vented Oriole, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, Lawrence's Goldfinch

Review List B.—Recognizable subspecies which, if they were elevated to full species status, would qualify for placement under Review List A: Reports of these subspecies will always be solicited and formerly reviewed.

(“Great White”) Great Blue Heron, Green-winged (“Common”) Teal, Yellow (“Mangrove”) Warbler, Dark-eyed (“White-winged”) Junco, Orchard (“Fuertes's”) Oriole.

Presumptive Species List.—The following is the official TBRC list of species for which written descriptions of sight records have been accepted by the TBRC but the species has not yet met the requirements for full acceptance on the Texas List (specimen, photo, video, or audio recording for at least one record).

Murre *species*, White-crowned Pigeon, Black Swift, Social Flycatcher, Crescent-chested Warbler.

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

EARLIEST NORTH AMERICA EGG DATES FOR THE AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER

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The American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) is a rare to uncommon permanent resident along the Texas coast (Texas Ornithological Society 1995). The species is most commonly encountered on the central Texas coast, primarily from Calhoun to Nueces County. It occurs in smaller numbers locally elsewhere along the coast, especially in the Galveston Bay area. Formerly this species was noted in larger numbers. Hancock (1887) regarded it as abundant in the Corpus Christi area, while Carroll (1900) mentions it as being "very common" on the lower central coast. Oberholser (1974) characterizes its status as "Fairly common to uncommon along central coast, nesting regularly; scarce to rare on upper and lower coasts, nesting locally". For some unknown reason, Texas data for this species (was not included in) the recent *The Birds of North America* account (Terres 1980, Hayman et. al. 1986, McAlister and McAlister 1993, Nol and Humphrey 1994, Rosair and Cottridge 1995, Baicich and Harrison 1997).

Since the mid 1990's we have regularly encountered breeding American Oystercatchers in the vicinity of Matagorda and Lavaca Bays in Calhoun County. This includes observations of nests with eggs and recently



American Oystercatcher eggs. Photo by Authors

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fledged young, with most noted in April and May, plus an occasional late March attempt. American Oystercatchers are considered an uncommon to fairly common component of the bird life of Lavaca and Matagorda Bays and are not difficult to locate in appropriate habitat.

On 22 January 2003, Chester Smith, Audubon Warden for Sundown Island, informed Petra Hockey that - during a pre-breeding survey for colonial bird nesting conditions - he, Edward Taylor and others had discovered two American Oystercatcher nests with three eggs each. The nests were found on Placement Area 16 or "Snake Island", a spoil island in Lavaca Bay across from the small community of Alamo Beach. On a 23 January visit to Mr. Smith's residence in Port O'Connor the authors viewed digital photographs taken by Mr. Taylor of one of the nests and confirmed that the images indeed showed a set of three mottled eggs of the American Oystercatcher placed in a shallow depression on a low ridge of shell fragments surrounded by vegetation consisting totally of sea purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*).

Given the extremely early egg date, we were eager to visit the island. Unfortunately, adverse weather did not allow a follow-up visit until 1 February when Petra and Ladd Hockey took their boat to the site of the first two nests. A thorough search resulted in the discovery of two additional nests with eggs, bringing the total number of active nests found on this small island to four. Three nests contained three eggs each while the fourth contained two, for a total of 11 eggs. All nest sites were attended by a pair of adult birds which exhibited a strong defensive behavior toward other pairs and were very vocal when the observers approached the various nest sites. With increased observer distance to the nests, one bird was seen incubating. In addition to the four occupied nests, approximately 18 other nest-like scrapes were discovered and two further oystercatcher pairs were seen, though nests with eggs for these were not located.

The incubation period for this species lasts from 24 to 28 days with eggs typically laid at intervals of 24 to 36 hours (Nol and Humphrey 1994). The eggs found on 22 January were of unknown age though with two sets of 3 eggs each, it can easily be inferred that egg laying must have begun no later than 18 January.

The previous earliest documented egg dates we were able to locate, consist of two specimen sets collected by T. C. Meitzen and housed at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo, California. The sets are cataloged as: 3 eggs, Texas: St. Charles Bay, Feb 28 1963 (WFVZ#37173), and 2 eggs, Texas: Aransas Bay, Shell Island, Feb 27 1969 (WFVZ#90998). The data card on the latter reads: "This is the earliest nesting record being a full month earlier than any record given in Bent's". Oberholser (1974) provides a somewhat twisted account of early egg and young dates in Texas: "(eggs, Mar. 29 to June 10; young as early as Mar. 17)". The Bird Life of Louisiana (Oberholser 1938) gives egg dates from 28 April to 3 June. All other references we have located for North America occur from 1 April to early July. One of the earliest cited dates comes from Florida, 8 April 1963, although it is mentioned that a Florida bird was collected 17 March 1956 with an egg "almost ready to lay" (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). South Carolina's earliest date is 2 April 1962 (Post and Gauthreux 1989).

We believe that the discovery of two American Oystercatcher nests on 22 January 2003 in Lavaca Bay, Calhoun County, Texas constitutes the earliest documented egg date record for the species in North America. It certainly establishes a new early date for Texas and precedes the previous documented early date of 27 February by 36 days.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank the following individuals who assisted by providing additional information and references: Steven W. Cardiff, Rene Corado, Judy Fisher, Tony Gallucci, Mark Lockwood, Noel Wamer. Special thanks go to Cliff Shackelford who made many helpful comments while reviewing an earlier draft of this paper.

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ODD "NESTING" BEHAVIOR IN GREATER ROADRUNNER

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We observed a Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) in Austin, Travis County, Texas, building a nest around a tennis ball and brooding the ball during the summer and fall of 2002. This type of behavior is unreported for the species (R. Ohmart, pers. comm.), but circumstances surrounding the event offer an explanation for this odd occurrence.

The territorial male Greater Roadrunner had been resident on the grounds of a office complex in suburban



Greater Roadrunner nest with tennis ball. Photo by Mark W. Lockwood

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west Austin from at least 1997 through 2002. The bird is identified as a male based on overall size and behavior. In late July 2002 a tennis ball appeared on the top of a manicured hedge of *Abelia grandiflora*. On 29 July the bird began constructing a nest around the tennis ball. By 1 August it had completed the nest, with the ball in the cup of the nest. The ball was incubated daily throughout August and early September. The roadrunner would rotate the ball as if it were an egg during this period. Incubation was more irregular during the remainder of September through December. The nest was typical of the species (Harrison 1988) and was 107 cm above ground level in an open manicured area with scattered Plateau Live Oaks (*Quercus fusiformis*) and other trees.

No other roadrunners have been observed in the vicinity during the six years this individual has maintained a territory. It has routinely offered food items to its reflection in a window during this time, providing evidence that it is a male. The tennis ball appeared conveniently near the above mentioned window. The presence of the ball stimulated the nesting instinct of the bird, resulting in the construction of the nest. Male Greater Roadrunners normally construct the nests and assist the female in incubating the eggs (Woods 1960). From this regard, the observed behavior is consistent with normal reproductive instincts. *Geococcyx californianus* have been documented to live up to seven years in the wild and are suspected to live much longer (J. Cornett pers. comm.). The individual present in Austin is, therefore, relatively old and has never attracted a mate, as far as we know. Considering these circumstances, the tennis ball appears to have been a super stimulus resulting in this odd "nesting" behavior.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank John Cornett, Robert Ohmart, and Kent Rylander for information on the life history of Greater Roadrunner.

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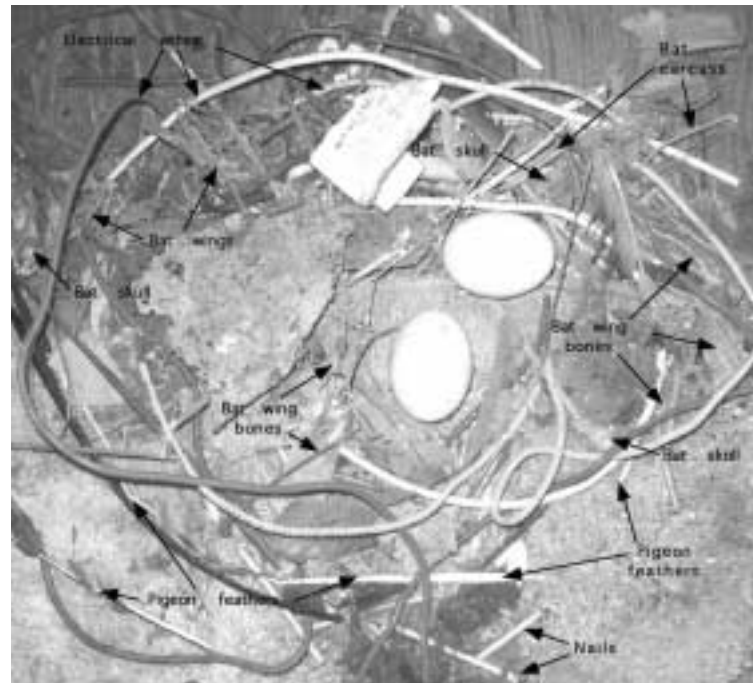
USE OF BAT CARCASSES AS NESTING MATERIAL BY ROCK DOVE

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The Rock Dove (*Columba livea*) inhabits many urban communities throughout the world. In its adaptation to human-altered habitats, the Rock Dove may nest under a wide variety of conditions. These include natural and man-made rock and brick ledges of buildings, rooftops, and platforms on the interior of structures such as ceiling joists and rafters. Although they do not build large nests, Rock Dove use a variety of readily available material in the construction of a flimsy platform (Terres 1982).

During research activities conducted on a colony of Brazilian free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*; Molossidae) inhabiting a Texas Department of Criminal Justice cotton storage warehouse in downtown Huntsville, Walker Co., in the summer of 2001, I observed a nesting attempt by Rock Doves on multiple occasions. This nest proved to be unsuccessful over the course of the period I was watching it; however, the material used in its construction was of particular interest due to its unique composition (Fig. 1). First observed in May, the nest had been constructed on a carpet remnant left on a wooden shelf in an area of the warehouse that has not been used in over 10 years. Material added to the basic structure included short pieces of insulated electrical wire, nails, plastic and wood fragments and, most notably, remains of several bats. Sections of skin and skeletal elements from at least three different bats had been used in the nest construction. The two eggs in



Rock Dove nest constructed on a carpet scrap using Mexican free-tailed bat skeletal material, electrical wires, nails, and assorted paper scraps. Photo by Monte Thies

the nest were resting against the bony elements of a wing and rib cage that appeared to have been opportunistically gathered from casualties associated with the colony of bats in the warehouse. It appeared that the bones had been pushed under the eggs to prevent them from rolling out of the nest. Although bones and mummified pigeons have been reported in pigeon nests (Johnson and Janiga 1995) and the use of wire as nesting material is not unique (Paterson 1977, Bolen 1983, Johnson and Janiga 1995), bat carcasses have not been reported as nesting material.

Although I had not seen bat carcasses in previous nesting attempts, this location was used in each of the past three years during the breeding seasons. No records of nesting success have been kept, but eggs have been observed in the nest on multiple occasions with successful hatches as recent as summer 2000. During summer 2001, I found one egg on the nest on 18 June and a second egg was added before 28 June. Although eggs had been laid on the nest, no adults were observed incubating them and neither egg had hatched by 16 August, well past the normal 17–19 day incubation period (Terres 1982). High ambient temperatures (>34.8°C) and relative humidity (65%) have been recorded in the building during this past summer associated with an on-going bat roosting study, possibly adversely affected egg incubation and hatching.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank M. Berkheiser and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for providing access to the building.

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**TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
08 FEBRUARY 2003, AMARILLO, TEXAS
SCIENTIFIC PAPER SESSION ABSTRACTS**

**PARADISE POND SANCTUARY: A COMMUNITY
CONSERVATION MODEL**

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Abstract: The Gulf Coast Region has one of the world's most productive fisheries, provides millions of hours of recreation, serves as an important buffer for hurricanes, provides the land and water that is critical to the survival of many coastal industries, and provides critical stopover habitat for migratory birds. This past year, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) has had the pleasure of working with officials and citizens of the coastal community of Port Aransas, Texas to secure the future of a small, but very important stopover site for migratory songbirds. The only freshwater wetland on Mustang Island, Paradise Pond is approximately two (2) acres of shallow wetlands with a lush border of black willows. Well known by local birders, the pond is a migrant 'hot-spot' during both spring and fall migration periods hosting more than 100 species of migratory songbirds, all of which rely on this secluded spot to rest and refuel during migration. To protect the pond from an encroaching new sub-division, GCBO teamed with the city's mayor, city manager, and dedicated local birders to raise funds and negotiate with landowners for habitat conservation measures. Overwhelming community support resulted in land donations and challenge grants that enabled us to create a sanctuary for birds and a new destination for birders. To help facilitate similar successes for natural habitat conservation in other small coastal communities, a 'Community Pocket Park Model' that was developed will be discussed.

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COWBIRD TRAPPING AS A CONSERVATION TOOL

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Abstract: While there is no one single reason for the decline in songbird numbers throughout the country, one contributing factor is the spread of the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). These birds were once limited to the short-grass prairies. Today however, this highly adaptive bird is found throughout North America. This is a problem because of the reproductive strategies the species employs. Because the female cowbird can lay as many as 70 eggs per season, susceptible species of songbirds, such as the Black-capped Vireo (*Vireo atricapillus*) and the Golden-cheeked Warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*), that are already endangered, are particularly at risk. For the past three years the Private Lands and Habitat Program in partnership with numerous private organizations and state agencies, has been working with private landowners to help control the Brown-headed Cowbird population in Central Texas. Traps are run during the prime songbird nesting season of March 1 through May 31. Data is collected by each landowner and submitted to TPWD on a weekly basis. Each year since 2000 there has been an increased number of participating landowners that have contributed to the project's success. Currently there are cowbird traps in 33 counties. Anecdotal evidence suggests that local songbird populations have increased dramatically in areas where trapping has taken place, clearly demonstrating that cowbird trapping is a viable conservation practice.

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Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Photo by Steven Gross

BALD EAGLE NESTING STATUS IN TEXAS

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Abstract: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has been tracking recovery of the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) since it was placed on the endangered species list. The number of Bald Eagles nesting in Texas has been rapidly increasing since 1987, with twenty (20) active nests documented at that time. The number of active nests increased to 37 in 1992, 54 in 1997, and 110 in 2002. Fourteen (14) new Bald Eagle nesting territories were located, and 110 of 140 nest territories observed were occupied in 2002. One hundred and fifty-three (153) young were fledged from 93 of the 110 occupied nests. Density and distribution of nesting associated with habitats will be discussed.

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POPULATION TRENDS OF MOTTLED DUCKS ON TEXAS GULF COAST NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

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Mottled Ducks (*Anas fulvigula*). Photo by Mel Cooksey

Abstract: Mottled Ducks (*Anas fulvigula*) are essentially non-migratory waterfowl dependent upon coastal marshes of the Gulf Coast for their entire life cycle. Numerous National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) have been established on the Texas Gulf Coast for the purpose of providing habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. With the continuing loss of wetland habitats along the Texas Gulf Coast, areas protected by NWR and the state of Texas represent the best remaining available habitat for coastal waterfowl. With the exception of the Midwinter Waterfowl Inventory, traditional surveys of waterfowl populations do not include mottled ducks. In 1985, a mottled duck breeding pair survey was initiated on upper- and mid-coast NWRs, representing the only continuous data source for breeding mottled ducks in Texas. At the same time, monthly (September-March) waterfowl surveys of all coastal NWRs in Texas were established providing the most comprehensive data base on wintering waterfowl in North America. There is a long-term decline in breeding pairs from 1985–2002 ($r = -0.71$). The steepest decline occurred from 1996 to 1997 (13.18 to 5.19 pairs/mile²). The long-term average is 12 pairs/mile². The 2002 estimate was 2.69 pairs/mile², which represents a 24.8% decline from 2001 and 77.6% decline from the long-term average. Monthly refuge surveys since 1985 indicate declining populations for all NWRs. Further, the annual Midwinter Waterfowl Inventory data also show a declining trend. Hypotheses for the decline include (1) increasing predator populations with a corresponding loss in buffer prey, (2) continuing impacts from spent lead shot, (3) declining habitat quality and quantity especially for breeding, brooding, and molting birds, (4) habitat fragmentation, (5) increasing human disturbance, (6) hybridization with mallards, and (7) improper identification by hunters. An intensive investigation into these hypothesis has been proposed in an attempt to understand and correct the reasons behind the Mottled Duck decline on NWRs.

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BEHAVIOR OF MIGRANT SHOREBIRDS ON SALINE LAKES OF THE SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

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Abstract: Information about the behavior of shorebirds at stop-over sites can be used to make inferences about which activities are predominant and the role of such sites in the life cycles of migrating shorebirds. Little is known about shorebirds using saline lakes of the Southern High Plains. In spring 2002, we initiated a study to determine time-activity budgets of migrant shorebirds. We used Focal Individual Sampling to determine behavior of American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*), Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*), Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) and Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*). Sampling was performed during 3 diurnal periods and 3 nocturnal periods. We noted time allocated to behaviors such as feeding, sleeping, alertness, locomotion, body maintenance, aggression, and mating. All 4 shorebird species studied spent more than 65% of time feeding during both spring and fall and during both day and night, except for phalaropes, which did not feed at night during spring migration. In the fall, all shorebirds spent less time feeding and more time sleeping and preening compared to spring. Results from this research will help wildlife biologists understand the importance of saline lakes in the life cycles of migrant shorebirds.

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THE ROLE OF LESSER SNOW GEESE AS CARRIERS OF AVIAN CHOLERA IN THE PLAYA LAKES REGION

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Abstract: Avian cholera, caused by the bacterium *Pasteurella multocida*, is one of the most important diseases affecting North American waterfowl. Two competing hypotheses have been proposed to explain the recurrence of avian cholera outbreaks: 1) *P. multocida* persists in specific wetlands year-round, and 2) carriers reintroduce the disease as migratory birds congregate on staging and wintering areas. To date, evidence gathered by the National Wildlife Health Center suggests that wetlands are not a likely reservoir for avian cholera. Our objective was to determine if wintering Lesser Snow Geese (*Chen c. caerulescens*) are carriers of *P. multocida* and determine where this bacteria resides in apparently healthy birds. Snow geese ($n = 266$) and Ross' Geese ($n = 55$; *Chen rossii*) were collected in January-March of 2001 and 2002 from the Playa Lakes Region of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Swab samples and blood samples were taken from each goose. Samples were processed at the National Wildlife Health Center, Madison,

Wisconsin. *P. multocida* were isolated from cultures of swab samples obtained from 4 snow geese and 1 Ross' goose collected in Texas and Colorado. Additionally, non-pathogenic strains of *P. multocida* were isolated from 1 snow goose collected in Texas and 1 collected in Kansas. Estimated prevalence of carriers is approximately 1.5% in snow geese and 1.8% in Ross' geese. Although the prevalence was low, results confirmed that apparently healthy geese can be carriers of avian cholera and can transmit the bacterium to other birds.

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BURROWING OWL USE OF PLAYA PRAIRIE DOG COLONIES

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Abstract: In summer 2002, we initiated a study of Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) use of prairie dog towns in the Southern High Plains. We identified burrowing owl nests on 130 prairie dog colonies, surveyed in six (6) counties (Lubbock, Crosby, Hale, Carson, Armstrong, and Randall). We measured productivity (number of fledglings observed per nest) of Burrowing Owls at 15 of these sites in 2002. We plan to capture and mark resident Burrowing Owls on these sites in winter 2002–2003 to identify whether breeding owls are resident or migratory pairs. Data collection will continue in summer 2003 and 2004. We are planning to assess burrowing owl nest selection and productivity in relation to Burrowing Owl residency, prairie dog colony size, prairie dog density, distance to playas and, indices of Burrowing Owl prey abundances.

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DISTRIBUTION AND BANDING OF PURPLE MARTINS IN NORTHWEST TEXAS

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Abstract: The Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) is believed to be a recent addition to the avifauna of northwest Texas. Through installation of martin housing, the eastern subspecies (*P. s. subis*) expanded its range westerly into the region during the last century, and now occurs east of a line extending through Spearman, Amarillo, Lubbock, and Monahans. This presentation will discuss the historical and present distribution of Purple Martins in Northwest Texas, as well as a banding program that was initiated in 1997. Nestling Purple Martins are banded each summer, with approximately 15% of the colonies receiving color bands unique to the site. More than 2,000 Purple Martins have been banded in the study area, representing 46 individual colonies, located in/near 13 communities. Although band returns through the Bird Banding Laboratory have been scarce ($N = 1$), to date, use of color bands has generated some interesting information on dispersal of Purple Martins from their natal colony site.

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Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*). Photo by Mark Lockwood

A COMPARISON OF TWO LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN POPULATIONS IN THE TEXAS PANHANDLE

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Abstract: We initiated a study of Lesser Prairie-Chickens (LPC, *Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) in spring 2000 to evaluate survival, reproduction, and habitat selection of 2 populations of LPC in the northeastern portion of the Texas Panhandle. A Hemphill County site contains a stable population of LPC and consists of sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia* spp.) rangeland with large ranching operations. A Wheeler County site contains a declining population and consists of shinnery oak (*Quercus havardii*) rangeland consisting of small to mid-sized farms and ranches. In spring 2001 and 2002, LPC were trapped with drop nets, fitted with radio transmitters. All birds were monitored an average of 4 times per week. A total of 55 LPC have been trapped and radio collared in the stable site, and 30 have been trapped in the declining site. Of 19 females radio-tracked during 2001, 10 were known to nest, 1 hen was known to re-nest, and 6 nests successfully hatched. Data regarding hatch success (60%) was limited to the Hemphill site. Only 2 females attempted to nest at the Wheeler site and both nests failed to produce a successful hatch. Nest success during spring 2002 was low at



Scaled Quail (*Callipepla squamata*). Photo by Mark Lockwood

both sites. Of 13 females monitored, only 5 were known to nest, 1 hen was known to re-nest, 5 did not nest, 2 hens were killed prior to nesting and 1 hen was not located until the summer but did not have a brood. Only 1 hen was known to have reared a successful brood. To date, no successful nests have been observed for the declining site. Poor nesting habitat as a result of the current drought and overgrazing appears to be the most likely explanation for nest failures. We believe insufficient rainfall, overgrazing, and habitat fragmentation are the most likely explanations for the decrease in LPC numbers at the declining site.

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NESTING ECOLOGY OF SCALED QUAIL AT ELEPHANT MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, BREWSTER COUNTY, TEXAS

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Abstract: We investigated Scaled Quail (*Callipepla squamata*) nesting ecology and survival at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Elephant Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Brewster County, Texas. During spring of 2000 and 2001, 179 scaled quail were captured (131 in 2000, 48 in 2001) in funnel traps on 2 study sites and banded with individually-numbered aluminum leg bands. One hundred eighteen Scaled Quail

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(70 F, 2 M in 2000; 25 F, 21 M in 2001) were radiomarked with neck-loop telemeters. A treatment site contained spreader dams constructed circa 1950s, whereas the control site had no spreader dams. Survival and nest success rates were compared to simulated nest survival. Predator indices were monitored with scent stations and simulated quail nests. Weekly survival, from March-September, was similar between sites and years (0.64 vs. 0.5 in 2000, 0.56 vs. 0.58 in 2001). We failed to reject the H_0 : spreader dams have no effect on reproduction and survival of Scaled Quail. Cause-specific mortality ($n = 32$) included kills by mammals (43%), unknown predators (31%), avian predators (13%), and drowning (9%). Eleven nests were detected in 2000–2001; 4 hatched, 5 were depredated, and 2 were abandoned. Nests were located in bunch grasses ($n = 5$) and under shrubs ($n = 6$). Earliest recorded nesting activity was 15 April; latest hatch date was approximately 7 September. Forty-four of 96 (46%) simulated quail nests survived in 2000, but only 3 of 96 (3%) of simulated quail nests survived in 2001. Survival of Scaled Quail in this study was slightly less than unpublished data for other Texas Scaled Quail populations and higher than survival reported for Northern Bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*) from the southeastern USA.

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**TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY 50TH ANNIVERSARY
26 APRIL 2003, PORT LAVACA, TEXAS
SCIENCE PAPER SESSION ABSTRACTS**

**CONSERVATION ORIENTED RESEARCH IN THE
GULF OF MEXICO REGION**

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Abstract: The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory works with a network of site partners that protect habitat for birds throughout the Gulf of Mexico region. The habitats in the Gulf Coast region are of special importance to many species of birds. A coordinated network of partners provides unique, large-scale research opportunities. Central to good conservation is having a solid base of population data to work from. The four research projects coordinated by the GCBO are: Migration Monitoring, Project Prairie Birds, Smith Point Hawk Watch, and the Columbia Bottomlands Forest Bird Study Group. The status of these and other research projects at partner sites will be discussed, as well as the potential for expanding research and making it more effective at addressing conservation questions.

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SCIENCE AND NON-SCIENCE IN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

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Abstract: Christmas bird counts have been in existence for over a century; in Texas, the “oldest” count exceeds 50 years. Counts which have a long history of regular occurrence can give us an idea of changes in

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bird populations within that count circle. These can include increase such as occurred with Cattle Egret, White-winged Doves and Eurasian Collared-Doves and House Finch, or decreases as with Greater Roadrunner and Northern Bobwhite. Increases and decreases may reflect actual changes in those avian populations or habitat changes within the circle, usually from increased urbanization. By examining count resolve on a larger scale, we can determine actual population changes over time and habitat changes. Finally, CBCs do occasionally document the occurrence of rare and unusual species. Unfortunately, the count data have a number of inherent problems, misidentification of which is not the least. Too many counts exert more time and energy on compiling a species list, while taking a more cavalier attitude towards actual numbers. In addition, in cases where two similar species occur in a count circle, one finds that every individual of thousands are identified to species! Even though the data with each count includes numbers of participants, weather conditions, etc., we do not know how thoroughly the area of each count was covered nor if all habitats received apportioned time in relation to the per cent of habitat. Other problems exist.

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ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED WINTERING WATERBIRDS IN REDFISH BAY, TEXAS

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Abstract: Estuarine environments in the Texas Coastal Bend provide wintering habitat for many wintering waterbirds including Common Loon (*Gavia immer*), Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*), Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritis*), Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), and Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*). These species comprise a loose guild of birds that dive for food and spend a majority of their time on the water. Understanding the population levels and habitat associations is key to making sound management decisions within the estuarine environment. The study area includes four main aquatic habitat types: deep unvegetated associated with the ship channel, medium depth unvegetated, shallow patchy vegetated, and shallow continuous vegetated. The vegetated habitats are primarily vegetated with sea grasses. The unvegetated substrate is primarily clay and sand. A Geographic Information Systems layer was developed to provide spatial analyses with various existing information layers for this area. Preliminary results will be presented showing spatial distributions of species within the habitat types and associated geographic features.

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SHOREBIRD HABITAT USE AND PREY RESOURCES IN A TEXAS COASTAL MOSAIC: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: The Gulf of Mexico Coast contains some of the most important staging and wintering shorebird habitats in North America. The mosaic of habitats along the Texas Gulf Coast is of particular importance because it contains large expanses of unvegetated foraging habitats juxtaposed with beach and marsh habitats that provide areas for both foraging and roosting. The focus of this study is to determine linkages among habitats within a coastal mosaic on the central Texas coast through determination of shorebird abundance, habitat

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Shorebirds along Texas coast. Photo by Steven Gross

use, and behavior as well as the quantity of invertebrate prey and their energetic quality. Data were collected at Indian Point Park, Corpus Christi, Texas, a coastal mosaic containing tidally influenced, depressional ponds, irregularly flooded tidal flats, uplands, an excavated "lake," undeveloped bay beach, and salt marsh. Shorebirds were censused using instantaneous scan sampling twice monthly since August 2002. Invertebrates were collected from transects in areas where birds were foraging and where they were not to determine and compare abundance, biomass and energetic content. Twenty shorebird species have been documented. The majority observed foraging and they were most abundant in salt marsh, pond, and lakeshore habitats. Preliminary analyses indicate that shorebirds were most abundant in areas where invertebrates are abundant.

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EFFECTS OF SUMMER PRESCRIBED FIRES ON VEGETATION, BIRD AND MACROINVERTEBRATE COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH TEXAS

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Abstract: Fire is an important tool used by range and wildlife managers to manipulate vegetation. However, the effects of summer prescribed fires on vegetation, bird and invertebrate communities are largely undocumented in south Texas. The objective of this study is to determine the effects of prescribed summer burns on

the avian and macroinvertebrate communities related to fire caused changes in vegetation. Two treatment replicates were established on two study sites in San Patricio County and Bee County Texas during April 2001. Pre-treatment data were collected during the breeding season for the bird and macroinvertebrate communities (April-June). Post-fire data were collected for invertebrates at quarterly intervals whereas bird and vegetation responses to summer fire were monitored 1-yr after fire ignition during the 2002 bird breeding season. Results indicate that vegetative cover was reduced on fire treatments 1-yr post-fire. Additionally, macroinvertebrate populations declined dramatically immediately after summer fires but began to recover within 4 to 6 months post-fire and the abundance of some important insect families surpassed pre-treatment and control population levels 1-yr post-fire. There did not appear to be a treatment effect for the bird community because post-treatment bird abundance and diversity remained similar to pre-treatment levels on both burned and control sites. The results of this study seem to indicate that summer prescribed fires may not have a negative long-term impact on invertebrate communities, and that more than one summer fire event may be necessary to impact the composition and abundance of south Texas bird communities.

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EFFECTS OF PRESCRIBED FIRE ON WINTERING AND BREEDING BIRD POPULATIONS IN THE WESTERN SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

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Abstract: Encroachment of woody plants into grassland-savanna ecosystems is a growing concern of natural resource managers and a likely factor in the recent decline of grassland bird species. Prescribed fire is an economical method of managing woody vegetation and enhancing rangeland productivity. Most prescribed burning is conducted during the winter months when burning conditions are less volatile. With the increasing interest in biodiversity and ecosystem management, more attention is being focused on summer burns, which reflect the timing of natural fires. The South Texas Plains is a fire-dependent ecosystem; yet, little data are available on the effects of fire on South Texas wildlife. The objective of this study is to determine the effects of winter and summer fire on wintering and breeding birds in the South Texas Plains. The study area is the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area in Dimmit and LaSalle Counties. Vegetation is dominated by the honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*)-mixed brush shrublands characteristic of South Texas. Two rangeland sites subjected to 2 burns during the dormant season in 1997 and 1999, 2 sites burned during winter 1997 and summer 1999, and 2 nontreated sites were selected for study. Wintering birds were surveyed along belt-transects during January 2001 and 2002. Breeding bird diversity and abundance was estimated with point counts in late spring 2001 and 2002. Preliminary data analyses indicate higher breeding bird diversity on burned sites. Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*), Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), and Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) were more commonly encountered on burned areas, whereas, Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) appeared more abundant on control sites. Burning appears to have little effect on wintering birds.

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BIRD USAGE OF RUNNING LIVEOAK WOODLANDS NEAR THE COAST IN CALHOUN COUNTY, TX

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Abstract: Birds were mist-netted during the spring and fall of 2001 and 2002 in expansive running liveoak (*Quercus virginiana*) woodlands that were 4 and 10 miles inland from Matagorda Bay and Gulf of Mexico, respectively, in Calhoun County Texas. The woodlands were a mosaic of running live oak less than 10 feet tall and coastal prairie in a 35,000-acre area that was comprised roughly of 50% of each between Powderhorn Lake and Matagorda Bay.

1200 (12-meter long with 30-mm mesh) mist-net hours were used during the spring and 2500 during the fall of two years to sample resident and migrant birds during March and April, and August through October. Although, roughly the same number of species were captured each season (55 in spring and 58 in fall), the frequency of captures were twice as high in the fall (50 per 100 net-hours vs. 24). Fall neotropical migrants and flycatchers were netted 6 times and warblers 4 times more frequent than spring. The only species group more abundant in spring were neotropical thrushes which were caught at .6 birds per 100 net-hours and none were captured in fall. At the distance of the study area from the Gulf, most spring inland bound migrants needing to make emergency landings probably did so prior to reaching the study area and those more fit migrants flew over the study area before making first land fall. In contrast, fall migrants made frequent use of the woodlands for foraging prior to migrating over or around the Gulf.

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GENETIC ALGORITHMS AND THE EVOLUTION OF BIRDSONG

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Abstract: Many birds have evolved an extremely sophisticated and complex system of acoustic communication. Even though birdsong has been a subject of serious research since the development of light, self powered magnetic recorders in the late 1950s, little progress has been made toward a satisfactory understanding of how this complicated behavior may have evolved. A primary goal of avian bioacoustics is the construction of predictive models that can provide verification for suggested selection processes (both genetic and cultural) that may have been responsible for the rich complexity of present day birdsong. The recent development of Genetic Algorithms from the field of computer science may finally provide the needed tool with which to make progress. Genetic algorithms are search procedures based on the mechanics of natural selection and natural genetics, thus they are ideal for the study of the evolution of birdsong. I present preliminary results of an ongoing study at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi where genetic algorithms are being used in an attempt to "tease out" some of the many threads that may trace the development of modern birdsong as it evolved over thousands of generations.

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WHITE-WINGED DOVE EXPANSION ACROSS TEXAS AND BEYOND

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Abstract: White-winged Doves (*Zenida asiatica*) are becoming common place in many urban areas of Texas.

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In Texas these doves historically used to be restricted to South and West Texas. Some of the historical habitat changes and human population shifts may have brought about this shift further north. A brief summary of the past 50 years of population estimates and habitat development and preservation will be presented to bring the audience up to date on the history of this bird.

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BROOD PARASITISM, EGG TRANSFER, AND EGG DESTRUCTION IN CAVE SWALLOWS AND CLIFF SWALLOWS OF SOUTH TEXAS

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Abstract: We studied the frequency and ecological correlates of intraspecific brood parasitism, physical transfer of eggs between nests, and destruction of eggs by conspecifics in colonially nesting Cave Swallows (*Petrochelidon fulva*) and Cliff Swallows (*P. pyrrhonota*) in south Texas in 2001. Brood parasitism was detected in 4.6–5.0% of Cave Swallow nests and in 10.7–11.9% of Cliff Swallow nests. Brood parasitism was not significantly related to colony size in either species, to eventual success of the host nest, to overall colony nesting success (measure of environmental risk), or to date of clutch initiation. Brood parasitism was more common than expected in nests with larger clutches. Physical transfer of eggs was detected in 0.7–2.0% of nests of these species. Egg destruction by conspecifics (or perhaps congeners) occurred in at least 9.5% of Cave Swallow nests and 7.9% of Cliff Swallow nests. In both species, egg destruction was greatest in larger colonies. Egg destruction was unrelated to clutch size or laying date for both species. Nests with brood parasitism tended to be more likely to also suffer egg loss than nonparasitized nests in both species. Cliff swallows apparently parasitized nests more often than Cave Swallows, but the frequencies of brood parasitism, egg transfer, and conspecific egg destruction in the two species in south Texas appeared broadly similar to those reported for Cliff Swallows in Nebraska despite geographical differences in habitat, seasonality, breeding phenology, and levels of sociality between the species. The advantages of destroying a conspecific's eggs are unclear, but egg destruction may be a prelude to brood parasitism. The risk of losing an egg to conspecifics is a cost of coloniality for both species.

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AGE CLASSES OF THE WHITE-TAILED HAWK

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Abstract: The White-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albicaudatus*) is unusual for a Buteo in having three immature plumages: juvenile, Basic I, and Basic II. Most buteos have only one immature plumage, juvenile, and no others have three. I will show and describe the differences in these plumages, including that of adults, using slides of hawks in hand, perched, and flying. Juveniles are overall dark, quite different from adults. They could be mistaken for dark Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*). Basic I birds have white breasts and dark belly bands, appearing somewhat similar to some Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*). Basic II birds are nearly adult in appearance. There are apparently no sexual differences in plumages.

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OBSERVATIONS ON NESTING HOOK-BILLED KITES IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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Abstract: The Hook-billed Kite (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*) is a little known species that occurs in the United States only along the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Fewer than five references have been published on its nesting in the U.S., and little more has been published from the rest of its range. There are thought to be fewer than 20 pairs nesting in Texas from Falcon Dam to Santa Ana NWR. I will discuss my observations of nesting pairs of this species in three protected areas where they are known to nest and speculate that there are many more pairs. I will show the first breeding dark-morph adult for Texas and its dark offspring, again the first produced in Texas. This was a result of a second brood for this dark female.

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RANGE EXPANSION OF THE BRONZED COWBIRD IN TEXAS

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Abstract: Since arriving in Texas in the latter half of the 19th Century, the Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) has expanded its range to include approximately 2/3 of the state. Lubbock and the northern edge of the Edward's Plateau currently demarcate the northern limits of Bronzed Cowbird breeding range in Texas. Area occupied by Bronzed Cowbirds within Texas has increased over time, but this increase has not been quite linear, indicating that rate of spread has varied over time. Post-1956, spread was more rapid, occurring at a mean rate of 10.16 km/yr. Pre-1956, mean rate of spread was 4.15 km/yr. More rapid spread post-1956 was likely facilitated by human-induced habitat changes. Potential for further range expansion exists. Observational and trapping data indicate increasing populations at the northern limits of their breeding range. In addition, fat indices of cowbirds trapped during spring migration at the northern edge of their range was relatively high (mean = 2.96, range = 1–5), suggesting that these birds potentially could have migrated further north. Continued range expansion is a management concern as the Bronzed Cowbird is a generalist brood parasite that may elevate risk of songbird nest failure due to increased risks of egg damage and parasitism.

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BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD TRAPPING CERTIFICATION TRAINING

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Abstract: Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) have been suppressing reproduction of songbirds in a number of areas of Texas, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has initiated a program of training people to appropriately trap and dispatch cowbirds parasitizing the nests of local songbirds. Songbirds have responded with increased reproduction in areas where cowbird control has been implemented during the breeding season.

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