

Texas Region

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CHUCK SEXTON**

With north and east Texas observers reporting a generally average season, the entire western half of the state was in stark contrast as it suffered through unmerciful heat and drought, conditions which were obviously worse as one progressed west or south. Lubbock and El Paso both had temperatures up to 114° F. in June. Rainfall was far below normal in Austin and the Lower Rio Grande Valley; El Paso simply had none, leaving that area with only three inches for the year through the end of the period. The Panhandle finally cooled off in July and got some of the rains that had eluded them earlier, and much of the rest of the state finally got a respite from the heat in the very last days of July.

In most areas, observers' attention seemed less focused on nesting results and more on the array of early and late migrant passerines and some curious summering waterbirds. The most pervasive trend was the early arrival of southbound migrants, primarily from the montane west. This movement was represented to varying degrees by hummingbirds, swallows, nuthatches, warblers, grosbeaks, and buntings, among others. Some new reservoirs were responsible for interesting nesting

records in north and west Texas, and another deep water pelagic trip continued to help us better define our offshore avifauna.

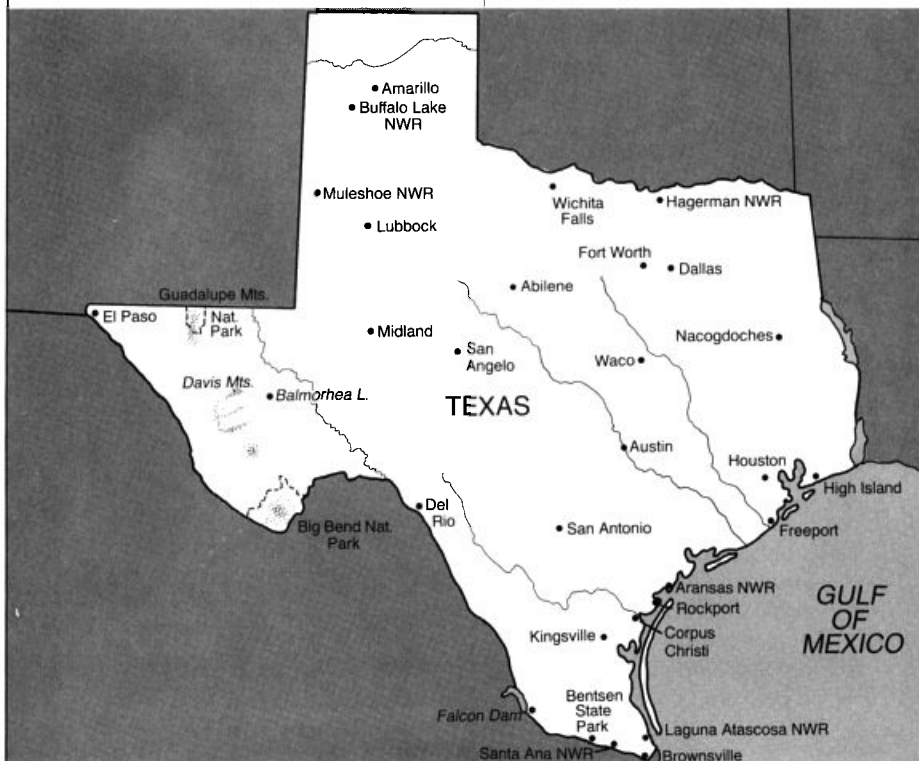
Our observer network shrank significantly this summer for a variety of reasons, and some regional reporting gaps may be apparent to regular readers. We continue to be grateful for a strong core of observers who help us crystallize patterns of avian occurrence, even through a tough summer season such as this one.

Abbreviations: Ft. Bliss (*Fort Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mountains Nat'l Park*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); S.S.W.T.P. (*South Side Water Treatment Plant, Dallas*); T.B.R.C. (*Texas Bird Records Committee—Texas Ornithological Society*); U.T.C. (*Upper Texas Coast*); V.C.D.B. (*Village Creek Drying Beds, Ft. Worth*). The following are shortened names for the respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges, etc.: Anahuac, Aransas, Attwater, Bazemore, Bentsen, Big Bend, Hagerman, Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, and Santa Ana.

Loons to Stork

A Pacific Loon was reported in *Aransas* July 9 († E&NA), providing a first July record for the state. The abundant Least Grebes from the last several seasons began to get concentrated into the few remaining suitable ponds by June; an astonishing 120 were seen on a single pond in *Kenedy* June 12 (GL, CS); breeding adults in this group attended >30 nests. For the 2nd consecutive year the species nested at *Attwater* (JH). At *McNary Res., Hudspeth*, a mixed pair of Western and

Clark's grebes were found nest-building July 11 (BZ, JP), the 2nd reported nesting of the genus in Texas. A single *Sooty Shearwater* was spotted during a pelagic trip out of Port O'Connor July 23 (ph. GL, †CS, DPe, ME, m.ob.). This will represent the 9th documented record of a species rarely observed alive in Texas waters; most records are beach wrecks. The same pelagic trip yielded five *Leach's Storm-Petrels* and ≤10 *Band-rumped Storm-Petrels* (†m.ob.). These records support our expectation that storm-petrels may be regular in small numbers in summer over deep water off the continental shelf. However, we continue to be surprised by the relative abundance of *Band-rumped* and the virtual absence of *Wilson's Storm-Petrel*; there is only one accepted Texas record of the latter species to date. A *Masked Booby* took up residence on a Galveston dock and remained through the summer (m.ob.). The now-famous *Blue-footed Booby* spent its 2nd summer at Lake L. B. Johnson. *Brown Pelicans* continued to thrive along much of the Texas coast. Two colonies on the c. coast reported increases in numbers of nesting pairs of 60% and 120% over 1993 (*fide* MF). Two new reservoirs, *Palo Duro Res., Hansford* (Panhandle) and *McNary Res., Hudspeth* (Trans-Pecos), each harbored new nesting colonies of *Double-crested Cormorants*, both representing new area nest records (KS, BZ, JP). Three *Neotropic Cormorant* nests were discovered at *San Antonio's Mitchell L.* in the same tree as last year, but the nests failed when the tree was blown down by gusty winds (WS). Small numbers of non-breeding *Neotropic Cormorants* lingered throughout the summer in n., c., and far w. Texas. *Least Bitterns* nested successfully at *Santa Ana* (*fide* JI) and a single bird was at *S.S.W.T.P., Dallas* July 9 (GH). The new reservoir at *McNary* hosted a rookery of 30 *Snowy Egret* nests, 40 *Cattle Egret* nests, and 25 *Black-crowned Night-Heron* nests in early July. A return trip there July 22 yielded 3 *Great Egret* nests, a first nesting record for the El Paso area (JP, BZ). *Tricolored Herons*, normally rare in n. Texas, were observed in higher than normal numbers; one–two birds were in *Grayson, Van Zandt, and Rains* in early and late July (KH, RR, RK *et al.*). *Lake Balmorhea* hosted two *Reddish Egrets* July 23, one of which was a white-morph, perhaps the same one reported last year (BN, DE). *Yellow-crowned Night-Herons* seemed more conspicuous at various w. and n. Texas localities; a remarkable concentration of at least 60 ad. and imm. *Yellow-crowns* was seen in e. *Tarrant* July 17 (BGi, PB, RR). The only *White Ibis* reports from n. Texas this season were six birds in *Van Zandt*, June 8 (*fide* RK) and two at *L. Tawakoni* July 27.



Waterfowl

A sprinkling of summering, non-breeding Snow and Greater White-fronted geese in ones and twos were noted in widely scattered c. and w. Texas localities. Two Muscovy Ducks were found during a canoe trip on the Rio Grande between Chapeño and Fronton June 18; three were found in the same area July 9 (TB, MB). An active Muscovy nest was found by Burgess near Bentsen in July (*fide* TB); details of this probable first U.S. nest record will be published elsewhere. Small numbers of Wood Ducks continue to be seen on the Rio Grande below Falcon Dam during summer (CS, GL, TB, MB). An unusual summer Cinnamon Teal, possibly an early migrant, was noted near Luling, *Gonzales* July 31 (BFr). Two Ring-necked Ducks were at Ft. Hancock July 11, providing one of very few summer records for the El Paso area (BZ, JP). Apparently ill, a Surf Scoter was observed in *Galveston* June 26 (BG). A pair of Hooded Mergansers nested successfully in *Collin* (*fide* WP), furnishing only about the 4th nesting record in Texas. The Masked Duck reported at Laguna Atascosa in the spring was joined by another in June and remained through the season (BM *et al.*). Others were reported without documentation intermittently at Santa Ana (*fide* JI, TP). An astounding 24 Masked Ducks, including 10 young, were observed at Attwater July 29 (JH). The birds were obviously present but undiscovered before that date; many of them were later observed in the fall period.

Raptors

A Black Vulture in *Archer* June 4 (KN) furnished an overdue first county record. Single Ospreys, unusual in summer away from the Rio Grande or deep e. Texas, included: Palacios June 11, Brownsville June 12, Boca Chica June 13 (CS, GL), and Corpus Christi July 7 (GS). A pair of Hook-billed Kites fledged two young near Los Ebanos, *Hidalgo* (*fide* JE). Other Hook-billeds were at Bentsen, Santa Ana, and Anzalduas during the season (m.ob.). Summer sightings of Am. Swallow-tailed Kite increased in e. Texas; the nesting pair reported in the spring in *Tyler* fledged a single young in the 3rd week of July (CSh, m.ob.). A suspected nesting pair of White-tailed Kites was observed intermittently in June in *Nacogdoches* (CSh, m.ob.); the species has not bred in the Piney-woods in more than 10 years. Bald Eagles had another record nesting year in Texas (*fide* JE); 52 eaglets fledged from 35 of the 40 active nests. Of considerable biogeographical interest was a nesting Bald Eagle in Arizona which had been banded as a nestling in *Matagorda*, TX, 6 years earlier (*fide* JE). The imm. Bald Eagle found last

summer at L. Tawakoni was observed in the same location 3 times this summer (RK); the nearest Bald Eagle nesting grounds are on the Red and Trinity Rivers well to the w. of Tawakoni (Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. files). Unusual N. Harrier records included one seen in n.w. *Lipscomb* June 5 (KS), and another in e. *Travis* July 21 (RA). An imm. Sharp-shinned Hawk in *Karnes* July 30 (WS) was out of place. Two pairs of Com. Black-Hawks successfully fledged young in the Davis Mts. (*fide* JE). Gray Hawk nests were located in Big Bend's Rio Grande Village and below Falcon Dam, with sightings of individual birds reported elsewhere in the L.R.G.V. Three sightings of Broad-winged Hawks in June at Midland were abnormal (FW). Rare summer sightings of Swainson's Hawks in n.e. Texas were noted in *Van Zandt* and *Gregg* (RK, T&RM). We received a belated report of a White-tailed Hawk at Santa Elena Canyon, Big Bend May 11 (*fide* JE); this species is a very rare visitor to the upper Rio Grande. Most unseasonable was an ad. Zone-tailed Hawk soaring over Santa Ana June 6 (TB). A single Crested Caracara reported June 2-3 at the Hill Country S.N.A., *Banderal Medina*, represented a first park record (ML). Unusual summer sightings of Am. Kestrels were made June 17 in *Hidalgo* and July 27 in *Starr* (JI). Eight more Aplomado Falcons were released at Laguna Atascosa during the period. A ♀ Peregrine Falcon regularly seen at Amistad Dam, Val Verde, was well away from any known nesting area (*fide* JE).

SA We recognized at least one resource that may be responsible for attracting Peregrine Falcons into the c. Texas region, far removed from any nesting areas, in midsummer: bats. This summer, two imm. Peregrines were observed on the early date of July 31 gorging themselves on Mexican Free-tailed Bats in a massive evening bat flight emerging at Bracken Cave, *Comal* (CS). These bat flights represent an abundant, dense, and easily-tapped food resource for birds of prey. Bat numbers peak in July and August at several large nursery colonies in the Texas Hill Country as young bats begin to emerge. Red-tailed, White-tailed, and Swainson's hawks and Great Horned Owls are commonly seen taking advantage of these morsels at dusk.

Prairie-Chickens to Shorebirds

Surveys conducted at Attwater in early July yielded 10 adult and 14 young Attwater's Prairie-Chickens, a slight increase in production over last year (JH). Drier spring

These photographs, submitted with the spring report, were accidentally omitted from the Fall 1994 issue of NAS Field Notes.



Male Garganey at Presidio, Texas, April 29, 1994. Second state record. Photograph/Alan Wormington.



Adult Northern Goshawk in Gillett, Karnes County, Texas, March 16, 1994. Only the sixth documented record for the state. Photograph/Jody Gabbert.



Providing a fifth record for Texas was this Surfbird (front, with Willet) on North Padre Island April 16, 1994. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley.



Male Tropical Parula at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend National Park, Texas, May 1, 1994. Regular in southern Texas, the species never had been documented in the western part of the state. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley.

conditions are credited with the increased breeding success. A total of five calling Black Rails were heard in 4 separate locations in *Calhoun* July 3 (ME). The first photographed nest record of Virginia Rail in *Midland* was obtained July 2 (GG). Rare in summer, a single Virginia Rail was spotted in *Matagorda* July 9 (ME). An ad. Sora provided an unexpected record at Mitchell L., June 26–28 (SF, WS). A pair of Com. Moorhens nested successfully at V.C.D.B., providing *Tarrant* with its first nesting record since 1958 (EW, m.ob.). Williams commented on a successful nesting season for Snowy Plovers in Midland despite the record heat. A pair of probably summering Snowy Plovers were at Boca Chica June 13 (BM, CS, GL); 65 Snowies were observed at nearby Laguna Atascosa July 11 (TB). Elsewhere, a Snowy Plover at Grand Saline Marsh July 17 (RK, GHa) provided a first *Van Zandt* record. Ten Semipalmated Plovers at Boca Chica June 13 (BM, CS, GL) was an unusual midsummer concentration. Four Piping Plovers at Austin's Hornsby Bend July 21 were more than are normally found there (BFr). Interesting Black-necked Stilt nesting records were reported in *McLennan* (2nd record, FB) and at V.C.D.B. (first since 1986, EW, m.ob.). Summering shorebirds seemed more numerous and diverse at a few coastal concentration points such as Bolivar Flats and San Luis Pass. Among the "regulars" were Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel, Short-billed Dowitcher, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Least Sandpiper. Less expected were two Dunlins in June at San Luis Pass (CS, GL, GDL), two White-rumped at Bolivar Flats June 26 (GDL, BG, m.ob.), and 13 Red Knots at Bolivar on the same date. There was an early movement of Solitary Sandpipers in n. and c. Texas, but a single Solitary in *Victoria* June 20–July 20 was a greater surprise (*fide* GDL). Up to seven Long-billed Curlews summered in *El Paso*, though no evidence of nesting was discovered (BZ *et al.*), while 27 Long-billeds were an unexpected early concentration July 23 in Austin (BFr). Other unexpected early shorebirds included a Marbled Godwit at Cooper L., *Delta* June 25 (MW), two Red Knots in Austin July 14 (BFr), and a Wilson's Phalarope July 24 near High I. (BG). On June 24 a basic-plumaged **Curlew Sandpiper** was discovered at Bolivar Flats (†WB, BB, ph., WR, GDL, DB, m.ob.) where it remained through the first week of July: It provided the 5th documented record for Texas.

Jaegers to Terns

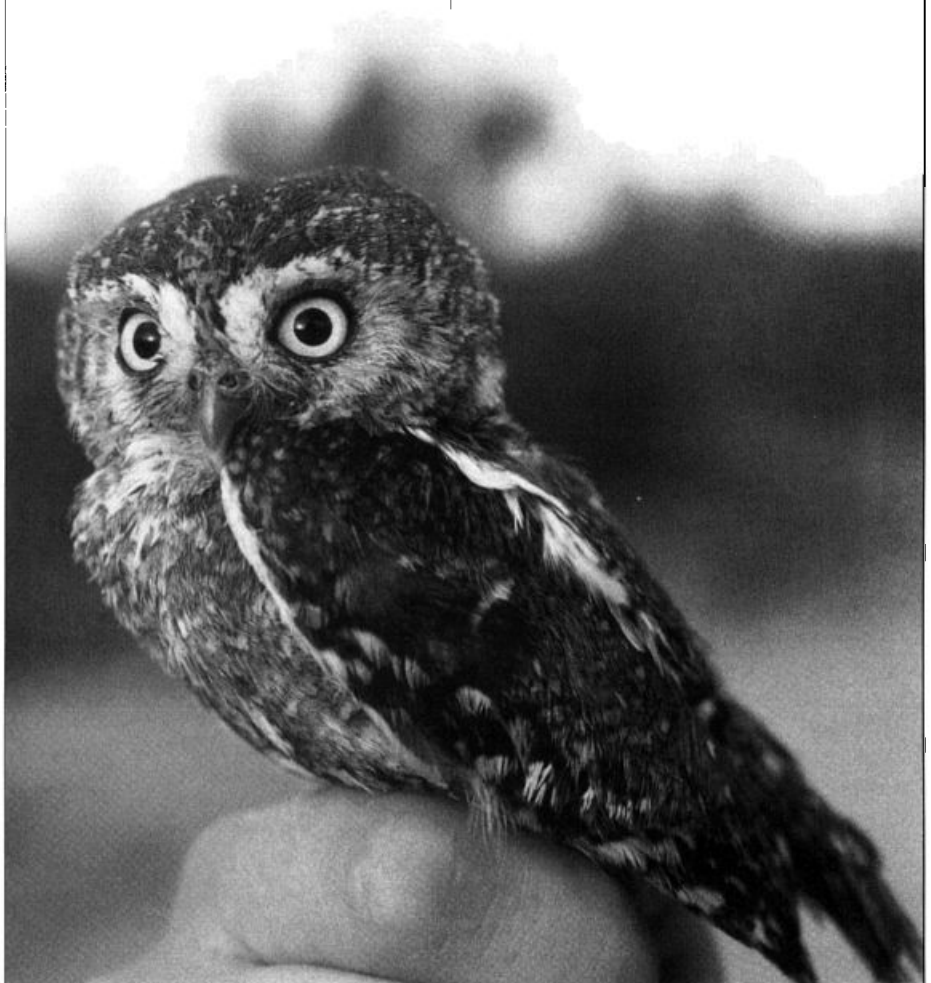
An imm. Pomarine Jaeger visited Bolivar Flats July 17 and was seen sporadically through the period (BG, m.ob.).

SA A totally unexpected avian event this summer was the unprecedented appearance of rare and out-of-season gulls and terns at Cooper L., *Delta*: An amazing 10 species were observed there in June and July. The most inexplicable were one–three California Gulls in 2nd and 3rd summer plumage May 26+ († & ph., MW, KN, RR, PB); these represent the first summer record for the species in Texas. Also present on Cooper L. at various times in June and July were <five Laughing Gulls along with Herring, Ring-billed and Franklin's gulls. Added to these were two Royal Terns June 25 (MW); two sub-ad. Com. Terns June 11, with one reported irregularly until mid-July (MW, KN); several ad. Caspian Terns all summer, and Black and Least terns present in mid-June. Adding to this phenomenon elsewhere in n. Texas were two Laughing Gulls at L. Arrowhead, Clay June 18 (CH), and an imm. Ring-billed Gull and three Caspian Terns there June 17 (CH). At L. Tawakoni a, Com. Tern was reported July 20 (RK).

Three Least Terns were at Palo Duro Res., *Hansford* June 4 (KS). This is the farthest west in the Panhandle the species has been recorded in the summer; it is probable that they were nesting in the area (*fide* KS). Unfortunately, the Least Tern colony at S.S.W.T.P. was abandoned this summer.

Doves to Kingfishers

A White-tipped Dove was heard calling at Medio Cr., *Refugio* June 11 (ME). Eleven Monk Parakeets noted in Temple July 12 may represent a new locality record (RP). Green Parakeets are reportedly continuing to increase in the Harlingen area, where at least one pair was observed feeding young (OC). A pair of Groove-billed Anis nested at Mitchell L., producing three young (WS). A pair of W. Screech-Owls was discovered in a small woodlot near Fabens, *El Paso* July 22 (BZ, JP); this species is curiously very rare in this corner of the state. Dawkins and Tarter were stunned when they found an Elf Owl in one of their mist nets July 7 in San Angelo; photos of this critter document the first Concho Valley



Elf Owl is a very local species in Texas, and there were no previous records for the region of San Angelo, where this individual flew into a mist net July 7, 1994. Photograph/Delbert Tarter.

record. A pair of Spotted Owls reported in the spring at G.M.N.P. successfully raised two young. An overdue first *Midland* record for Lesser Nighthawk was provided July 16 (JCH *et al.*). Lesser Nighthawks were also reported as increasing in the Abilene area (LB). In Conroe, an imm. Green Violet-ear was well described July 14–17 (PDH); this represents the easternmost record for Texas; there are now about 16 records for this species in the state. A ♂ **White-eared Hummingbird** frequented feeders near Ft. Davis July 24–early August (ph., C&RAS, †JG) in the same area where \leq three females were seen last summer. This particular location is turning out to be a mecca for hummingbird watching in Texas, with up to 10 species reported there this season. Among other notable finds there were several Calliopes, a Lucifer, numerous Magnificents, and two birds thought to be Allen's (†JG). A couple of Buff-bellied Hummingbirds summered as far n. as *Bastrop* (*fide* EK). A Black-chinned Hummingbird was seen at Santa Ana June 5 (JI); the species is rare and irregular in the L.R.G.V. in summer. A ♂ Anna's Hummingbird was observed irregularly in w. Ft. Worth July 18–30 (AY, EW, CH, GK, MP) furnishing n.c. Texas with its first summer record. Along with the concentration in the Davis Mts., Calliope Hummingbirds were also slightly more numerous than expected in Midland, Big Bend, and El Paso (m.ob.). Increased numbers of Broad-tailed and Rufous hummingbirds in late July in Midland and Amarillo (FW, PA, RS, KS) probably represented a related phenomenon. These movements lead some of our reporters to speculate that drought conditions and/or forest fires may have driven these montane hummers south a bit early. A stray Belted Kingfisher was in *De Witt* July 17, where the species is not known to breed (ME).

Flycatchers to Swallows

A few *Empidonax* flycatchers showed up in the last week of July to surprise some observers, but this is not atypical for the beginning of the migration. A Black Phoebe on the Rio Grande at Santa Ana July 14 was unseasonable (TB). A Great Crested Flycatcher was present for the 3rd consecutive summer at Palo Duro, but evidence of nesting is still lacking (KS). Freeman found a couple of Brown-crested Flycatchers in *Gonzales* June 25 at the n. fringe of the species' range. At least 4 of 5 *Cameron* Tropical Kingbird sites showed nesting activity (BM), one of which successfully fledged young in June. There was clearly an unusual early movement of Tree Swallows into c. Texas in July. Birds were present in the first

2 weeks of the month in Midland and small numbers had made it to the e. edge of the Hill Country in Austin and San Antonio before the month was out. Could this be another symptom of conditions in the montane west? Two nesting colonies of Bank Swallows, totaling about 100 birds, were found on the banks of the Rio Grande below Falcon Dam June 18 (TB, MB). Cave Swallows have now become regular in small numbers in e. *Travis* and *Bastrop*, being found without much difficulty all summer (BFR, CS, GL).

Crows to Shrikes

A single Mexican "Tamaulipas" Crow was seen briefly near the Brownsville Dump June 12 (CS, GL); there was no evidence that the species might be nesting there this year. A Com. Raven was seen in the Canadian R. breaks of n. *Potter* June 6, where the species is very rare and irregular (KS). A Carolina Chickadee, a short distance out of its normal range but still quite unexpected, was in Corpus Christi July 11 (M. Jenkins, *fide* GS). Another early visitor probably from the montane west was a Red-breasted Nuthatch in *Vega*, *Oldham* July 8 (RS). Midsummer records of Carolina Wrens were notable in Midland and Amarillo (J&DM, RS). A single Cactus Wren was noted in *Shackelford* June 5 (KN), a decline from recent years; this area of the mesquite plains in n. c. Texas is at the fringe of the species range, and fluctuations are apparent through the years. A few Clay-colored Robins were reported without documentation in July in the L.R.G.V. Come on, folks; this is a Texas Review List species! A Curve-billed Thrasher in *Archer* June 4 provided a first county record (KN).

Vireos to Warblers

Single Bell's Vireos, now quite uncommon in n. Texas, were noted in *Archer* June 4 and in *Shackelford* June 5 (KN). A singing Yellow-throated Vireo was unexpected at Cooper L., July 9 (MW), providing a first county record. A Red-eyed Vireo at Laguna Meadows July 30 constituted a rare fall record for Big Bend (JG *et al.*). Late migrant warblers were sprinkled here and there: Chestnut-sideds were in Midland June 14–15 and in Corpus Christi June 15; a Blackburnian was still at Santa Ana June 3; an Am. Redstart in Midland June 10 and a N. Waterthrush in Amarillo June 2 were slightly late (m.ob.). Reports of nesting success among our breeding warblers were infrequent. In portions of n. Texas, such species as Black-and-white, Kentucky, and Prothonotary warblers and Com. Yellowthroats were said to have done well. Northern Parulas were confirmed nesting for the

first time in *Delta* when a fledgling was spotted July 9 (MW). In the Hill Country, Golden-cheekeds appeared to have substantial nesting success (*e.g.* at Pedernales Falls, *fide* ML); this Texas native has broods out of the nest in late May or early June, usually well before the worst heat or midsummer drought conditions set in. Drought conditions or forest fires may have led to early migrant departures among warblers of the montane west, as suggested by a Yellow-rumped in *El Paso* which was over a month early July 28 and a Hermit in Big Bend July 30, which was just a bit early. Early Black-and-whites showed up in Corpus Christi July 8, at Santa Ana July 17, and at many other localities in the last week of July; Louisiana Waterthrushes also showed up in late July along the coast away from nesting grounds (m.ob.).

Tanagers to Finches

Summer Tanagers were noted in greater frequency in n.c. Texas, including a rare record for *Wichita* June 4 (*fide* DM). Add two Black-headed Grosbeaks in Amarillo July 20–26 (RS) and three Lazuli Buntings at Fort Bliss July 27 (BZ, JP) to the list of early returning w. migrants. One and probably two singing ♂ Varied Buntings were discovered July 2 in San Angelo (MBS), providing a first Concho Valley record; at least one was seen through July 9 and one was banded July 7 (RD, DT, TM). It was definitely a Dickcissel summer in deep s. Texas; the species was common in the L.R.G.V. and singing birds were heard as far s. as Monterrey, Mexico in mid-June (GL, CS). A Canyon Towhee in *Shackelford* June 5 was at the n.e. edge of that species' range (KN). Recent work by Farmer and others has shown Botteri's Sparrow to be quite widespread on the lower Texas coastal plain in suitable grassland habitat, and not the local rare breeder as was once presumed. An out-of-season Savannah Sparrow was at Cooper L., July 29 (MW). A pair of Seaside Sparrows were found at Laguna Atascosa July 11 at the same site as in 1993 (TB); the species is very local on the lower Texas coast. Noteworthy in the Pineywoods was a pair of Great-tailed Grackles which fledged 3 young in *Harrison* June 15 (WPa, GLu). Observers remarked about Orchard Orioles in widespread areas from the coast to deep s. Texas and the Trans-Pecos in early–mid-July, wondering if some of these might have been nesting birds; however, the normal early migration of this species and the unusual conditions of the summer should add a cautionary note. A solitary Audubon's Oriole was in *Goliad* June 11 at the extreme n. limit of its range (ME). Fifteen Scott's

Orioles at Kickapoo July 21 (ML) suggested the species was more common than usual in the s. Hill Country. A fledgling Am. Goldfinch accompanying an adult in *Delta* July 29 confirmed nesting for this rare breeder in n. Texas (MW); another goldfinch July 18 provided a first July record for nearby *Van Zandt* (RK); and the species was seen at 2 sites in *Hemphill* June 5, an area of the Panhandle where they were found nesting in 1990 (KS).

Cited observers (subregional editors in boldface): Peggy Acord, Rich Armstrong, Eddie & Nina Arnold, Bob Behrstock, Peter Billingham, Lorrie Black, David Bradford, Marty Bray, Tim Brush, Barbara Bruns (BBr), Frank Bumgardner, Harold Burgess, Winnie Burkett, Oscar Carmona, Ross Dawkins, Gladys Donohue, John Economy, Mark Elwonger, Doug Emkalns, Mike Farmer, Bill Farnsworth, Steve Freed, Brush Freeman (BFr), John Gee, Brian Gibbons (BGi), Bill Graber, Gene Grimes, Karl Haller, George Harmon (GHa), Carl Haynie, J. C. Henderson, Gary Hodnee, Jenny Hoskins, P. D. Hulce, Joe Ideker, Greg Keiran, Richard Kinney, Greg Lasley, Mark Lockwood, **Gail Diane Luckner** (GDL) (East Texas: 13708 Bohemian Hall, Crosby, TX 77532), Guy Luneau (GLu), Debra McKee, Terry Maxwell, Brad McKinney, Joann & Don Merritt, Tony & Renee Messina, Ken Nanney, Bruce Neville, Julius Nussbaum, Brent Ortego, Nancy & **Paul Palmer** (South Texas: 615 South Wanda, Kingsville, TX 78363), Wyatt Partney (WPa), Jim Paton, Mike Patterson, Dick Payne, Dwight Peake (DPe), Tom Pincelli, Randy Pinkston, Barbara J. Porthast, Warren Pulich, **Ross Rasmussen** (North Central Texas: 600 S. Graves #1704, McKinney, TX 75069), Will Risser, Sara St. Slair, Paul Saraceni, Rosemary Scott, **Willie Sekula** (Central Texas: Rt. 1, Box 130, Falls City, TX 78113), Chuck Sexton, **Ken Seyffert** (Panhandle: 2206 S. Lipscomb, Amarillo, TX 79109), Cliff Shackelford (CSh), Clyde & Ruth Ann Smith, John Sproul, Rose Marie Stortz, Mary Beth Stowe, Glen Swartz, Delbert G. Tarter, Ed Wetzels, Egon & Sue Wiedenfeld, Matt White, Francis Williams, Ad York, **Barry Zimmer** (Trans-Pecos: 6720 Heartstone Ct., El Paso, TX 79924).

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Idaho/ Western Montana Region

DAN SVINGEN

This summer saw a return to the drought conditions that have plagued the region for four of the last five years. Fortunately, the dry weather allowed high nesting success. Waterfowl was the group most often mentioned as benefiting. Chuck Trost reports that Trumpeter Swan production was up in southeast Idaho. In northern Idaho, John Nigh found the highest duck nesting success in years, and Montana reporters described waterfowl reproduction as "good" to "fabulous!" Osprey and accipiter nest success was also high, based on the record number of Osprey banded on Idaho's Coeur d'Alene Lake, and the widespread reports of fledgling Cooper's Hawks and Northern Goshawks around St. Maries, Idaho. George Holton saw numerous second broods of American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Pine Siskins in the Helena, Montana area, suggesting that the conditions also benefited passerines. All of these sightings are in marked contrast to the summer of 1993, when the unseasonably cool, wet season greatly curtailed regional nesting success. It should be noted, however, that it was the wet weather last year that produced the thick vegetation this summer.

It is with affection and great respect that this column bids farewell to the editorial services of Tom Rogers. Tom has generously guided bird documentation in the Region for 40 years, and holds the distinction of being *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds'* longest-

term Regional Editor. Tom served as Editor for both the former Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region and the current Idaho/Western Montana Region. His energy, dedication, and insights have added greatly to our understanding of birdlife. We sincerely thank him for his efforts.

Loons to Shorebirds

An alternate-plumaged Com. Loon at Winchester Lake S. P., *Lewis*, ID June 28, was likely a summering non-breeder (WW). A Horned Grebe was at Mann Creek Res., *Washington*, ID July 7, where very rare in summer (JG). Unusual were four Am. White Pelicans at Mann L., *Nez Perce*, ID July 2-7 (KD, CV, WH) and 17 pelicans at Frenchtown, MT July 23 (DHo). A Double-crested Cormorant was at McArthur L., *Boundary*, ID, July 21, where a few are seen each year (PC). Cormorants are rare in e.c. Idaho, so singles in Salmon July 4 (HR) and 25 mi upstream from Riggins June 30 (DJ) were of interest.

The 15 Greater White-fronted Geese flying over Rattlesnake, MT June 18 were unseasonably late (DHo). A Harlequin Duck pair on the St. Joe R., *Shoshone*, ID included a female banded as a duckling there in 1988 (FC). Three Harlequins were photographed June 10 on the Lochsa R., *Idaho*, ID, where they are known to breed (M& MD), while two males were on the Salmon R., 85 mi e. of Riggins June 28 (DJ), where breeding has yet to be confirmed.

