

FINAL
North Central Texas
Summer (June-July) 2020 Bird Report

Reporting Compiler/Editor: Ross Rasmussen

Report Date: September 1, 2020

Highlights: Glaucous-winged Gull, California Gull, Masked Booby

Overview

Unexpected this summer were some casual and accidental lingering gulls and wanderers from the south and the Gulf of Mexico. Water levels continued to be very high in most locales which seemed to result in lower numbers of herons and egrets in some locales and lower than average numbers of shorebirds in many areas due to lack of foraging habitat. Migrant shorebirds were only present at a very few isolated locales (water treatment plants and widely scattered marginal lakeshore edge habitat).

Migrant shorebird began arriving back in the region in low numbers in mid-July which was a week or two earlier than normal. High Arctic nesting species (Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling) returned in late July which was noticeably earlier than normal. The record heat in the Arctic may have resulted in nesting failures?

Weather

It was an atypical summer weather season in the region. After a near normal start the last half of June and July was cooler than normal with no 100 degree days. Humid Houston conditions prevailed during this period with some unusually heavy summer rains in the northern Red River counties and localized heavy rains in the central section of the region. However, the southwest region was very dry with burn bans in effect by late July.

Potentially Noteworthy Sightings

Hooded Merganser – Hooded Mergansers nested at the Old White Rock Lake hatchery ponds in April and produced 10 young which stayed till early June (Kayla Murphy King, ph.). This species last nested at this locale in 2016.

Least Grebe – A pair of Least Grebes that arrived at Village Creek Drying Beds, *Tarrant* during spring produced at least three young, which remained at the site thru the season, establishing the northern most U.S. successful nesting record for the species, 1 Jun-31Jul+ (Colby Ayers, Ed Wetzel, m.ob. ph.).

Sora – Casual in summer was a Sora at the Dallas Water Treatment Plant, Seagoville, *Dallas* 8 Jul (Matt DuRoss)

Purple Gallinule – Casual was an unexpected Purple Gallinule in densely vegetated drainage ditch adjacent to 900 Hatton Summer Place, Viridian, Arlington, *Tarrant* 20-24 Jun (Colby Ayers, Ed Wetzel, ph.).

Common Gallinule – A pair of Common Gallinules found at a nest at Village Creek Drying Beds, *Tarrant* 20 May (Colby Ayers, ph.) but no young were reported by 26 Jun (m.ob.). A Common Gallinule found at L. Fork Reservoir, *Wood* 24 Jun (Caleb McKinney) was a rare unexpected find east of normal range at the edge of the Piney Woods.

Piping Plover – Piping Plover migrants were found in slightly above average numbers. Locally uncommon in the central section of the region, but rare in the east and west sub-region, were five reports of migrant Piping Plovers. The first was found on the White Rock Spillway Dallas 14 July (Chris Runk, ph.) and the last was at Lake Lewisville Park, *Denton* 27 Jul (Katherine Cavazos, m.ob.).

Marbled Godwit – Unexpected was a very early flock of 23 immature Marbled Godwits at Hagerman NWR, *Grayson* 23 Jun (Jack Chiles, ph.).

Ruddy Turnstone – Rare for late July and in above normal numbers were four sightings of one to two Ruddy Turnstones. The first of four sightings was at Dallas Water Treatment Plant, Seagoville, *Dallas* 26 Jul (Sheila Shallcross, Matt DuRoss) and the last was at L. Lewisville Park, *Denton* 30 Jul (Cameron Johnson, Randell Patterson, ph.).

Sanderling – Also rare and early for late July were single Sanderlings at L. Lewisville Park, *Denton* 28-31 Jul+ (Winston Caillouet, ph. m.ob.) and at Lavon *Collin* 29-30 Jul (Mike Cameron, ph.)

California Gull – Accidental in summer was a late second or third cycle California Gull at Steward Creek Park, Lake Lewisville, *Denton* 24-26 Jun (Winston Caillouet, North American Gull reviewers, ph.).

Glaucous-winged Gull – After extensive review via experts (North American Gulls), an early first summer gull at L. Wichita, *Wichita* 8-13 Jun (Scotty Lofland, ph.) was tentatively presumed to be a **Glaucous-winged** Gull. Documentation has been submitted to the Texas Bird Record Committee for review. If accepted, it would be only the second documented record for Texas.

Wood Stork – Rare for early summer and north of normal was a Wood Stork seen in flight along Evelyn Rd., Argyle, *Denton* 27 Jun (Ken Pankhurst, ph.).

Masked Booby – Totally shocking and unexpected hundreds of miles inland was an immature Masked Booby found by a paddle boarder on Lake Grapevine, *Denton* 19 Jul (Courtney Paine, ph.). Despite a massive search the bird was never relocated. This sighting is likely the farthest north and inland record for the species in the southern U.S. Positive identification reviews were noted on the reporting website. Photos were sent to the Texas Rare Birds Record Committee for confirmation.

Brown Booby – An adult Brown Booby was located the following day after the Masked Booby report on Lake Grapevine, *Denton/Tarrant* and continued to be sighted Jul 20-31+ (Ed Wetzel, m.ob. ph.). It is thought that this bird probably arrived with the Masked Booby but was not sighted until the next day.

Brown Pelican – Rare in summer was a Brown Pelican over L. Whitney, *Hill* 29 Jul (Sheri Hemrick, ph.).

American Bittern – Casual in summer was an American Bittern at Village Creek Drying Beds, *Tarrant* 18-21 Jun (Matt DuRoss).

Least Bittern – Always a rare find was were single Least Bitterns in the northwest corner of Lake Weatherford, *Parker* 29 Jun (Kevin Long) and at Hidden Cove Park, L. Lewisville, *Denton*, 13 Jul (Sheila Murray).

Osprey – An Osprey over the Heard Museum, *Collin* 24 Jun (Brady Schwab, ph.), and one at L. Fork Reservoir, *Wood* 23 Jun (Caleb McKinney), and one over L. Benbrook, *Tarrant* 30-31 Jul (William Edwards, ph.) were unexpected rare summer sightings.

Peregrine Falcon – A Peregrine Falcon was a rare summer find along East Jentsch Rd. Wichita Falls, *Archer* 28 Jun (Scotty Lofland, ph.).

Olive-sided Flycatcher – Rare was a lingering non-breeder or early migrant Olive-sided Flycatcher at Dallas Water Treatment Plant, *Dallas* 25 Jun (Tony Adler, ph.).

Rock Wren - At best casual was an unexpected pair of Rock Wrens along County Rd. 204, Luedens, *Schackelford* 4 Jul (Bradley Banner, ph.).

Bronzed Cowbird – A Bronzed Cowbird was a rare find for the region at Sandy Beach Pecan Plantation. Granbury, *Hood* 9-11 Jun (Wendy Moore, ph.).

Nesting

High Arctic nesting shorebird species, Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling, returned exceptionally early in late July. Is it these are failed nesters because of the record high temperatures this summer in the high Arctic possible that?

Year-round resident species (titmice, chickadees, cardinals, etc.) had a very good nesting year. Some summer resident only species had a below average season. Significant declines were noted in Cliff Swallow colonies at several locations. In addition, migrant flycatchers (scissor-tails, Western Kingbirds) nesting success was reported as below average in some locales. The decline in insect populations the last three years is certainly a contributing factor in the noted decline. Buntings seemed to at least have an average nesting season. Black-capped vireos were reported at four locations in the southwestern sector of the region where they are suspected of nesting. Golden-cheeked warbler nesting seemed to be near average.

Observers

Tony Adler
Colby Ayers
Bradley Banner
Winston Caillouet
Mike Cameron
Katherine Cavazos
Jack Chiles
Matt DuRoss
William Edwards
Sheri Hemrick
Cameron Johnson
Kala Murphy King
Scotty Lofland
Kevin Long
Wendy Moore
Caleb McKinney
Sheila Murphy
Ken Pankhurst
Courtney Paine
Randall Patterson
Chris Runk
Brady Schwab
Sheila Shallcross
Ed Wetzel