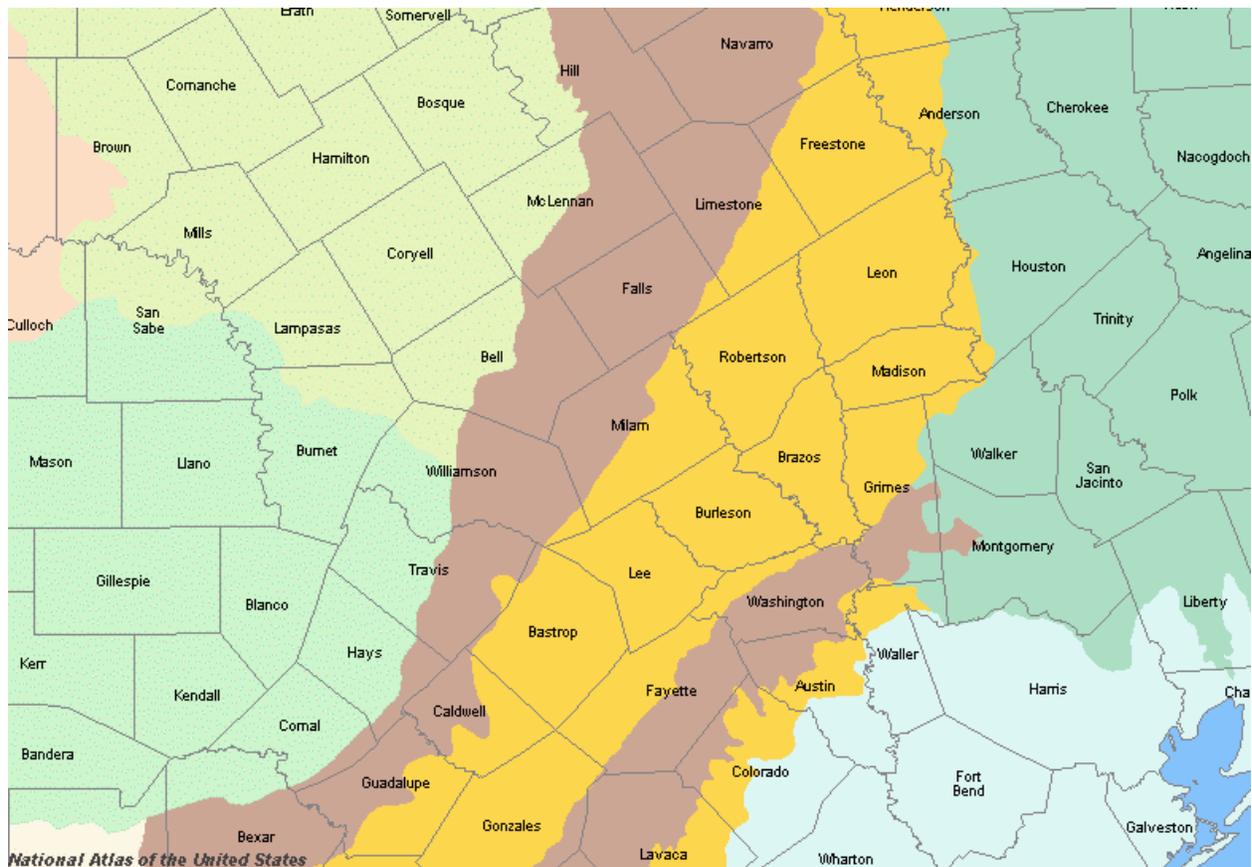


Spring 2020: Central Oaks & Prairies

By Bert Frenz

This report is reduced from over 50,000 sightings from 1 March to 31 May 2020. Sightings are included for the following counties: Bastrop, Bell, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Limestone, Madison, McLennan, Milam, Navarro, Robertson, and Washington.

For over 100 years, migrating shorebirds were rare in the Central Brazos Valley undoubtedly owing to a lack of appropriate habitat. In the last several years with the advent of turf farms that has changed, and it was especially obvious this spring. With multiple birders monitoring the turf farms at Sims Lane in Brazos County on almost a daily basis, the reports of shorebirds shatter historical records. This season's report includes numerous early arrivals, late departures, extended stays, huge quantities, and many rarities.



MOST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS:

Greater White-fronted Goose – Two out-of-season Greater White-fronted Geese visiting an island on a small lake off FM50 southwest of Hearne, *Robertson* 22 May (ph. †Simon Walker) raised suspicions that they escaped from the Franklin Drive Thru Safari about 10 mi. distant.

Blue-winged Teal – A large concentration of 700-850 Blue-winged Teal gathered on puddles at the sod Farm on Sims Lane, *Brazos* 23 Mar (Simon Kiacz. Michael McCloy).

Redhead – Redheads in a large raft mixed with wigeons at Buescher S.P., *Bastrop* 1-7 Mar 2020 (Ellen Oneil, ph. Bill Wright, m.ob.) with varying daily counts of 35-96.

Greater Scaup – The first photo-documented record for *Brazos* was a group of 2 females and a male at Lake Bryan 28 May (ph. †Shirley Wilkerson). There are only 4 other records for the county since the first in 1953. A 4th record for *Fayette*, a Greater Scaup was near the boat ramp at Park Prairie Park, Lake Fayette 10 Mar (†Jeffrey Jackson).



Greater Scaup, © Shirley Wilkerson, 28 May 2020, Brazos County

Lesser Scaup – An estimated count of 3000 Lesser Scaup 23 Mar (†Michael McCloy, Simon Kiacz, Tyler Scott) at Lake Bryan far exceeds previous numbers for *Brazos*. Two lingered until 20 May (Michael McCloy), a date exceeding previous records.

Surf Scoter – Occurring about the same time as last year, 4 male and 2 female Surf Scoters were found in *Bell*, again at Belton Lake near Cowhouse Creek 5 Mar (†Randy Pinkston).

Common Goldeneye – Both a late sighting and a high count, 8 Common Goldeneyes were in a mixed duck flock at Lake Bryan, *Brazos* 23 Mar (†Michael McCloy).

Red-breasted Merganser – A 5th record for *Burleson*, a Red-breasted Merganser was at Welch Park, Lake Somerville 11 Apr (†Eric Faria).

Ruddy Duck – At the late date of 27 May (†Allan Seils, Jeff Patterson) 6 Ruddy Ducks were still at Temple Lake Park, Belton Lake, *Bell*.

Wild Turkey – Although widely introduced in Texas after being nearly exterminated, Wild Turkeys never did well in the Central Brazos Valley, so 3 seen 26 May (Barbara Stern) near Somerville are only the 13th record for *Burleson*.

Least Grebe – A single Least Grebe visited Finfeather Lake, *Brazos* 5-8 Mar (ph. †Tyler Scott, †Michael McCloy, †Mark McDermott, m.ob.). Then 3 showed up at a marshy pond near the Hildebrand Equine Complex of Texas A&M University 18 Apr–8 May (ph. †Simon Kiacz, m.ob.). On 25 Apr (ph. Simon Kiacz) nest building was observed. Least Grebes first reached *Brazos* in 2004 and nested that year. The grebe has been reported in 2005, 2017, and 2018 but this is only the second time breeding has been suspected in the county.



Least Grebe, © Simon Kiacz, 25 Apr 2020, Brazos County

Pied-billed Grebe – A stunning count of 150 Pied-billed Grebes were in a single group on Alcoa Lake, *Milam* 8 Mar (Nancy Webber).

Black-billed Cuckoo – Given that it is often missed in spring migration, it is surprising to get 5 reports of single Black-billed Cuckoos: 30 Apr–1 May (ph. Brent Cox, †Simon Kiacz) at Brison Park, *Brazos*; 6 May (†Mark McDermott, Laura Sare) at the Texas A&M University Research Park; 11 May (†Charlie Plimpton) at Belton Lake, *Bell*; and 12 May (†Gus Cothran) at Brison Park.



Black-billed Cuckoo, © Brent Cox, 30 Apr 2020, Brazos County

Common Pauraque – A Common Pauraque was heard 28 Mar–22 Apr (audio Joan Bohls) at 9E Ranch, *Bastrop*. The county has about 18 prior records.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird – Rare in *Brazos*, a Buff-bellied Hummingbird was observed 25 Apr (ph. †John Hale, Linda Hale, Tyler Scott) in the Wellborn area of College Station.

Whooping Crane – Three Whooping Cranes, first a pair at 4:59 PM and then a single at 5:27 PM, flew over Temple, *Bell* 1 Apr (†Randy Pinkston). Three is a high count for *Bell* in spring.

American Avocet – A high count of 52 American Avocets visited Stillhouse Hollow Lake, *Bell* 25 Apr (ph. Daniel Kelch, ph. Randy Pinkston). They were first observed from Dana Peak Park and then two hours later from Stillhouse Park.

Black-bellied Plover – The spring gathering of Black-bellied Plovers in *Brazos* was utterly amazing. With only 11 records 1949-2017 the plover was a casual visitor found only as singles. However, with the advent of turf farms, *Brazos* has become a regular migrant stopping point. This season more than a dozen reports 27 Apr–18 May (ph. †Simon Kiacz, m.ob.) included counts of up to 7 on 18 May (†Laura Sare).

American Golden-Plover – More than two dozen reports of American Golden-Plover spanned 5 Mar–17 May (m.ob.) in *Brazos*. Counts were often in the high hundreds, topped by an astounding 2500 covering the sod farm at Sims Lane 25 Mar (ph. †Simon Kiacz).



American Golden-Plover, © Simon Kiacz, 25 Mar 2020, Brazos County



American Golden-Plover, © Simon Kiacz, 25 Mar 2020, Brazos County

Semipalmated Plover – A 6th record for *Burleson*, a single Semipalmated Plover was at Horizon Turf Farms in the Brazos River bottoms 10 Apr (†Bob Friedrichs). Others were at Sims Lane, *Brazos* 22 Apr–18 May (m.ob.) including a high count of 12 on 27 Apr (ph. Simon Kiacz, Mark McDermott, Tyler Scott). An even higher count was 25 at Moore Farms 25 Apr (Tyler Scott, Mark McDermott, John Hale) which far surpasses the previous high count of 4 for *Brazos*. Also, an impressive count of 12 was at Anderson-Tucker Ranch 25 Apr (†Alberto Manterola), providing only the 3rd *Robertson* record.

Piping Plover – A rare migrant in *Bell*, a Piping Plover appeared at Dana Peak Park, Stillhouse Hollow Lake 25 Apr (ph. †Charlie Plimpton, ph. †Daniel Kelch, ph. †Randy Pinkston, ph. †Doug Orama, ph. Steve Snyder).



Piping Plover, © Doug Orama, 25 Apr 2020, Bell County

Snowy Plover – Rare in spring in *Bell*, a Snowy Plover was photographed 23 Apr (ph. Steve Snyder) at Temple Lake Park, Belton Lake.

Upland Sandpiper – Very late migrants, 4 Upland Sandpipers were at Sayersville Rd, *Bastrop* 16 May (ph. Shelia Hargis et al.) and one still there 19 May (†William Reiner).

Whimbrel – Just last year only the 2nd record of Whimbrel for *Brazos* was reported. This year, over two dozen reports flooded eBird 17-23 Apr (ph. †Shirley Wilkerson, m.ob.) at Sims Lane. One was present at the start but was joined by a second 22 Apr. *Bell* has about 10 records though it is still notable for 2 at Temple Lake Park, Belton Lake 23-29 Apr (ph. Charlie Plimpton, m.ob.) and another at Dana Peak Park, Stillhouse Hollow Lake 25 Apr (ph. †Charlie Plimpton). Still another was at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Freestone* 5 May (ph. Evan Ward) where it was the 9th record for the W.M.A.



Whimbrel, © Randy Pinkston, 29 Apr 2020, Bell County

Hudsonian Godwit – Migrating Hudsonian Godwits passed through *Bastrop*, *Bell*, *Brazos*, and *Falls*. Notably, substantial numbers visited Sims Lane, *Brazos* 19 Apr–20 May (†Sandy Dillard, m.ob.). The high count of 58 was 17 May (Bill Eisele) when flocks of 17, 11, and 30 were counted. The single godwit found at Marlin 29 Apr (Michael Gray) is a first record for *Falls*. *Bastrop* which has about 5 records, added one 13 May (ph. Jason Leifester) when 6 were in a drainage area at the edge of a turf farm on Old Potato Rd.



Hudsonian Godwit, © Michael McCloy, 20 May 2020, Brazos County

Marbled Godwit – Only the 3rd *Brazos* record, 1-4 Marbled Godwits were at Sims Lane 16-18 May (ph. Tyler Scott, †Mark McDermott, Nicole Foley, m.ob.).



Marbled Godwit, © Alycia Fratzke, 17 May 2020, Brazos County

Ruddy Turnstone – Two Ruddy Turnstones were at Temple Lake Park, Belton Lake, *Bell* 16 May (ph. †Charlie Plimpton, ph. Chelsea Blauvelt et al.) and the same day one was at Dana Peak Park, Stillhouse Hollow Lake (†Nathaniel Watkins, et al.). On 16-18 May (ph. Mark McDermott, Tyler Scott et al.) a surprising 3-13 were at Sims Lane, *Brazos*.



Ruddy Turnstone, © Daniel Kelch, 16 May 2020, Bell County

Stilt Sandpiper – Two Stilt Sandpipers 20 Mar (†Michael McCloy, Tyler Scott, Nicole Foley) at Sims Lane, Brazos were early and numbers increased through 25 May, topped by 40 on 17-18 May (Simon Kiacz, Michael McCloy).

Sanderling – Sanderlings stopped in migration over *Bell* 18 Apr–17 May (m.ob.), topped by 11 at Temple Lake Park, Belton Lake 16 May (Nick Varvel, Nathaniel Watkins, Brendan Wang). Up to 5 Sanderlings were noted at Sims Lane, *Brazos* 17-27 May (ph. Simon Kiacz, m.ob.) where they were considerably rarer until the advent of turf farms. The rarest, however, and a 3rd *Bastrop* record was one 25 May (†Jason Leifester) at Old Potato Rd. Most of the reported Sanderlings were coming into breeding plumage.



Sanderling, © Daniel Kelch, 16 May 2020, Bell County

Dunlin – Dunlin, another previously rare shorebird in *Brazos*, was reported multiple times 25 Apr–25 May (m.ob.), first at Moore Farms and then consistently at Sims Lane. High count was 15 on 16-17 May (†Tyler Scott, Mark McDermott, Nicole Foley) far exceeding the previous high count of 3 in spring.

Baird's Sandpiper – Rare in under birded *Falls*, a sizable flock of 40 Baird's Sandpipers were at Marlin W.W.T.P. 14 Apr but that good count was topped by 100 on the mudflats 16 Apr (†Michael Gray).

Least Sandpiper – Least Sandpiper is so common it is rarely included in these reports but this spring the sheer number migrating through *Brazos* was amazing. Consistent estimates in the hundreds 5 Mar–23 Apr (m.ob.) was topped by 800 on 23 Mar (Simon Kiacz) when large flocks were scattered throughout the sod farm at Sims Lane. Sixty lingered as late as 18 May (Michael McCloy, Tyler Scott).

White-rumped Sandpiper – Early by a couple of days, two on 19 Apr (Sandy Dillard, †Mark McDermott) were at Sims Lane, *Brazos*. On 13 May (ph. Jason Leifester) a high count of 100 was estimated at Old Potato Rd, *Bastrop*. This number, however, was vastly exceeded by 1600 at Sims Lane 13 May (Simon Kiacz). To justify the extremely high count, Kiacz stated he “counted one flock of birds to 100 and extrapolated throughout the rest of the sod farm.” High numbers, often in the hundreds, continued to 25 May.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – A single Buff-breasted Sandpiper 20 Mar (ph. †Simon Kiacz) was early at Sims Lane, *Brazos*, and continued to be seen regularly to 26 May. Three seen near Elm Mott 21 May (ph. †Matthew York) are rare migrants through *McLennan*.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, © Bryce Loschen, 19 Apr 2020, Brazos County

Pectoral Sandpiper – Pectoral Sandpipers visited Sims Lane, *Brazos* 5 Mar–18 May (m.ob.), including a high count of 1100-1200 on 25 Mar–5 Apr (ph. Simon Kiacz, Michael McCloy). A high count for *Bastrop* at Old Potato Road was one flock of at least 100 with more too far out on the turf farms to identify on 13 May (ph. Jason Leifester).



Pectoral Sandpipers in mixed flock, © Simon Kiacz, 25 Mar 2020, Brazos County

Short-billed Dowitcher – A 4th record for *Brazos*, a Short-billed Dowitcher was found at Sims Lane 16-18 May (ph. Tyler Scott, Simon Kiacz, ph. †Ron Newhouse) accompanying Long-billed Dowitchers.



Short-billed Dowitcher, © Ron Newhouse, 17 May 2020, Brazos County

Long-billed Dowitcher – Setting a new high count for Brazos, 102-110 Long-billed Dowitchers were at Sims Lane, *Brazos* 20-26 Mar (Michael McCloy, m.ob.). Four lingered until 25 May (Michael McCloy, Corina Giron), a late date for *Brazos*.

Solitary Sandpiper – Setting a new late date for *Brazos*, a Solitary Sandpiper was at Lake Bryan, *Brazos* 20 May (†Michael McCloy).

Lesser Yellowlegs – A new high count for Brazos for Lesser Yellowlegs was 150 at Sims Lane, *Brazos* 23 Mar (Simon Kiacz).

Willet – An 8th county record for *Brazos*, 1-2 Willets were at Sims Lane 26 Apr–18 May (†Laura Sare, m.ob.)

Wilson's Phalarope – A Wilson's Phalarope 15-18 Mar (ph. †Christian Walker, †Kathy Cantu) was very early at Witter Lane, *Bell* as was one 19 Mar (Michael McCloy, ph. Tyler Scott] at Sims Lane, *Brazos*. At Marlin W.W.T.P., 1-3 phalaropes 30 Mar–4 Apr (ph. Michael Gray) provided a second record for *Falls*. Larger numbers were present 14 Apr–9 May (Michael Gray), topped by 345 on 29 Apr. Sims Lane hosted hundreds through 17 May (m.ob.), topped by 400 on 23 Apr (ph. Bert Foquet) after storms the previous day.

Laughing Gull – A Laughing Gull at Lake Madison Park 22 Mar (†Christian Walker, Paul DiFiore) is only the 2nd record for *Madison*. One at Trading House Creek Reservoir 25 May (†John Muldrow) is the 6th record for *McLennan*.

Black Tern – Black Tern numbers varied from 250-800 at Sims Lane, *Brazos* throughout 15 May (ph. Simon Kiacz, Mark McDermott, et al.) as they flew over the sod farm and came to rest on the fields.

Common Loon – Surprisingly, late single Common Loons include one flying north over Lick Creek Park, *Brazos* 7 May (ph. Michael McCloy) and one on Stillhouse Hollow Lake, *Bell* 16 May (Nathaniel Watkins, †Nick Varvel, Brendan Wang).

Wood Stork – Four Wood Storks flying near La Grange 1 Apr (†Marcia Braun, Ron Braun) were early and the first spring record for *Fayette*.

Brown Booby – Unbelievably but for photos, an immature Brown Booby was found sleeping on the back porch of a residence in Cameron, *Milam* 18 Mar (ph. Wayne Poorman, Vicki Poorman). Not surprisingly, it is a first record for *Milam*.



Brown Booby – © Wayne & Vicki Poorman, 18 Mar 2020, Milam County

Least Bittern – Scarce in recent years in *Brazos*, a Least Bittern at Moore Farms 25 Apr (ph. John Hale, Mark McDermott, Tyler Scott) was noteworthy.



Least Bittern – © John Hale, 25 Apr 2020, Brazos County

Great Egret – A rookery visible from Paint Creek Road, *Bastrop* supported a high count of 150 Great Egrets 30 May (Jason Leifester).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – Gabbard Park, *Brazos*, was oft-visited 26 Mar+ (David Scott, m.ob.) to watch the development of nesting Yellow-crowned Night-Herons.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, © Smily Flores, 26 May 2020, Brazos County

White Ibis – A dozen White Ibis 16 Apr (†Kelly Sampeck) near Navasota provided only the 3rd spring record for *Grimes*.

Glossy Ibis – Single Glossy Ibis were observed 5 Apr (†Greg Cook, ph. Steve Glover) and again 23 May (ph. †Cameron Johnson) at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro*. Another was picked out of a flock of White-faced Ibis 28 Apr (ph. †Randy Pinkston) at Shallow Ford Road, *Bell*.



Glossy Ibis, © Randy Pinkston, 28 Apr 2020, Bell County

White-faced Ibis – Seven White-faced Ibis at Witter Lane, *Bell* 22 Mar (ph. Scott Snyder) were early, while one near Anderson 28 Mar (†John Berner) was a first spring record for *Grimes*. At another *Grimes* location near Anderson 70 White-faced Ibis 11 Apr (†Chris Bailey, Angela Bailey) was a significant number. Thirty near Caldwell 15 Apr (†Andrea Fox) provided a 4th spring record for *Burleson*. At Marlin W.W.T.P. 22 were in a northbound flock 16 Apr (†Michael Gray), a first spring record for *Falls*.

Osprey – Marking the latest spring record for *Brazos*, an Osprey was at Lake Bryan 26 May (†Tyler Scott).

Golden Eagle – Golden Eagles are rare anywhere in the central oaks and prairies, so it is quite surprising to have 3 reports of singles this season: at Allen Ranch, *Bastrop* 14 Mar (ph. †Dan Allen), at Shipp/Stagners Lake, *Bastrop* 29 Mar (†Bernd Gravenstein), and at Nails Creek, Lake Somerville 27 Apr (ph. Ruben Torres), the latter providing a first record for *Lee*.



Golden Eagle, © Ruben Torres, 27 Apr 2020, Lee County

Cooper's Hawk – A pair of Cooper's Hawks again nested at Wolf Creek Park, *Brazos*. An adult brought food to a nestling 20-22 May (ph. Neil Diaz).



Cooper's Hawk, © Neil Diaz, 22 May 2020, Brazos County

Bald Eagle – An impressive sight, 9 Bald Eagles were seen at the same time at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Freestone-Navarro* 10 May (Blaine Carnes, Greg Cook, Steve Glover).

Harris's Hawk – Although the 1993, 1994 and 2000 Bell County checklists include Harris's Hawk as rare, it is not listed on two more recent checklists. A pair observed 20-22 May (ph. Gil Eckrich, ph. †Charlie Plimpton) at Belton Lake is the first photo-documented report.



Harris's Hawk – © Charlie Plimpton, 22 May 2020, Bell County

Zone-tailed Hawk – Although rare in *Bell* with about 10 prior records, this spring singles were reported 3 times: 20 Apr (ph. †Charlie Plimpton) at Cowhouse Creek, Belton Lake; 21 Apr (†Rebecca Davis) at Dana Peak Park, Stillhouse Hollow Lake; and 8 May (ph. †Doug Orama) at Temple Lake Park, Belton Lake.



Zone-tailed Hawk – © Charlie Plimpton, 20 Apr 2020, Bell County

Barn Owl – Because of its nocturnal habits, Barn Owl is not reported annually in *Brazos*, so one that did a loop over the heads of observers at 9 PM 14 May (Bill Eisele, et al.) at Pitts Road was a rare treat.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker – A Ladder-backed Woodpecker at Brenham 29 May (†Darrell Vollert) was the first report in *Washington* in over 10 years.

Hairy Woodpecker – With few records for *Robertson*, a nesting pair of Hairy Woodpeckers at Camp Creek Lake 6 Apr–10 May (†Marilyn Tears) is noteworthy.

American Kestrel – Linda Hale has monitored a pair of American Kestrels near Carter Lake for over 3 years, hoping to get firm confirmation of the first nesting for *Brazos*. Finally, on 15 May she heard nestlings begging from inside the arm of a utility pole. On 19 May, 3 birds fledged and were observed in adjacent cedar and mesquite trees. Monitored daily, a 4th fledgling was discovered 28 May+.



American Kestrel fledgling, © Ron Newhouse, 19 May 2020, Brazos County

Great Kiskadee – A calling Great Kiskadee was observed 2-3 Apr (audio† Jason Leifester) in Elgin, *Bastrop*. Although the county has about a dozen records, only 2 prior records have been in spring. Another sighting was 12 Apr (Jason Leifester) at Sayersville Road.

Couch's Kingbird – The Couch's Kingbird first reported in Bryan, *Brazos* 12 Oct 2019 was still present at Finfeather Lake 22 Mar (audio Michael McCloy, ph. Tyler Scott, Cameron Johnson, Keith Andringa). Two calling at Caldwell 10 Apr (†Bob Friedrichs) provided *Burleson* with its first record. *Bell* had 3 reports: at Witter Lane 5 Apr (†Randy Pinkston, m.ob.), at Belton 12 Apr (†Randy Pinkston), and at Shallow Ford Road 18 Apr (†Jeff Hall).

Eastern Kingbird – A good movement of 43 Eastern Kingbirds passed through the Cedar Springs area 30 Apr (Michael Gray), giving a high count for *Falls*.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher – A rare migrant through *McLennan*, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was observed 17 May (†Fay Ratta, Matthew York) at Carleen Bright Arboretum.

Say's Phoebe – Continuing since 18 Jan, a Say's Phoebe was last seen 15 Mar (Linda Hale) at Moore Farms, *Brazos*.

Chihuahuan Raven – The first photo-documented record in *McLennan* for Chihuahuan Raven occurred 26 Apr (ph. †John Muldrow) in the far western corner of the county. The only other *McLennan* record is referenced without dates in *Amer. Birds* (1992).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were reported in double digits in *Brazos* 19 Mar–7 Apr, topped by 25 at Hensel Park 21 Mar (Bert Foquet).

Veery – The first photo-documented record of a Veery for *Washington* was seen 11 May (ph. Kelley Sampeck) at Washington-on-the-Brazos S.H.P. With only a handful of prior records in *Bell*, 1-2 Veeries 9-10 May (†Randy Pinkston, †Charlie Plimpton) at Temple Lions Park are noteworthy. Another was at Chalk Ridge Falls Park on Stillhouse Hollow Lake 15 May (ph. †Scott Snyder, Steve Snyder).



Veery, © Kelley Sampeck, 11 May 2020, Washington County

Gray-cheeked Thrush – A scarce and long-staying Gray-cheeked Thrush was viewed often at Temple Lions Park, *Bell* 2-17 May (†Jeff Hall, m.ob.).



Gray-cheeked Thrush, © Scott Snyder, 10 May 2020, Bell County

Gray Catbird – Large numbers of migrating Gray Catbirds stopped to feed on mulberries at Brison Park, *Brazos* 1 May (Simon Kiacz, Michael McCloy). Sixteen were tallied there and the next day 17 were at Hensel Park (Bert Foquet).

Cassin's Sparrow – Occasional in *Bastrop*, this spring Cassin's Sparrows were reported nearly a dozen times at Gotier Trace Road and Sayersville Road 25 Apr–25 May (ph. Jason Leifester, m.ob.).



Cassin's Sparrow, © Jason Leifester, 3 May 2020, Bastrop County

Lincoln's Sparrow – A late Lincoln's Sparrow was along the Brazos River Valley Trail, *Washington* 27 May (†Darrell Vollert).

Yellow-headed Blackbird – Migrating Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported more often than usual through *Bastrop* and *Brazos*, starting with an early record 5-12 Apr (ph. Jason Leifester) at Sayersville Road and then in *Brazos* with a flock of 150 12-15 Apr (Bill Eisele, Simon Kiacz, m.ob.) at Cotrone Dix Lane.

Bobolink – Bobolinks reports included 2 birds at Sayersville Road, *Bastrop* 25 Apr (†Brush Freeman), 10 at Newman Bottom, *Lee* 6 May (†Jeremy Webster), and one at Fort Hood 13B, *Bell* 22 May (†Charlie Plimpton).

Bullock's Oriole – Single immature Bullock's Orioles were observed 3 May (ph. †Doug Orama) at Belton and 9 May (†Charlie Plimpton) at Fort Hood 13B, both in *Bell*. A male and a female were at Fort Hood East Range 30 May (†Matthew Christiansen, Nathaniel Watkins, Nick Glover).



Bullock's Oriole, © Doug Orama, 3 May 2020, Bell County

Audubon's Oriole – The rare Audubon's Oriole that first appeared 16 Feb in *Bastrop* was last seen 5 Mar (ph. Jonah Gula) near the intersection of Dairy and Earl Callahan Roads.



Audubon's Oriole, © Jonah Gula, 5 Mar 2020, Bastrop County

Bronzed Cowbird – One to two Bronzed Cowbirds were seen daily at a Smithville elementary school athletic practice field, *Bastrop* 26 Apr+ (†Ron & Susan Martin).



Bronzed Cowbird, © Ian Layton, 23 May 2020, Bastrop County

Louisiana Waterthrush – A singing Louisiana Waterthrush 25 May (†Byron Stone) at Little River Crossing is a rare spring record for *Milam* and the date coincides with fledging but precedes July dispersal, suggesting possible breeding which has not been documented for the county.

Prothonotary Warbler – Although Prothonotary Warbler was ascribed to *McLennan* as early as 1912, there are only 6 dated records 1915-2011 for the county. Thus, it is a surprise that this season brings tentative evidence of the warbler breeding at Lake Waco Wetlands. A pair was discovered on territory 25 Apr (ph. John Muldrow) and a third was suspected. Monitored regularly, a third bird was confirmed 24 May (audio ph. Matthew York, John Muldrow, Anand Chaudhury) and at least one remained on territory into June.



Prothonotary Warbler, © John Muldrow, 25 Apr 2020, McLennan County

Swainson's Warbler – A high count of 5 Swainson's Warblers were singing on Lake Trail at Fort Boggy S.P., *Leon* 10 May (Ashley Tessnow, Bert Foquet).

American Redstart – May 16 was a good warbler migration day in *Brazos* when 15 American Redstarts were found at Georgie K. Fitch Park (Bert Foquet) and another 21 were at Brison Park (Simon Kiacz).

Cerulean Warbler – Always a good find, the only report in the area was 30 Apr (†Toby Hibbitts) in the Wellborn area, *Brazos*.

Northern Parula – While kayaking down the Navasota River, *Grimes-Brazos*, at least 20 Northern Parulas were heard singing 6 Apr (Tyler Scott).

Blackburnian Warbler – A high count for *Brazos* was 10 Blackburnian Warblers 16 May (Bert Foquet) at Georgia K. Fitch Park.

Blackpoll Warbler – A rare migrant Blackpoll Warbler was at Lick Creek Park, *Brazos* 9 May (†Bert Foquet) and, surprisingly, another was photographed 10 May (ph. †John Hale, Linda Hale) in the Wellborn area when John Hale was birding with his mother on Mother's Day. Yet another was at Georgia K. Fitch Park 17 May (†Gus Cothran).



Blackpoll Warbler, © John Hale, 10 May 2020, Brazos County

Golden-cheeked Warbler – Not rare in *Bell*, but the photograph was too good to pass up, taken at Stillhouse Park, Stillhouse Hollow Lake 31 May (ph. Gil Eckrich).



Golden-cheeked Warbler, © Gil Eckrich, 31 May 2020, Bell County

Scarlet Tanager – An excellent find for *Brazos*, a young male Scarlet Tanager was at Brison park 3 May (ph. Susan McCoy).



Scarlet Tanager, © Susan McCoy, 3 May 2020, Brazos County

Black-headed Grosbeak – With only a handful of records for *Bell*, a good discovery was a male Black-headed Grosbeak 8 May (†Gil Eckrich) at Belton.

Blue Grosbeak – Setting a new early arrival date, a Blue Grosbeak was in a mixed flock at Hensel Park, *Brazos* 3 Apr (†Bert Foquet).

Dickcissel – High counts of 607-680 were remarkable 23-25 Apr (ph. Michael Gray) in the Cedar Springs area, *Falls*. Six hundred Dickcissels was the conservative estimate of a huge flock at Little River Academy, *Bell* 25 Apr (Randy Pinkston). Dickcissels singing in a sunflower field in the Brazos River bottoms of *Burleson* provided striking photographic opportunities in late May (ph. Smily Flores, ph. Cathy Stark, ph. Mary Lloyd Richards).



Dickcissel, © Cathy Stark, 27 May 2020, Brazos County

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