

Upper Texas Coast Sub-regional Report, Winter 2019-20

Covering: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange and Waller

Compiled by Ron Weeks
110 Indian Warrior Lake Jackson, TX 77566
(979) 299-0066

The Weather:

The total rainfall for the period at Houston's Intercontinental Airport was 6.56 inches (16.7 cm) which is 3.76 inches (9.1 cm) below normal. Average temperatures were about 2.5 degrees F (1.4 C) above normal. The lowest temperature for the period was a balmy 31F (-0.6C).

The Birds:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: A dawn estimate of 2011 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Shoveler Pond at Anahuac N.W.R., *Chambers* 31 Dec confirms wintering numbers continue to grow (Nathan Trimble, Ruth Trimble).

Red-breasted Merganser: An estimated 2000 Red-breasted Merganser were in a single raft along the Texas City Dike, *Galveston* 19 Feb (Steve Rogow).

Western Grebe: A Western Grebe was once again seen in the Hog Island, *Harris* area 14-30 Dec (Mike Austin, Judy Behrens, ph. Dale Wolck, John Berner, Tim Perkins, Chris Hammond, Stuart Nelson).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: A late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at San Bernard N.W.R., *Brazoria* 11-14 Dec (ph. Wendy McCrady, Dominic LeCroisette).

Common Nighthawk: A "peenting" Common Nighthawk seen at Terry Hershey Park, *Harris* 11 Dec was late (Karl Poetzl).

Chuck-will's-widow: Chuck-will's-widows were noted at San Bernard N.W.R., *Brazoria* 3 Dec (Wendy McCrady) and another overwintered at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 23 Dec+ (Howard Davis, Sheila Hebert, ph. Leslie Goodman, Travis Ly, John Haines, Charmaine Jones).

Broad-billed Hummingbird: A male Broad-billed Hummingbird was at Mont Belvieu, *Chambers* 20 Dec-19 Jan (David Hanson, et al.).

Purple Gallinule: Purple Gallinule sightings from Brazos Bend SP, *Fort Bend* 3-30 Jan implied overwintering (ph. Kelsey Low, Bob Gress, Vollie Rifner).

Whooping Crane: Three continuing Whooping Cranes from the Louisiana flock were seen along Oak Island Road, *Chambers* 11 Jan+ (m.obs.).

Pectoral Sandpiper: A count of 25 Pectoral Sandpipers on Oak Island Road, *Chambers* 25 Feb were a high count for so early (Scott Somershoe, Robert Doster, Michael Green, Thomas Leeman, Andy Forbes).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: It was a banner winter for Semipalmated Sandpipers with 2 birds photographed at the Texas City Dike, *Galveston* 28 Dec (Ted Keyel), one photographed at the San Jacinto Battleground, *Harris* 3 Jan (ph. Cin-Ty Lee, Chris Hammond, Stuart Nelson), and 3 early migrants were well-described at Yacht Basin Road, *Galveston* 27 Feb (Scott Somershoe, Robert Doster, Michael Green, Thomas Leeman, Andy Forbes, Eric Kershner).

Franklin's Gull: The 13 Franklin's Gulls at Davis Estates Road, *Fort Bend* 7 Dec were a notable winter tally (James Barnes, Ryan Shaw, Albert Ribes); one was still present there on 4 Jan (Todd McGrath).

Iceland Gull: Single Iceland Gulls were present at Davis Estates Road, *Fort Bend* 19 Dec (ph. Albert Ribes) & 1 Jan (Ron Weeks). Three birds including a "Kumlien's type" were there on 8 Jan (ph. Cin-Ty Lee, Nina Rach, Kelly Hill, Letha Slagle, Connie Clark, Linda Martin-Rust).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: An impressive count of 135 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at the Davis Estates Road Ponds, *Fort Bend* 8 Jan (ph. Cin-Ty Lee, et al.)

Glaucous Gull: A first cycle Glaucous Gull was at the Texas City Dike, *Galveston* 10 Dec (Brian Berry).

Least Tern: A first cycle Least Tern photographed at Bolivar Flats, *Galveston* 27-28 Jan was the first mid-winter record for the U.T.C. (Coen Dexter, ph. Brenda Wright). Previous U.T.C. late date is 25 Dec and early is 25 Feb.

Wood Stork: Winter Wood Storks included two at Warren Lake, *Harris* 8 Dec (Todd McGrath), two birds on CR318 near Cedar Lake, *Brazoria* 20 Dec (ph. Ron Weeks, Mike Lange), one at San Bernard N.W.R., *Brazoria* 17 Jan (ph. Wendy McCrady, Suzanne Mottin) and another at Smith Oaks at High Island, *Galveston* 19 Jan (Bob Gress).

Brown Booby: The highest brown Booby count was of 8 seen at Bailey's Fish Camp, *Orange* 1 Jan (John Whittle). The most unexpected location was near the Rice University campus where an adult bird circled in then landed on the Houston Methodist Building, *Harris* 14 Jan (Annie Xu, ph. Cin-Ty Lee, Janet Neath, Barbara Stern, Stuart Nelson, John O'Brien).

Least Bittern: Least Bitterns were reported from at least two different locations at Anahuac N.W.R., *Chambers* with reports 7 Dec (Iliana Mock, Timothy Freiday), 8 Dec (Laurie Sines) and 19 Dec (John Whittle). One at Turtle Bayou, *Chambers* 29 Feb was an early arrival (Mike Austin).

Harris's Hawk: The only Harris's Hawk was one 3 Feb on the Kay Prairie, *Waller* (Bob Honig).

Zone-tailed Hawk: Zone-tailed Hawks were seen at Warren Lake, *Harris* 8 Dec (ph. Stephen Gast, James Rieman, ph. Fred Collins, ph. Bob Honig), Sandy Point, *Brazoria* 4 Jan (ph. Richard Gibbons), and at Stephen F. Austin SP, *Austin* 18 Jan (Barbara Stern, Karen Goodger, Barry Barentine, ph. Mary Anne Weber).

Aplomado Falcon: An Aplomado Falcon at Brazoria N.W.R., *Brazoria* 30 Dec was one of few U.T.C. records (Sally Pachulski, Peggy Tsue).

Prairie Falcon: A Prairie Falcon was seen on the Katy Prairie, *Waller* 7 Feb (Howard Smith, Geoff Butcher).

Western Kingbird: A Western Kingbird on West Galveston Island, *Galveston* 28 Dec-6 Jan implied local overwintering (ph. Sally Pachulski, ph. Bonnie deGroot, et al.). Others were seen in on Thompson Road, *Jefferson* 3-15 Dec (John Whittle, ph. Sheila Hebert) and at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 14 Dec (ph. Steve Mayes).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: The latest Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was one found on the San Bernard C.B.C., *Brazoria* 20 Dec (Ron Heubner).

Red-eyed Vireo: Lingering Red-eyed Vireos were seen in Missouri City, *Fort Bend* 10 Dec (Robert Opperman) and Galveston, *Galveston* 17 Dec (Scott Buckel) were later than typical.

Cliff Swallow: Cliff Swallow reports of 6 at El Franco Lee Park, *Harris* 21 Feb (Kristi Carr) and 13 at the San Jacinto Battleground, *Harris* 22 Feb (Stuart Nelson, Chris Hammond) were the earliest ever for the U.T.C.

Wood Thrush: A Wood Thrush photographed at San Bernard N.W.R., *Brazoria* 22 Feb (ph. JD Paes) may represent an overwintering bird as it or another was seen at the same location through 11 Dec (ph. Wendy McCrady).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: A Chestnut-collared Longspur was an unusual sight so close to the coast at Pleasure Island, *Jefferson* on 23 Jan - 17 Feb (ph. John Whittle, m.obs.)

Clay-colored Sparrow: A Clay-colored Sparrow at a Houston, *Harris* feeder 29 Dec was notable (ph. Kevin Smith).

Lark Bunting: Up to 3 Lark Buntings present at Warren Lake, *Harris* 1 Jan-9 Feb were east of normal (ph. James Rieman, Todd McGrath, Nicholas DeMaio, Duke Liebler, Chris Hammond, Stuart Nelson, ph. Stephen Gast).

Green-tailed Towhee: Wayward Green-tailed Towhees were present at San Bernard N.W.R., *Brazoria* 14-18 Dec (Dominic LeCrossette, Wendy McCrady), *Brazoria* N.W.R., *Brazoria* 26 Dec-11 Jan (Todd McGrath, Martin Hagne, Richard Ray, et al.), Cullinan Park in Sugar Land, *Fort Bend* 22 Dec+ (ph. Mark Scheuerman, ph. Robbin Mallett, ph. James Barnes, et al.).

Spotted Towhee: Spotted Towhees were on the Katy Prairie, *Waller* through 21 Dec (Jim Hinson. Clayton Leopold) and at the San Jacinto Battleground, *Harris* 23 Jan+ (ph. Stephan Lorenz, m.obs.).

Bullock's Oriole: It was an excellent year for Bullock's Oriole on the U.T.C. which included reports from near Double Bayou, *Chambers* 9 Dec (Kristi Savage), Brazos Bend SP, *Fort Bend* 14 Dec (Alisdair Brown), Pearland, *Brazoria* 12-30 Jan (Brian & ph. Elizabeth Mikeska), Wallisville, *Chambers* 28 Dec-3 Jan (Michelle Rometry, Cathy Hay, ph. Bonnie de Groot, et al), and Seabourne Creek Park, *Fort Bend* 8-14 Feb (ph. Robert Opperman, et al.). There were 5 other reports I did not include - spectacular winter for Bullock's.

Rusty Blackbird: Rusty Blackbirds have become rare on the immediate coast so 8 at Freeport, *Brazoria* 15 Dec (ph. Ron Weeks, Brad Lirette, Mark Lear) were notable.

Worm-eating Warbler: A Worm-eating Warbler at Challenger 7 Memorial Park, *Harris* 6 Dec was extremely late (ph. Robin Gray).

Tennessee Warbler: Lingering Tennessee Warblers were seen at Randolph Park, *Harris* 1 Dec (Brad Lirette) and at Wallisville, *Chambers* 28 Dec (Carl Poldrack, Marvin Masters).

American Redstart: American Redstarts at the Hargrove Recycling Center in Pearland, *Brazoria* 24 Jan (Lucy Spade) and another at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 6-27 Feb (Coen Dexter, Brenda Wright, Sheila Hebert, John Haynes) were likely birds that overwintered.

Cape May Warbler: A male Cape May Warbler was seen at a feeder in Lake Jackson, *Brazoria* 7-9 Jan (Larry & Vicki Kirby, ph. Susan Heath).

Northern Parula: Lingering Northern Parulas were photographed at Bay Area Park, *Harris* 22 Dec (ph. Lihua Feng) and at the Brazos Woods Preserve, *Brazoria* 4 Jan (ph. Rich Kostecke, Tyler Miloy).

Tropical Parula: Tropical Parulas seem to be becoming more regular in winter on the U.T.C. as evidenced by birds near Freeport, *Brazoria* 15 Dec (Stephen & Laura Gast, Candy McNamee), Brazos River County Park, *Brazoria* 4 Jan (Kyle O'Haver, David Goff), Armand Bayou Nature Center, *Harris* 25 Jan-22 Feb (ph. Andrew Hamlett, ph. Farokh Jamalyaria, et al.), and Seabrook, *Harris* 8 Feb (ph. Arnaud Lecroix, Sarah Wiesbrock).

Magnolia Warbler: The latest Magnolia Warbler was one photographed at Brazos River County Park, *Brazoria* 4 Jan (ph. Kyle O'Haver, David Goff).

Yellow Warbler: Late Yellow Warblers included single birds at Lake Jackson, *Brazoria* 4 Jan (Tom Morris), the Hargrove Recycling Center in Pearland, *Brazoria* 23 Jan-23 Feb (ph. Marie Asscherick, ph. Lucy Spade, Michelle Rometry, et al.), Anahuac N.W.R., *Chambers* 2 Feb (Krien VerBerkmoes III), and Galveston, *Galveston* 26-27 Jan (Greg Hall, Kyle O'Haver, Justin Bosler).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Friendswood, *Galveston* 17 Dec - 3 Jan (ph. Dennis Cooke, m.ob.) while a male was at High Island, *Galveston* 4 Jan (ph. Cindy Venus).

Black-throated Gray Warbler: The only Black-throated Gray Warbler was at Houston, *Harris* 7 Dec (ph. Tim Hebert).

Pyrrhuloxia: Pyrrhuloxia made a good showing on the U.T.C. this winter with birds on the Katy Prairie 1 Dec (Jim Hinson), at Pilcik Road, *Fort Bend* 9 Dec (Ryan Shaw), Galveston, *Galveston* 5 Jan (ph. Romey Swanson, Kyle O'Haver, Brent & Dora Ann Ortego), Centerhill Road, *Austin* 18 Jan (ph. Jo Willars, et al.), and Quintana, *Brazoria* 12-13 Feb (ph. Mel C, Martin Hagne, Susan Heath).

Blue Grosbeak: The only Blue Grosbeak was one seen at Port Bolivar, *Galveston* 29 Feb (ph. Cin-ty Lee, Chris Bick).

Painted Bunting: The Painted Bunting sighting of the winter was at Jones Creek, *Brazoria* where 6 birds, including 4 males in a single photo, were present 8 Feb (ph. Shawn Chaney). Chaney commented the males show up every year in December with the females joining in February.

Dickcissel: Dickcissels were noted along Fairview Road near Winnie, *Chambers* 1 Dec (Carl Poldrack) and on the Katy Prairie, *Waller* 19 Jan (ph. Bob Honig).

Observers

Marie Asscherick
Mike Austin
Barry Barentine
James Barnes
Judy Behrens
John Berner
Brian Berry
Chris Bick
Justin Bosler
Alisdair Brown
Scott Buckel
Geoff Butcher
Mel C
Kristi Carr
Shawn Chaney
Connie Clark
Carlton Collier
Fred Collins
Nicholas DeMaio
Bonnie deGroot
Coen Dexter
Robert Doster
Lihua Feng
Sydney Fitzpatrick
Andy Forbes
Timothy Freiday
Laura Gast
Stephen Gast
Richard Gibbons
David Goff
Karen Goodger
Leslie Goodman
Robin Gray
Michael Green
Bob Gress
Martin Hagne
Greg Hall
Andrew Hamlett

Chris Hammond
David Hanson
Cathy Hay
John Haynes
Susan Heath
Sheila Hebert
Tim Hebert
Kelly Hill
Jim Hinson
Bob Honig
Ron Huebner
Farokh Jamalyaria
Charmaine Jones
Eric Kershner
Ted Keyel
Larry Kirby
Vicki Kirby
Rich Kostecke
Mike Lange
Dominic LeCroisette
Arnaud Lecroix
Mark Lear
Cin-ty Lee
Thomas Leeman
Clayton Leopold
Duke Liebler
Brad Lirette
Stephan Lorenz
Kelsey Low
Travis Ly
Robbin Mallett
Linda Martin-Rust
Marvin Masters
Steve Mayes
Wendy McCrady
Todd McGrath
Candy McNamee
Tyler Miloy
Brian Mikeska
Elizabeth Mikeska
Iliana Mock
Tom Morris
Suzanne Mottin
Janet Neath
Stuart Nelson
John O'Brien
Kyle O'Haver
Robert Opperman

Brent Ortego
Dora Ann Ortego
JD Paes
Sally Pachulski
Tim Perkins
Karl Poetzl
Carl Poldrack
Nina Rach
Richard Ray
Albert Ribes
James Rieman
Vollie Rifner
Steve Rogow
Michelle Rometry
Kristi Savage
Mark Scheuerman
Ryan Shaw
Laurie Sines
Letha Slagle
Howard Smith
Kevin Smith
Scott Somershoe,
Lucy Spade
Denise Stephens
Barbara Stern
Romey Swanson
Nathan Trimble
Ruth Trimble
Peggy Tsue
Cindy Venus
Krien VerBerkmoes III
Mary Anne Weber
Ron Weeks
Sarah Wiesbrock
John Whittle
Jo Willars
Dale Wolck
Brenda Wright
Annie Xu,