

JANUARY 2006 SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

For the third month in a row the Lubbock area picked up 0.00 inches of rain, leaving us 0.39 inches behind average year-to-date totals. Surface water in the region is now restricted to artificially maintained playas - mostly urban - and a few of the larger bodies of water in Bailey, Garza, Lubbock, and Crosby Counties. Water birds are, obviously, in short supply and very patchily distributed. Songbirds are also in low numbers as are the majority of the upland species - with the exception of hawks and owls which seem to be responding positively to what's left of an excellent breeding season for rodents.

As always the county follows the site in () and birds are listed based on rarity, unusual scarcity, or unusual abundance.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 1 near Lake Six (Lubbock) on 1/7/06 (BB) and 2 at City Farms (Lubbock) on 1/28/06 (AnH) the only reports - VERY LOW.

SNOW GOOSE: 4 in Lubbock on 1/2/06 (BB), 2 in Plainview (Hale) on 1/26/06 (AnH), and 18 at City Farms (Lubbock) on 1/28/06 (AnH) the only reports - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

ROSS'S GOOSE: 2 in Lubbock on 1/2/06 (BB) and 2 at City Farms (Lubbock) on 1/28/06 (AnH) the only reports - VERY LOW.

WOOD DUCK: 3 at Stevens Park (Lubbock) on 1/2/06 (BB), 2 west of Clairemont (Kent) on 1/22/06 (AnH, RL), and 4 in Plainview (Hale) on 1/26/06 (AnH) the only reports - LOW.

GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON, MALLARD, NORTHERN SHOVELER, NORTHERN PINTAIL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, REDHEAD, RING-NECKED DUCK, LESSER SCAUP, BUFFLEHEAD, HOODED MERGANSER - all present in region but in low numbers and very patchily distributed.

CINNAMON TEAL: 1 near Springlake (Lamb) on 1/26/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

CANVASBACK: 25 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 1/28/06 (BB) the only report - VERY LOW.

GREATER SCAUP: 1 at Whisperwood Pond (Lubbock) on 1/26/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

COMMON MERGANSER: 4 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 1/14/06 (BB) - A VERY GOOD SIGHTING.

SCALED QUAIL: 1 in Dickens County on 1/14/06 (BB) - a good sighting FOR THE COUNTY.

HORNED GREBE: 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 1/14/06 (BB) the only report - LOW.

GREAT EGRET: 1 at MacKenzie Park (Lubbock) throughout the period (BB, CS) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH; A RARE WINTERING EVENT.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: 1 at City Farms (Lubbock) on 1/7/06 (BB) the only report - LOW.

MERLIN: 1 at Hamilton Park (Lubbock) on 1/13/06 (BB), 1 in northwest Kent County on 1/14/06 (BB), 1 near Post (Garza) on 1/19/06 (AnH, AvH), 1 in Lubbock on 1/22/06 (AnH), and 1 in Littlefield (Lamb) on 1/26/06 (AnH) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

PEREGRINE FALCON: 1 seen in southwest Lubbock on 1/27/06 (DT) MAY HAVE been the same 1 seen in southeast Lubbock on 1/28/06 (AnH) - STATUS UNCERTAIN IN OUR REGION.

SORA: 1 at Aztlan Park (Lubbock) on 1/2/06 (BB) the only report - LOW.

SANDHILL CRANE: 150,000 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 1/10/06 (HB) - THE HIGHEST NUMBER ON THE REFUGE FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: Six reports of from 1-5 birds throughout the region (Crosby, Garza, Lubbock) and period (BB, AnH, RL) - LOW.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: 1 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) on 1/28/06 (AnH, TeT, ToT) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

WILSON'S SNIBE: 2 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 1/14/06 (BB) the only report - VERY LOW.

HERRING GULL: 1 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 1/9/06 (CS) the only report - LOW.

LONG-EARED OWL: 1 east of White River Lake (Dickens) on 1/14/06 (BB) - A GOOD REPORT FOR THIS IRRUPTIVE SPECIES.

DOWNY WOODPECKER: 2 at Clairemont (Kent) on 1/22/06 (AnH, AvH, RL) the only report - LOW.

EASTERN PHOEBE: 1 at Clairemont (Kent) on 1/22/06 (AnH, AvH, RL) the only report - LOW.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: 1 in Lubbock on 1/10/06 (TS) the only report for the season - VERY LOW.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET: 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 1/14/06 (BB) and 1 near Post (Garza) on 1/22/06 (AnH, RL) the only reports - LOW.

NO REPORTS OF EASTERN BLUEBIRD, TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE, OR HERMIT THRUSH.

AMERICAN ROBIN: Almost absent in the region - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

CEDAR WAXWING: 25 in Lubbock on 1/26/06 (AnH) and 8 in Plainview (Hale) on 1/26/06 (AnH) the only reports - VERY LOW.

ORANGE-CROWNED and YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: Present in LOW NUMBERS at normal locales.

SPOTTED TOWHEE, FIELD SPARROW, VESPER SPARROW, SAVANNAH SPARROW, LARK BUNTING, SONG SPARROW, LINCOLN'S SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, DARK-EYED JUNCO, MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR: Present in VERY LOW NUMBERS at normal locales.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, FOX SPARROW, HARRIS'S SPARROW, WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Absent - NO REPORTS AT ALL!

SWAMP SPARROW: 2 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 1/14/06 (BB) and 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 1/28/06 (AnH) the only reports - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR: 12 near Littlefield (Lamb) on 1/26/06 (AnH) and 2 near Smyer (Hockley) on 1/29/06 (AnH) the only reports - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW>

OBSERVERS: HB=Harold Beierman, BB=Brandon Best, AnH=Anthony Hewetson, AvH=Aveline Hewetson, RL=Richmond Lee, TS=Tom SoRelle, CS=Cliff Stogner, DT=Debbie Tennyson, TeT=Tess Trost, ToT=Tom Trost.

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