

JUNE 2006 SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS:

With 0.57 inches of rain in June, Lubbock is now at 4.82 inches for the year -- a whopping 3.21 inches below average year-to-date totals of 8.03 inches. This reflects the deepening drought afflicting our entire region and made for an even slower than usual June in the region -- though June is, traditionally, our slowest month anyway. Waders, including typically common species such as Green Heron, were in very low numbers, shorebirds were almost non-existent, and the typical waterfowl, such as Gadwall and Northern Shoveler, were present but in much lower numbers than normal.

As always the county follows the site in () and species are included by virtue of typical rarity, atypical rarity, or atypical abundance.

GADWALL: 3 in Lubbock on 6/4/06 (BB) the only report - VERY LOW.

GREAT EGRET: 1 at Whisperwood Pond (Lubbock) from 6/2/06 through 6/26/06 (AnH) the only one reported - a far cry from the much more abundant summering population of the last five years - LOW.

SNOWY EGRET: 14 at Maxey Park (Lubbock) throughout the month (BB, AnH), 1 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) throughout the month (BB, AnH), 2 at Whisperwood Pond (Lubbock) throughout the month (AnH), and 8 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) the only reports - also a dramatic drop as compared to the past five summers - VERY LOW.

LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN: 8 recorded from a Breeding Bird Survey north of Bronco (Yoakum) on 6/4/06 (LS) - rarely detected from public roads in our region - A WONDERFUL REPORT.

WHITE-FACED IBIS: 4 in Floydada (Floyd) on 6/3/06 (AnH, AvH) the only report for the month - VERY LOW.

COOPER'S HAWK: 1 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/10/06 (BB) - breeding at this site is strongly suspected as there have been summer reports from the Afton area in 2001, 2002, and 2005 - POTENTIAL BREEDER and ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: 1 near Cedar Hill (Floyd) on 6/3/06 (AnH) - the first June report for the region since 1968 - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

COMMON TERN: 2 over Maxey Park (Lubbock) on 6/18/06 (AnH, RL) - the fourth June report for the region - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: 1 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) from 5/16/06 through 6/7/06 (CS), 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/2/06 (AnH, AvH), 2 along Ballard Creek (Motley) on 6/3/06 (AnH), 6 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - a poorly understood species in our area; 2 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/10/06 (BB); a single bird on the Beach Ranch (Garza) on 6/24/06 (BB); the Lubbock County record is well west of the species' typical haunts.

DOWNY WOODPECKER: one pair in one cottonwood stand, one pair with two fledglings in another stand, one pair with three fledglings in a third stand, and one adult in a fourth stand - all in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) -- FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION; NOW A CONFIRMED BREEDER IN OUR EASTERN COUNTIES.

WESTERN WOOD PEWEE: 1 at Ransom Lake (Lubbock) on 6/3/06 (BB) was the region's eleventh June record - A LATE MIGRANT.

SAY'S PHOEBE: 1 near Crosbyton (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH) - VERY RARE.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER: 5 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - typical for this RECENTLY DOCUMENTED BREEDING SITE.

EASTERN KINGBIRD: 1 near Sandhill (Floyd) on 6/3/06 (AnH, AvH) and 2 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - PROBABLY STILL BREEDING IN OUR EASTERN COUNTIES but VERY RARE.

BELL'S VIREO: a pair on nest in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 6/3/06 (AnH, AvH) - STILL BREEDING IN OUR EASTERN COUNTIES but VERY RARE.

COMMON RAVEN: 2 near Floydada (Floyd) on 6/3/06 (AnH, AvH) - NOW SUSPECTED OF BREEDING IN OUR EASTERN COUNTIES; NOT YET CONFIRMED.

PURPLE MARTIN: 8 near Idalou (Lubbock) on 6/2/06 (AnH) and 2 at Ransom Lake (Lubbock) on 6/3/06 (BB) the only reports for the month - VERY LOW.

BUSHTIT: 2 at Dickens Spring (Dickens) on 6/10/06 (BB), 6 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK), and 2 on the Beach Ranch (Garza) on 6/24/06 (BB) - GOOD NUMBERS and BETTER THAN AVERAGE SCATTER.

CAVE SWALLOW: 26 adults and 15 active nests at a culvert just north of Wellman (Terry) on 6/11/06 (AnH) - THE SECOND RECORD FOR THE COUNTY AND A CONFIRMATION OF BREEDING FOR THE COUNTY.

HOUSE WREN: 9 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/10/06 (BB) had swollen to 26 on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - this is the only reliable site known in our region for breeding House Wrens. 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - A RARE SUMMER RECORD AWAY FROM DICKENS COUNTY.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER: 2 at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 6/10/06 (BB) - not entirely unexpected - but 9 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) probably represent a SECOND BREEDING SITE FOR OUR REGION.

YELLOW WARBLER: 1 in a Lubbock yard on 6/1/06 (KD) - the seventh June record for the region - A LATE MIGRANT.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: 5 singing males in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - the fifth year in a row for breeding at this site - A VERY RARE BREEDER IN OUR REGION.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: 59 in the woodlands just north of White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) - the fifth year of breeding in a row and the LARGEST NUMBER YET for this site - and 1 in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH).

FIELD SPARROW: 7 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK) the fifth year of breeding in a row and the LARGEST NUMBER YET for this site; the only known breeding locale in our region.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: 30 near Floydada (Floyd) on 6/3/06 and 10 near Dougherty (Floyd) on 6/4/06 (AnH, AvH) - LOW NUMBER OF REPORTS and VERY PATCHY DISTRIBUTION THIS SUMMER.

INDIGO BUNTING: a pair at a nest in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 6/3/06 (AnH, AvH), 17 males/6 females/3 fledglings the best number yet at White River Lake (Crosby) on 6/17/06 (AnH, RK), a pair near Dickens (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH), and a single male in the Afton area (Dickens) on 6/17/06 (AnH) - BREEDING CONTINUES; AT LEAST IN OUR EASTERN COUNTIES.

BRONZED COWBIRD: 3 males near Floydada (Floyd) on 6/3/06 and 3 males near Dougherty (Floyd) on 6/4/06 (AnH, AvH) - THE FIRST AND SECOND RECORDS FOR THE COUNTY and evidence of FURTHER EXPANSION IN OUR REGION. No other reports for the month - OVERALL, VERY LOW.

LESSER GOLDFINCH: 2 near Floydada (Floyd) on 6/3/06 (AnH) and 2 in a Lubbock yard on 6/23/06 (BB) the only reports - LOW COMPARED TO RECENT YEARS.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH: 1 persisted in a Lubbock yard until 6/2/06 (BB) - THE FIRST JUNE RECORD FOR THE REGION.

OBSERVERS: BB=Brandon Best, KD=Ken Dixon, AnH=Anthony Hewetson, AvH=Aveline Hewetson, RK=Rich Kostecke, RL=Richmond Lee, LS=Leanna Smith, CS=Cliff Stogner

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