

MARCH 2006 SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

1.62 inches of rain brought Lubbock up to 1.80 inches for the year, a mere 0.16 inches below average year-to-date totals. The pronounced deficit from last year prevailed, however, and few of the region's playas have water, most of the region's lake levels are low, and almost all water-loving species were in short supply. Waterfowl and gulls left the region early, waders have been late to arrive, and shorebirds have been late to arrive, very patchily distributed, and very low in numbers. Almost all of our wintering songbird species were low to very low in numbers and very few migrants had put in an appearance by the end of the month.

As always the county is listed after the site in () and birds are listed by virtue of rarity, unusual scarcity, or unusual abundance.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 1 near Mayfield (Hale) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH) was the only report - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

SNOW GOOSE: 60 at the City Farms (Lubbock) on 3/4/06 (BB), 96 near Mayfield (Hale) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH), 1 near Springlake School (Lamb) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH), and 1 near Robertson (Crosby) on 3/5/06 (AnH) were the only reports for the month - EARLY TO LEAVE AND VERY LOW IN NUMBER.

ROSS'S GOOSE: 18 near Mayfield (Hale) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH) was the only report for the month - EARLY TO LEAVE AND LOW IN NUMBER.

WOOD DUCK: 13 at Stevens Park (Lubbock) on 3/15/06 (BB) had dwindled to 4 on 3/22/06 (BB) for the only reports of the month - LOW.

CINNAMON TEAL: 1 near Springlake School (Lamb) on 3/4/05 (AnH, AvH), 8 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB), and 1 at Stevens Park (Lubbock) on 3/22/06 (BB) the only reports - GOOD NUMBERS FOR A SPECIES INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO FIND IN OUR REGION.

CANVASBACK: 1 near the intersection of CR 2320 and Highway 208 (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the only report for the month - LOW.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: 3 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) on 3/4/06 (BB) - A VERY GOOD REPORT FOR MARCH.

HORNED GREBE: 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 3/3/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

EARED GREBE: 1 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) on 3/5/06 (AnH) and 4 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 3/25/06 (BB) the only reports - VERY LOW.

GREAT EGRET: 1 at MacKenzie Park (Lubbock) on 3/28/05 (BB) - A RARE SUCCESSFUL OVERWINTERING ATTEMPT FOR OUR REGION.

TURKEY VULTURE: 1 over Lubbock on 3/3/06 (BB), 1 over Girard (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), and 25 at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 3/11/05 (BB) were the first three reports - AT OR NEAR NORMAL NUMBERS by the end of the month.

WHITE-TAILED KITE: 2 were photographed near Girard (Kent) on 2/25/06 (JW) - THE 9TH REPORT FOR OUR REGION and THE FIRST FEBRUARY REPORT.

COOPER'S HAWK: 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB) the only report - EARLY TO LEAVE AND LOW IN NUMBER.

SWAINSON'S HAWK: 1 in Hockley County on 3/25/06 (BB), 1 over the TTU HSC Fields (Lubbock) on 3/28/06 (AnH), and 1 in Yoakum County on 3/28/06 (HWo) - THE FIRST THREE REPORTS OF THE SEASON.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: 1 near Sudan (Lamb) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH) the only report for the month - VERY LOW.

GOLDEN EAGLE: 1 brought into the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center from Floyd County on 3/1/06 (fide BB) the only report for the month - RARELY FOUND IN OUR AREA THESE DAYS.

MERLIN: 1 in central Lubbock on 3/1/06 (AnH), 1 in south Lubbock on 3/6/06 (BB), 1 at Reese Center (Lubbock) on 3/25/06 (AnH), and 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 3/30/06 (AnH) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

VIRGINIA RAIL: 1 along Duck Creek (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

SORA: 1 along the Canyon Lakes (Lubbock) on 3/3/06 (AnH) the only report - VERY LOW.

SNOWY PLOVER: 6 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB), 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 3/25/06 (BB), and 1 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 3/28/06 (BB) - THE 8TH, 9TH, and 10TH MARCH REPORTS FOR THE REGION - EARLY AND HIGH NUMBERS.

BLACK-NECKED STILT: 2 at Tech Terrace Park (Lubbock) on 3/23/06 (WW), 2 at Andrews Park (Lubbock) on 3/25/06 (HWe), and 2-4 at Miller Park (Lubbock) from 3/25/06-3/31/06 (BB) the first three reports of the season - LATE AND LOW.

AMERICAN AVOCET: 6 near Springlake School (Lamb) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH), 1 at Casey Park (Lubbock) on 3/5/06 (JG), and 2 at Buddy Holly Park (Lubbock) on 3/13/06 (BB) the first three reports of the season - throughout region in LOW NUMBERS through rest of period.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: 2 near Post (Garza) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 3 along the Brazos River (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB), 1 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 3/19/06 (BB), and 1 at Miller Park (Lubbock) on 3/26/06 (BB) the only reports - VERY LOW.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS: 1 near Post (Garza) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 1 along the Brazos River (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 1 in south Lubbock on 3/15/06 (BB), 2 in Miller Park (Lubbock) on 3/25/06 (BB) and 4 on 3/26/06 (BB) the only reports - A SURPRISINGLY GOOD SHOWING.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER: 1 at MacKenzie Park (Lubbock) on 3/28/06 (BB) an early report - THE 3RD MARCH RECORD FOR THE REGION.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: 1 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 3/23/06 (TM) and 1 at MacKenzie Park (Lubbock) on 3/30/06 (BB) - GOOD NUMBERS FOR MARCH.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: 1 at Tech Terrace Park (Lubbock) on 3/23/06 (WW) and 11 near the intersection of FM 596 and Highway 114 (Cochran) on 3/25/06 (AnH) the only reports - LOW.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: 2 near Post (Garza) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the only report for the month - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

LEAST SANDPIPER: 9 near Post (Garza) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 6 in south Lubbock on 3/15/06 (BB), 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB), 1 in south Lubbock on 3/22/06 (BB), and 1 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 3/25/06 (BB) the only reports for the month - VERY LOW.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: NO REPORTS FOR THE MONTH - EXTRAORDINARILY ABSENT.

STILT SANDPIPER: NO REPORTS FOR THE MONTH - EXTRAORDINARILY ABSENT.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: 1 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 3/25/06 (AnH) the only report of dowitchers to species - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

WILSON'S SNIBE: 2 along the Canyon Lake (Lubbock) on 3/3/06 (AnH), 1 near Post (Garza) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 1 in Motley County on 3/11/06 (BB), 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB), and 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 3/25/06 (BB) the only reports - LOW.

FRANKLIN'S GULL: 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB) - FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH THIS IS THE 6TH YEAR OF MARCH ARRIVALS IN A ROW.

RING-BILLED GULL: Most had departed by mid-month with a few lingering through the rest of the period - EARLY DEPARTURE AND LOW NUMBERS.

HERRING GULL: 1 first cycle bird at Dupree Park (Lubbock) throughout the period (BB, AnH) - LOW.

LONG-EARED OWL: 1 at MacKenzie Park (Lubbock) on 3/30/06 (KS, mob) the only report for the month - OUTSTANDING.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD: 1 in a Lubbock Yard on 3/11/06 (EM, TM) the only report for the month - FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH; MARCH ARRIVAL NOW EXPECTED.

DOWNY WOODPECKER: 1 along Duck Creek (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the only report for the month - LOW.

EASTERN PHOEBE: 2 building a nest in Clairemont (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 2 building a nest at the CR 112 crossing of Duck Creek (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 2 pairs building nests at the CR 1081 crossing of the Brazos River (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 1 singing at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 3/11/06 (BB), and 1 in Motley County on 3/11/06 (BB) - FORMERLY RARE IN MARCH; NOW EXPECTED TO BE NESTING BY MID-MONTH.

SAY'S PHOEBE: 1 near the intersection of FM 40 and FM 378 (Crosby) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

WESTERN KINGBIRD: 1 in a Lubbock Yard on 3/28/06 (AnH) - FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL IN MARCH; THE 4TH MARCH RECORD SINCE 2002.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: 1 near Wolfforth (Lubbock) on 3/31/06 (LW) the only report - LATE AND LOW.

COMMON RAVEN: 1 along Duck Creek (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) - MORE EVIDENCE OF RESIDENCE STATUS FOR THIS SPECIES IN OUR REGION.

BUSHTIT: 15 at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 3/11/06 (BB) - A RARE MARCH REPORT.

PURPLE MARTIN: 18 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06 (BB) the only report for the month - LATE AND LOW BY 00s STANDARDS.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW: 3 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) on 3/4/06 (BB) and 1 at Begg's Ranch (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the first two reports of the season - AT OR NEAR NORMAL NUMBERS THROUGH REST OF PERIOD.

BARN SWALLOW: 1 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 3/25/06 (BB), 2 at Morton City Park (Cochran) on 3/25/06 (AnH), 1 over Dickens (Dickens) on 3/26/06 (ML), and 2 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 3/30/06 (AnH) the first reports of the season - FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL IN MARCH; MARCH ARRIVALS NOW EXPECTED.

BROWN CREEPER: 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 3/3/06 (AnH) - A RARE MARCH REPORT.

CANYON WREN: 1 at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 3/11/06 (BB) - A RARE MARCH REPORT.

SEDGE WREN: 1 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) on 3/4/06 (BB) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD: 3 in Clairemont (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) and 6 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 3/9/06 (EM, TM) the only reports for the month - VERY LOW.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD: 1 near Girard (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH) the only report for the month - LOW.

SAGE THRASHER: 3 near Bull Lake (Lamb) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH), 1 near the intersection of CR 1081 and Highway 380 (Kent) on 3/5/06 (AnH), 1 at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 3/11/06 (BB), 1 near the intersection of FM 301 and CR 1780 (Cochran) on 3/25/06 (AnH), and 1 near Smyer (Hockley) on 3/25/06 (AnH) - EITHER MUCH BETTER THAN AVERAGE NUMBERS OR MUCH BETTER THAN AVERAGE COVERAGE.

CEDAR WAXWING, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, and YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - generally common to abundant in our region during the winter all three of these woodland songbirds were close to absent throughout the month - VERY LOW to EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

SPOTTED TOWHEE, FIELD SPARROW, and SWAMP SPARROW - generally common in our region during the winter, these three species were close to absent throughout the month - VERY LOW.

VESPER SPARROW, SAVANNAH SPARROW, SONG SPARROW, LINCOLN'S SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, DARK-EYED JUNCO - generally abundant in our region during the winter, these species were difficult to find and in low numbers throughout March - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

CHIPPING SPARROW: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 3/25/06 (BB), 1 in a Lubbock Yard on 3/26/06 (BB), and 2 at TTU HSC (Lubbock) on 3/31/06 (AnH) were the only reports for the month - VERY LATE and VERY LOW.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 7 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 3/18/06, 1 at Cochran County Park (Cochran) on 3/25/06

(AnH), and 2 at TTU HSC (Lubbock) on 3/31/06 (AnH) were the only reports - LATE and LOW.

LARK SPARROW: 2 near the intersection of CR 238 and Highway 207 (Crosby) on 3/5/06 (AnH) and 1 near Sundown (Hockley) on 3/25/06 (AnH) the only reports for the month - LATE and LOW.

LARK BUNTING: THE ONLY SPARROW SPECIES AT NORMAL NUMBERS THIS SEASON - THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: 1 at Buffalo Springs Lake (Lubbock) on 3/4/06 (BB) the only report for the month - LATE and LOW.

FOX SPARROW: NO REPORTS AT ALL - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR: 12 near Halfway (Hale) on 3/4/06 (AnH, AvH) and 3 near Lehman (Cochran) on 3/25/06 (AnH) the only reports for the month - VERY LOW.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR: 200 in Floyd County on 3/11/06 (BB) the only report for the month - VERY LOW.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: 1 first spring male near Smyer (Hockley) on 3/25/06 (AnH) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

LESSER GOLDFINCH: 1 male at a Lubbock Yard from 3/16/06 through 3/31/06 (BB) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

OBSERVERS: BB=Brandon Best, JG=Jack Goldfarb, AnH=Anthony Hewetson, AvH=Aveline Hewetson, EM=Ellen McBride, TM=Toby McBride, ML=Marlene Leiby, KS=Ken Schmidt, LW=Lois Wallace, HWe=Harry Weitlauf, WW=William Wenthe, HWo=Hope Woodward, JW=Jim T. Wyatt.

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