

MAY 2006 SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS:

With 1.68 inches of rain in May (almost all of which fell during the night of the 29th/30th, contributing little to the birding efforts for the month), Lubbock is now 1.03 inches below average year-to-date totals of 5.28 inches. With intensification of the ongoing drought, waterfowl vanished early, shorebirds were in scarce supply, and oddball waders had little reason to visit. The songbird migration strengthened a bit during the month in terms of diversity but numbers of most species remained relatively low.

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

CAACKLING GOOSE: 17 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/20/06 (BB) were the last reported for the season - STILL COLLECTING DATA FOR THIS SPECIES.

WOOD DUCK: 1 male at the Littlefield Sewage Pond (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH, AvH) - LAST OF THE SEASON.

AMERICAN WIGEON: 25 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) and 2 in Lynn County on 5/27/06 (BB) were the only reports - ABOUT AVERAGE.

REDHEAD: 4 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) and 5 in Lynn County on 5/27/06 (BB) were the only reports - A LITTLE LOW.

RING-NECKED DUCK: 1 in Lubbock on 5/9/06 (BB) and 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) were the only reports - ABOUT AVERAGE.

BUFFLEHEAD: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) was the last report of the season - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

EARED GREBE: 1-8 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) seen by various folks (BB, EH, AnH, PS) throughout the period and 10 in Lynn County on 5/27/06 (BB) - WELL WORTH WATCHING FOR BREEDING BEHAVIOR.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) - PRETTY GOOD FOR MAY.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: 6 at Maxey Park (Lubbock) on 5/6/06 had dwindled to 2 by 5/29/06 (AnH), 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/10/06 (EH, PS), and 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 - TYPICAL LINGERERS.

GREAT EGRET: 1 at Whisperwood Pond (Lubbock) on 5/29/06 (AnH) was the only sighting reported - LOW BY RECENT STANDARDS.

SNOWY EGRET: 6 reports of 1-5 birds throughout the region (Crosby, Hale, Lubbock, and Motley) and period (BB, AnH, AvH, EM) - A LITTLE LOW BY RECENT STANDARDS.

GREEN HERON: only 2 reports of single birds from the entire region (Lubbock, Motley) and period (AnH) - VERY LOW.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 5/1/06 (DS) and 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH) were the first reports for the season - LATE AND LOW.

WHITE-FACED IBIS: 6 reports of 1-5 birds scattered through the region (Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Garza, Lubbock) and period (BB, JG, AnH, EM) though 59 south of Plainview (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH) was a more typical sighting for the month - LOW.

PRAIRIE FALCON: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) - FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH; MAY SIGHTINGS ARE BECOMING FAIRLY REGULAR.

PEREGRINE FALCON: 1 at TTU's HSC (Lubbock) on 5/5/06 (AnH) and 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (AnH, AvH) - STATUS POORLY UNDERSTOOD IN OUR REGION.

VIRGINIA RAIL: 1 at Mae Simmons Park (Lubbock) on 5/20/06 (BB) the only report - FORMERLY MORE COMMON DURING MIGRATION; MUCH MORE SPARSE IN RECENT YEARS.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER: a very odd individual (with BRIGHT ORANGE HARD PARTS) was photographed at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) and was the only report for the month - LOW?

SNOWY PLOVER: 4 in Lynn County on 5/27/06 (BB) was the only report - LOW.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER: 1 near Smyer (Hockley) on 5/20/06 (AnH) and 1 at Chas Guy Park (Lubbock) on 5/21/06 (BB) the only reports - ABOUT AVERAGE.

BLACK-NECKED STILT, AMERICAN AVOCET, SPOTTED SANDPIPER, STILT SANDPIPER, and WILSON'S PHALAROPE: These five shorebirds were at or near normal abundance throughout the period (BB, EH, AnH, AvH, EM, DS, PS) and region - where water persisted. All other shorebirds were well below expected abundance - even where water could be found - with individual reports worthy of note.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: 2 at Plainview (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH), 1 at the Matador Sewage Ponds (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH), 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 5/14/06 (AnH), 1 at Chas Guy Park (Lubbock) on 5/15/06 (BB), and 3 near Whiteface (Cochran) on 5/20/06 (AnH) were the only reported: LOW.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS: 4 near Hale Center (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH) was the only report for the month - VERY LOW.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER: 1 at the Littlefield Sewage Pond (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH), 1 near Plainview (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH) and 1 at the Matador Sewage Ponds (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) - A LITTLE LOW?

UPLAND SANDPIPER: NO REPORTS AT ALL: ABBERANTLY LOW.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: 2 near Cereal (Floyd) on 5/13/06 (AnH) and 1 near Smyer (Hockley) on 5/20/06 (AnH) were the only reports - VERY LOW.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER: NO REPORTS AT ALL: ABBERANTLY LOW.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: 2 near Smyer (Hockley) on 5/20/06 (AnH) the only report - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

LEAST SANDPIPER: 5 at Chas Guy Park (Lubbock) on 5/4/06 (BB) and 2 from 5/15/06 to 5/16/06 (BB) the only reports - EXTRAORDINARILY LOW.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: 1 near Plainview (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH) and 1 at Chas Guy Park (Lubbock) from 5/15/06 to 5/16/06 (BB) the only reports for the month - VERY LOW.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: 8 reports of from 1-9 birds and 2 reports of 19-21 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Crosby, Hale, Lubbock) and period (BB, WH, AnH, PS) - LOW.

FRANKLIN'S GULL: 10 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) the only report - LOW?

RING-BILLED GULL: 6 at Maxey Park (Lubbock) on 5/7/06 (AnH) and 10 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/10/06 (EH, PS) the only reports - LEFT EARLY.

CALIFORNIA GULL: 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) was well photographed. This is the fourth record of the species for the region (three of which have occurred across the last three years), the first May record, and the first record for Crosby County. ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION.

FORSTER'S TERN: NO REPORTS - VERY LOW.

BLACK TERN: 40-50 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/10/06 (EH, PS) the only report - LOW.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) was well described. This is the eighth record for the region, the second May record, and the second record for Bailey County. ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION.

LONG-EARED OWL: 1 very late bird was brought into the SPWRC from Lubbock on 5/9/06 (fide BB) - LATE.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: 1 in Yellowhouse Canyon (Lubbock) on 5/6/06 (EL) was a bit west of normal range. Pairs at Los Lingos Creek (Floyd), at Ballard Creek (Motley), in Northfield (Motley), along the North Pease River (Motley), and in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) were already attending nests - RARELY SEEN IN OUR AREA BUT NOT HARD TO FIND IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER: 7 reports of 1-3 birds scattered across the region (Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Floyd, Lubbock, Yoakum) and period (BB, AnH, AvH) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE: 1 was singing and defending a territory in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) - CURRENTLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION but potentially a breeder in the eastern counties.

WESTERN WOOD PEWEE: 5 reports of single birds throughout the region (Hale, Hockley, Lubbock, Motley, Yoakum) and period (AnH, RL) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: 1 at Yoakum County Park (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH), 1 at Cochran County Golf Course (Cochran) on 5/20/06 (AnH), 1 in Levelland City Park (Hockley) on 5/20/06 (AnH), 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH), and 1 near Robertson (Crosby) on 5/29/06 (ML) the only reports - LATE TO ARRIVE, A LITTLE LOW.

LEAST FLYCATCHER: 1 at Yoakum County Park (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER: NO REPORTS - VERY LOW.

SAY'S PHOEBE: 1 near Sudan (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER: 1 carrying nest material to a tree cavity near Northfield (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) the only report.

EASTERN KINGBIRD: 2 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) and 2 along the North Pease River (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) the only reports.

BELL'S VIREO: 1 singing and 1 carrying nest material at a stock tank in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) - RARE BREEDER IN OUR REGION.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO: 1 near Sudan (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH) the only report for the season - LOW.

WARBLING VIREO: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/10/06 (EH, PS), 1 along the White River (Floyd) on 5/13/06 (AnH), and 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH) the only reports - GOOD FOR MAY.

PURPLE MARTIN: 40 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) the only report - LOW.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER: 4 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB), 2 along the North Pease River (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH), and 1 near Post (Garza) on 5/27/06 (BB) - GOOD FOR MAY.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH: 5 reports of 1-2 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Cochran, Hockley, Yoakum) and period (BB, AnH, AvH) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

HERMIT THRUSH: 6 reports of 1-4 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Hockley, Lubbock, Yoakum) and period (BB, EH, AnH, RL, PS) - WELL BELOW AVERAGE.

GRAY CATBIRD: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (AnH, AvH), 1 at Lamb County Sandhills Historical Marker (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH, AvH), and 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH) finished off - A VERY GOOD SPRING.

BROWN THRASHER: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) was - WEST OF NORMAL HAUNTS.

CEDAR WAXWING: 9 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) and 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 5/14/06 (AnH) - WEIRD LITTLE REPORTS AFTER A VERY POOR SEASON FOR THIS SPECIES.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: only 4 reports of 1-6 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Crosby, Lamb) and period (BB, AnH, AvH) - VERY LOW.

NASHVILLE WARBLER: 1 at Lamb County Sandhills Historical Marker (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH), 1 in a Lubbock yard on 5/7/06 (HW), and 1 along the White River (Floyd) on 5/13/06 (AnH) the only reports - A TRIFLE LOW.

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (AnH) - the 27th record for the region, the 11th May record, and the 6th record for the refuge - FORMERLY CONSIDERED ACCIDENTAL; BECOMING ANNUAL.

YELLOW WARBLER: 13 reports of 1-4 birds scattered across the region (Bailey, Crosby, Floyd, Hale, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Motley, Yoakum) and period (BB, AnH, AvH, RL, LS, HW) - DECENT NUMBER OF REPORTS BUT ABUNDANCE A BIT LOW.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER: the warbler of the month; a very bright male at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH, AvH) represents the 17th record for the region, the 10th May report, and the 3rd county record - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: 9 reports of 1-8 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Floyd, Hale, Lubbock, Motley) up to 5/20/06 (BB, AnH, AvH) - NUMBER OF REPORTS AND ABUNDANCE A LITTLE LOW.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER: 1 in a Lubbock yard on 5/5/06 (AnH) and 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (AnH) the only reports - A DECENT SHOWING FOR MAY.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: 1-3 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH, AvH), 1 at Lamb County Sandhills Historical Marker (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH), and 1 at Los Lingos Creek (Floyd) on 5/13/06 (AnH) the only reports - ABOUT AVERAGE.

AMERICAN REDSTART: 1 at Lamb County Sandhills Historical Marker (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH), 1 at Yoakum County Park (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH), and 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH) - A DECENT SHOWING FOR MAY.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER: 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB) - A GREAT REPORT FOR THE COUNTY.

WORM-EATING WARBLER: 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 5/14/06 (AnH) - VERY RARE IN THE REGION.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH: 1 in a Lubbock yard on 5/7/06 (BB), 1 near Plainview (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH), 1 in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH), and 3 at Yoakum County Park (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) from 5/6/06 (BB) to 5/7/06 (AnH), 5 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH), and 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 5/27/06 (AnH) the only reports - ABOUT AVERAGE.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: 6 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB), 1 at the Littlefield Sewage Pond (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH), 1 near Plainview (Hale) on 5/13/06 (AnH), and 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH) the only reports - A TRIFLE LOW.

WILSON'S WARBLER: 11 reports of 1-8 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Floyd, Hale, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Motley, Yoakum) and period (BB, AnH, AvH, PK) - A LOW NUMBER OF REPORTS AND SOMEWHAT LOW NUMBERS.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/7/06 (AnH), 20+ on the breeding grounds at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB), and 1 at Yoakum County Park (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH) - GOOD FOR MAY.

SUMMER TANAGER: 1 male at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/7/06 (AnH) and 1 male in the Turkey Creek Drainage (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) the only reports - ABOUT AVERAGE.

WESTERN TANAGER: 1 male at the Cochran County Golf Course (Cochran) on 5/20/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW BY RECENT STANDARDS.

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH, AvH) and 1 at Monk's Crossing (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) the only reports - A TRIFLE LOW.

SPOTTED TOWHEE: 1 in a Lubbock yard on 5/3/06 (EM, TM) the last report for the season - AN EARLY DEPARTURE?

CHIPPING SPARROW, CLAY-COLORED SPARROW, VESPER SPARROW, LARK SPARROW, LARK BUNTING - all in average or better than average numbers throughout the region and period.

SONG SPARROW, LINCOLN'S SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - all in lower than average numbers throughout the region and all left earlier than expected.

BREWER'S SPARROW: 2-4 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH) the only report - A TRIFLE LOW.

SAVANNAH SPARROW: 10 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB) - GOOD NUMBER FOR SO LATE IN THE SEASON.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB), 1 near Floydada (Floyd) on 5/13/06 (AnH), 2 on the Stitch Ranch (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH), 2 near Plains (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH), and 1 near Post (Garza) on 5/27/06 (BB)

- GOOD FOR MAY; LOOKS PROMISING FOR A GOOD BREEDING SEASON.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: 2 males at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH) and 1 male at Lamb County Sandhills Historical Marker (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH) - A GOOD SHOWING FOR MAY.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK: 1 female at Lamb County Sandhills Historical Marker (Lamb) on 5/7/06 (AnH, AvH), 2 males in Levelland (Hockley) on 5/12/06 (LS), and 1 male at Yoakum County Park (Yoakum) on 5/20/06 (AnH) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

LAZULI BUNTING: 2 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH) the only report for the month - A TRIFLE LOW, PERHAPS.

INDIGO BUNTING: 1 male at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/7/06 (AnH), 3 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 5/13/06 (BB), 1 male singing along Los Lingos Creek (Floyd) on 5/13/06 (AnH), and 1 male singing along Ballard Creek (Motley) on 5/13/06 (AnH) - THE USUAL COMBINATION OF MIGRANTS and POTENTIAL BREEDERS.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: 11 reports of 1-36 birds scattered across the region (Cochran, Crosby, Floyd, Hale, Hockley, Lubbock, Yoakum) and period (BB, AnH) - GOOD BY RECENT STANDARDS; POTENTIALLY A GOOD YEAR FOR BREEDING IN THE REGION.

BRONZED COWBIRD: 2 males at Cochran County Park (Cochran) on 5/20/06 (AnH) PROVIDED A COUNTY RECORD. 1 male at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB, AnH, AvH), 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/20/06 (BB), 1 female and 3 males at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 5/22/06 (AnH), and 4 males at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 5/27/06 (AnH, RL) A DECENT SHOWING IN THE EXPECTED LOCALES.

PINE SISKIN: 5 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 5/6/06 (BB), 1 in a Lubbock yard on 5/8/06 (EM), and 1 in Levelland (Hockley) on 5/12/06 (LS) - A GOOD SHOWING CONSIDERING THE WINTER WAS SO POOR.

LESSER GOLDFINCH: 1-2 in a Lubbock yard from 5/19/06 through 5/27/06 (BB) the only report - LOW BY RECENT YEAR'S STANDARDS.

Observers: BB=Brandon Best, JG=Jack Goldfarb, EH=Evelyn Hamilton, AnH=Anthony Hewetson, AvH=Aveline Hewetson, PK=Phillip Kite, RL=Richmond Lee, EL=Elizabeth Linder, ML=Mark Lockwood, EM=Ellen McBride, TM=Toby McBride, DS=David Shelburne, LS=Leanna Smith, PS=Patricia Snyder, HW=Hope Woodward.

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