

OCTOBER 2006 SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS:

Lubbock received 1.14 inches of rain during October, well below the average monthly total of 1.86 inches, leaving us sliding steadily into drought - 3.94 inches below the average year-to-date totals of 17.37 inches. Despite the overall dryness, there were some wet patches in the region and the unusually heavy rains of September made for easily findable waterfowl and waders and a somewhat salvaged shorebird season. The fall songbird migration was reasonably strong, with the exception of sparrows, and some interesting finds were made.

As always, the county follows the site in () and birds are listed due to typical rarity, atypical rarity, or atypical abundance.

SNOW GOOSE: No reports at all - VERY LATE.

CAACKLING GOOSE: 68 at Whisperwood Pond (Lubbock) on 10/27/06 (AnH) the only report - LATE AND LOW - WE THINK.

WOOD DUCK: 2 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) from 10/19/06 on (CR, FR, AnH) and 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 10/29/06 (AnH) the only reports so far this season - LOW.

DABBLERS: Most present in normal numbers, at available water, throughout period and region.

CANVASBACK: 1 east of Estacado (Crosby) on 10/15/06 (AnH), 1 in northwest Lubbock County on 10/15/06 (AnH), 2 east of Post (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH), and 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 10/29/06 (AnH) - GOOD NUMBERS FOR OCTOBER.

REDHEAD: 1 near Ralls (Crosby) on 10/7/06 (BB), 2 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH), 5 near Floydada (Floyd) on 10/15/06 (AnH), 2 near Petersburg (Hale) on 10/15/06 (AnH), 1 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 10/19/06 (CR, FR), 10 east of Post (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH), 125 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/28/06 (BB), 3 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (AnH), and 3 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 10/29/06 (AnH) - GOOD NUMBERS FOR OCTOBER AND EXCELLENT SCATTER.

RING-NECKED DUCK: 2 at the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) and 16 east of Post (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the first reports of the season - LOW NUMBERS.

LESSER SCAUP: 2 at Whisperwood Park (Lubbock) on 10/14/06 (AnH), 6 near Ellen (Hale) on 10/15/06 (AnH), and 26 east of Post (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the first reports of the season - LOW.

HOODED MERGANSER: 1 at Leroy Elmore Park (Lubbock) on 10/22/06 (AnH) - VERY RARE IN OCTOBER - EARLY.

EARED GREBE: 12 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH), 1 near Hackberry (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH), and 3 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/28/06 (BB) the only reports - LOW.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/28/06 (BB) - VERY RARE IN THE REGION; CLOSE TO ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

GREAT EGRET: 1 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 10/2/06 (BB), 2 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 10/4/06 (CR, FR), 1 at Miller Park (Lubbock) on 10/8/06 (BB), 1 at Higginbotham Park (Lubbock) on 10/14/06 (AnH, AvH, RiL), 2 at Maxey Park (Lubbock) on 10/14/06 (AnH, AvH, RiL), 3 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 10/14/06 (AnH, AvH, RiL), 2 at Leroy Elmore Park (Lubbock) on 10/14/06 (AnH), 1 at Leroy Elmore Park (Lubbock) on 10/22/06 (AnH), and 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 10/29/06 (AnH) - THE NUMBERS AND NUMBER OF SITES INCREASE WITH EACH FALL AND WINTER FOR THIS SPECIES.

SNOWY EGRET: 10 reports of from 1-6 birds at in-town playas throughout Lubbock and throughout period (BB, AnH, AvH, RiL, CR, FR) - TYPICAL FOR OCTOBER - OF INTEREST WILL BE ANY OVERWINTERING ATTEMPTS.

WHITE-FACED IBIS: 9 near Ralls (Crosby) on 10/7/06 (BB) the only report - LOW.

TURKEY VULTURE: 1 near Clairemont (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the last report for the season - NOW TYPICAL THROUGH OCTOBER.

OSPREY: 1 west of Needmore (Terry) on 10/8/06 (AnH) and 1 at Clapp Park (Lubbock) on 10/29/06 (AnH) the only reports - LOW.

WHITE-TAILED KITE: 2 adults west of Girard (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION; TENTH RECORD.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: only 5 reports of 1-3 birds at sites in the region (Bailey, Kent, Lubbock) and during the period (BB, AnH) - LOW.

COOPER'S HAWK: only 3 reports of single birds at sites in the region (Hockley, Lubbock, Terry) and during the period (AnH) - LOW.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK: 1 immature at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (DL), 1 immature west of Floydada (Floyd) on 10/15/06 (AnH), and 1 at the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) - NICE SCATTER AND GOOD NUMBER.

SWAINSON'S HAWK: 1 just south of the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) was the - LAST OF THE SEASON.

MERLIN: 1 at City Farms (Lubbock) on 10/8/06 (BB) and 2 in northwest Terry County on 10/8/06 (AnH) the - FIRST AND ONLY REPORTS SO FAR.

PEREGRINE FALCON: 1 brought into the SPWRC from Plainview (Hale) on 9/28/06 (fide RoL) and 1 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 10/4/06 (BB) - STATUS IN OUR REGION STILL NOT UNDERSTOOD.

BLACK-NECKED STILT: 3 near Ralls (Crosby) on 10/7/06 (BB) - THE LAST OF THE SEASON.

AMERICAN AVOCET: 1 at Leroy Elmore Park (Lubbock) on 10/22/06 (AnH) - THE LAST OF THE SEASON.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: 17 reports of from 1-12 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Crosby, Garza, Lubbock, Terry) and period (BB, AnH, CR, FR) - ABOUT AVERAGE.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS: 7 reports of from 1-11 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Garza, Hockley, Lubbock) and period (BB, AnH) - BETTER THAN AVERAGE NUMBERS and GOOD SCATTER with 60 near Ralls (Crosby) on 10/7/06 (BB) - AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD REPORT.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: 2 west of Needmore (Terry) on 10/8/06 (AnH) and 2 at Credit Lake Park (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the only reports - LOW.

WILLET: 1 in northeast Lubbock County on 10/15/06 (AnH) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

UPLAND SANDPIPER: 10 west of Needmore (Terry) on 10/8/06 (AnH) - RARE FOR THE MONTH.

SANDERLING: 1 immature at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH, JH, JJ) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION - THE FIRST RECORD SINCE OCTOBER OF 2002.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: 4 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) and 2 near Sandhill (Floyd) on 10/15/06 (AnH) the only reports - LOW.

LEAST SANDPIPER: 11 reports of from 1-25 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Hockley, Lubbock) and period (BB, AnH, CR, FR) the only reports - LOW.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: 7 reports of from 1-42 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Crosby, Garza, Lubbock) and period (BB, AnH) - LOW.

WILSON'S SNIPE: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH), 2 near Sandhill (Floyd) on 10/15/06 (AnH), and 2 near Hackberry (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the only reports - LOW.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: 2 near Close City (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the only report - VERY RARE IN REGION DURING OCTOBER - AVERAGE NUMBER.

RING-BILLED GULL: 15 at Dupree Park (Lubbock) on 10/4/06 (EM, TM), 1 at Leroy Elmore Park (Lubbock) on 10/14/06 (AnH), 3 at Leroy Elmore Park (Lubbock) on 10/22/06 (AnH), and 2 at Earl Crow Park (Lubbock) on 10/29/06 (BB) the only reports - ODDLY LATE AND LOW IN NUMBER FOR A SPECIES THAT HAS BEEN SHOWING UP EARLIER EACH OF THE LAST TEN YEARS.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK: 1 in Tahoka (Lynn) on 10/6/06 (ML) and 1 near Bula (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) were the - LAST OF THE SEASON.

COMMON POORWILL: 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (GG, AnH) was the only report for the month - LOW.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: 1 in a Lubbock yard through 10/13/06 (JD) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER: 1 juvenile near Afton (Dickens) on 10/7/06 (BB) the first of the season - VERY RARE IN OCTOBER.

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER: 2 adults at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) - RARE IN THE REGION.

LEAST FLYCATCHER: 1 near Robertson (Crosby) from 10/7/06 to 10/8/06 (ML) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH; SECOND EVER OCTOBER REPORT.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER: 1 at Ransom Lake (Lubbock) on 10/8/06 (BB) was an exceptionally late migrant - THE FIRST OCTOBER RECORD FOR THE REGION.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: 8 near Girard (Kent), 4 near Post (Garza), and 1 near Slide (Lubbock) on 10/21/06 (AnH) were the - LAST REPORTS FOR THE SEASON.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO: 1 at the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) was probably A LATE MIGRANT; 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (GG, AnH) may be TRYING TO OVERWINTER.

COMMON RAVEN: 2 near Jayton (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) - FORMERLY ACCIDENTAL FOR THE REGION; BECOMING REGULAR.

TREE SWALLOW: 2 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (AnH) were - THE LAST OF THE SEASON.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW: 50 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (AnH) - VERY RARE IN OCTOBER.

CLIFF SWALLOW: 4 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (AnH) and 8 in southwest Lubbock on 10/8/06 (BB) were - VERY RARE IN OCTOBER.

BARN SWALLOW: 2 at the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) were - THE LAST OF THE SEASON.

BUSHTIT: 2 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (AnH) - RARE IN THE REGION.

CACTUS WREN: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) - INCREASINGLY RARE IN THE REGION.

HOUSE WREN: 5 reports of from 1-2 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Hockley, Kent, Lubbock) and period (BB, GG, AnH) - GOOD NUMBERS.

WINTER WREN: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/28/06 (BB) and 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (AnH) tied for - FIRST OF SEASON - RARE IN THE REGION.

MARSH WREN: 11 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (GG, AnH) were - THE FIRST OF THE SEASON - LATE AND LOW IN NUMBER.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER: 2 at the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the only report - INCREASING IN REGION.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD: 1 near Floydada (Floyd) on 10/15/06 (AnH), 12 in northeastern Lubbock County on 10/15/06 (AnH), and 8 at the Kent County Golf Course (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) - HOPEFULLY, THE START OF A GOOD SEASON.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) and 1 near Arnett (Hockley) on 10/8/06 (AnH) the only reports for the month - LOW.

HERMIT THRUSH: 8 reports of from 1-2 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Crosby, Garza, Hale, Hockley, Lubbock) and period (BB, AnH, ML) the only reports - LOW.

GRAY CATBIRD: 1 brought into the SPWRC from Lubbock on 9/25/06 (fide RoL) - RARE FOR THE REGION IN SEPTEMBER.

SAGE THRASHER: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) the only report for the month - LOW.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: 17 reports of from 1-5 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, Kent, Lubbock, Terry) and period (BB, AnH, ML, DL) - GOOD NUMBERS AND NICE SCATTER; MUCH BETTER THAN LAST YEAR!

NASHVILLE WARBLER: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH), 1 south of Pep (Hockley) on 10/7/06 (AnH), 1 west of Needmore (Terry) on 10/8/06 (AnH), and 1 west of Jayton (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) - GOOD NUMBERS AND NICE SCATTER.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (AnH) - A TAD LATE.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

WILSON'S WARBLER: In typical numbers throughout the region though 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (GG, AnH) was running - A BIT LATE.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: 1 south of Pep (Hockley) on 10/7/06 (AnH) was both - LATE AND FURTHER WEST THAN EXPECTED IN OUR AREA.

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE: 1 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH), 1 south of Pep (Hockley) on 10/7/06 (AnH), and 1 west of Needmore (Terry) on 10/8/06 (AnH) were the only reports - A LITTLE LOW BUT NICE SCATTER.

SPOTTED TOWHEE: only 7 reports of from 1-5 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Garza, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Terry) and period (BB, AnH) - LATE AND LOW.

CHIPPING SPARROW, CLAY-COLORED SPARROW, VESPER SPARROW, LARK BUNTING, SONG SPARROW, LINCOLN'S SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - all trickled in on time but none reached expected numbers by the end of the month - LOW.

BREWER'S SPARROW: 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (AnH, DL), 2 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH), and 4 near Pleasant Valley (Garza) on 10/21/06 (AnH) - GOOD NUMBERS FOR OCTOBER.

FIELD SPARROW: No reports at all - VERY LOW.

LARK SPARROW: Vanished from the scene very early, consequently - LOW THOROUGHOUT MONTH.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: 3 west of Girard (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

SWAMP SPARROW: 1 at the LEAS Nature Trail (Lubbock) on 10/28/06 (AnH) the only report - LATE AND LOW.

DARK-EYED JUNCO: Only 4 reports of from 1-15 birds throughout the region (Bailey, Kent, Lubbock) and period (BB, AnH) - LATE AND LOW.

MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR: 32 near Bula (Bailey) on 10/7/06 (AnH) and 4 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/28/06 (BB) - UNUSUALLY EARLY; GENERALLY NOT IN THE REGION UNTIL MID-NOVEMBER.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: 20 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 10/1/06 (AnH) the only report - LOW.

ORCHARD ORIOLE: 1 female in the Afton area (Dickens) on 10/7/06 (BB) - ACCIDENTAL FOR THE MONTH; THE FIRST OCTOBER RECORD FOR THE REGION.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH: 3 at Dickens Springs (Dickens) on 10/7/06 (BB), 2 near Girard (Kent) on 10/21/06 (AnH), and 20 at Muleshoe NWR (Bailey) on 10/28/06 (BB) - THE FIRST REPORTS OF THE SEASON.

OBSERVERS: BB=Brandon Best, JD=Jewel Downing, GG=Greta Gorsuch, JH=Jack Henshall, AnH=Anthony Hewetson, AvH=Aveline Hewetson, JJ=Jim Joiner, RiL=Richmond Lee, RoL=Rob Lee, ML=Mark Lockwood, DL=David Lukas, EM=Ellen McBride, TM=Toby McBride, CR=Clarice Robertson, FR=Floyd Robertson.

Anthony Hewetson
terrverts@yahoo.com
Field Notes Compiler,
Llano Estacado Audubon Society
www.leas.bizland.com