
Noteworthy Bird Records for Southwestern Oklahoma and North Central Texas

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Since the publication of *Birds of Southwestern Oklahoma* in 1979 (1), numerous records of unusual species or dates of unseasonal occurrence for several species in this 13-county region have surfaced. The area encompassed lies south of 35°13' N latitude and west of 97°30' W longitude. The most noteworthy of these records, together with several from the Wichita Falls, Texas, area and adjacent regions along the Red River of north-central Texas, are presented here. Sources of information included my personal field notes, records on file at the University of Oklahoma (2), personal communications from a variety of observers, and published records in the literature. Most of the Texas observations were summarized by Zinn (3), but many of more recent origin were provided by Debra G. McKee of Wichita Falls. Recent records for Stephens County, Oklahoma, were verified by Frances Neeld.

Brown Pelican, *Pelicanus occidentalis*. There were no known records for this bird in the area prior to 1979 (1). On 6 August 1994, Debra G. N. June and Terry J. McKee and Earl Anderson watched a Brown Pelican feed for about 25 min near a group of 10 White Pelicans (*P. erythrorhynchos*) at Lake Arrowhead, Clay County, Texas; it was again seen by the same observers on 10 and 18 September and on 2 October [4,5]. A documentation report is on file in the Cameron University Museum of Zoology (CUMZ). This bird was also observed by Ross P. Rasmussen. Inclusive dates of August 6-October 16 were given in *Field Notes* (6). During the early afternoon of 15 May 1996, Charles C. Stowe and I observed a Brown Pelican feeding on dead shad thrown from fishing boats on Lake Texoma, Marshall County, Oklahoma, near the confluence of the Red and Washita rivers. On 4 June, Stowe saw apparently the

same bird again, about 0.5 km to the east, in the Platter Flats area of the lake, probably in Bryan County. At Buffalo Creek Reservoir, about 8 km northwest of Iowa Park, Wichita County, Texas, Gary Smith reported a Brown Pelican on 4 April 1998, but the sighting was apparently never documented (7).

Black Vulture, *Coragyps atratus*. According to Baumgartner and Baumgartner (8), this species is an uncommon resident in southeastern Oklahoma, rare and local elsewhere in eastern sections of the state, and a "very rare visitant westward." I (1) listed only two area records, both for single birds seen in the early 1950s, one from the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Comanche County (9 March 1951), the other for Greer County (near Mangum, 1 June 1952). On 10 October 1969, Emma and John Messerly observed a Black Vulture at Quartz Mountain State Park in Kiowa County about 18 km east of Mangum. Loyd Payne and Larry Adams saw one bird at Fort Sill, Comanche County, on 1 April 1982. These are the westernmost sightings known. More current records indicate that the species has begun overwintering farther west, particularly in Stephens County. Prior to 1996, only one record was known for the county. On 13 October 1952, George M. Sutton and Richard R. and Gene W. Graber saw two birds at Duncan Lake, 13 km east of Duncan (2). Members of the Stephens County Audubon Society (SCAS) and others have observed Black Vultures as follows: on 22 November 1996 (one bird), and 13 December 1996 (2 birds), John and Moryne Craythorne found this species 11 km north and 11 km east of Duncan (9); 20 were counted on the SCAS Christmas Bird Count (CBC) of 30 December 1996 (10); on 18 April 1997, the Craythornes and Frances Neeld saw three Black Vultures at a road-kill 6.5 km north and 13 km east of Duncan; Nancy

Vicars, Jimmy Woodard, and others saw one soaring with Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) 4 km north and 13 km east of Duncan on 21 February 1998; Neeld and others found one 3 km north and 14 km east of Duncan on 18 January 1999. Shawn Lawson and I watched two birds soaring 13 km south, 2.5 km west of Ringling, Jefferson County, on 6 February 1993.

Black-legged Kittiwake, *Rissa tridactyla*.

There is only one record for this species in the area. During a blizzard late on the morning of 11 January 1997, Kurt A. and Sharon K. Meisenzahl discovered a first-winter bird with thick black collar, forked tail, and black legs at Lake Ellsworth, 4 km northeast of Porter Hill, Comanche County.

White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica*. Not listed for southwestern Oklahoma by me (1), nor for Wichita County, Texas, by Zinn (3), but this species has recently been expanding its range northward, and in 1991 nested in Waco and Brownwood, Texas (11). One was identified near Willow, in Greer County, by Jerry Sturdy and Roy Frye (12) on 3 July 1969. Jim W. Tinsley saw one 5 km east of Eldorado, Jackson County, on 13 June 1973. Near the Red River about 8 km southwest of Waurika, Jefferson County, R. John Taylor and John R. Sandidge saw one on 21 September 1978 (8). Beginning in 1992, there were 21 additional records for the area, 11 of them in Wichita County, Texas. In Oklahoma, three observations were in Jackson, four in Comanche, two in Tillman, and one in Kiowa counties. All of these sightings span the period 30 March to about 10 November. There is one nesting record; on 17 July 1999, John Cys and Floyd Killeen discovered a nest 7 m up in a cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) with three nestlings ready to fledge in Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas (13). On 2 September 1998, Kelvin Schoonover shot a White-winged Dove 0.5 km east of Hackberry Flat Wildlife Management Area, which lies 11 km southeast of Frederick, Tillman Co. (CUMZ 1161); another was killed next day by a hunter north of Hackberry Flat, but the specimen was apparently not saved (Wes D. Webb, personal communication). Two birds

have been photographed in Lawton, Comanche County, the first by Kurt M. Meisenzahl on 17-18 May 1996; the second by Ken N. Dorrell on 12 September 1999 (both on file, CUMZ). The first record in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge was on 29 September 1996, when Dorrell and Dan J. Farrell studied one through a telescope at the west end of Lake Elmer Thomas (Kenneth N. Dorrell, personal communication).

Inca Dove, *Scardafella inca*. Robert L. More and John K. Strecker (14) indicated that a pair of Inca Doves spent the summer in Wilbarger County, Texas, "several years ago," but the species was not listed for adjacent Wichita County, Texas, by Zinn (3). Only two records were given by me (1), one of four birds in Altus, Jackson County, from early October 1972 to 15 August 1973 (15), the other a specimen (CUMZ 607) from near Apache, Caddo County, taken 31 October 1975 (16). Leroy and Lafayette Stankewitz observed one in their yard in Wichita Falls from 22 December 1979 to 14 January 1980 (17) and a single individual was recorded on 28 December 1981, during the CBC of the SCAS (18). Since 1991, however, more than 40 sightings have been compiled, occurring in every month of the year. In Texas, 20 records were from Wichita, two from Clay and one from Hardeman counties. The Oklahoma sightings include 10 from Jackson, seven from Comanche, two from Tillman, and one from Grady counties. The last was the northernmost record; a pair was seen in Chickasha on 22 May 1999 by Charles M. Mather (personal communication). The number of area records by year were as follows: 1991,1; 1992,1; 1993,5; 1994,1; 1995,3; 1996,11; 1997,12; 1998,9; 1999,5. As many as 14 birds were observed by Mary Pollard at her home in Altus, Jackson County, during the fall and winter of 1996-1997 (Ina S. Mery, personal communication). In the CUMZ are photographic records of at least two different individuals. One was taken by Kurt A. Meisenzahl in Lawton, Comanche County, on 8 December 1991, and several more were obtained by him on 26 January 1992, probably of the same individual, that was last seen on 16 February. The other photograph,

from Altus, Jackson County, was obtained by Mitch Oliphant on 31 January 1993. Warren M. Pulich (19) found a nest in Wichita County during the spring of 1976 and has a specimen from the same county. On 24 July 1996, Debra G. McKee saw two recently fledged young birds in Iowa Park, Wichita County, Texas. There are three known breeding attempts for southwest Oklahoma. On 14 and 16 March 1997, a female was observed sitting on a nest begun about 8 March in Altus, Jackson County, but high winds destroyed it several days later (Ina S. Mery, personal communication; photo of nest on file, CUMZ). On 9 April 1997, Jim W. Tinsley videotaped two young birds being fed by adults in Eldorado, Jackson County (film viewed by me on 17 April 1997).

Gray Catbird, *Dumetella carolinensis*. This species is rare in summer. In Fletcher, Comanche County, Gray Catbirds attempted unsuccessfully to nest during the spring of 1976 in Carrol M. Ridgway's yard (my personal field notes). On 13 or 14 July 1999, Marlin Holtmyer reported to Frances Neeld an active nest in his yard in Duncan, Stephens County. On 17 July 1999, Neeld, David B. Wallace and I observed a female on a heavily shaded nest which contained two eggs and was positioned 3.5 m up in a 5.5 m dogwood (*Cornus* sp.). The fate of this nest is unknown.

Pine Warbler, *Dendroica pinus*. There is but one record for this species. On 31 January 1994 (light snow cover, temperature 17° F) a Pine Warbler came to the yard of John and Moryne Craythorne in Duncan, Stephens County, and remained until 24 February. It was seen by several persons, including Frances Neeld, and was described by the Craythornes as being small "with a bright yellow throat and breast...conspicuous white wing bars...olive-green unstreaked back, with faint streaks on the yellow breast alongside the wings, a yellow line through the eye, and a white belly" (20).

American Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla*. A male of this uncommon migrant was seen on the late date of 15 October 1983, at Quanah Parker Lake in the Wichita Moun-

tains Wildlife Refuge, Comanche County, by Moryne Craythorne, and others (21).

Prothonotary Warbler, *Protonotaria citrea*. There are few records of this warbler west of Stephens County. In Lawton, Comanche County, Kurt A. Meisenzahl photographed one in his yard on 12 October 1998 (on file, CUMZ).

Kentucky Warbler, *Oporornis formosus*. A rare migrant. On 10 September 1984, Louis E. McGee banded and photographed an individual in his yard in Lawton, Comanche County (Louis E. McGee, personal communication).

MacGillivray's Warbler, *Oporornis tolmiei*. This rare migrant was seen by Kevin Mason at the Sunset Campground in the Wichita Mountains Refuge, Comanche County, on 13 May 1983. He described the broken eye-ring, yellow belly, head with blue-gray hood, darker gray throat, and olive-yellow back. On 21 May 1996, Chet Gresham, a refuge intern, saw one at refuge headquarters (Chet Gresham, personal communication).

Hooded Warbler, *Wilsonia citrina*. This species is a rare transient. On 6 June 1989, Janet M. and Louis E. McGee and Kevin Mason saw and heard three birds at Sunset Campground in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Comanche County. One was reported by Vic Fazio and Joseph A. Grzybowski in the refuge (exact location not specified) on 10 June 1994 (22). Kurt A. Meisenzahl saw a female bird on 25 June 1998 in his yard in Lawton; he noted the yellow face encircled by darker color and ending in a dark crescent behind the eye; possibly the same bird reappeared on 9 July.

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