

Spring Report (March 20 – May 20, 2010)

by David E. Wolf

A season as complex as these two months is hard to summarize...but, in general, most breeding species were somewhat late in arriving; few large pushes of migrants were observed; and May was the worst spring for warblers in recent memory. Conversely, the cool fronts in late April produced a good push of species at best uncommon in our area. May was extremely dry and I would surmise that the lack of visible migration was due to the lack of strong fronts and especially rain. Special thanks go to Carroll Moore for posting the sightings on the PAS website as they came in, and apologies go to anyone with significant sightings that I over-looked.

The only noteworthy late waterfowl was a female Bufflehead on the Winston 8 pond on US 59 (Angelina Co) on April 8 (LD, DW). Different female **Hooded Mergansers** with broods of tiny ducklings were at Alazan Bayou April 5-7 and April 25 (DW et al); this species is a rare breeder here. The last 3 Horned Grebes were on Kurth Lake March 23, but more unexpected were 2 **Eared Grebes** there the same day (LD). The only report of migrating Am. White Pelicans was 10 over Alazan Bayou on April 10 (RH, CW). The first Anhingas were 2 at the Nac ponds March 27 (CW). Single American Bitterns were at Alazan Bayou April 27 (DW) and May 8 (DW, RT; late). More unexpected there were a **Tricolored Heron** May 8 (RT, DW) and 3 **Black-crowned Night-Herons** April 27 (DW). The first Green Heron was one in Carrizo Creek April 4 (SL). The first **White Ibis** were 8 at Alazan Bayou March 12, an early date (TR), while the season high count was 125 there May 8 (DW, RT). Nine ad. **White-faced Ibis** flew over Alazan Bayou April 25 (DW) and a beautiful adult was there May 8 (RT, DW). The first Mississippi Kite was an early one over Alazan Bayou April 5 (DW); the spring high count was 44 over Alazan Bayou April 27 (DW); and the last was a late one in Nac May 16 (TR). A Northern Harrier at the Angelina Co AP April 4 was the only report (LD). A pair of Cooper's Hawk were seen copulating on the Azalea Trail March 29 and then the **nest** was found on April 4 for the **first confirmed breeding for Angelina County** (LD et al). The first Broad-winged Hawk was one on the Azalea Trail March 20 (LD), but no large flights were reported all spring. Single Merlins were at the Ang Co AP on March (LD, SL, CM) and April 8 (LD). Shorebirds came on strong early in the season, especially after spring storms. American Golden-Plover visited the Angelina Co AP from at least March 23-April 8, with 12 on April 4 the highest count (LD et al). Two tiny Killdeer chicks were found in Douglass April 18 (CW). It was a good spring for Upland Sandpipers. The first were 11 at Ang Co AP on March 29 (LD), while peak counts were 50 at Angelina Co AP April 4 (LD) and 12 in Carrizo Creek the same day (SL); 45 at Angelina Co AP April 8 (LD, DW); and 23 in Central Hts 12 April (DW). Five Semipalmated Sandpipers at Alazan Bayou May 8 (DW); 2 Western at the Angelina Co AP April 8 (LD); and 4 Baird's at the Angelina Co AP April 27 and one at the Nac ponds May 6 (DW) were the only reports of these species. The first Pectoral Sandpipers were 4 at the Angelina Co AP March 23 (LD). Three **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at the Angelina Co AP April 4 (LD) and 4 there April 8 (LD, DW) were unusual for spring. A Wilson's Snipe lingered at Alazan Bayou until April 27 (DW) and a flock of 25 restless Wilson's Phalaropes was there April 25 (DW). Single **White-winged Doves** in Loco Valley April 22 (RH) and Central Hts April 25 (CS) coincided with the peak of spring migration for this species, which has not yet established itself as a breeding bird in the Pineywoods. A Black-billed Cuckoo in Cushing May 14 was the only one reported this spring (DS). A Greater Roadrunner was photographed

in San Augustine Co on April 6 (MA), confirming their presence this far east. Whip-poor-wills were heard in Crown Colony April 6 (LD) and near Douglass on April 24 (CW). One Chimney Swift over Crown Colony on March 21 was the first (LD). A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Lufkin March 11 was first (LS), while the female **Rufous Hummingbird** at the Rohrer's in Nac was last seen on March 21.

The first Least Flycatcher was an early one in Pecan Park April 26 (DW). A male **Vermilion Flycatcher** was seen and photographed on the SFASU campus on March 23-26 (SS et al) for one of our very few spring records ever. The first Great Crested Flycatchers were 2 in Pecan Park April 11 (CW), while the first Eastern Kingbird was near Huntington March 29 (RT). **Western Kingbirds** appeared with the late April fronts, with 2 seen in Central Hts April 25 (MHW, DW) and another there April 28 (DW). The first Red-eyed Vireo was one in Douglass March 24 (CW). The first 4 **Cave Swallows** were back at the Alazan Bayou bridge April 7 (DW, TR) and by early May several nests were visible and at least 10 birds were present (DW). A late Brown Creeper visited Hudson April 8 (JP). A singing Marsh Wren was at Alazan Bayou April 7 (DW, TR) and 3 were there April 27, along with 12+ Sedge Wrens (DW). The first Swainson's Thrush was one in Pecan Park April 16 (DW, TR), while the only Gray-cheeked Thrush was there April 28 (DS, DW). Seven American Pipits at the Angelina Co AP April 27 were the last (DW). It was generally a poor season for warblers and observers struggled to find even singles of the more common migrants. I received second-hand reports of two sightings of Golden-winged Warblers in Pecan Park in early May. The only Blue-winged Warblers were a singing male at Alazan Bayou April 7 (DW, TR) and 2 in Pecan Park April 22 (TR). The first Tennessee Warbler was one at Alazan Bayou April 10 (RH, CW), while a Nashville in Pecan Park May 15-17 was late (DW). Two singing Prairie Warblers near Douglass May 9 were at a new site for this species (CW). A male "western" **Palm Warbler** in Pecan Park April 27 (DW) and a female **Blackpoll Warbler** there May 11 (DW) were the only unusual warblers seen this spring. A singing Swainson's Warbler showed up in Carrizo Creek April 20 (SL). A migrant Louisiana Waterthrush was at Lakeside Park in Nac on April 1 (TR). Single Wilson's Warblers in Pecan Park May 8 (DW) and Douglass May 9 (CW) were the only ones, as was a Canada in Pecan Park May 7 (DW, DS). The first Hooded Warbler was one on the Azalea Trail April 1 (LD). The first Summer Tanagers were just south of Lufkin on April 3 (JP) and Huntington on April 7 (NB), while 2 male Scarlet Tanagers on the Azalea Trail April 11 were early (RT) and a male in Pecan Park May 7-8 was a little late (DW, DS). The only Clay-colored Sparrows were singles in Pecan Park April 25 and at Alazan Bayou April 27 (DW). Two Grasshopper Sparrows were at Alazan Bayou April 27 and one was there May 8 (DW). A Harris's Sparrow lingered in Central Hts until the late date of April 17 (MHW). The first Rose-breasted Grosbeak was a male in Central Hts April 20 (MHW). More firsts were a Blue Grosbeak in Huntington April 9 (NB), single Indigo Buntings in Central Hts April 3 (DW) and near Hudson April 4 (JP), an early Painted Bunting in Central Hts April 7 (DW), and a Dickcissel in Central Hts April 24 (DW). **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were unusually frequent in late April on the westerly winds, with 8 low over Alazan Bayou April 25, 3 females in Central Hts April 27 and 2 males there April 28 (all DW). **Great-tailed Grackles** seem to have finally conquered the heart of the Pineywoods. The first report this year was a male in the Wal-Mart area in Nac on March 20 (SL); the high count there was 3 males and 3 females April 21 and a few days earlier (CS). A male was seen in San Augustine town April 20 (RS) and then 2 were in Henderson town on May 16 (RS). The first big push of Baltimore Orioles was 18 in Central Hts on April 24 (DW) and they were numerous in Pecan Park in late April-early May (DS et al). The last Purple Finch were 2 late males

at feeders in Hudson on April 1-2 (JP), while a single Pine Siskin was in Nacogdoches March 19 (TR) and 10 appeared in Loco Valley April 20 (RH).

Observers: MA = Marcus Arreguin; NB = Nancy Bird; LD = Louis Debetaz; RH = Ruth Heino; SL = Susie Lower; JP = Jimmie Putnam; DS = Dennis Scheef; CS = Cliff Shackelford; LS = Lynn Smith; SS = Sarah Stovall; TR = Thomas Riecke; RT = Robert Truss; CW= Carol Wells; DW = David Wolf; MHW = Mimi Hoppe Wolf

Localities in: Angelina County are Angelina Co Airport (= Ang Co AP); Azalea Trail (Lufkin); Crown Colony; Hudson; Huntington; Kurth Lake; Lufkin

Nacogdoches County are Alazan Bayou WMA; Carrizo Creek; Central Heights; Cushing; Douglass; Loco Valley; Nacogdoches (town); Nacogdoches sewage ponds (= Nac ponds); Pecan Park; SFASU campus