

## Summer Bird Report (June 1 – August 31, 2010)

by David E. Wolf

To sum it up, it was a long hot and dry summer. Rain was generally scarce and spotty and some areas were very dry by late August. Few interesting sightings were reported – it was too hot to enjoy getting out birding! The pace did pick up a bit in late August, when a “cool” front August 24-27 dropped temperatures to the upper 60s at night and low 90s in the day, bringing the first significant push of migrants. By this time Lake Rayburn had receded enough to attract shorebirds and long-legged waders, especially in the Marion Ferry and Attoyac Bayou areas. The lake should remain productive for some time to come, plus every weather shift and front in the upcoming month brings the potential for great birds, so get out and enjoy them!

A **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** in Diboll Aug 25 was the first report this year (RT), plus a pair raised young near Corrigan (Polk Co; fide RT). 255 Wood Ducks concentrated in the shallow marshes at the TX 147 causeway on Aug 25 was a high count, while 360 migrant Blue-winged Teal were tallied there and along the Attoyac Bayou at TX 103 the same day (DW). Waterfowl firsts for fall were 5 Northern Shoveler at TX 103 at the Attoyac Aug 25 and a single Green-winged Teal at Marion Ferry Aug 26 (both DW). Two Pied-billed Grebes summered on Kurth Lake (LD). Over 50 pairs of cormorants nested on the island south of the TX 147 causeway on Lake Rayburn again this year, but the exact proportion of Neotropic to Double-crested wasn't clear; both species were present in numbers (DW). A Great Egret in Central Heights June 28 was the first post-breeding wanderer (DW), while 16 Snowy Egrets were already at Alazan Bayou WMA July 9 (DW, RT). An adult Tricolored Heron over the TX 147 causeway July 16 was perhaps a local breeder, but 1-4 seen on daily trips to upper Rayburn Aug 25-27 were likely post-breeding wanderers (all DW). A fuzzy-headed juvenile Green Heron was at the TX 147 causeway on July 1 (DW). A juvenile White Ibis over Central Heights July 8 was the first post-breeding disperser (DW), while 35 at Marion Ferry Aug 11 were the first numbers (DW). By late August this species was widespread around the receding upper end of the lake. Two *Plegadis* ibis sp? at TX 147 Aug 25 and 2 at Marion Ferry Aug 26 were too distant to identify to species (DW). A distant **Roseate Spoonbill** at Marion Ferry Aug 11 was the first and then good numbers appeared in late August as the lake went down, with 7 at Marion Ferry Aug 26 and 9 at TX 103 at the Attoyac Aug 27 (all DW). 60 Wood Storks at TX 103 at the Attoyac Aug 25 was the highest count so far this year (DW).

By June 30 three fledgling **Ospreys** had “jumped” from the nest on a pylon on upper Rayburn at TX 103 at Etoile (Nac Co), but were still clumsy and fairly helpless; an adult was in the vicinity (DW). Several **Mississippi Kites** spent the entire summer in Nacogdoches and apparently nested here for the first time, with repeated sightings by TR, CS, JS and others in the North Raguet St neighborhood throughout June and July, to at least Aug 10. The adults became more vocal in mid-July and at least one recently-fledged juvenile was seen in late July (TR). By mid-August a few migrant kites were appearing, but no large numbers were reported. A family group of **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, with 3 screaming juveniles just learning to fly and an adult bird hiding nearby, was near Boykin Springs July 16 (DW); they have nested at this site in the past. Another rare summer sighting of a Sharp-shin was one in s. Lufkin June 27 (LD). An adult Cooper's Hawk stole prey from a juvenile bird on the Azalea Trail in Lufkin on June 27, near where a nest was found earlier in the season (LD). A **Common Moorhen** was at the TX 147 causeway

July 16 (DW); this species is inexplicably rare in our region. A Purple Gallinule was at Kurth Lake Aug 28, our only regular locale for this species, and the first 2 American Coots of fall were there the same day (LD). The first southbound shorebirds were 7 Least Sandpipers in Central Heights July 13; a Spotted Sandpiper there July 16-17; and a Solitary Sandpiper there July 17 (all DW). August 25, the day after the "cool" front, was a good day for shorebirds at TX 103 at the Attoyac, including one Black-bellied and 5 Semipalmated plovers; 2 Lesser Yellowlegs; and 25 Semipalmated, 12 Western; 90 Least; one Baird's and 3 Stilt sandpipers (DW). 33 Pectoral Sandpipers were at Marion Ferry Aug 26 (DW) and one American Avocet was at TX 103 at the Attoyac Aug 27 (DW, RT). A very early adult Ring-billed Gull flew south over the TX 147 bridge Aug 25 (DW).

A late fledgling Red-headed Woodpecker was in Central Hts Aug 12 (DW). A Northern Flicker was at the base of the TX 147 causeway July 16, where they have nested in the past (DW), while a fledged juvenile was at Marion Ferry Aug 26 (DW). Two Least Flycatchers at Marion Ferry Aug 11 were the first this fall (DW), as was a Warbling Vireo in Central Hts Aug 29 (DW). A Tree Swallow at Etoile Park on June 30 was likely a local breeder; 5 at TX 103 at the Attoyac Aug 27 may also have nested locally (both DW). The first Bank Swallows were 5 over Marion Ferry Aug 26 (DW). Local records of **Cave Swallow** continue to accumulate, with several family groups in central Cherokee County on May 31 (BW), and at least 6, including at least one fledged juvenile, at the Alazan Bayou WMA breeding site July 9 (DW). 10 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in Central Hts Aug 12 was the first push of migrants there this fall, while the first numbers were 55 at the TX 147 causeway Aug 25 (both DW). Two Gray Catbirds were on the Azalea Trail Aug 23 (LD). Three Yellow Warblers at Marion Ferry Aug 11 were the first this fall (DW). A juv. male Prairie Warbler well out the TX 147 causeway on July 16 gave a strange whisper song several times; this bird was presumably a migrant (DW). Migrant Black-and-white Warblers were at Marion Ferry and Etoile Park on Aug 11 (DW). The first Northern Waterthrushes were singles on the Azalea Trail Aug 24 (LD) and at Etoile Park Aug 26 (DW); the first Mourning Warbler showed up in Central Hts Aug 28 (DW, MHW); the first Wilson's Warbler was on the Azalea Trail Aug 24 (LD); and a Canada Warbler was at Marion Ferry Aug 26 (DW). A migrant Yellow-breasted Chat was on the Azalea Trail Aug 23 (LD). Chipping Sparrows nested in Huntington this summer (NB) and a juvenile Lark Sparrow at Millard's Crossing (Nacogdoches) Aug 6 confirmed breeding here (SL). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** (probably an immature male) passed by Marion Ferry on Aug 11 with a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, for one of our very few fall records (DW). The first Baltimore Oriole was one at the TX 147 causeway Aug 25, a bit early (DW). A bright male **American Goldfinch** at TX 103 at the Attoyac Aug 27 was a surprise (RT, DW) and one of very few local records at this season. What was it doing here?

**Observers:** NB = Nancy Bird; LD = Louis Debetaz; SL = Susie Lower; TR = Thomas Riecke; CS = Cliff Shackelford; JS = Julie Shackelford; RT = Robert Truss; BW = Becky Whisenant; DW = David Wolf; MHW = Mimi Hoppe Wolf.

**Localities in Angelina County:** Azalea Trail (Lufkin); Boykin Springs; Diboll; Huntington; Kurth Lake; Lufkin; and Marion Ferry. **In Nacogdoches County:** Alazan Bayou WMA; Central Heights; Etoile Park; Millard's Crossing; and Nacogdoches. **In San Augustine County:** TX 103 at the Attoyac Bayou on upper Lake Rayburn; and TX 147 causeway on middle Lake Rayburn.