

## Summer (June-August 2012) Bird Report

by David E. Wolf

As far as birding goes, most of us had the usual “summer doldrums” and did not get out much, so this report is brief, but thankfully this summer was not as extremely hot as last year and we got some decent rain showers (especially the eastern and southern parts of our area). Fall migration is now well underway, so please send all reports of interesting sightings to dewolf@myinu.net Thanks in advance – David E. Wolf

The first push of Blue-winged Teal appeared Aug 18, a high count of 250 at Kurth Lake (LD) and another 30 at TX 147 (DW). An out-of-season Ring-necked Duck at Kurth Lake June 23 and August 22 may have been injured (LD). Breeding was confirmed for Pied-billed Grebes on Kurth Lake again this year, when 2 ad. and 2 juvs. were seen June 23 (LD). Numbers were good all summer and 12 were seen Aug 18 (LD). “The bird of the year” has to be the **Brown Booby** photographed off Powell Park on Lake Rayburn (San Augustine County) on July 7 by Roger Bacon, a professional fishing guide who is on the lake a lot and recognized this bird as something very different! This salt-water species is very rare in the northern Gulf of Mexico and Texas waters and totally unprecedented inland in Texas. Amazingly, Brown Boobies were also seen on Lake Norrell in Arkansas in mid-August and Canyon Lake near San Antonio in late August. Occasional Neotropic Cormorants continue to occasionally show up away from the breeding area at TX 147 on Lake Rayburn, including one at Ellen Trout Park August 31 (LD). The dawn flight of long-legged waders at Marion Ferry included 5 Tricolored Herons on August 9 and 9 on August 31 (both DW), while singles in Central Hts on August 21 (DW) and Ellen Trout Park on Aug 31 (LD) were more unexpected. The first fledged Green Herons were 2 at Kurth Lake June 23 (LD). Small numbers of White Ibis visited Alazan Bayou WMA from late July to early August and the Marion Ferry area from early August on (TR, RT, CW, DW). Two **White-faced Ibis** at the VFW Pond in Lufkin on June 27 were out-of-season; nice photos were obtained (AM). 4 *Plegadis sp?* over Marion Ferry August 9 were likely also that species (DW). The first Wood Storks were 6 at Alazan Bayou WMA on June 27 (Ron Mize et al), but there were no other reports until some were seen here August 12 (CW).

On May 30 two Ospreys were sitting on the nest on the pylon at Etoile crossing (juveniles?) and 2 were in the air nearby (adults?); this is a traditional nest site (DW). There may be as many as 5 additional nests around immense Lake Rayburn (fide local fishermen). Summer Mississippi Kites are very rare in our area, but 2 were over the Azalea Trail on June 1 (LD) and a pair was over Nacogdoches June 10 (RS). Migrants or wanderers began appearing again in early August and the first three weeks of the month many observers reported them in small numbers (to 15) over Nacogdoches and elsewhere (m. obs.). On June 22 a very unexpected pair of **White-tailed Kites** was seen near Gallatin in Cherokee County, just outside of our reporting area (CW). Purple Gallinules were back at Kurth Lake again this year, with 6 adults, 2 grown juveniles and 3 chicks on June 23. One ad. and 2 juvs. were seen July 27, and 2 juvs. were still present August 22 (LD). American Coots also nested at Kurth Lake, with 2 ads. and 2 juvs. seen June 23; one ad. was seen Aug 18 (both LD). A Spotted Sandpiper at Kurth Lake July 10 was the first southbound shorebird (LD). The first Upland Sandpipers were heard over Central Hts August 17 and many were heard going over on August 27 (both MHW). A Caspian Tern at Kurth Lake July 27 was very

early and the first in this area in a long time (LD). The first Forster's Tern was one at Kurth Lake July 10 and the first Black Terns were 25 there August 18 (both LD).

A barely-fledged Ruby-throated Hummingbird found at Tucker Woods August 14 had perhaps left the nest prematurely; this is a very late date for young (Greg Grant fide CS). An Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Alazan Bayou WMA August 19 (RT, DW). The first migrant *Empidonax sp?* appeared in Central Hts August 8 and was likely an Alder, while the first Least Flycatcher showed up there August 12 (both DW). A noisy pair of Eastern Kingbirds in Central Hts fed a stub-tailed young just out of the nest on August 18, a late fledging date (DW). The first Warbling Vireo was one at Alazan Bayou August 31 (DW, RT). A single Tree Swallow on May 30 at TX 103 at the Attoyac (upper Rayburn) was likely a local breeder (DW). On June 24 at least 9 Cave Swallow nests were counted in a culvert on TX 7 West at the Nacogdoches Airport and 25-30 birds (mostly juveniles) were in the air nearby (DW, SL, LS), confirming breeding at this site again this year. A pair of Brown Thrashers in Nacogdoches May 30 was carrying food, confirming breeding (DW).

Warblers began moving around by late June and by early August small numbers of migrants were appearing. A single Yellow Warbler in Central Hts August 2 was an early first (MHW), a migrant Prairie Warbler visited Alazan Bayou August 19 (DW, RT), and the first Black-and-white was one in Central Hts August 2 (MHW). An agitated pair of American Redstarts "spished up" at Alazan Bayou on May 26 acted like local breeders rather than late migrants, while one in Central Hts on August 8 was a very early fall migrant (both DW). Two Northern Waterthrushes in Central Hts on August 12 were very early (DW), while the first wandering Louisiana Waterthrush was in the Wolfs yard in Central Hts June 22-29. A nice Mourning Warbler on the Azalea Trail August 31 was the first report and a new species for the trail (LD). A Chipping Sparrow in Douglass on July 26 was a summer first in that area (CW). This species is quite local and generally not very common in our area in the summer, unless you have info to the contrary. A very high count of 75 Blue Grosbeaks was concentrated in one field at Alazan Bayou August 19 (DW, RT). A wandering juvenile Dickcissel in Central Hts June 28 was a surprise since none summered in this area (DW). Southbound overhead migrants of that species were first heard August 6, while the first good push was 56 seen at Alazan Bayou August 31 (DW, RT). Great-tailed Grackles are now well-established as breeding birds in both Lufkin and Nacogdoches, with numerous fledglings seen in June (m. obs.). A migrant Baltimore Oriole at Alazan Bayou WMA August 19 was a bit early (RT, DW).

**Observers:** LD = Louis Debetaz; SL = Susie Lower; AM = Allison Maxwell; RS = Rick Schaefer; TR = Thomas Riecke; CS = Cliff Shackelford; LS = Les Stewart; CW = Carol Wells; DW = David Wolf; MHW = Mimi Hoppe Wolf.

**Localities in Angelina County:** Azalea Trail (Lufkin); Ellen Trout Park (Lufkin); Kurth Lake; Marion Ferry; VFW Pond (Lufkin). **In Nacogdoches County:** Alazan Bayou WMA; Central Heights; Douglass; Nacogdoches; Tucker Woods (Nacogdoches). **In San Augustine County:** Powell Park on Lake Rayburn; TX 147 causeway on Lake Rayburn; TX 103 at the Attoyac on upper Lake Rayburn.