

Summer Bird Report for Pineywoods Audubon Society
June 1 - August 15, 2018
by David E. Wolf

Our summer began with typical weather in June, hot but not extremely so, and with occasional rains to keep things green. Then we had prolonged hot weather from early July through mid-August, with significant rain to the south and east in our area, but very dry conditions from Nacogdoches north and west. This did not inspire much birding activity and with the lack of “interesting weather” there wasn’t much visible southbound migration, while locally breeding birds simply slipped away and disappeared.

Bird Report:

About 50 Double-crested Cormorant nests were counted on July 21 on Toledo Bend near the TX 21 crossing of the reservoir, and 100+ were seen in flight, but only a very few young were still in nests (DB). This colony was one of the first, perhaps the first, known in Texas and was first noted here in the early 1970s. Cormorants no longer nest on the islands off the TX 147 causeway, but a few individuals of both species were noted in this area all summer (DW). The only Wood Storks were at least 50 at a roost site at Boggy Slough July 16-18 (ET, JS, CS) and 3 over Douglass on Aug 11 (CW). A large nesting colony of ardeids at TX 103 at the Attoyac Bayou was not noticed until July, but it had an estimated 1600 Cattle Egrets on July 25 & 31, including many juveniles fledged or about to fledge (DW). A few Snowy Egrets and Little Blue Herons were in the vicinity and it is likely that at least some nested here. The only **Tricolored Herons** reported were one near Arcadia (San Aug Co) on Aug 5 (DB, JS) and 2 leaving the roost at TX 103 at the Attoyac Bayou on July 25 (DW). Two ***Plegadis sp?*** (dark ibis) at Marion Ferry July 25 were too distant to identify to species (DW). Eight Blue-winged Teal in San Augustine Co on August 1 were the first fall migrants (DB).

There were many reports of **Mississippi Kite** scattered throughout our area and it seems that numerous towns now host a few summering birds as they continue to expand their breeding range. They became more conspicuous in mid-July as they began fledging young or feeding large juveniles. Small flocks of definite migrants began appearing in mid-August. Reports included: 2 together in Maydelle (Cherokee Co) on May 22 (CW); 1-2 almost daily from June 11 through early Aug in Carrizo Creek neighborhood (SL); one over Townsend Park June 23 (eBird); 3 fledglings at a different site in Carrizo Creek ca July 13-15 (KG); 3-4 in Lufkin several times in July including 2 juveniles on July 27 (GH); one in Huntington July 25 (DW); a few over Diboll all summer (RT); 2 in north Nacogdoches July 20 (D Wa); and sporadic sightings of 1-2 in south Nacogdoches all summer (DW). Two young left a **Cooper’s Hawk nest** in Nacogdoches for the first time on June 15 (DW), but were still in the vicinity and very vocal through mid-July (DW, RS). Broad-winged Hawks summered in Carrizo Creek and were seen occasionally throughout the season (SL).

There were **almost no reports of southbound shorebirds**, due to the lack of habitat as lake levels remained high but rains were scattered and not heavy enough to flood low-lying areas. Three Least Sandpipers were near TX 21 at Toledo Bend on July 21 (DB) and 5 were at Marion Ferry on July 25 (DW). An **American Woodcock** on TX 21 in w. Nac Co on Aug 19 was a rare summer sighting, but not unprecedented (CW). A second-year **Laughing Gull** over the TX 147 causeway on Lake Rayburn on June 20 was a rare sighting of this visitor to area lakes (DW). **White-winged Doves** consolidated their recent expansion into the Central Pineywoods, with singles seen in Pineland (Sabine Co) on June 19 (DB); San Augustine Co on Aug 1 (DB); and Nacogdoches Aug 5 (DW). Two Eastern Screech-Owls fledged from a

nest in Nacogdoches ca May 31 (TD). Single Northern Flickers were at the TX 147 causeway June 20 & July 25 (DW), where they have nested in the past. A well-seen **Crested Caracara** visited a recently-mowed field near Pineland (Sabine Co) “on one day during the first week of June” (Norman Dew fide CS). This is the only record east of Nacogdoches Co that I know of and one of very few for anywhere in the central Pineywoods. A pair of American Kestrels was seen occasionally in Lufkin all summer through at least August 5 and they were almost certainly nesting locally (GH).

An **Alder Flycatcher** in Central Hts Aug 12 sang vigorously to confirm its identification, while another one there Aug 21 was identified by call (both DW). The first Least Flycatcher was one in Central Hts Aug 14 (DW). Many juveniles were amidst 300+ Cliff Swallows at the TX 147 causeway on June 20, but on July 25 almost all of the swallows were gone (DW). Recently-fledged juveniles were amidst 15 Cave Swallows at Alazan Bayou WMA on June 16 (DW). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on the TX 147 causeway July 25 acted like a migrant, the first for the season (DW). Modest numbers were on the move by mid-August, with 8 in Central Hts on Aug 14 the first push there (DW). A juvenile **Gray Catbird** in Nacogdoches July 28 (LS) confirmed local breeding for the first time in years. Nice photo Les!

The first wandering Louisiana Waterthrushes away from known territories were singles in Central Hts June 11 & June 20 (MHW). Another was near Arcadia (San Aug Co) Aug 5 (DB, JS). With this species and other early warblers it is impossible to know whether these are birds that have summered locally and just moved around a little bit, or early migrants from further north. The first Black-and-white Warbler was one in Melrose July 5 (RT) and the next was one in Sabinetown July 13 (DB). A well-watched Prothonotary Warbler nest near Antioch (Shelby Co) fledged 5 young around June 24 and then started another clutch (SO). The first Hooded Warbler “off territory” or migrant was one in Sabinetown (Sabine Co) July 8-10 (DB). A wandering male Northern Parula sang for a few minutes in Central Hts on June 22 but was never seen again (DW), while a migrating Northern Parula briefly stopped along the TX 147 causeway July 25 and then kept going southwest across the lake (DW). The first Yellow Warblers were 2 in Central Hts Aug 10 (DW).

The first wandering or migrant Yellow-breasted Chat was one in Central Hts July 19 (MHW). An extremely out-of-season **White-throated Sparrow** was seen at Sabinetown on Toledo Bend July 13 (DB). A **Pine Siskin** that “appeared to be healthy” visited feeders in Nacogdoches June 22-24 (TD). This is our latest date ever, but last winter/spring brought a large flight of them into the region and these feeders hosted large numbers from late Dec-May 18; after that there were none until this late stray.

Observers: DB = David Bell; TD = Thelma Dalmas; KG = Kathy Griffin; GH = Gary Hunter; SL = Susie Lower; SO = Sue Orwig; RS = Rick Schaefer; CS = Cliff Shackelford; JS = Julie Shackelford; JS = John Smelser; LS = Les Stewart; ET = Ellen Temple; RT = Robert Truss; AT = Ashley Tubbs; D Wa = Dave Wallace; CW = Carol Wells; DW = David Wolf; MHW = Mimi Hoppe Wolf.

Localities in Nacogdoches County: Alazan Bayou WMA; Carrizo Creek; Central Heights; Douglass; Melrose; Nacogdoches town.

Localities in Angelina County: Boggy Slough; Diboll; Huntington; Lufkin; Marion Ferry.

Localities in San Augustine County: Arcadia; TX 103 at the Attoyac Bayou (upper reaches of Lake Rayburn); TX 147 causeway across Lake Rayburn; Townsend Park on Lake Rayburn.

Localities in Sabine County: Sabinetown (on Toledo Bend Reservoir); TX 21 at Toledo Bend.

Localities in Shelby County: Antioch.