

**Summer Bird Report for the Pineywoods Audubon Society**  
**(June 1 - August 31, 2019)**  
**by David E. Wolf**

As important as the summer breeding season is for the birds, here in Deep East Texas it is less than inspiring to get out birding – think heat, humidity, chiggers, poison ivy, mosquitos, etc. – and we still have much to learn about our local breeders. **The weather** this summer was actually not as hot in June and July as most years, and we continued to get regular heavy rains, but then everything changed in August and it became very hot and very dry for much of the month (and on into September). Thanks to everyone who submitted sightings ([dewolfnac@gmail.com](mailto:dewolfnac@gmail.com)) and have a good fall migration. Mimi and I will be gone Sept 19-Oct 12, so no e-mails please until we get back.

**Bird Report:**

Several Neotropic and Double-crested cormorants and up to 7 Anhingas frequented the Nacogdoches sewer ponds in August (DW). Snowy Egrets were in good numbers there, with 20 on August 13 and 45 on August 28 (DW). Again this summer there was a large Cattle Egret heronry at TX 103 at the Attoyac Bayou on upper Lake Rayburn, with a crude estimate of 400-800 nests on July 5 (DW). It was hard to get an accurate count as many of the nests are hidden in the large buttonbush swamp and not visible from the highway. On August 18 an estimated 4500-5000 were at this site at dawn, with at least 50 Little Blue and 2 **Tricolored** herons also seen leaving the roost. (DW). A recently-fledged juvenile **Black-crowned Night-Heron** photographed nicely at Lake Naconiche on July 27 was an unexpected rare find (AT). Could it have been raised locally? The only Wood Storks reported were 4 leaving Alazan Bayou WMA July 28 (DW).

An Osprey over south Lufkin on August 17 was a bit odd (GH), while at least 4 were around the TX 147 causeway on Rayburn July 14 (DW). Several looked immature and it is likely that they were fledged from one of the nests around the lake. **3** perched **Swallow-tailed Kites** were photographed near Patroon in Shelby County in mid-August (fide J Sm). This is very noteworthy and raises the possibility that they are summering and perhaps slowly expanding their breeding range northward in East Texas. **Mississippi Kites** continue to expand their summer range in our part of East Texas and are presumably breeding, though no actual nests were found this year. They were present in the Pioneer Park area in Nacogdoches all season, with peak counts of 7 adults June 22-23 (SL, AM, RT, DW) and 6 (at least one juvenile) August 17 (SL, DW). They were not seen in this area after the latter date. 3-6 adult kites were seen in Melrose several times in August, where they have not summered in the past (RT), and a pair was seen and heard in Carrizo Creek to at least August 15 (SL). On August 16 CS had an interesting observation of an adult kite adeptly running up the branches of a big tree in Nacogdoches catching cicadas. 21 migrating kites tallied over Central Heights August 22 was the high count for the month (DW, MHW), but much smaller numbers were seen on many other days. This species was also regular all summer in south Lufkin (GH), where a few have summered for many years. Two juvenile Cooper's Hawks ("branchers") were just out of a nest in Nacogdoches June 23 and begging vociferously (DW). A juvenile Broad-winged Hawk was photographed nicely at the Angelina County Airport August 20 (GH), while a few other singles were noted around our region from mid to late August (m. obs.).

Migrant shorebirds were few and far between as there was little habitat available and not

much stormy weather to bring them down. The first Spotted and Solitary sandpipers were singles at Alazan Bayou WMA July 19 (RT). A Greater Yellowlegs came over Central Heights August 28 (DW). 2 Least Sandpipers visited Central Hts July 27 (DW) and a Pectoral Sandpiper was at Alazan Bayou July 28 (DW). A White-winged Dove over Central Hts August 17 was the only summer report (DW). Single Common Nighthawks over Lufkin August 26, 28 & 29 were the first fall migrants (GH). A Chuck-will's-widow was heard in Lufkin August 6 (GH). A big increase in Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was noted in Nacogdoches (CS, JS) and Central Hts (DW, MHW) August 30-31, including many males. A Northern Flicker was seen at TX 103 at the Attoyac July 5 (DW). Noisy youngsters left a Pileated Woodpecker nest hole in Central Heights June 7 (MHW, DW). A **Crested Caracara** was seen near Linwood in eastern Cherokee County August 24 (CW). We have now accumulated half-a-dozen or so sightings from this general area, but they don't seem to cross the line into Nacogdoches County! A pair of American Kestrels was seen sporadically in Lufkin all summer (GH) and a worn male was seen in south Nacogdoches June 22 (DW). Both were likely local breeders.

The first Olive-sided Flycatcher of the fall migration visited Central Hts August 30 (DW). 2 Alder Flycatchers at Alazan Bayou WMA August 15 called and one sang for confirmation to species (DW). 2 diurnally migrating Eastern Kingbirds over Central Hts August 14 were the first, while 80 over Central Hts after thunderstorms on August 28 was the high count for the month (DW). Stormy August 28 brought at least 9 migrant Red-eyed Vireos to Central Hts (DW). A few (2-4) Bank Swallows were amidst Barn, Cliff and Cave swallows over Central Hts August 28 (DW). The first few fledged Cliff Swallows were at the TX 147 bridge on May 25; by mid-July almost the entire colony, which is quite large, had fledged their young and left the area (DW). A wandering pair of White-breasted Nuthatches was in south Nacogdoches August 12 (AT) and another wandering bird appeared in Central Hts August 20-22, but was not seen after that (DW, MHW). The first migrant Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were 2 in Central Hts August 5 (DW) and several appeared in Sabinetown August 10 (DB). The first good push in Central Heights was 25+ after a rainshower on August 20 (DW). Post-breeding American Robins gathered in Pecan Park in Nacogdoches in late August (and later), including many juveniles (CDF); 20 were counted there on August 29 (DW). A Gray Catbird was seen in Nacogdoches July 25 (CDF); 2 were at the Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches August 3 (RT); and 1-2 in Lufkin July 20-25 and August 12 were the first there since June 29, but had probably been there all summer (GH). Catbirds breed locally in our region, mostly in towns, but are not common and are quite inconspicuous at this season.

A **Worm-eating Warbler** near Antioch (Shelby Co) August 21 was likely a local breeder (SO). The first wandering or southbound migrant Black-and-white Warblers were singles in Melrose June 30 (RT) and Nacogdoches July 1 (AT). Another was in Nacogdoches July 26 (CDF), while the first migrant in Sabinetown was August 1 (DB). After this scattered singles were seen through August at a number of places. Prothonotary Warblers had a very successful nesting season near Antioch (Shelby Co), including 2 clutches laid in June and lots of begging juveniles in August (SO). A Swainson's Warbler was still singing in the SFA Exp Forest on August 20 (RS, JC) and this species summered near Antioch (Shelby Co) (SO). An agitated pair of Kentucky Warblers on Dorr Creek Road June 16 likely had a nest nearby (AM) and this species was present all season near Antioch (Shelby Co) (SO). A migrant or wandering Hooded Warbler appeared in Sabinetown July 28 (DB), while the next report of one away from a breeding area was one in Lufkin August 18 (GH). A migrant male came through Central Heights August 22 (DW). An adult male American Redstart on Dorr Creek Road June 16 was

likely on territory (AM). A wandering Yellow-throated Warbler visited Central Hts June 10 and sang a few times before disappearing, not to be seen or heard again (MHW, DW).

A streaky and molting Chipping Sparrow at Alazan Bayou WMA August 31 had presumably been raised in the vicinity (DW). At least 7 Summer Tanagers were in or migrating over Pecan Park August 29 (DW). 60+ post-breeding Indigo Buntings were at Alazan Bayou August 31, along with at least 15 Blue Grosbeaks (DW). An adult male Orchard Oriole in Central Hts July 12 was likely a migrant, the first of the “fall migration”, while 9 on August 7 was the season high count there (DW). A Baltimore Oriole in Central Heights August 27 was the first fall migrant (DW).

**Observers:** DB = David Bell; JC = James Childress; CDF = Charles Dean Fisher; GH = Gary Hunter; SL = Susie Lower; AM = Alix Matthews; SO = Sue Orwig; RS = Rick Schaefer; J Sm = John Smelser; AT = Anne Tindell; RT = Robert Truss; CW = Carol Wells; DW = David Wolf; MHW = Mimi Hoppe Wolf; m. obs. = many observers.

**Localities in Angelina County:** Angelina County Airport; Lufkin.

**Localities in Nacogdoches County:** Alazan Bayou WMA; Carrizo Creek; Central Heights; Dorr Creek (St’s Rest) Road; Lake Naconiche; Melrose; Nacogdoches (town); Nacogdoches sewage ponds; Pecan Park (in Nacogdoches); Pioneer Park (in Nacogdoches); SFA Exp Forest (= Stephen F. Austin Experimental Forest)..

**Localities in Sabine County:** Sabinetown.

**Localities in San Augustine County:** TX 103 at the Attoyac; TX 147 causeway on Lake Rayburn.

**Shelby County:** Antioch; Patroon.