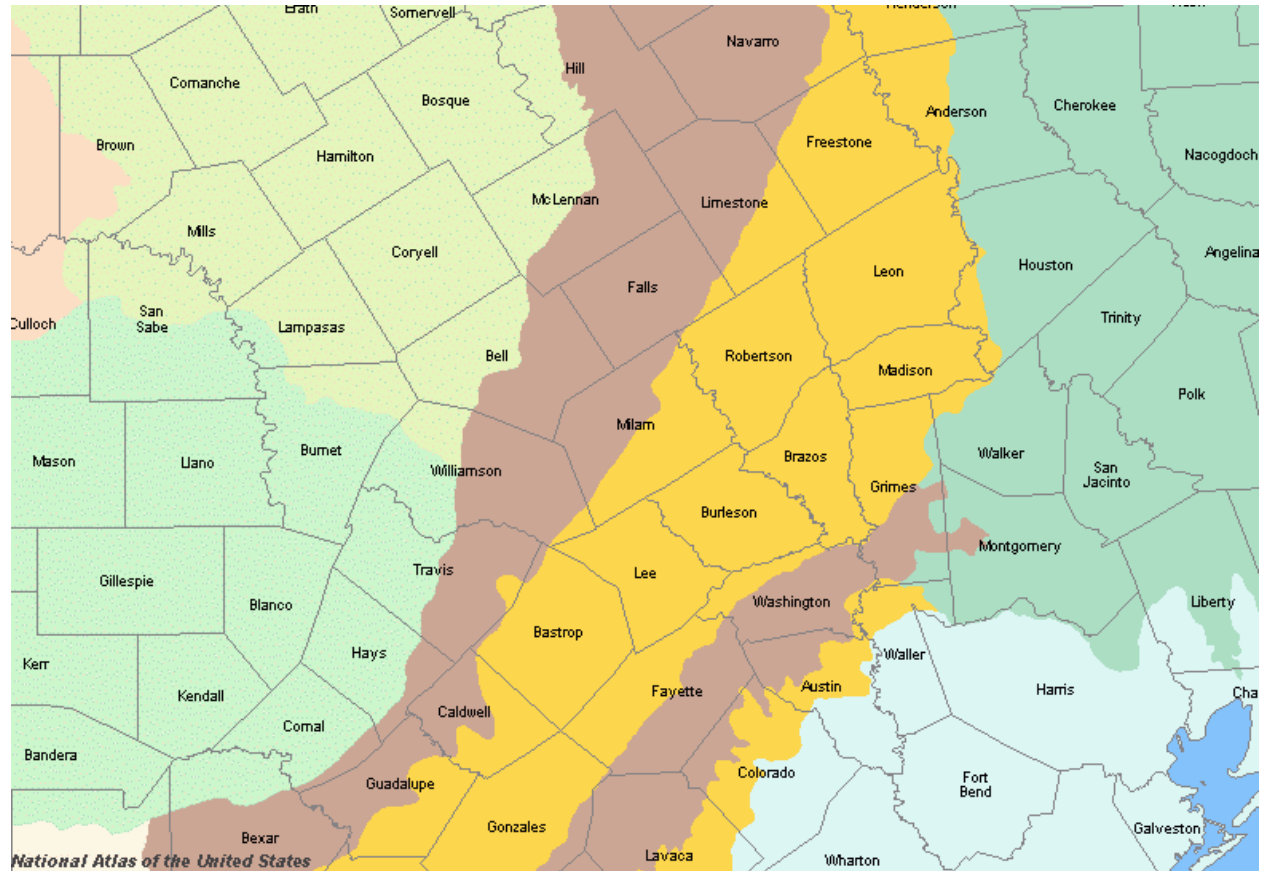


By Bert Frenz

This report is from 1 August to 30 November 2018. It includes sightings from the following counties: Austin, Bastrop, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Limestone, McLennan, Madison, Milam, Navarro, Robertson, and Washington.



MOST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS:

Bufflehead – Setting a record for the highest number of Bufflehead at one location in the central Oaks & Prairies region, 160 were counted at Finfeather Lake, Bryan, *Brazos* 21 Nov 2018 (Sandy Dillard).

Least Grebe – A first record for *Grimes*, 1-2 Least Grebes were at Carlos Lake 19 Aug-8 Sep (†Tyler Miloy, m.ob.).

Common Nighthawk – A late departure for *McLennan*, a Common Nighthawk flew over Baylor University, Waco 1 Nov (†Anand Chaudhary).

Purple Gallinule – Purple Gallinules continued at Carlos Lake to at least 23 Sep (Tyler Miloy). Recently fledged chicks were noted 19 Aug (Tyler Miloy), a first breeding event for *Grimes*. The highest count was 4 adults and 1 with 4 chicks on 8 Sep (Byron Stone).



© Herb Thorn, 26 Aug 2018

American Coot – A new high for *Brazos* is a count of 550 American Coots in flooded fields at Sims Lane 18 Oct (Simon Kiacz).

Black-bellied Plover – Rare for *Lee*, a Black-bellied Plover was seen 4 Aug-8 Sep (ph. Rich Kostecke, Angela Bailey, †Chris Bailey) at Lake Somerville S.P., increasing to 5 on 25 Oct (Rich Kostecke). Other notable inland sightings of Black-bellied Plover include 1 at the Washington side of Lake Somerville 26 Aug (Sheridan Coffey) and 5 in *Brazos* at Sims Lane 25 Oct (†ph. John Hale, †Mark McDermott).

American Golden-Plover – Fall records of American Golden-Plover are sparse in the Central Brazos Valley, so sightings this season at Lake Somerville, *Washington* 19 Aug (ph. Rich Kostecke) and in *Brazos* 9 Sep (Sandy Dillard) and 12 Nov (†Michael McCloy) are noteworthy.



© Rich Kostecke
© Rich Kostecke

Snowy Plover – Only the third record for *Washington* and the first photo-documented are 6 Snowy Plovers 8-9 Sep (ph. Byron Stone) at Overlook Park, Lake Somerville.



© Byron Stone

Upland Sandpiper – A late migrant, a flyover Upland Sandpiper was heard 10 Oct (Mark McDermott) at the Texas A&M University campus, *Brazos*.

Marbled Godwit – A first county record for *Lee*, a Marbled Godwit was photographed at Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek, 3 Sep (ph. Rich Kostecke).



© Rich Kostecke
© Rich Kostecke

Dunlin – Although first recorded in *Brazos* in 1969, there are few follow-up sightings. This season up to 6 were observed 16-22 Oct (ph. †John Hale, †Michael McCloy, Mark McDermott) at Sandy Point and Cotrone Dix in the western part of the county.



© John Hale

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – Twelve Buff-breasted Sandpipers at Lake Somerville is a first record for Lee 4 Aug-3 Sep (ph. Rick Kostecke).



© Rich Kostecke
© Rich Kostecke

Western Sandpiper – An amazing count of 481 Western Sandpipers was tallied at Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek, Lee 3 Sep (†Rich Kostecke), and becomes the highest count ever for the 24-county central Oaks & Prairies region. Owing to severe drought, water levels were exceptionally low, providing a half-dozen distinct mudflat expanses.

Long-billed Dowitcher – Estimates has high at 400 Long-billed Dowitchers were present 14-25 Oct (Mark McDermott, m.ob.) in flooded fields following a storm at Sims Lane, Brazos. This count far exceeds previous records for the Central Brazos Valley.

Solitary Sandpiper – Late migrating Solitary Sandpipers 29 Nov were found both at Lake Travis, Travis (Christine Snitkin) and Buescher S.P., Bastrop (ph. Steven McDonald).



© Steven McDonald

Willet – A 7th record for *Lee* is a Willet at Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek 26 Aug (Sheridan Coffey). Four were seen there 3 Sep (Rich Kostecke) and one was there 8 Sep (Berndt Gravenstein).

Least Tern – A Least Tern 11 Aug (ph. †John Hale, †Mark McDermott) at Millican Reserve is the 6th record for *Brazos*.

Royal Tern – Rare inland in the Central Brazos Valley, 2 Royal Terns were flying at Washington-on-the-Brazos S.H.P., *Washington* 16 Sep (†Simon Burton, Bruce Neville, Laura Sare).

Double-crested Cormorant – Rare in summer and early fall in the Central Brazos Valley and especially *Lee*, a Double-crested Cormorant was identified at Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek 4 Aug (Rich Kostecke).

Great Egret – An exceptional count of 148 Great Egrets was made in pastures near Anderson, *Grimes* 10 Nov (ph. Cinda Crosley, Jean Martin).



© Cinda Crosley

Snowy Egret – A high count for *Lee* was 150 Snowy Egrets at Lake Somerville S.P.-Newman Bottom 3 Sep (Rich Kostecke).

Reddish Egret – Reddish Egrets made a substantial push into the central Oaks & Prairies region with sightings in 6 counties at 11 locations from 1 Aug to 14 Oct. Sightings include Belton Lake-Outdoor Recreation Area, *Bell* 1-3 Aug (Charlie Plimpton, m.ob.), Hugh Brown Sanctuary, *Lee* 2-3 Aug (†Hugh Brown), Stillhouse Hollow Lake, *Bell* 12 Aug (ph. Gil Eckrich, Nic Webster), Devin Lake Park, *Travis* 14-16 Aug (ph. William Hilscher, m.ob.), Mankin's Crossing, *Williamson* 17-27 Aug (ph. Sue Wright, m.ob.), Lake Somerville, *Washington* 18 Aug (Helen Rejzek), Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek, *Lee* red phase 19 Aug (ph. Rich Kostecke), Belton Lake-Temple Lake Park, *Bell* 23 Aug-19 Sep (ph. Kathy Cantu, m.ob.) Temple Lions Park, *Bell* 7 Sep (Steve Snyder), Lake Bryan, *Brazos* 8 Sep (ph. John Hale), Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek, *Lee* white phase 8 Sep (†Bernd Gravenstein), and Hornsby Bend, *Travis* 14 Oct (m.ob.).

White-faced Ibis – A new high count for *Lee* is 108 White-faced Ibis at Lake Somerville S.P., Newman Bottom 3 Sep (Rich Kostecke). Rarely reported in *Limestone*, up to 41 White-faced Ibis were at Fort Parker S.P. 16 Sep-5 Oct (Steve Glover, †Cinda Crosley).

Roseate Spoonbill – Good records for Lake Somerville are up to 68 Roseate Spoonbills 13 Jul-5 Oct (Rich Kostecke, m.ob.) at Nails Creek, *Lee*. A late spoonbill was an immature at the *Washington* side at Welch Park 11 Nov (Susan Miles).

Swallow-tailed Kite – Single Swallow-tailed Kites were seen 16 Aug (Shirley & Dan Wilkerson) over Hwy. 6 in *Brazos*, 11 Aug (ph. Patricia Isaacson) at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Navarro*, and 24 Aug (†Fred Collins) near Brazos River and US290, *Washington*.

Cooper's Hawk – Mixed in with Turkey Vultures flying southeasterly were 15 Cooper's Hawks, a remarkable count for Lake Bastrop, *Bastrop* 20 Oct (Tammy Brown). The next day (Arman Moreno), 19 were counted migrating over Austin, *Williamson*.

Bald Eagle – Four Bald Eagles in *Fayette* 10 Nov (William Tarbox) is a high count for Lake Fayette.

White-tailed Hawk – Reports of White-tailed Hawk extending into the Central Prairie have increased this season. Only the second record for *Milam*, a White-tailed Hawk was described south of Rogers 10 Nov (†Jeff Hall). A sixth record (the first was in 1937) for *Brazos* is a first-year White-tailed Hawk at turf farms on Sims Cutoff 29 Sep (ph. †John Hale, Mark McDermott). Another was at the Horizon Turf Farms 1 Sep (ph. Brian Berry), a 7th record for *Burleson*. Yet another was in farmlands near Calvert 22 Aug (Alberto Manterola), a 7th record for *Robertson*.



© John Hale

Zone-tailed Hawk – Usually reported annually in *Bastrop*, though an exciting sighting nonetheless, an adult Zone-tailed Hawk was seen 24 Nov (ph. †Reid Hardin) at Bastrop S.P. and the same or another was 5 mi. away the next day (†Bernd Gravenstein) at Colorado River Refuge.

Ferruginous Hawk – A Ferruginous Hawk first noticed in the winter of 2010-11 and returning each subsequent winter, was seen 18 Nov+ (ph. †Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey) at Sayersville Rd., *Bastrop*.



© Martin Reed & Sheridan Coffey

Prairie Falcon – Uncommon in *Bastrop*, a Prairie Falcon was described 23 Nov (ph. †Mike Stewart, Yvette Stewart) at Sayersville Rd.



© Mike Stewart

Couch's Kingbird – One or more Couch's Kingbirds have been visiting Brenham, *Washington* each winter since 2013 and this season one arrived 12 Oct+ (Darrell Vollert), the first October record for the county.

Western Kingbird – An usually large gathering of migrating Western Kingbirds was 24 in the Cameron area of *Milam* 20 Sep (Ann Collins).

Vermilion Flycatcher – Very rare in *Lee* and the first Sep record, a Vermilion flycatcher was present 29 Sep (Rich Kostecke) at Lake Somerville S.P, Newman Bottom. The same or another was also there 24 Nov.

Common Raven – Common Raven had been considered hypothetical in the Central Brazos Valley owing to an undocumented report in 1961. Now, a well described Common Raven was reported 10 Aug (†Russell Moses) in College Station, *Brazos* well east of its normal range, 58 mi. southeast of the previously documented record in Marlin, *Falls*, and 58 mi. east of documented records east of Granger Lake, *Williamson*, and 71 mi. east of *Bastrop* records near Utley.

Red-breasted Nuthatch – The strong influx of wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches is represented by 60 reports in the central Oaks & Prairies region, beginning with 29 Sep (Rich Kostecke) at Lake Somerville S.P., Newman Bottom, *Lee*.

American Robin – Unusually large numbers of migrating American Robins passed through early, topped by a half-hour count of 1725 at Carlos Lake, *Grimes* 23 Nov (†Steve Glover) and a 45 min. count of 1633 near Oakwood, *Leon* 24 Nov (†Linda Martin-Rusk).

Lesser Goldfinch – Lesser Goldfinches rarely reach east to *Bastrop* in fall so 4 reports 1 Sep-23 Nov (Debbie Feagin, †Karen Mansfield, Anna Stalcup, †Louise Ridlon) are noteworthy.

Yellow-headed Blackbird – Only the second record for *Falls*, a single female Yellow-headed Blackbird was among 1200-1500 Great-tailed Grackles near Rosebud 11 Oct (†Lamont Brown).

Bobolink – Rare in fall in the central Oaks & Prairies and only the second record ever for *Lee*, a Bobolink was at Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek 19 Aug (†Rich Kostecke).

Rusty Blackbird – A Rusty Blackbird near Buffalo 20 Nov (†Justin Roach) is the 1st fall record and the 3rd overall record for *Leon*.

Prothonotary Warbler – Rare in *Lee* and the first photo-documented record was a Prothonotary Warbler at Lake Somerville S.P.-Nails Creek 24 Nov (ph. Rich Kostecke, ph. Brandon Best).



© Brandon Best



© Rich Kostecke

© Rich Kostecke

Hooded Warbler – Occasional as a fall migrant through the Central Brazos Valley, 2 Hooded Warblers were reported at Camp Allen, *Grimes* 8 Sep (†Darrell Vollert, Bill Wright, †Byron Stone), 1 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, *Washington* 16 Sep (Bruce Neville, Laura Sare, Simon Burton), and yet another at Texas A&M University, *Brazos* 18-19 Oct (†Simon Kiacz, Michael McCloy).

Northern Parula – A Northern Parula was a late migrant through *Brazos* 25 Oct (†Simon Kiacz) at Texas A&M University campus.

Palm Warbler – A Palm Warbler found on the Texas A&M University campus, College Station 13-19 Oct (†Michael McCloy, †Erik Atwell) is noteworthy as it is a once-in-a-decade occurrence in *Brazos*.

Yellow-rumped Warbler – The Audubon's form of Yellow-rumped Warbler is a first record for *Falls* when one was seen in the Mooreville area 29 Oct (†Christia Walker).

Summer Tanager – Nine Summer Tanagers at Camp Allen 8 Sep (Byron Stone, Darrell Vollert) is an unusually large gathering in fall migration for *Grimes*.

Blue Grosbeak – An immature Blue Grosbeak passed through College Station, *Brazos* at the late date of 23 Oct (†Simon Kiacz).

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