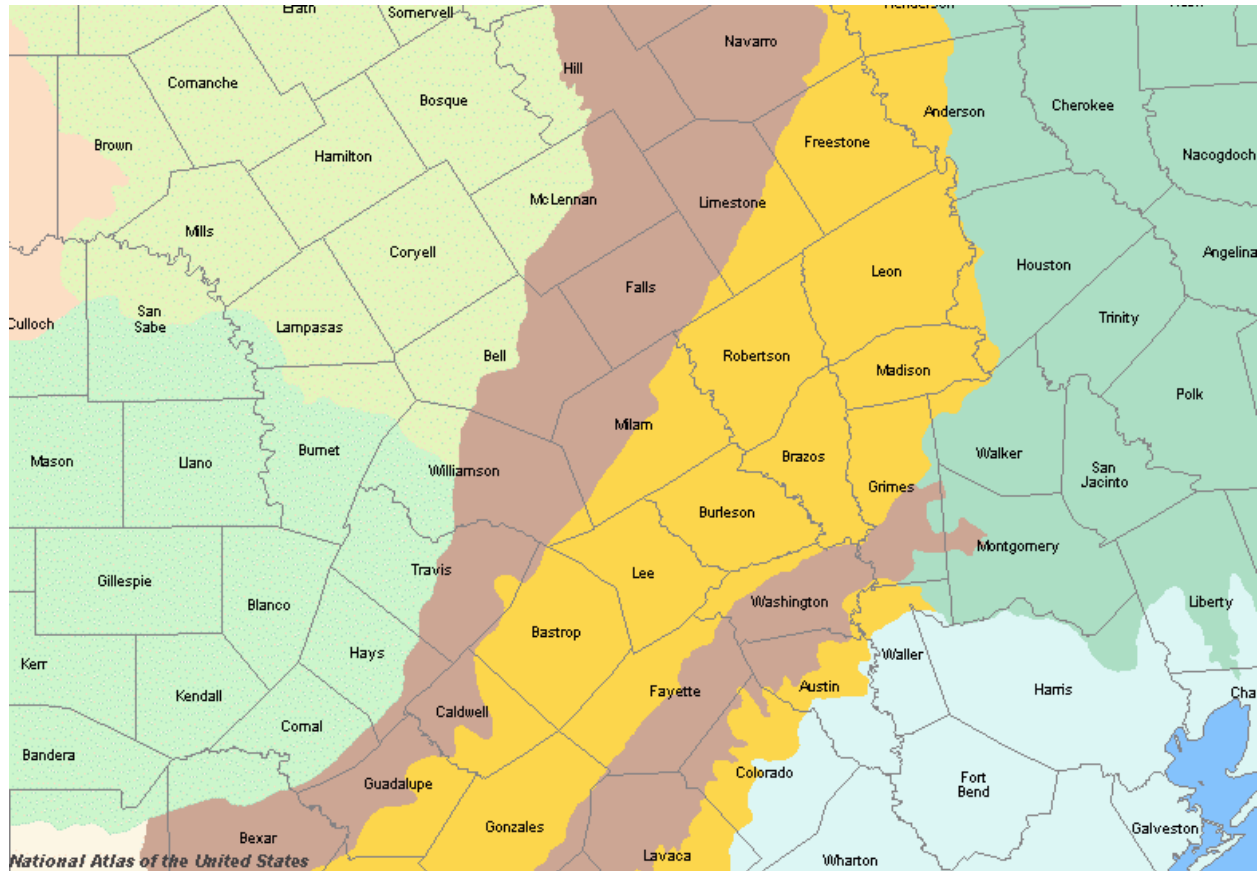


Summer 2018: Central Oaks & Prairies of Texas

By Bert Frenz

This report is from 1 June to 31 July 2018. It includes sightings from the following counties: Austin, Bastrop, Bell, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Limestone, McLennan, Madison, Milam, Navarro, Robertson, Travis, Waller, Washington, and Williamson.



MOST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS:

Ring-necked Duck – Two Ring-necked Ducks continued throughout the summer at Devine Lake Park, *Williamson* (Brush Freeman).

Chuck-will's-widow – Although Chuck-will's-widow is often heard in breeding season, it is much less seen and even rarer is finding eggs 5 May and chicks 6 Jun as did Freeman in Utley, *Bastrop*.



© Brush Freeman



© Brush Freeman

Purple Gallinule – Up to 9 Purple Gallinules continued at Carlos Lake, *Grimes* throughout the summer season (Mark McDermott, John Berner, Darrell Vollert).

Black-necked Stilt – Up to 5 Black-necked Stilts again summered near the Texas A&M Research Annex, *Brazos*, but as yet there has been no evidence of breeding (Mark McDermott, ph. John Hale).



© John Hale

Killdeer – An exceptional count of 206 Killdeer were present at the Horizon Turf Farms in the Brazos River bottoms of *Burleson* 23 Jul (Laura Sare).

Stilt Sandpiper – A new early passage date for Stilt Sandpiper for the Central Prairie and a high count for the area were 29 at Cotrone Dix Lane, *Brazos* 21 Jul (ph. John Hale).



© John Hale

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – A substantial flock of 500+ Buff-breasted Sandpipers 28 Jul (ph. John Hale) were in *Brazos* at Sims Cutoff turf farm, a location not previously known to support such large numbers.



© John Hale



© John Hale

Pectoral Sandpiper – A first June record for *Brazos* and only the second for the Central Brazos Valley, was a Pectoral Sandpiper 6 Jun (†John Hale) at Sims Lane.

Western Sandpiper – A well-described Western Sandpiper was observed 7 Jul (†Mark McDermott, m.ob.) at Country Club Lake, *Brazos*. The species is either rare or often overlooked in the Central Brazos Valley.

Long-billed Dowitcher – The earliest summer record for *Brazos* and the Central Prairie is a Long-billed Dowitcher 14 Jul (ph.† John Hale) at Cotrone Dix Lane.



© John Hale

Wilson's Phalarope – A first summer record in the Central Brazos Valley for Wilson's Phalarope was 3 at Cotrone Dix Lane, *Brazos* 14 Jul (ph.† John Hale).



© John Hale

Least Tern – A Least Tern at a pond along CR 459 3 Jul († Randy Pinkston) is first summer record for *Falls* and only the second overall record for the county.

Forster's Tern – Rare in summer, a Forster's Tern was at Nails Creek, Lake Somerville, Lee 6 Jul (ph. Lee Wallace, †Pat Wallace).

Glossy Ibis – A Glossy Ibis joined Cattle Egrets at Richland Creek W.M.A., Freestone 9 Jun (ph. Laura Wilson, Bonnie McKenzie). Although very rare in the region, this is the third summer record for the W.M.A.

Osprey – Rare in summer in the Central Brazos Valley, an Osprey was fishing at Frierson Lake #3 28 Jul (ph. † John Hale), a first summer record for *Brazos*.

Mississippi Kite – As stated by Shirley Wilkerson, "Mississippi Kites seem to have really exploded in Brazos County." Throughout the season, there were dozens of reports of 1-4 at scattered location within the county, topped by 13 kettling in College Station 8 Jul (Bruce Neville). At a traditional nesting site in College Hills subdivision, young had not yet fledged as of 28 Jul (Mary Dabney Wilson).

Eastern Phoebe – Not expected in summer and not known to breed in *Austin*, an Eastern Phoebe was chasing another 6 Jun (Darrell Vollert) at Old Nelsonville Road in the northern part of the county. In the New Ulm area, 1-2 Eastern Phoebes were heard 9 Jul (Jason Loghry).

Purple Martin – Tens of thousands of Purple Martins came to roost in North Gate area of College Station 4 Jul+ (video Kelley Sampeck).

Gray Catbird – Without a summer record of Gray Catbird in *Brazos* in over 50 years, one found 2 Jun (Mark McDermott) at Lick Creek Park is significant.

Yellow-headed Blackbird – Rare in July, a single Yellow-headed Blackbird joined Red-winged Blackbirds at Richland Creek W.M.A., *Freestone* 18 Jul († Gerard van Heijzen).

Common Yellowthroat – Rare in summer in the Central Brazos Valley, 2 Common Yellowthroats were heard singing in the Navasota River bottoms at Peach Creek, Brazos 17 Jun (recording Darrell Vollert).

CONTRIBUTORS:

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