

By Bert Frenz

A map of Texas showing its counties, each colored according to its population density. The colors range from light green (low density) to dark brown (high density). The map includes labels for numerous counties, such as Comanche, Brown, Mills, San Saba, Lampasas, Coryell, Hamilton, Bosque, Hill, Navarro, Freestone, Anderson, Cherokee, Nacogdoches, Angelina, Houston, Trinity, Polk, Madison, Leon, Falls, Limestone, McLean, Bell, Robertson, Brazos, Grimes, Walker, San Jacinto, Montgomery, Liberty, Lee, Burleson, Williamson, Burnet, Llano, Mason, Gillespie, Blanco, Travis, Hays, Kendall, Comal, Bexar, Guadalupe, Caldwell, Bastrop, Lee, Washington, Fayette, Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Harris, Wharton, Lavaca, Gonzales, and Galveston. The Gulf of Mexico is visible on the right side of the map.

Mottled Duck – Only reported in Bell Co once every three years, one at Union Grove WMA 10-13 Jul (Randy Pinkston, ph. Daniel Kelch) is noteworthy.

Lesser Scaup – Bell Co's second summer record for Lesser Scaup was 27 Jun—17 Jul (Randy Pinkston), this time at Union Grove WMA.

Bufflehead – One to two "healthy-appearing adult male" Buffleheads continued from spring at Union Grove WMA to at least 28 Jun (Randy Pinkston), a first summer record for Bell Co and the entire central oaks and prairies region.



© Randy James, 23 Jun 2022, Union Grove WMA, Stillhouse Hollow Lake, Bell County

Pied-billed Grebe – A high count of 12 Pied-billed Grebes 24 Jul (Justin Bosler) at Flag Pond, Lake Somerville is unprecedented in Lee for that timeframe.

Mexican Violetear – A Mexican Violetear was at Austin 2-4 Jun (ph. Barry Newberger), the first report for Travis Co since 2014.



© Barry Newberger, 2 Jun 2022, Austin, Travis County

Sora – The first summer record for Sora in Lee Co was 24 Jul (Mark McDermott, Jeffrey Ward) at Nails Creek SP on Lake Somerville.

Limpkin – Limpkins, which first arrived in Texas in May 2021, have spread to other counties this summer, including Navarro and Freestone Cos at Richland Creek WMA 17 Jun—2 Jul (April Feldt, Abbie Feldt) and Harrison Co at Caddo Lake 22 Jun+ (Michael Landrum). Meanwhile, more than 80 observers logged sightings into eBird for Travis Co where a single Limpkin was viewed all summer at Barton Creek Wilderness Park near the Hill of Life Dam on the Colorado River.



© Tim Fennell, 22 Jun 2022, Barton Creek Wilderness Park, Travis County

American Avocet – Three American Avocets at a ranch near Carmine 21 Jul (Betty Scardino) were the first summer record for Washington Co.

American Golden-Plover – An early fall migrant and a first summer record for Williamson Co, an American Golden-Plover was at Sore Finger WMA on Granger Lake 15 Jul (Tim Fennell).



© Tim Fennell, 15 Jul 2022, Sore Finger WMA, Granger Lake, Williamson County

Snowy Plover – A first county record for Lee Co was a single Snowy Plover photographed at mudflats at Flag Pond on Lake Somerville 28 Jul—1 Aug (ph. Caleb Helsel). Also at Lake Somerville but at Welch Park, Burleson Co was a Snowy Plover 29 Jul (ph. Ben Sandstrom).



© Ben Sandstrom, 29 Jul 2022, Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County

Piping Plover – Only the third record for Burleson Co since the first in 1976, a Piping Plover was photographed beside a Snowy Plover at Welch Park on Lake Somerville 29 Jul (ph. Ben Sandstrom).



© Ben Sandstrom, 29 Jul 2022, Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County

Long-billed Curlew – A Long-billed Curlew at Flag Pond on Lake Somerville 31 Jul (ph. John Pike, ph. Todd Fitzgerald) was only the second record for Lee Co and the first photo-documented.



© Todd Fitzgerald, 31 Jul 2022, Flag Pond, Lake Somerville, Lee County

Marbled Godwit – Only the second record for Lee Co and the first summer record, a Marbled Godwit was at Flag Pond mudflats on Lake Somerville 30-31 Jul (Justin Bosler, Brian Berry). Another Marbled Godwit was at Bob Wentz Windy Point Park on Lake Travis 29 Jul (ph. Jeff Osborne, ph. Janet Davis, ph. Vincent O'Brien) where it is rare although not unprecedented for Travis Co.



© Vincent O'Brien, 29 Jul 2022, Bob Wentz Windy Point Park, Lake Travis, Travis County

Stilt Sandpiper – Tied for the record high count in the central oaks and prairies, 200 Stilt Sandpipers were at Lake Somerville mudflats near Flag Pond, Burleson/Lee Cos 30-31 Jul (Justin Bosler, Brian Berry).

American Woodcock – A late post-breeding American Woodcock was photographed foraging in the evening of 28 Jul (ph. Bryan Cotter) at Soil Conservation Site 13a Reservoir in Williamson Co. It is the first summer record for the county.



© Bryan Cotter, 28 Jul 2022, Soil Conservation Site 13a Reservoir, Williamson County

Willet – A count of 11 Willets was a record high for summer for the central oaks and prairies region 8 Jul (Emily Stoudt) at Lake Somerville's Overlook Park 8 Jul 2022.

Laughing Gull – Rarely reported in summer at Lake Somerville, two juvenile Laughing Gulls were photographed at Welch Park, Burleson Co 29 Jul (ph. Ben Sandstrom).



© Ben Sandstrom, 29 Jul 2022, Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County

Least Tern – A count of five Least Terns 31 Jul (Jesse Hendricks) at Bob Wentz Windy Point Park on Lake Travis is high for Travis Co. One photographed at Lake Bryan 4 Jun (ph. Brent Cox, Alexander Cox) is rare for Brazos Co., as is another at Camp Creek Road wetland in Bell 16 Jul (Randy Pinkston).



© Brent Cox, 4 Jun 2022, Lake Bryan, Brazos County

Common Loon – Unprecedented for Travis Co, a juvenile Common Loon lingered through much of the summer at Lake Travis, usually viewed from Red Bud Isle Park 27 Jun—24 Jul 2022 (ph. Willem Meintjes, Ryan Pierce). It had a damaged lower mandible.



© Cheryl McGrath, 9 Jul 2022, Brackenridge Field Labs, Travis County

Brown Booby – The Williamson Co Brown Booby, first reported 17 Mar continued at Lake Georgetown throughout the summer.



© Tim Fennell, 1 Jun 2022, Lake Georgetown, Williamson County

Reddish Egret – A fifth record for Brazos Co and the first in summer months was a juvenile dark morph Reddish Egret at Lake Bryan 30 Jul+ (ph. Brent Cox). A juvenile white morph was at Friendship Park on Granger Lake, Williamson Co 29 Jul+ (Sean Mecredy). Another juvenile dark morph was at Flag Pond, Lee Co 24 Jul+ (John Hale, Mark McDermott, Jeffrey Ward, Todd McGrath, Greg Cook) and it was nearby on the Burleson Co side of Lake Somerville 30-31 Jul (Justin Bosler, Brian Berry, Kristopher Dapprich, ph. Christian Walker).



© Brent Cox, 31 Jul 2022, Lake Bryan, Brazos County

Swallow-tailed Kite – An odd record 6 Jul (Gil Eckrich) for a Swallow-tailed Kite far inland at Stillhouse Park on Stillhouse Hollow Lake, Bell Co was at a date generally expected for fledglings at the nest and was too early for modern-day post-breeding dispersal. Within the central oaks and prairies region there are only four other modern-day July records. An interesting historical record from 1880 for Navarro Co was described by James Douglas Ogilby, "About the middle of July they begin to visit the prairie in flocks consisting both of old and young birds, and numbering sometimes as many as two hundred individuals."

Snail Kite – An immature Snail Kite at Lake Somerville SP, Lee Co 23 Jul (ph. Lauren Kubica) was first posted on Twitter and the next day the site was flooded with at least 19 observers who posted the rare sightings on eBird, including many photos. Ultimately, eBird received 239 submissions before the kite left the area 3 Aug. The Snail Kite was a first for the central oaks and prairies region.



© Todd McGrath, 24 Jul 2022, Flag Pond, Lake Somerville, Lee County

Mississippi Kite – A new high count for Lee Co in summer was 18 at Flag Pond 31 Jul (Shelia Hargis, Louise Smyth), surpassing the previous high of 10.



© Jeff Osborne, 31 Jul 2022, Flag Pond, Lake Somerville, Lee County

White-tailed Hawk – Additional evidence of the northern push of White-tailed Hawk, Grimes Co got its fourth record since the first in 2015, this one 6 Jun (Lawrence Langston) near Plantersville.

Swainson's Hawk – A summertime high count of 7 Swainson's Hawks for Austin Co was observed 24 Jul (Darrell Vollert) as they flew over and perched on fence posts in the Centerville Road area. Although they are not known to nest in the county, they do nest in the adjacent Washington Co.

Zone-tailed Hawk – A first record for Lee Co, a Zone-tailed Hawk was described at Newman Bottom, Lake Somerville SP 31 Jul (Dodge Engleman, Lorna Engleman).

Peregrine Falcon – Contributing to only two previous summer records in Bastrop Co for Peregrine Falcon, one was reported 19 Jun (Shelia Hargis) along Highway 71 and another 23 Jul (Jason Leifester) along Sayers Road.

Prairie Falcon – Rare in the central oaks and prairies, though a single bird has been regular in the Granger Lake area, Prairie Falcon has not previously been reported in summer months. Noteworthy then are three sightings 16-18 Jul (ph. Rich Kostecke, Bryan Cotter) at Sore Finger Unit and Willis Creek Wildlife Area.



© Rich Kostecke, 16 Jul 2022, Willis Creek Wildlife Area, Granger Lake, Williamson County

Orchard Oriole – An unusually large count of 32-34 multi-generational Orchard Orioles gathered in family flocks at Flag Pond, Lee Co 31 Jul (ph. Jeff Osborne, Janet Davis, Phyllis Frank, Tony Frank).



© Jeff Osborne, 31 Jul 2022, Flag Pond, Lake Somerville, Lee County

Swainson's Warbler – Near daily reports of a Swainson's Warbler singing on territory continued until 22 Jul (audio Greg Page) at a Leon Co home near Centerville. Others at Fort Parker SP, Limestone Co continued to 7 Jul (audio Gary Yoder) at which date two were heard singing. Neither county had previously been reported for breeding Swainson's Warblers.

Lazuli x Indigo Bunting – A hybrid Lazuli x Indigo Bunting first reported 3 May continued at Lake Waco Wetlands, McLennan Co until 26 Jun (Cal Deal).



© Lou Fleischhauer, 18 Jun 2022, Lake Waco Wetlands, McLennan County

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