

Seven Falls Ranch Bird Report - 2012

Birding is a year-round recreational activity at Seven Falls Ranch. Birding for 2012 was odd all year due to weather – rain in spring and dry for rest of year. This pattern caused an abundant of wild flower but no grass growth. The last hurricane to drench the Texas Hill County was 2005. Most of the birds observed have been around water and bird feeders.

First Nesting Bluebirds – March 16, 2012.

The first Eastern Bluebird nest was observed on March 16, 2012 and six baby bluebirds were observed on March 28.

Other nesting birds observed were Carolina chickadees, eastern phoebe, barn swallows, and great crested flycatchers. Something got into the eastern phoebe nest and destroys five eggs. The Carolina wren was in and out of her nest with chicks by July 10, in about 12 days.

First Hummingbirds – January 25, 2012

Jan 25 – Broad-tailed Hummingbird at winter feeder (sugar water)

First Black-chinned Hummingbird was March 3, 2012. Highest count was 50 at six feeders between the weeks of June 25 and July 15. Last Black-chinned was Aug. 12.

First Ruby-throated Hummingbird was April 16, 2012. Fall Ruby-throated hummingbirds started Aug 6 with highest count of 12. The count on Oct 31 was 1, the last remaining ruby-throated hummingbird.

First Rufous hummingbird was August 2, 2012. Rufous hummingbirds were observed very early and left by September 16.

Seven Falls Ranch participates in the Texas Parks and Wildlife's "Texas Hummingbird Roundup Backyard Survey" for 2012. This is a weekly hummingbird observation survey and report to Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Rio Grande Turkey – 2012 Survey

Seven Falls Ranch conducted a year long Turkey survey during 2012. The survey observed the number of males, females and chicks. Turkeys can be found on Seven Falls Ranch almost daily. Seven Falls Ranch contains basic habitat requirements of food, cover and water to sustain a health population of Rio Grande Turkeys. Turkeys can be found in a pattern that covers Seven Falls Ranch. Records were kept for each day observed. Summary by month, observed days, highest number of males, females and chicks.

Summary by Month:

Jan	Observed 4 days	6 males
Feb	Observed 4 days	8 males
Mar	Observed 19 days	10 males, 17 females
Apr	Observed 10 days	4 males, 6 females
May	Observed 9 days	6 males, 1 female
June	Observed 6 days	6 males, 2 females, 13 chicks (first chicks observed)
July	Observed 2 days	2 females, 10 chicks (chicks look like their mothers only half the size)
Aug	Observed 5 days	6 males, 3 females, 11 chicks
Sept	Observed 2 days	6 males, 9 females
Oct	Observed 3 days	4 males, 13 females
Nov	Observed 5 days	6 males, 8 females (large group of 38 toms and hens)
Dec	Observed 3 days	8 males (large group of 78 toms and hens)

A group of four males and seventeen females were observed mating on March 15 from 9AM to 4PM. quite a party.

Other Observed Birds:

Lots of mockingbirds, cardinals, scrub jays, titmice, chickadees, crows, lesser goldfinches, house finches, Morning, whitewing, and Eurasian-collared doves, and black and turkey vultures. Nesting Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Barn swallow, Eastern Bluebirds, and Carolina wrens.

There were however several **new birds** that had not been observed before at Seven Falls Ranch. These are listed:

Jan 25 – Broad-tailed Hummingbird at winter feeder (sugar water)

May 16 - Scotts Oriole at feeder

June 3 – Vermilion Flycatcher at front gate of Seven Falls Drive

Oct 12 - Burrowing Owl (seen during white-tail deer night survey)

Nov 26 – Red-breasted Nuthatches at black oil sunflower feeder flying with titmices and chickadees.

Jan 14 – Loggerhead shrike

Jan 21 – Sand hill Cranes

Jan 26 – Spotted Towhee

Jan 26 – Slate colored Junco

Jan 26 – American Goldfinches

Jan 26 – Rufous crown sparrow

Jan 29 – Eastern Meadow Lark

Jan 29 – Red-tailed Hawk

Jan 29 – Cooper's Hawk

Jan 29 – Bluebirds

Feb 5 - Robins

Feb 5 - Caroline wren

Feb 10 – Lark sparrows

Feb 10 - Gadwall ducks

Feb 10 – American Kestrel

Feb 10 – Pintail ducks

Feb 10 – first house sparrow observed at Seven Falls Ranch

Mar 31 – Scissor-tail flycatcher

Apr 4 – Swainson 's hawk

Apr 18 – Barn swallows

Apr 21 – Summer Tanager

Apr 25 - Blue Grosbeak

May 1 – Painted Bunting

May 9 – Black-bellied Whistling Duck

Oct 15 - Sandhill Cranes (35 first in fall then groups of 14, 58, and 56)

Dec 20 - Spotted Towhee

Dec 30 - The Winter Hawks – Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Broad-winged Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Black Vulture, Northern Caracara, water birds and ducks.

On February 19, 2012, Seven Falls Ranch participated in the **Great Backyard Bird Count** (www.birdsource.org/gbbc). During the day, 41 different birds were observed. This list of birds is a good example of what to expect during the winter months. (See attached report)

Other interesting sightings:

Moths:

Aug 2 – Black Witch Moth (reported to survey group)

Animals:

Bobcat - (*Lynx rufus*) The Bobcat is a medium-sized, reddish brown or grayish cat. Its ears usually have small tufts at the tips, and its fur is longer on the sides of its head than on the rest of its body, forming a ruff. They have a short tail, long legs, and large feet. The reclusive Bobcat is active largely at night, although they frequently leave cover and begin hunting long before sundown. Bobcats live in a variety of habitats, but they favor rocky canyons or outcrops when they are available. Otherwise, they choose thickets for protection and den sites. These cats are highly adaptable, and in most places have been able to thrive in spite of increasing habitat loss due to human settlement.

American hog-nosed skunk - (*Conepatus leuconotus*) Large skunk. In Texas, it is commonly known as the **rooter skunk** for its habit of rooting and overturning rocks and debris in search of food. The distinguishing feature of the American hog-nosed skunk is it has a single, broad white stripe from the top of the head to the base of the tail, with the tail itself being completely white. The snout of *C. leuconotus* is relatively long, with a naked nose pad, and resembles the nose of a small hog.

Documented rainfall at Seven Falls Ranch:

Jan 10, 2012 – 1 inch

Jan 25 – 1.6 inches

Feb 5 – trace

Feb 13 - .27 inches

Feb 18 – 2 inches

Mar 10 – 1 inch

Mar 20 – 2.5 inches

May 6 – ¼ inches

May 8 – 1 inch

May 10 – 1.75 inches

May 14 – 1.25 inches

May 15 – 1.25 inches

June 10 – 3/8 inches

June 17 – 3/8 inches

July 10 - .75 inches

Sept 13 – 3 5/8 inches

Sept 29 – 1 5/8 inches

October 14 – .25 inches

Nov 4 – .5 inches

Dec 31 – .25 inches



Congratulations!

We have saved your bird checklist. Thank you for participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count!

Please print this page for your records.

Record ID: S9913870

(You will need to refer to this number if you wish to correspond about your data.)

Locality: Stonewall, Gillespie County, TX

Observation Date: FEB 19, 2012

Email: khuffman@austin.rr.com

Start Time: 8:00 AM

Total Birding Time: 10 hours

Location Type: Farm

Party Size: 1

Habitat(s):

deciduous woods
coniferous woods
scrub
grassland
agricultural
rural

Skill: good

Weather: excellent

Number of species: 41

All Reported: yes

Species	Count
Gadwall	5
American Wigeon	45
Northern Pintail	20
Wild Turkey	12
Double-crested Cormorant	2
Great Blue Heron	1
Turkey Vulture	1
Osprey	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Crested Caracara	2
American Kestrel	1
Sandhill Crane	41
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1
White-winged Dove	4
Mourning Dove	12
Greater Roadrunner	1
Belted Kingfisher	1
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	1
Eastern Phoebe	1
Western Scrub-Jay	2
American Crow	2
Carolina Chickadee	6
Black-crested Titmouse	8
Carolina Wren	2
Bewick's Wren	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Eastern Bluebird	8
American Robin	25
Northern Mockingbird	2
Spotted Towhee	1

Rufous-crowned Sparrow	2
Chipping Sparrow	5
Lark Sparrow	6
White-crowned Sparrow	6
Dark-eyed Junco	15
Northern Cardinal	6
Eastern Meadowlark	15
Brown-headed Cowbird	200
House Finch	3
Lesser Goldfinch	6
American Goldfinch	30

Comments:

2 inches of rain over Feb 17 and 18, Feb 19 was bright, sunny and temperature was between 45 and 61 degrees. great day.

- This data will be included in online reports within about 30 minutes.
- If your bird checklist included unusual species or high numbers of individuals, you may receive an email from a regional editor requesting more details.

Thank you for taking part in the Great Backyard Bird Count! Because you care about birds and their survival, please consider joining the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, or Bird Studies Canada. Not only will you receive the benefits of membership, but you'll continue to support bird research and conservation goals we all share. Find out more:

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