

## **Seven Falls Ranch Bird Report - 2011**

Birding is a year-round recreational activity at Seven Falls Ranch. Birding for 2011 has been good all year. Most of the birds observed have been around water and bird feeders. Natural conditions though October were high heat, fires, no rain and little food. Since October, Seven Falls Ranch has had 8 inches of rain. This provided a short false spring that started some wildflowers to grow, especially the bluebonnets. Very little grass growth is evident. Cold weather set in early November then higher temperatures then cold again. These temperature changes and the high heat this summer with drought condition plus the large fires statewide and especially Bastrop have had an effect on migratory bird patterns. Notable is the number of different orioles seen at Seven Falls Ranch. Another bird at Seven Falls Ranch is the Rufous hummingbird. This late fall migratory bird generally appears in October and stays for 2 to 3 weeks. This year the salvia rebloomed and the Rufous hummingbirds did not leave until after December 18. One hummingbird feeder was left up and the Rufous visited it often but in general ignored it in favor of the salvia, shrimp plants, and Mexican orchid trees.

### **First Nesting Bluebirds – March 12, 2011.**

There were several bluebird nestings observed through May 1. Heat in bird boxes became hard on chicks by May 1, so that bird box doors were left open to stop nesting.

Other nesting birds observed were Carolina chickadees, eastern phoebe, barn swallows, great crested flycatchers and road runners (June 1). Barn swallows tried to nest unsuccessfully twice but lost chicks both times to the heat.

### **First Hummingbirds:**

First Black-chinned Hummingbird was March 13, 2011. Highest count was 49 at six feeders. Last Black-chinned was Aug. 7.

First Ruby-throated Hummingbird was April 1, 2011. Fall Ruby-throated hummingbirds started Aug 8 with highest count of 15. The count on Oct 8 was 4 and two ruby-throated hummingbirds remained until Nov 16.

First Rufous hummingbird was October 10, 2011. He left December 18. A normal stay is 3 weeks. This time it was 10 weeks.

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

### **Rio Grande Turkeys:**

Turkeys have been seen all year (almost daily). Observed period was March 13 through December. Turkeys were generally in groups of 6 to 20 birds. Observation of turkeys will begin early in 2012. The first 2012 observation was Jan 6 -- twelve turkeys with beards; a second

observation was Jan 9 -- four turkeys with beards and Jan 12 -- six turkeys with beards. All look healthy and large.

### **Other Observed Birds:**

Lots of mockingbirds, cardinals, scrub jays, titmice, chickadees, crows, lesser goldfinches, house finches, Morning, whitewing, and Eurasian-collared doves, and turkey vultures.

Mar 16 – Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Mar 23 – Scott's Oriole also June 20

May 4 – Painted Bunting – all summer

May 4 – Blue Grosbeak

May 16 – Yellow billed cuckoo

May 20 – Great Crested Flycatcher

May 20 - Eastern Phoebe

May 25 – Summer Tanager also Aug 18

May 26 – Poor Wills every night

Jun 1 - Nesting road runner

Jun 20 – Canyon Towhee

Aug 16 – Orchard Oriole -- also a pair on Aug 25 and again on Sept 4.

Aug 19 – Great Horned Owl

Set 4 – pair of Wilson warblers

Sep 6 – Baltimore Orioles stayed around through Sept 26 (2 males and 1 female).

Sep 6 – Yellow-breasted Chat also Sept 22 and Sept 26

Oct. 9 – Northern Flicker (pair male and female)

Oct 10 – Indigo Bunting (adult non-breeding)

Oct 10 – Nashville Warbler (group of 6)

Oct 10 – Scissor-tail flycatcher

Oct 10 - Rufus Hummingbird (first in fall)

Oct 20 - Spotted Towhee (Continuous sightings all winter)

Oct 24 - Sandhill Cranes (first in fall then groups of 6, 15, 50 all winter)

Nov 23 - Slate-colored Junco

Nov 26 - Eastern Screech Owl (in the owl nesting box and has remained all winter)

Dec 29 – Raven

Dec 29 – American Gold Finches

Dec 29 – Ladder-back woodpecker

Dec 30 - Greater Yellow legs

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

**Other interesting sightings:**

**Moths:**

July 15 – Black Witch Moth

Aug 15 – Lunate Zale Moth

Aug 27 – *Eacles imperialis* Moth

**Snakes:**

Coach whip

Coral snake (May 13)

Rough Green snake

Hog-nose snake

**Axis Deer:**

Herd of 17 with 4 large bucks on Lot 37. Sightings of Axis deer in groups also on other Seven Falls Ranch Lots.

**White-tail Deer** standing on front porch eating anything.

Very few wildflowers and butterflies.

**Conditions have been very dry;**

**Documented rainfall at Seven Falls Ranch:**

Jan 9, 2011 – 1 inch

Jan 14 – ¼ inches

April 11 – ¼ inches

May 3 – ¼ inch

May 12 – 5/8 inch

May 25 – trace

June 21 – ½ inches

October 9 – 2 inches

Nov 15 - 1 inch

Nov 22 - 5/8 inch

Nov 26 - 1 3/8 inch

Dec 5 - 2 inches

Dec 10 - 1 inch

Jan 10, 2012 – 1 inch

For a total of 2 or 3 inches through September 2011 and 8 inches between October and December.

## Seven Falls Ranch Bird Count taken December 29 – 31, 2011

- **Bird count includes**
  - black vulture, 12
  - red-tailed hawk, 1
  - broad-winged hawk, 1
  - American kestrel, 2
  - caracara, 2
  - cardinal, 6
  - black-crested tufted titmice, 8
  - Carolina chickadee, 5
  - house finch, 12
  - mockingbird, 4
  - Berwick's wren, 1
  - Lesser goldfinch, 10
  - eastern bluebird, 4
  - field sparrow, 6
  - eastern phoebe, 3
  - meadowlark, 6
  - ruby crowned kinglet, 1
  - Rufus-crowned sparrow, 3
  - Rufus-sided towhee, 2
  - Eurasian collared Doves, 2
  - white crowned sparrow, 8
  - chipping sparrow, 8
  - mourning dove, 8
  - white winged dove, 6
  - junco, 12
  - raven, 1
  - Carolina wren, 2
  - American gold finch, 9
  - Greater yellow leg, 2
  - Ladder-back woodpecker, 1
  - Eastern screech owl, 1
- **Birds in Stonewall area**
  - **Pedernales river**
    - great blue heron, 1
    - common egret, 6
    - belted kingfisher, 1
  - **Weinheimer ponds**
    - killdeer, 2
    - brown headed cowbirds, 2 flocks of over 200 birds
    - meadowlarks, 20
    - pied-billed grebe, 1
    - gadwall, 15
    - northern pintail, 3
    - northern shoveler, 4
    - ring-neck duck, 20
    - redhead, 17
    - cooper's hawk