

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
DECEMBER, 2003 - FEBRUARY, 2004

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period December, 2003 - February, 2004. I've compiled observations for species which are listed as **Sporadic, Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?win" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the winter season.

On the heels of a very wet early fall season, the winter season came in very dry. Late November, all of December and the first half of January saw no rain until a front pushed through with rain and colder temperatures from January 16 -18. More late January rains and some good precipitation in February helped pull rainfall totals up to near the previous winter's levels. Some of the coldest weather for the period didn't occur until the end of February when a fast-moving cold and wet front passed through, bringing hard winds, cold temperatures, thunder and lightning, and a light dusting of snow in the highest elevations. A comparison of current precipitation totals through February with the same period last year (+ or -) illustrates the recovery from the early winter dry spell: Panther Junction; 1.24" (-0.21"), Chisos Basin; 1.56" (-0.26"), Rio Grande Village; 1.30" (-0.20"), Castolon; 0.75" (-0.32"), and Persimmon Gap; 0.44" (-1.57").

The annual Christmas Counts (December 28-29) noted good food crop conditions, and species and individual numbers were about average with previous years. The Chisos Circle was hindered by strong winds, but the RGV count had excellent weather conditions. Species of interest included rufous hummingbirds on both counts, Harlan's hawk, Sprague's pipit, yellow and Wilson's warbler, and two slate-colored juncos.

Highlights for the season included several female hooded mergansers in Lajitas and at Hot Springs, a surprising adult gray hawk that overwintered at Cottonwood Campground, and a male **Costa's hummingbird** that stayed in Panther Junction for the month of February. The last documented Costa's in the park was a recently accepted record in the Green Gulch from 5/19/00. Brown creeper observations were again unusually high this winter, and sage thrashers and sage sparrows made good showings at lower elevations.

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DECEMBER, 2003 - FEBRUARY, 2004

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Lesser scaup	7	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	rare
Hooded merganser	1f	01/03	Lajitas	Kym Beckwith, Mark Flippo	rare
	2f	01/17	Lajitas	Laird Considine, Mark Flippo	rare
	1f	01/27	Hot Springs	Daniel Paez	rare
	1f	02/24	Hot Springs	Lucas Foerster	rare
American bittern	1	02/16-19	RGV-Nature Trail	Cecelia Neitz, Doug Thompson	early
Gray hawk	1	12/11	Cottonwood Camp.	Florence McGuire	? win
	1	01/25	Cottonwood Camp.	Daniel Paez	? win
	1	01/31	Cottonwood Camp.	Kym Beckwith, Mark Flippo	? win
	1	02/01	Cottonwood Camp.	James Lybarger	? win
	1	02/17	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	? win
Red-tailed hawk (Harlan's)	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Mark Flippo	? win
Prairie falcon	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	K.Stinnet,M.Adams	rare
Merlin	1m	02/16	Rio Grande Vill.	Susan Ferguson	rare
Virginia rail	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
Greater yellowlegs	1	01/22	Terlingua Creek	Brad Storey	early
	1	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith Mark Flippo	early
Long-eared owl	2	12/02	Trap Spring	Joe Sirotnak	rare
Elf owl	1	02/28	Boulder Mdw.	Greg Levandoski Lucas Foerster	early
Anna's Hummingbird	3-4	12/01-2/20	Panther Junction	M.Flippo, R.Dean	rare
	3	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Mark Flippo	rare
<b>Costa's Hummingbird</b>	<b>1m*</b>	<b>02/02-23</b>	<b>Panther Junction</b>	<b>Mark Flippo, Rob &amp; Angie Dean</b>	<b>? win</b>

\*Texas review species: report to TBRC: Lockwood. Accepted 5/04

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Rufous Hummingbird	1f	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Mark Flippo	rare
	1f	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	M.Flippo,K.Stinnet	rare
Green kingfisher	1f	01/25	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	rare
	2	02/06	Lower Canyons	Greg Levandoski	rare
Ash-throated Flycatcher	4	12/29	CBC-RGV	Several observers	spo.
	1	01/02	Lajitas	Kym Beckwith, Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/17	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Flippo	spo.
White-eyed vireo	1	02/20	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Flippo	acc.
Gray vireo	1	12/07	Grapevine Hills	M.Powell, T.Hanks G.Levandoski	rare
	1	12/29	Burro Mesa Cyn.	P. Petermann	rare
	2	02/26	Rte 12 mp 4	Kelly Bryan	rare
Blue-headed vireo	2	12/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan & Will Risser	rare
	1	01/17	Lajitas	Laird Considine, Mark Flippo	rare
Western Scrub-jay	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	K.Stinnet	spo.
Chihuahuan raven	2	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	M.Adams,L.Long	rare
	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
	2	02/26	Fossil Bone	Kelly Bryan	rare
Tree swallow	1	02/11	Hot Springs	Kim Turley	early
Cave swallow	2	01/31	Terlingua Creek	Mark Flippo	acc.
Brown creeper	2	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	M.Flippo,K.Stinnet	spo.
	1	01/14	RGV-Store	David Defik, Ralph Andrews	spo.
	3	01/26	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/17	RGV-RV camp	Mark Flippo	spo.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Carolina wren	1	12/04	Santa Elena Cyn	Missy Powell	rare
	1	01/10	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Lockwood	rare
	1	01/11	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	01/14	RGV-Nature Trail	David Defik, Ralph Andrews	rare
	1	02/02	Santa Elena Cyn	James Lybarger	rare
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	01/10	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Lockwood	spo.
Mountain bluebird	~35	12/06	Bruja Canyon	G.Levandoski, T. Hanks	spo.
Sage thrasher	1	12/03	Mule Ears Tr.	M.Parsons	spo.
	2	12/12	Rte 12	Jan & Will Risser	spo.
	3	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	several observers	spo.
	2	01/15	North Rosillos	Greg Levandoski, Tim Hanks	spo.
Sprague's pipit	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	acc.
Nashville warbler	1	01/23	Persimmon Gap	Bill Carlson	? win
Black-throated Gray warbler	1	02/09	Cottonwood Camp.	P.B. Rieaz	early
Yellow warbler	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	? win
Wilson's warbler	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	? win
	1	01/10	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Lockwood	early?
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	????	spo.
Field Sparrow	2	12/11	Rte 11 mp2-3	Kelly Bryan	spo.
	1	12/16	Pine cyn. Tr.	Jan & Will Risser	spo.
Sage sparrow	1	12/05	N. Rosillos	M.Powell, G.Levandoski	spo.
	10	01/10	Maverick Road	Mark Lockwood	spo
	3	01/21	N. Rosillos	Greg Levandoski Tim Hanks	spo.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Grasshopper Sparrow	2	12/11	Burro Mesa PO	Kelly Bryan	spo.
	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	Darren Wallace	spo.
Lark bunting	5	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	????	spo.
Fox sparrow	1	12/14	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/02	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	spo.
Dark-eyed junco (Slate-colored)	1	12/28	CBC-Chisos Circle	???	rare
	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
	1	01/10	Chisos Basin	Mark Lockwood	rare
Chestnut-collared Longspur	2	02/26	N. Rosillos	Kelly Bryan	early
Red-winged Blackbird	3	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	???	rare
	3f	01/15	RGV-Nature Trail	J. Biddick	rare
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	12/29	CBC-RGV Circle	Darren Wallace	rare
Orchard oriole	1f	02/20	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	early
Hooded oriole	1f	02/22	RGV-Campground	Greg Levandoski	early
Cassin's finch	6	12/29	CBC-Chisos Circle	????	spo.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
MARCH - MAY 2004

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period March 1 - May 31. I've compiled only those observations for species which are listed as **Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?spr" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the spring season.

This spring season in the Big Bend was wet, green and, until mid-May, very mild. The Chisos Basin alone received almost seven inches of rain during the three month period. Year to date precipitation, as compared to ytd totals through May 2003 (+ or -) is as follows: Panther Junction; 5.45 " (+2.85"), Chisos Basin; 8.27" (+4.40"), Rio Grande Village; 2.62" (+0.61"), Castolon; 3.87" (+2.35"), and Persimmon Gap; 5.12" (+2.34").

Three review species were reported this season, all from the high Chisos. The now-expected **dusky-capped flycatcher** has once again set up shop in the Boot Canyon drainage, although only single birds have been reported so far. Hopefully the summer report will include nesting records for this little *Myiarchus*. Unusual for spring were two **red-faced warbler** reports, one very early in March down on the Window trail, and a second from April in the Boot Spring area. The last accepted spring record for red-faced warbler was in 2000. There are no breeding records for this species in the park, although Gibbon & Hill reported a juvenile bird in August of 2002, suggesting possible breeding. Finally, a **flame-colored tanager** was reported in mid-May along the Lost Mine Trail. The three previous accepted records (last in 2002) were all April observations. Also reported but without supporting detail was a white-eared hummingbird at the Pinnacles campsite on May 19 (no previous spring records) and a Baird's sparrow at Rio Grande Village on April 8.

Other highlights for the spring include a pair of gray hawks that are nesting for the fourth year in a row at the south end of the Cottonwood campground, the common black-hawk pair at Rio Grande Village for the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row, utilizing the same grove and nest, a lone upland sandpiper along the Maverick-Panther Junction road in May, a single adult least tern at Rio Grande Village Nature Trail in April, two great kiskadee reports a month apart at opposite ends of the park, a single male golden-winged warbler at Sam Nail Ranch in early May, late worm-eating and hooded warblers and, in a repeat of the 2003 spring season, at least two, and possibly three pairs of painted redstarts are nesting in the Boot Canyon.

Peregrine falcon monitoring will not be completed this year due to lack of funding, but researcher John Maresh did perform the annual black-capped vireo survey in the first week of June. Preliminary results include three active nests, two nest starts, 23 total vireos, and no evidence of cowbird parasitism.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
MARCH - MAY 2004

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Lesser scaup	1f	3/01	N. Rosillos Rd.	V&G Wolfe	rare
	1f	3/20	Lajitas	Laird Considine Mark Flippo	rare
Bufflehead	4m,f	3/20	Lajitas	Laird Considine Mark Flippo	rare
Ruddy duck	2m,f	3/20	Lajitas	Laird Considine Mark Flippo	rare
Hooded merganser	1f	3/02-03	Hot Springs	V&G Wolfe	acc.
Little blue heron	1	4/01	RGV-Nature Trail	Jim Gessaman	rare
Reddish egret	1	4/01	RGV-Nature Trail	Esther Edie	acc.
Bald eagle	1	3/25	Santa Elena Cyn.	Tom Deeds	rare
Gray hawk	1-2	3/01-31	Cottonwood Camp.	Many observers	unc.
	2*	4/01-30	Cottonwood Camp	Many observers	unc.
	2*	5/01-31	Cottonwood Camp.	Many observers	unc.
*nesting pair					
Common black-hawk	1	3/09	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Flippo	rare
	2*	3/15-31	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
	2*	4/01-30	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
	2*	5/01-31	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
* at same nest area used in 2003 season. Area near nest closed off on 3/20 to prevent unnecessary intrusion. Hawks on nest with eggs (?) from ~4/15.					
Common black-hawk (other than RGV)	1	4/26	Santa Elena Cyn	Mark Korducki	rare
	1	5/02	SECyn Rd. MP 2	Jom & Lynne Weber	rare
	2	5/31	Santa Elena Cyn	Darren Wallace	rare
Red-tailed hawk (Krider's)	1	3/03	N. Rosillos Rd.	Jim & Barb Hines	? spr.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Virginia rail	1	3/20	Lajitas	Laird Considine Mark Flippo	rare
	1	5/31	Santa Elena Cyn	Darren Wallace	rare
Common moorhen	1	3/20	Lajitas	Laird Considine Mark Flippo	rare
Upland sandpiper	1	5/28	MP 13, Rte 11	Dan Peak Don Schaezler	rare
Forster's tern	2	5/08	Cottonwood Camp.	David Tickman	acc.
Least tern	1	4/04-06	RGV-Nature Trail	Claudette Waldrop, Lacey Smith, J&J Biddick, M. Flippo	acc.
Eurasian collared Dove	1	3/03	Terlingua	Rob Dean	rare
	1	4/01	Panther Junction	Barbara Hines	rare
	2	4/17	Terlingua	Mark Flippo	rare
Ringed turtle-dove	1	5/08	RGV-Store	David Elkowitz	escape
Monk parakeet	1*	3/27	Cottonwood Camp	M.Flippo, K.Stinnet Betty Bock	escape
*escaped cage bird; with leg band.					
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1m	5/30	Panther Junction	Rob & Angie Dean	rare
Rufous hummingbird	1m	3/11	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1f	5/4-5	Boot Canyon*	Eric Carpenter	late
*Unusual location					
<b>Dusky-capped Flycatcher</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>5/4-5</b>	<b>Boot Canyon</b>	<b>Eric Carpenter</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>1*</b>	<b>5/09</b>	<b>Boot Canyon</b>	<b>Brad Lirette Ron Weeks</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>1*</b>	<b>5/26</b>	<b>Boot Canyon</b>	<b>Rhandy Helton</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>1*</b>	<b>5/29</b>	<b>Boot Canyon</b>	<b>Richard Kostecke</b>	<b>rare</b>

\*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 9/07/04



<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Great kiskadee	1	4/28	Santa Elena Cyn	Tim & Jan Kaspa	acc.
	1	5/28	Hot Springs	Richard Kostecke	acc.
Black-capped Vireo	1m	4/24	Green Gulch	S. Betchkal	rare
Gray vireo	1	4/18	Oak Springs	Mark Flippo	rare
	2	4/23	Blue Creek	Gray Tuttle	rare
	1	5/05	Oak Springs	Mike Austin	rare
	3	5/30	Blue Creek	Richard Kostecke	rare
Blue-headed Vireo	1m	3/02	Cottonwood camp.	Mark Flippo Kym Beckwith	rare
Brown creeper	1	3/02	RGV-Daniels Ranch	V&G Wolfe	spo.
	1	3/09	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	spo.
Carolina Wren	1	3/09	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	4/27	Boot Spring*	Mark Korducki	rare
	1	4/30	Boot Spring*	Jon Dunn	rare
	1	4/30	Sam Nail Ranch*	Rich Hoyer	rare
	1	5/4-5	Boot Canyon*	Eric Carpenter	rare
* Unusual locations					
Black-throated Gray warbler	1m	3/27	Cottonwood Camp	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	4/01	Cottonwood Camp	R&G.Burns	rare
Golden-winged Warbler	1m	5/05	Sam Nail Ranch	Rose Ann Jordan Mike Austin	acc.
Worm-eating Warbler	1	5/26	Laguna Mdw. Tr.	Rhandy Helton	rare
Hooded warbler	1m	5/31	Window Trail	John Maresh	rare
<b>Red-faced warbler</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>3/14</b>	<b>Window Trail</b>	<b>Jonathan Sprague</b>	<b>acc.</b>
	<b>1*</b>	<b>4/27</b>	<b>Boot Springs</b>	<b>Mark Korducki</b>	<b>acc.</b>

\*Texas Review Species: report to TBRC:Lockwood 4/27 record accepted 7/13/04

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Painted redstart	1	4/06	Boot Canyon	A. Peterson	spo.
	4	4/12	Boot Canyon	Joe Seebacher	spo.
	1	4/24	Boot Spring	Doug Watt	spo.
	2	4/27	Boot Spring	Mark Korducki	spo.
	1	5/03	Boot Spring	Jim & Lynne Weber Rich Webster	spo.
	6?	5/4-5*	Boot Canyon	Eric Carpenter	spo.
	3	5/08	Boot Canyon	Bill & Judy Quick	spo.
	1	5/21	Colima Trail	D.&S. Porter	spo.
	3	5/27	Boot Spring	Bill Lansley	spo.
	4**	5/29	Boot Canyon	Richard Kostecke	spo.

\* three pairs

\*\* including 1 fledgling.

**Flame-colored  
Tanager**                      **1m\***   **5/18**                      **Lost Mine Trail**      **Michael Keck**                      **acc.**

**\*Texas Review Species: Report to TBRC:Lockwood Pending review**

Common grackle	1m	5/05	RGV-Nature Trail	Richard Webster	rare
Hooded oriole	1m	3/23	Panther Junction	Mark Flipppo	rare
	2	4/14	Cottonwood Camp.	Linda Clark	rare
	1m	5/07	Cottonwood Camp.	Bill & Judy Quick Jim Weber	rare
	1m	5/29	Cottonwood Camp.	Richard Kostecke	rare

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
JUNE - JULY 2004

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period June 1 - July 31. I've compiled only those observations for species that are listed as **Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?sum" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the summer season.

"Warm" and "wet" are the key words for this summer in the Big Bend, mirroring the wet summer season of 2003. All the major drainages in the park have flashed multiple times, and Terlingua Creek has had an almost constant flow for the entire summer season. The Rio Grande has been up more often than not, including a major rise in late July after a nearly four inch rain in the Terlingua area, providing great opportunities for rafting and canoeing. The desert and mountains are green, wildflowers are blooming everywhere, and Boot Canyon has been flowing with a constant stream of water. Both Panther Junction and the Chisos Basin received over seven inches of rain during the two month period. Year to date precipitation as compared to ytd totals through July 2003 (+ or -) is as follows: Panther Junction; 12.50" (+4.03"), Chisos Basin; 15.50" (-0.09"), Rio Grande Village; 6.90" (+1.77"), and Castolon; 7.08" (+1.29"). Persimmon Gap; 10.56" (+5.26").

A major highlight for this summer was the second consecutive successful nesting by the common black-hawks at Rio Grande Village. This year, for the first time in nine years, the pair fledged **two** young. This is only the third confirmed successful nesting in the nine years that a pair has been utilizing the same cottonwood grove at Rio Grande Village, the first record occurring in 1999.

Another surprise this season was a report from Park Ranger Marcos Paredes of three Montezuma quail along park route 11 (Hwy 385), just two miles from park headquarters. Once resident in the Chisos, Montezuma quail were gone from the park by the time of establishment in 1944. In 1973, Former Chief Naturalist Ro Wauer brought in 26 quail from Arizona for release in the Pine Canyon area. By 1979, follow-up surveys failed to locate any of the released birds. The last documented sighting was in 1983 along the South Rim. Earlier this spring, a Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist who specializes in Montezuma quail visited the park to assess potential habitat for the species. He reported finding not only good habitat but also potential sign of the quail's presence in the Chisos Mountains (scrapes, partially eaten tubers, and droppings). The report raised hopes that the quail, like the Mexican black bears before them, may be "pioneers" from populations in the Maderas Mountains just south across the border in Mexico. There is evidence that Montezumas will leave preferred habitat to cross arid country in order to reach new, previously unpopulated areas. This could explain Paredes' observation of the Montezumas at such a low elevation in untypical habitat.

Only two review species were reported during the period. A **white-eared hummingbird** was reported on June 22 in Boot Canyon but, unlike the pair reported in the summer of 2003, there were no other reports turned in during the period. (Update: a single male white-eared was reported just below the Pinnacles Pass on August 6). Several reports of **Dusky-capped flycatcher** were submitted during the season, all from the vicinity of the Boot Canyon backpack campsites, where they have been present since this spring. So far, no nest site or juveniles have been observed. Prior to this year, dusky-capped flycatchers nested in the Chisos for three years in a row.

Warbler highlights included early hermit, Townsend's and black-throated gray warblers in the Boot Springs area, and two, possibly three nesting pairs of painted redstarts in Boot Canyon. This is the second year in a row that redstarts have nested in the park.

TPWD Researcher John Maresh returned to the park to perform a survey of black-capped vireos from June 3-10. This year he located 29 total individuals as compared to 21 last year. Breakdown of the total included 16 males (14 in '03), 7 females (5 in '03), 6 HY (2 in '03), three active nests (two in '03), two family groups (same as '03), two new nest starts (one in '03), and, encouragingly, no nest parasitism by cowbirds.

In the spring report I reported that the Peregrine falcon monitoring project was not funded and hence no monitoring would occur. Fortunately, some funding did finally come available, but not until late in the reproductive season. The funding allowed observers to check only four eyrie sites this season. All four were occupied and a total of three fledglings were confirmed from two sites. In 2003, a total of 12 eyrie sites were visited, 11 of those were occupied, and 13 fledglings were visually confirmed from a total of 7 sites.

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RARE BIRD RECORDS  
JUNE - JULY 2004

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Montezuma Quail	3	7/06	Park Rte 11, mp 2	Marcos Paredes	acc.
Black-crowned night-heron	3	6/01	RGV-Nature Trail	Dan Leavitt	rare
	2	6/12	RGV-Nature Trail	Dan Leavitt	rare
Yellow-crowned Night-heron	1juv	7/23	RGV-Nature Trail	Dan Leavitt	rare
Gray hawk	1	7/17	Cottonwood Camp.	Angie Dean	unc.
Common black-hawk	2	6/1-30	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
	2	7/1-31	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
	1juv	7/23	Rio Grande Vill.	Dan Leavitt	rare
	2juv	7/26	Rio Grande Vill.	Bonnie Deming	rare
<b>White-eared Hummingbird</b>	<b>1f*</b>	<b>6/22</b>	<b>Boot Canyon</b>	<b>Martin Byhower</b>	<b>acc.</b>
<b>*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Pending review.</b>					
<b>Dusky-capped Flycatcher</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>6/04</b>	<b>Boot Canyon</b>	<b>Bob Doe Barbara Thompson</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>1*</b>	<b>6/20</b>	<b>Boot Springs</b>	<b>Dan Leavitt</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>2*</b>	<b>6/28</b>	<b>Boot Cyn 3</b>	<b>Steve Gross</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>6/29-7/01</b>	<b>Boot Cyn 3</b>	<b>Tim &amp; Bill Shelmerdine</b>	<b>rare</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>7/17</b>	<b>Boot Cyn 3</b>	<b>Mark Lockwood</b>	<b>rare</b>
<b>*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 9/7/04</b>					
Tropical kingbird	1	7/??	Cottonwood Camp.	J.P. Valentik	rare
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	1	6/12	RGV-housing	Dan Leavitt	acc.
Black-capped Vireo	29	6/03-10	See comments	John Maresh	rare
	4	6/17	Maple Canyon	D. Leavitt, A. Freeman	rare
	1m	7/04	Window Trail	David Elkowitz	rare
	1m	7/31	Pinn./Basin Loop	Charles Lyon	rare

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	6/29-7/01	Boot Cyn 2-4	T&B Shelmerdine	?sum
	1	7/17	Boot Cyn 2-3	Mark Lockwood	?sum
Carolina wren	1	7/15	Sam Nail ranch	Jim Hines	rare
Black-throated gray warbler	1f	7/31	Boot Springs	Charles Lyon	early
Townsend's warbler	2m,f	7/31	Boot Springs	Charles Lyon	early
Hermit warbler	1m	7/31	Boot Spring	Charles Lyon	early
Painted redstart	2	6/30-7/01	Boot Canyon	T&B Shelmerdine	spo.
	4	7/17	Boot Canyon	Mark Lockwood	spo.
Indigo bunting	1m	6/28	Window Trail	Walter Lamb	rare
Dickcissel	1	6/03	Harte Ranch Road	John Maresh	late?

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2004

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period August 1 - November 30. I've compiled only those observations for species which are listed as **Rare**, **Accidental**, **Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?fall" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the fall season.

Like the fall season of 2003, the Big Bend region was again graced with abundant rainfall, in fact surpassing totals from the previous year. August and September were particularly wet, with the Chisos Basin receiving over 8 ½ inches in the two month period. Several times through the season the Rio Grande reached flood stage, and its major tributaries, Terlingua and Tornillo Creeks, flashed hugely with the heavy downpours. An added blessing of the rains was the exceptionally clear skies through the season, washing away the now-typical pollution haze that occludes visibility in the region. (What impact the pollution tainted rain had on soils in the region remains to be seen...). Late fall/early winter food crops are looking exceptionally good this year, resulting in good numbers and diversity of wintering sparrows.

A comparison of current year to date precipitation with ytd totals through November 2003 (+ or -) documents the dramatically wet Fall season.

Panther Junction; 22.10" (+6.12"), Chisos Basin; 27.83" (+3.46"), Rio Grande Village; 13.12" (+4.31"), Castolon; 16.99" (+7.83"), Persimmon Gap 19.79 (no data from 2003). The Panther Junction rainfall total is only 0.37 inches from the record rainfall of 1986.

#### Review Species:

In a repeat of last August, **white-eared hummingbirds** were reported along the Pinnacles Trail in the Chisos mountains, and a female broad-billed hummingbird, several painted redstarts, and a **red-faced warbler** all made appearances in the Boot Canyon drainage. For the first time in over three years (05/01-J&W Risser), a **rufous-capped warbler** was documented in the park, found in the steep and rocky terrain of Campground Canyon. Also reported during August was a **greater pewee** at Rio Grande Village, last documented in the park in 1991. The white-eared and pewee reports are still pending review by the TBRC, while the two warbler reports were accepted in November. The highlight of the late fall was Carpenter's and Laidlaw's observation and photographs of a pair of **ruddy ground-doves** at Cottonwood Campground. The last accepted record for the park goes back to 1992. John Gee and Carol Edwards found the pair again in a flock of Inca doves on 12/01.

#### Summary:

Reported here, not so much for its rarity, but more so the novelty, was at least one, sometimes two, American bitterns, observed wandering out in the open through irrigated fields at Rio Grande Village. Most amusing was the bird's attempt at freezing in typical bittern fashion, bill to the sky, while standing completely exposed. Once again, juvenile plumaged yellow-crowned night-herons showed up at the RGV Nature Trail during August. There is no evidence of this species breeding anywhere near the park, so their origin is a bit of a mystery. For the second year in a row, at least one, and possibly two, gray hawks may be set to over-winter at Cottonwood Campground. An immature gray hawk observed just outside the park along the Terlingua Creek drainage was a surprise in early November, coming on the heels of a minor cold front passage. The prolonged rainy season encouraged excellent wildflower blooms in the Chisos Mountains, and hummingbirds in general lingered long into the season. Particularly interesting was a late report of a blue-throated hummingbird on 10/19 and a female Lucifer on 10/22. Anna's hummingbirds have been very conspicuous this year, but whether this is the result of two years of good rain and improved conditions or a general range expansion remains to be seen.

The day before the aforementioned immature gray hawk on Terlingua Creek, an early minor cold front blew in some surprising visitors; Beckwith caught a yellow-shafted northern flicker in the same snag with a Lewis's woodpecker. During the ensuing two weeks, other small cold fronts brought in some other unusual birds, including two gray flycatchers and two Couch's/tropical kingbirds, a white-eyed vireo, a late Bell's vireo, a blue-headed vireo that lingered at Cottonwood for a week, a winter wren, tons of American robins and hermit thrushes, some late black-throated gray warblers, a late western tanager, late-lingering painted buntings, and an excellent showing of sparrows. As mentioned above, sparrow populations are well represented this year, with unusually high numbers of all *Spizella* species, including field sparrows. Most unusual were two reports of a LeConte's sparrow at Rio Grande Village, a bird not documented here since 1997. A late Scott's oriole in November was unusual, as were three November reports of common grackles, never common here, during the passage of several

cold, wet fronts. Finally, over a period of a few days in August, single red crossbills were observed in different areas of the park over a three day period.



BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2004

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
American bittern	1-2	11/02-20	Rio Grande Vill.	Many Observers	unc.
Yellow-crowned Night-heron	1juv	08/05	RGV-Nature Trail	K.Beckwith, D.Leavitt M.Flippo	rare
	2juv	08/08	RGV-Nature Trail	D.Elkowitz,R.Womite	rare
	3juv	08/19	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	2juv	08/21	RGV-Nature Trail	Rich Hoyer	rare
	1juv	09/02	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
Gray hawk	1	10/15	Cottonwood Camp.	Tom Kershaw	rare
	1-2	10/16-11/30	Cottonwood Camp	many observers	rare
	1imm	11/05	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith	rare
Common Black-hawk	4*	08/05	Rio Grande Vill.	Beckwith,Leavitt Flippo	rare
	1	08/08	Rio Grande Vill.	D.Elkowitz,R.Womite	rare
	2juv	08/12	Rio Grande Vill.	Beckwith,Flippo	rare
* Adult pair + 2 juv.					
Merlin	1	11/05	Lajitas	John Maresh	rare
Ruddy ground-dove*	2m,f	11/21	Cottonwood Camp.	Eric Carpenter Howard Laidlaw	?fall
	2m,f	11/27	Cottonwood Camp.	Judy Bohm	?fall
* Texas Review Species: Report w/ photos to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 5/05					
Broad-billed Hummingbird	1f	8/14	Boot Canyon	Mark Flippo	acc.
White-eared Hummingbird*	1m	8/05	Pinnacles Trail	Glenn Curetan Kevin Franks	acc.
	1m	8/11	Pinnacles Trail	Jim & Lynne Weber	acc.
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. ACCEPTED 3/05 .					
Blue-throated Hummingbird	1m	10/19	Oak Springs	Judy Williamson Jane Wicker	late

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Magnificent Hummingbird	1m	8/07	Pinnacles Pass	Mark Flippo	rare
	1f	8/13	Boot Canyon	Mike Austin	rare
	1m	8/13	Boot Canyon	Vic Fazio	rare
Lucifer Hummingbird	1f	10/22	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	late
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1m	9/24	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	10/08	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	rare
Anna's Hummingbird	2m,f	10/18-11/30	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	10/28-11/30	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Many observers	rare
	2m,f	11/05-30	Terlingua	Kym Beckwith	rare
	2m	11/12	RGV-campground	Brian Gibbons	rare
Green kingfisher	1m	8/19	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	9/02	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	9/09	RGV-Nature Trail	Dan Leavitt	rare
Lewis's woodpecker	1	11/04	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith	acc.
Northern Flicker (yellow-shafted)	1f	11/04	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith	rare
<b>Greater pewee</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>8/05</b>	<b>RGV-Store</b>	<b>Chris Raithel</b>	<b>acc.</b>
	<b>1*</b>	<b>8/08</b>	<b>RGV-Nature trail</b>	<b>D.Elkowitz,R.Womite</b>	<b>acc.</b>
<b>*Texas Review Species: reports to TBRC:Lockwood NOT ACCEPTED 3/05</b>					
Gray flycatcher	1	8/12	RGV-Campground	Vic Fazio	rare
	2	11/21	Cottonwood Camp.	Eric Carpenter Howard Laidlaw	rare
Great-crested Flycatcher	1	8/21	RGV-Daniel Rch Rd	Rich Hoyer	acc.
Tropical kingbird	1*	8/08	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan & Will Risser	rare
* On nest					
Trop./Couch's Kingbird	1	11/03	Terlingua Creek	Kym Backwith	rare

	1	11/21	Cottonwood Camp	Eric Carpenter Howard Laidlaw	rare
<b><u>SPECIES</u></b>	<b><u>#</u></b>	<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>LOCATION</u></b>	<b><u>OBSERVER</u></b>	<b><u>PARK STATUS</u></b>
Couch's kingbird	1	8/12	RGV-Campground	Vic Fazio	rare
Western kingbird	2	10/20	Cottonwood Camp.	Judi Williamson	late
Eastern Kingbird	1	8/05	Rio Grande Vill.	Chris Raithel	acc.
White-eyed vireo	1	11/12	RGV-Nature Trail	Brian Gibbons	acc.
Bell's vireo	1	11/07	SEC river takeout	John Maresh	late
Black-capped vireo	2m,f	8/14	Window Trail	Vic Fazio	rare
	2m	8/19	Window Trail	Rich Hoyer	rare
Gray vireo	1m	11/05	Santa Elena Cyn	John Maresh	rare
Blue-headed vireo	1m	8/07	Boot Spring	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	11/21-27	Cottonwood camp.	E. Carpenter, H Laidlaw Carol Edwards, John Gee Ralph Fielding	rare
Red-eyed vireo	1	8/08	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan & Will Risser	rare
Carolina wren	1	9/02	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	2	9/04	Boot Canyon	Mark Lockwood	rare
	1	11/29	RGV-Nature Trail	Dan Leavitt	rare
Winter wren	1	11/12	RGV-Gambusia pond	Brian Gibbons	rare
Black-throated Gray warbler	1	11/10	Cottonwood Camp.	Brian Gibbons	late
	1	11/11	Chisos Basin	Brian Gibbons	late
	1	11/12	Rio Grande Vill.	Brain Gibbons	late
Black-throated Green warbler	1m	9/05	South Rim	Curt McCamy	acc.
Townsend's warbler	1	11/11	Chisos Basin	Brian Gibbons	late
Grace's warbler	1f	8/13	Boot Canyon	Mark Flippo	rare
	2m	8/20	Laguna Mdw Trail	Rich Hoyer	rare
<b>Red-faced warbler</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>8/07</b>	<b>Boot Springs</b>	<b>Mark Flippo</b>	<b>spo.</b>
<b>*Texas Review Species: Report to TBRC:Lockwood Accepted 11/2004</b>					
Painted redstart	2	8/07	Boot Canyon	Mark Flippo	spo.

4 8/13-14 Boot Canyon Mark Flippo spo.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Rufous-capped Warbler	1*	8/12	Campground Cyn	Dan Leavitt Alison Freeman	acc.
<b>*Texas Review Species: Report to TBRC:Lockwood Accepted 11/2004</b>					
Western tanager	1f	11/21	Cottonwood Camp.	Eric Carpenter Howard Laidlaw	late
Painted bunting	4-6im	11/22	Cottonwood camp.	Carol Edwards John Gee	late
Field sparrow	6	11/04	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith	rare
	1	11/12	RGV_Daniels Rch	Brian Gibbons	rare
Grasshopper Sparrow	2	11/07	Terlingua Creek	Kym Beckwith Mark Flippo	rare
	1	11/12	Rio Grande Vill.	Brian Gibbons	rare
LeConte's sparrow	1	11/12	RGV-Gambusia pond	Brian Gibbons	acc.
	1	11/14	RGV-Daniels Rch.	L & M Caswell	acc.
Fox sparrow	1	11/12	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Brian Gibbons	rare
Common grackle	2m	11/06	Terlingua	K.Beckwith, M.Flippo	acc.
	1m	11/10	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	acc.
	1im	11/21	Cottonwood Camp.	Eric Carpenter	acc.
Hooded oriole	1m	9/02	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	rare
Scotts oriole	2m	10/08	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	late
	1m	11/21	Mule Ears	Sarah Bourbon	late
Red Crossbill	1m	8/13	Chisos Basin	Vic Fazio	spo.
	1f	8/14	Colima Trail	Mike Austin	spo.
	1m	8/15	Panther Junction	D. Leavitt, M.Flippo	spo.