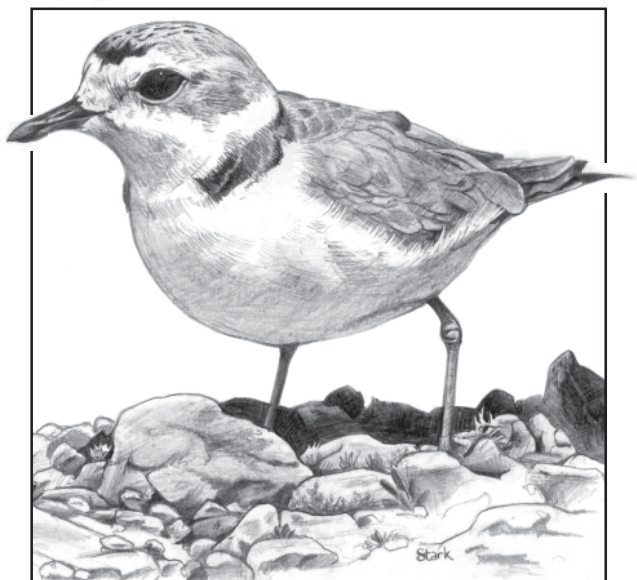


TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

# BIRDS

OF

BALMORHEA  
STATE PARK  
AND VICINITY



A FIELD CHECKLIST

2005

*Cover: Illustration of Snowy Plover by Patrick Stark.*

# INTRODUCTION

**B**almorea State Park is situated in the heart of the Trans-Pecos Region. The Davis Mountains form a scenic backdrop to this extensive agricultural area. Balmorea is best known for the 24 million gallon per day spring located within the park. San Solomon Springs flows into a swimming pool constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and is the home of two endangered fish, the Comanche Springs pupfish and the Pecos mosquito fish. A man made refugium and the restored San Solomon Ciénega within the park are designed to provide long-term, safe habitat for these fish.

The native vegetation of the region is dominated by creosote bush, mesquite, and mimosa as well as saltbush and yucca. The park contains a few acres of Chihuahuan Desert scrub as well as old cottonwoods that line the channels radiating from the spring. The San Solomon Ciénega offers marsh habitat and has a few scattered cottonwoods around it as well. This concentration of habitat offers excellent birding opportunities year round.

Four miles northeast of the state park is the town of Balmorea, which offers birding opportunities in the winter and during migration. The small town has many mature trees to which birds are attracted.

Balmorea Lake is located about two miles east of town. This spring-fed lake is one of the largest bodies of water in the Trans-Pecos. As a result, large numbers of birds congregate here. The lake functions as a storage facility for irrigation and as a result, the water level fluctuates greatly. In dry years the lake can be very low by mid-summer, while in wet years the lake may overflow in to several areas. One of those areas is located on the west side of the lake at the base an earthen dike.

This pond is part of an extensive marsh and offers good birding opportunities. The southern edge of the lake is excellent for shorebirds in dry years when water levels are low. The east end of the lake is where the dam is located. This end of the lake is favored by loons, diving ducks and Clark's and Western Grebes in fall and winter. Below the dam is an area of sedges, reeds and salt cedar. Overall, the lake attracts large numbers of waterbirds, especially in winter.

This checklist is compiled for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department by Mark Lockwood of Alpine, Texas. The compiler appreciates the contributions of visiting birders and Tom Johnson, currently the park manager at Balmorhea State Park. Nomenclature and organization for this checklist are based upon the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (7th edition) as currently supplemented.

You may contribute to our knowledge of the park's birdlife by reporting sightings of unusual records or changes in status to the park's office. Please request Bird Sighting Report Forms available at the park headquarters. Return the completed form or lists of sightings to the Natural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744 or leave them at the park headquarters for forwarding.

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*Please help us protect the natural avian communities in our parks by refraining from using playback tapes of bird songs. Frequent use of these tapes disrupts normal avian activity patterns, disrupts essential territorial behavior and may lead to nest failure. Thank you for your cooperation.*

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# LEGEND

- A - Abundant - should be seen on 75% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
  - C - Common - should be seen on 50% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
  - FC - Fairly Common - should be seen on 25% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
  - U - Uncommon - should be seen on about 10% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
  - R - Rare - not seen annually but expected to occur again
  - Ca - Casual - three to five records in past ten years
  - X - Accidental - only one or two records in past ten years
  - I - Irregular - absent or in low numbers some years, but may be numerous in others
- / - (in summer column before status designation) indicates that the bird's presence in summer is due to early southbound migrants
- \* - (in summer column) breeds
- Sp - Spring (March-May)
- S - Summer (June-August)
- F - Fall (September-November)
- W - Winter (December-February)

# CHECKLIST

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Black-bellied Whistling-Duck .....	X			
___ Fulvous Whistling-Duck .....	X	X	X	
___ Greater White-fronted Goose .....	Ca		Ca	R
___ Snow Goose .....	R		R	U
___ Ross's Goose .....	Ca		Ca	R
___ Canada Goose .....	U		R	FC
___ Wood Duck .....				X
___ Gadwall .....	C		C	A
___ American Wigeon .....	C		C	A
___ Mallard .....	C	FC*	C	C
___ Blue-winged Teal .....	C		C	Ca
___ Cinnamon Teal .....	C	Ca	C	R
___ Northern Shoveler .....	C		C	A
___ Northern Pintail .....	C	R	C	C
___ Green-winged Teal .....	C		C	C
___ Canvasback .....	FC		FC	U
___ Redhead .....	FC		FC	U
___ Ring-necked Duck .....	C	Ca	C	FC
___ Greater Scaup .....	R		R	R
___ Lesser Scaup .....	FC		FC	FC
___ Surf Scoter .....	X		R	Ca
___ White-winged Scoter .....	X		X	X
___ Black Scoter .....				X
___ Long-tailed Duck .....			X	X
___ Bufflehead .....	U		U	FC
___ Common Goldeneye .....			R	R
___ Hooded Merganser .....	R	X	R	R

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Common Merganser .....	R		U	U
___ Red-breasted Merganser .....	U		U	U
___ Ruddy Duck .....	C	Ca	C	C
___ Wild Turkey .....	R	R	R	R
___ Scaled Quail .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Northern Bobwhite .....	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca
___ Montezuma Quail .....			X	
___ Red-throated Loon .....	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ Pacific Loon .....	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ Common Loon .....	R	X	U	U
___ Yellow-billed Loon .....			X	X
___ Least Grebe .....	X			
___ Pied-billed Grebe .....	C	U*	C	C
___ Horned Grebe .....	R		R	R
___ Eared Grebe .....	C	R	C	C
___ Western Grebe .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Clark's Grebe .....	C	C*	C	C
___ American White Pelican .....	U		FC	U
___ Brown Pelican .....	X	X	X	
___ Neotropic Cormorant .....	R		R	R
___ Double-crested Cormorant .....	FC		C	C
___ American Bittern .....	R	Ca	R	R
___ Least Bittern .....	R	Ca	R	R
___ Great Blue Heron .....	A	U	A	C
___ Great Egret .....	U	R	U	R
___ Snowy Egret .....	U	R	U	R
___ Little Blue Heron .....	Ca		Ca	
___ Tricolored Heron .....	X	Ca		
___ Reddish Egret .....	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Cattle Egret .....	U	FC	FC	Ca
___ Green Heron .....	FC	FC*	FC	Ca
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron .....	U	U	U	R
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron .....	R		R	Ca
___ White Ibis .....	X			
___ Glossy Ibis .....	X			
___ White-faced Ibis .....	C	U	C	R
___ Roseate Spoonbill .....	X	X		
___ Turkey Vulture .....	C	C	C	
___ Osprey .....	FC		U	R
___ White-tailed Kite .....	X			
___ Mississippi Kite .....	X		X	
___ Bald Eagle .....	X		Ca	R
___ Northern Harrier .....	R	Ca	FC	FC
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk .....	R		R	U
___ Cooper's Hawk .....	R		R	U
___ Harris's Hawk .....	R		R	R
___ Swainson's Hawk .....	C	FC*	C	
___ Zone-tailed Hawk .....	X			
___ Red-tailed Hawk .....	C	U*	C	A
___ Ferruginous Hawk .....	U		U	U
___ Rough-legged Hawk .....			R	R
___ Golden Eagle .....	R	R	R	R
___ American Kestrel .....	C	R	C	C
___ Merlin .....				R
___ Aplomado Falcon <sup>1</sup> .....			X	
___ Peregrine Falcon .....	R	X	R	X
___ Prairie Falcon .....	U		U	U
___ King Rail .....	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca



	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Virginia Rail .....	U	U	U	U
___ Sora .....	U	U	U	FC
___ Common Moorhen .....	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ American Coot .....	A	R*	A	A
___ Sandhill Crane .....	R		R	R
___ Black-bellied Plover .....	R	X	U	
___ American Golden Plover .....	Ca		Ca	
___ Snowy Plover .....	U	U*	U	
___ Semipalmated Plover .....	U	/U	U	X
___ Piping Plover .....	X		X	
___ Killdeer .....	A	C*	A	A
___ Mountain Plover .....	X		X	X
___ Black-necked Stilt .....	C	C*	C	
___ American Avocet .....	C		C	X
___ Greater Yellowlegs .....	FC	/FC	FC	U
___ Lesser Yellowlegs .....	C	/C	FC	
___ Solitary Sandpiper .....	U	/U	U	
___ Willet .....	R	/R	U	
___ Spotted Sandpiper .....	FC	/FC	FC	U
___ Upland Sandpiper .....	R		R	
___ Whimbrel .....	Ca			
___ Long-billed Curlew .....	FC	/U	C	R
___ Hudsonian Godwit .....	X	/X		
___ Marbled Godwit .....	Ca		R	
___ Ruddy Turnstone .....	X		X	
___ Red Knot .....		/X	X	
___ Sanderling .....	X		X	
___ Semipalmated Sandpiper .....	R		R	
___ Western Sandpiper .....	C	/C	C	U

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Least Sandpiper .....	C	/C	A	U
___ White-rumped Sandpiper .....	Ca			
___ Baird's Sandpiper .....	U	/U	U	
___ Pectoral Sandpiper .....	FC	/U	FC	
___ Dunlin .....			X	X
___ Stilt Sandpiper .....	R	/U	FC	
___ Short-tailed Dowitcher .....		/X	X	
___ Long-billed Dowitcher .....	C	/U	C	U
___ Wilson's Snipe .....	C		C	C
___ Wilson's Phalarope .....	U		U	
___ Red-necked Phalarope .....			R	
___ Red Phalarope .....			X	
___ Parasitic Jaeger .....			X	X
___ Laughing Gull .....	X	X	X	
___ Franklin's Gull .....	R		U	
___ Bonaparte's Gull .....	R		U	U
___ Mew Gull .....				X
___ Ring-billed Gull .....	C	R	A	A
___ California Gull .....	Ca		X	X
___ Herring Gull .....	R		R	Ca
___ Thayer's Gull .....				X
___ Lesser Black-backed Gull .....			X	X
___ Slaty-backed Gull .....				X
___ Sabine's Gull .....	X		Ca	
___ Black-legged Kittiwake .....			X	X
___ Caspian Tern .....		Ca	X	
___ Elegant Tern .....				X
___ Common Tern .....	Ca		Ca	X
___ Forster's Tern .....	U		U	R

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Least Tern .....	Ca	Ca	Ca	
___ Black Tern .....	U		U	
___ Black Skimmer .....		X		
___ Rock Pigeon .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Band-tailed Pigeon .....			X	
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove .....	A	A*	A	A
___ White-winged Dove .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Mourning Dove .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Inca Dove .....	U	U*	U	U
___ Common Ground-Dove .....			X	X
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo .....	R	R*	R	
___ Greater Roadrunner .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Barn Owl .....	R	R*	R	R
___ Western Screech-Owl .....				Ca
___ Great Horned Owl .....	U	U*	U	U
___ Burrowing Owl .....	R	R*	R	Ca
___ Long-eared Owl .....				Ca
___ Short-eared Owl .....				Ca
___ Lesser Nighthawk .....	C	C*	C	
___ Common Nighthawk .....	U	U*	U	
___ Common Poorwill .....	R	R	R	Ca
___ White-throated Swift .....	R	R	R	X
___ Blue-throated Hummingbird .....			X	
___ Lucifer Hummingbird .....		X	X	
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird .....	X		Ca	
___ Black-chinned Hummingbird .....	A	A*	C	
___ Calliope Hummingbird .....		Ca	Ca	
___ Broad-tailed Hummingbird .....	Ca	/U	U	
___ Rufous Hummingbird .....		/U	U	

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Belted Kingfisher .....	C		C	C
___ Lewis's Woodpecker .....	X		X	X
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker .....	R		R	R
___ Red-naped Sapsucker .....	R		R	R
___ Ladder-backed Woodpecker .....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ Downy Woodpecker .....				X
___ Northern Flicker .....	C		C	C
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher .....	R		U	
___ Western Wood-Pewee .....	U		U	
___ Willow Flycatcher .....	R		R	
___ Least Flycatcher .....	Ca		Ca	
___ Gray Flycatcher .....	R		R	
___ Dusky Flycatcher .....	R		R	
___ Cordilleran Flycatcher .....	U		U	
___ Black Phoebe .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Eastern Phoebe .....	X			R
___ Say's Phoebe .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Vermilion Flycatcher .....	C	C*	C	R
___ Ash-throated Flycatcher .....	FC	FC*	FC	
___ Cassin's Kingbird .....	FC	FC*	FC	
___ Western Kingbird .....	C	C*	FC	
___ Eastern Kingbird .....	Ca			
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher .....	U	R*	U	
___ Loggerhead Shrike .....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ White-eyed Vireo .....	X			
___ Bell's Vireo .....		I		
___ Plumbeous Vireo .....	R		R	
___ Cassin's Vireo .....	R		R	
___ Warbling Vireo .....	R		R	

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Philadelphia Vireo .....	X			
___ Red-eyed Vireo .....			X	
___ Steller's Jay .....				X
___ Blue Jay .....			X	X
___ Western Scrub-Jay .....			Ca	Ca
___ Chihuahuan Raven .....	U	U*	U	U
___ Common Raven .....			FC	FC
___ Horned Lark .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Purple Martin .....	X	/X		
___ Tree Swallow .....	U		C	R
___ Violet-green Swallow .....	FC		FC	
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow .....	C		C	R
___ Bank Swallow .....	R		U	
___ Cliff Swallow .....	C	C*	C	
___ Cave Swallow .....	C	C*	A	Ca
___ Barn Swallow .....	A	A*	A	
___ Mountain Chickadee .....				X
___ Black-crested Titmouse .....	R		R	R
___ Verdin .....	U	U*	U	U
___ Bushtit .....	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch .....				I
___ White-breasted Nuthatch .....			R	R
___ Brown Creeper .....	R		R	U
___ Cactus Wren .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Rock Wren .....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ Canyon Wren .....				X
___ Bewick's Wren .....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ House Wren .....	U		U	R
___ Winter Wren .....				X

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Sedge Wren .....	R		R	R
___ Marsh Wren .....	FC		FC	A
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet .....				Ca
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet .....	C		C	C
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher .....	R		R	Ca
___ Black-tailed Gnatcatcher .....	Ca			Ca
___ Eastern Bluebird .....	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ Western Bluebird .....			I	I
___ Mountain Bluebird .....			I	I
___ Townsend's Solitaire .....			I	I
___ Swainson's Thrush .....			X	
___ Hermit Thrush .....	U		U	U
___ Wood Thrush .....			X	
___ American Robin .....	I		U	U
___ Varied Thrush .....			X	X
___ Gray Catbird .....	X			X
___ Northern Mockingbird .....	C	C*	C	FC
___ Sage Thrasher .....	I		I	I
___ Brown Thrasher .....				R
___ Curve-billed Thrasher .....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ Crissal Thrasher .....	R	R*	R	R
___ European Starling .....	C	C*	C	C
___ American Pipit .....	C		C	A
___ Sprague's Pipit .....				X
___ Cedar Waxwing .....	C		C	A
___ Phainopepla .....			R	R
___ Golden-winged Warbler .....	X			
___ Tennessee Warbler .....			X	
___ Orange-crowned Warbler .....	U		U	U
___ Nashville Warbler .....	R		R	

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Virginia's Warbler .....	X			
___ Northern Parula .....	X		Ca	X
___ Yellow Warbler .....	FC		U	
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler .....	A		A	A
___ Townsend's Warbler .....			R	
___ Palm Warbler .....	Ca			X
___ Black-and-white Warbler .....			X	
___ American Redstart .....	Ca		Ca	X
___ Prothonotary Warbler .....	X			
___ Northern Waterthrush .....	X			
___ MacGillivray's Warbler .....	R		R	
___ Common Yellowthroat .....	U		U	R
___ Wilson's Warbler .....	C		C	Ca
___ Painted Redstart .....	X			
___ Yellow-breasted Chat .....	Ca			
___ Hepatic Tanager .....	X			
___ Summer Tanager .....	FC	U*	U	
___ Western Tanager .....	U		R	
___ Green-tailed Towhee .....	FC		FC	FC
___ Spotted Towhee .....	FC		FC	FC
___ Canyon Towhee .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Cassin's Sparrow .....	C	C*	C	U
___ Rufous-crowned Sparrow .....	U	U	U	U
___ Chipping Sparrow .....	C		A	C
___ Clay-colored Sparrow .....	U		U	I
___ Brewer's Sparrow .....	C		C	C
___ Field Sparrow .....	R		R	R
___ Black-chinned Sparrow .....				X
___ Vesper Sparrow .....	C		C	C
___ Lark Sparrow .....	C	C*	C	C

	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Black-throated Sparrow .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Sage Sparrow .....				I
___ Lark Bunting .....	A		A	A
___ Savannah Sparrow .....	C	/R	C	C
___ Grasshopper Sparrow .....	U		U	U
___ Baird's Sparrow .....				X
___ Le Conte's Sparrow .....	X		X	R
___ Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow .....			X	X
___ Fox Sparrow .....	R		R	R
___ Song Sparrow .....	FC		FC	FC
___ Lincoln's Sparrow .....	C		C	C
___ Swamp Sparrow .....	U		U	FC
___ White-throated Sparrow .....				R
___ Harris's Sparrow .....				X
___ White-crowned Sparrow .....	A	X	A	A
___ Dark-eyed Junco .....	C		C	FC
___ McCown's Longspur .....				I
___ Chestnut-collared Longspur .....				I
___ Snow Bunting .....			X	
___ Northern Cardinal .....	U	U*	U	U
___ Pyrrhuloxia .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak .....	R			
___ Black-headed Grosbeak .....	U		R	
___ Blue Grosbeak .....	C	C*	C	
___ Indigo Bunting .....	X			
___ Lazuli Bunting .....	R		R	
___ Painted Bunting .....	U	U*	U	
___ Dickcissel .....	R		R	
___ Bobolink .....	X			
___ Red-winged Blackbird .....	A	A*	A	A



	<b>Sp</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>W</b>
___ Eastern Meadowlark .....	C	C*	C	C
___ Western Meadowlark .....	U	R*	U	U
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird .....	FC		FC	R
___ Rusty Blackbird .....				X
___ Brewer's Blackbird .....	A		A	A
___ Common Grackle .....	R	Ca*	R	R
___ Great-tailed Grackle .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Bronzed Cowbird .....	I	I		
___ Brown-headed Cowbird .....	C	C*	C	A
___ Orchard Oriole .....	C	C*	U	
___ Hooded Oriole .....	X			
___ Bullock's Oriole .....	C	C*	R	
___ Baltimore Oriole .....	X			
___ Scott's Oriole .....	R	R*	R	
___ Red Crossbill .....			X	
___ House Finch .....	A	A*	A	A
___ Pine Siskin .....	I		I	I
___ Lesser Goldfinch .....	FC	FC*	FC	I
___ American Goldfinch .....	I		I	I
___ Evening Grosbeak .....			X	
___ House Sparrow .....	A	A*	A	A

<sup>1</sup> - from reintroduction program

## CITATION

Lockwood, Mark W. 2005. Birds of Balmorhea State Park and vicinity: a field checklist. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Natural Resources Program, Austin, Texas.

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In 1983, the Texas Legislature created the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. This fund may be used for nongame wildlife and endangered species research and conservation, habitat acquisition and development and dissemination of information pertaining to nongame management. Money for this fund is obtained through private donations and sale of nongame wildlife art prints and stamps. This fund now gives Texans a unique opportunity to help support this state's valuable and sensitive nongame resources. Your individual contributions and purchases of nongame art prints and stamps will help determine the level of nongame conservation activities in Texas. For more information call toll-free (1-800-792-1112) or contact: **Nongame and Endangered Species Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.**

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Natural Resources Program  
Texas Parks and Wildlife  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744