

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

# BIRDS

OF

## DINOSAUR VALLEY STATE PARK



A FIELD CHECKLIST

2017

Cover: Illustration of Golden-cheeked Warbler by Clemente Guzman III.

# INTRODUCTION

**D**inosaur Valley State Park, on the Lampasas Cutplain in Somervell County, contains 1,597 acres, nearly half of which is covered in evergreen Ashe juniper woodlands. This large area of cedar brake on hilly terrain is dissected by several drainages which empty into the Paluxy River — the park's primary watercourse. One of these tributary drainages, Denio Creek, contains habitat which harbors one of the most sought-after birds in the park, the Golden-cheeked Warbler. The visiting birder should look for this warbler between late March and late June along the Denio Creek and Ridge Trails.

While searching for the warbler, expect to find Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Bewick's Wrens (year-round), Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Black-and-white Warblers, and Field Sparrows (year-round). Lesser Goldfinches and House Finches can sometimes be found in the park, especially during spring and summer along the Denio Creek Trail. Please stay on the trail so as not to disturb the breeding cycle of our Texas specialties.

Perhaps a third of Dinosaur Valley consists of a large fairly open grassland where live oak, yucca, prickly pear and a diversity of shrubby growth predominate. In summer, this habitat is home for Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, orioles, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. If you're lucky, you might find a Bell's Vireo in a dense shrubby thicket. On spring and summer evenings, listen for Common Poorwills along Farm Road 1007 as it winds along the park's western border.

Much of the remaining habitat in Dinosaur Valley along the Paluxy River is riparian. Originating some 10 miles north of Stephenville, the Paluxy traverses eastern Erath, southwestern Hood and central Somervell counties before joining the Brazos east of Glen Rose.

During the dry summer months, the Paluxy normally stops flowing and, within the park, is reduced to only a few pools of water. At this time, you may find herons feeding on fish trapped in the shallow pools or early shorebirds foraging at the water's edge.

It is along the Paluxy that the largest variety of birds can be found. Oaks, elms, hackberry, and to a lesser extent, willows, pecans and

sycamore grow heaviest at the river's edge attracting in summer such birds as Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Crested Flycatchers, White-eyed Vireo, Summer Tanager, and Painted Bunting. In migration, a variety of flycatchers, vireos, warblers, and sparrows are found near the river as well. Along the dryer banks, the Rufous-crowned Sparrow can be seen year-round. Another resident, the Canyon Wren, should be looked for along the Main Trail where rocky outcroppings occur.

The camping and picnic grounds can be two good areas to find birds as well. In winter, one can expect to see Northern Flicker, Hermit Thrush, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee, and many different species of sparrows (including Harris's) at these locations. The large field upriver from the picnic grounds, when it hasn't been mowed, can be an excellent area to look for wintering Le Conte's Sparrow — a rare but perhaps regular winter resident.

This checklist was compiled by Carl B. Haynie and updated by Mark Lockwood. The compiler gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of many contributors who assisted in the preparation of this checklist and especially Charles Crabtree, Charles Easley, Bill Lawley, Kennett Offill, Warren Pulich, J.W. Sifford, and the Fort Worth Audubon Society. Checklist nomenclature and organization follow the A.O.U. *Checklist of North American Birds*, 1998 as amended by supplements.

You can contribute to our knowledge of the park's birdlife by sharing new and unusual sightings or changes in status with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Please report your observations to the Natural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, or leave your detailed observations at the park headquarters for forwarding.

---

*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, including essential territorial behavior, and may lead to nest failure. Thank you for your cooperation.*

---

# LEGEND

## Seasons

Sp – Spring	March, April, May
Su – Summer	June, July, August
F – Fall	September, October, November
W – Winter	December, January, February

## Abundance

- 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  
 f = fairly common — should be seen on 40% or more of trips in proper habitat and season  
 u= uncommon — should be seen on 25% or more of trips in proper habitat and season  
 o= occasional — should be seen on 10% or more of trips in proper habitat and season  
 r= rare — not seen annually but expected to occur again  
 x= accidental — only one or two records in the past ten years  
 i=irregular — absent some years, but may be numerous in others  
 \* =breeding species — known to breed in park or breeding strongly suspected  
 /= migrants arrive in late summer

# CHECKLIST

	Sp	Su	F	W
___ Greater White-fronted Goose.....	x			
___ Snow Goose .....	x			
___ Canada Goose .....	x			
___ Wood Duck.....	i		i	i
___ Gadwall.....				o
___ American Wigeon.....				r
___ Mallard.....				o
___ Blue-winged Teal .....	o		o	
___ Ring-necked Duck.....				x

	Sp	Su	F	W
___ Lesser Scaup.....				x
___ Ruddy Duck.....	x			
___ * Northern Bobwhite.....	c	c	c	c
___ Wild Turkey .....	r	r	r	r
___ Pied-billed Grebe.....				x
___ Rock Pigeon .....	r	r	r	r
___ * Eurasian Collared-Dove.....	r	r	r	r
___ * White-winged Dove .....	c	c	c	u
___ * Mourning Dove .....	a	a	a	f
___ Inca Dove .....	o	o	o	
___ * Yellow-billed Cuckoo .....	c	c	u	
___ * Greater Roadrunner.....	r	r	r	r
___ Common Nighthawk.....	u	u	u	
___ * Common Poorwill .....	f	f	f	
___ * Chuck-will's-widow .....	c	c		
___ Chimney Swift .....	f	f	f	
___ * Black-chinned Hummingbird.....	c	c	c	
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird.....	r		r	
___ American Coot .....	r			r
___ Sandhill Crane .....	r		r	
___ * Killdeer .....	f	f	f	u
___ Willet .....	r			
___ Upland Sandpiper .....	f	/f	f	
___ Spotted Sandpiper.....		/u	u	
___ Solitary Sandpiper.....		/u	u	
___ Franklin's Gull .....	o		o	
___ Ring-billed Gull.....				r
___ Double-crested Cormorant .....	r		r	
___ American White Pelican .....	o		o	
___ Great Blue Heron.....	u	u	u	r
___ Great Egret.....		o		
___ Snowy Egret .....	u	u		
___ Little Blue Heron.....		r	o	
___ Cattle Egret .....	r	r		

	Sp	Su	F	W
___ Green Heron.....	f	f	u	
___ Black Vulture.....	f	f	f	f
___ Turkey Vulture .....	a	a	a	a
___ Mississippi Kite .....	r		r	
___ Bald Eagle.....	x			
___ Northern Harrier .....	u		u	u
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	u		u	u
___ Cooper's Hawk.....	r	x	r	r
___ Broad-winged Hawk .....	r			
___ Red-shouldered Hawk .....	r	r	r	
___ Swainson's Hawk .....	u		u	
___ * Red-tailed Hawk.....	f	u	f	f
___ Barn Owl .....	x			
___ * Eastern Screech-Owl .....	c	c	c	c
___ * Great Horned Owl.....	f	f	f	f
___ Barred Owl .....	x	x		
___ * Belted Kingfisher.....	f	f	f	f
___ Red-headed Woodpecker.....	x			
___ Red-bellied Woodpecker .....	u	u	u	u
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	r		r	r
___ * Ladder-backed Woodpecker .....	f	f	f	f
___ Downy Woodpecker .....	o	o	o	o
___ Northern Flicker .....	c		c	f
___ Crested Caracara.....	x			
___ American Kestrel.....	f		f	f
___ Prairie Falcon .....	x			
___ Peregrine Falcon.....	x			
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher.....			o	
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee .....	o	o	o	
___ Willow Flycatcher.....	o		o	
___ Least Flycatcher .....	f		f	
___ * Eastern Phoebe.....	c	f	c	u
___ Ash-throated Flycatcher .....	x			
___ * Great Crested Flycatcher.....	f	f	f	

	Sp	Su	F	W
___ Western Kingbird .....	o	o	o	
___ Eastern Kingbird .....	u	u	u	
___ * Scissor-tailed Flycatcher .....	c	c	c	
___ * Loggerhead Shrike .....	f	f	f	f
___ * White-eyed Vireo .....	f	f	u	
___ Bell's Vireo .....	r	r	r	
___ * Black-capped Vireo.....	r	r	r	
___ Blue-headed Vireo .....	r		r	
___ Yellow-throated Vireo .....		x		
___ Red-eyed Vireo .....	r		r	
___ * Blue Jay.....	c	u	c	c
___ * American Crow .....	f	f	f	f
___ Purple Martin .....	u	u	u	
___ Tree Swallow.....			x	
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow .....	f	f	f	
___ Cliff Swallow .....	f	u	f	
___ Cave Swallow .....	x			
___ Barn Swallow.....	f	u	f	
___ * Carolina Chickadee .....	a	a	a	a
___ * Black-crested Titmouse.....	a	a	a	a
___ Bushtit.....	x			
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch.....				x
___ Brown Creeper .....				r
___ * Canyon Wren.....	r	r	r	r
___ * Carolina Wren.....	c	c	c	c
___ * Bewick's Wren .....	a	a	a	a
___ House Wren.....	u		u	
___ Winter Wren .....			x	o
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	f		u	f
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	c		c	f
___ * Blue-gray Gnatcatcher .....	c	c	f	
___ Eastern Bluebird.....	u		u	f
___ Swainson's Thrush .....	r		r	
___ Hermit Thrush .....	u		u	u



	Sp	Su	F	W
___ American Robin.....	c		c	a
___ Gray Catbird.....	o			
___ * Northern Mockingbird.....	a	a	a	a
___ * Brown Thrasher.....	u	u	u	u
___ European Starling.....	o	o	o	o
___ Cedar Waxwing.....	a		u	a
___ * House Sparrow.....	o	o	o	o
___ American Pipit.....			o	
___ Purple Finch.....				i
___ * House Finch.....	u	u	u	u
___ Pine Siskin.....	a		c	a
___ Lesser Goldfinch.....	r	r	r	
___ American Goldfinch.....	a		c	a
___ Louisiana Waterthrush.....		o		
___ Northern Waterthrush.....	o			
___ * Black-and-white Warbler.....	f	f	f	
___ Orange-crowned Warbler.....	u		u	o
___ Nashville Warbler.....	f		f	
___ Common Yellowthroat.....	r		r	
___ American Redstart.....	o			
___ Magnolia Warbler.....	o			
___ Yellow Warbler.....	u		u	
___ Townsend's Warbler.....	x			
___ * Golden-cheeked Warbler.....	f	f		
___ Black-throated Green Warbler.....	r		r	
___ Pine Warbler.....				r
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	c		c	c
___ Wilson's Warbler.....	u		u	
___ Yellow-breasted Chat.....	r	r	r	
___ Spotted Towhee.....	a		f	a
___ Eastern Towhee.....	o		o	o
___ Canyon Towhee.....			x	x
___ * Rufous-crowned Sparrow.....	c	c	c	c
___ Cassin's Sparrow.....	i	i		

	Sp	Su	F	W
___ Chipping Sparrow .....	f	r	r	o
___ Clay-colored Sparrow .....	u		r	
___ * Field Sparrow.....	a	f	c	a
___ Vesper Sparrow .....	f		f	f
___ * Lark Sparrow .....	a	a	a	
___ Savannah Sparrow .....	c		c	c
___ Grasshopper Sparrow .....	u		u	
___ Le Conte's Sparrow .....			r	r
___ Fox Sparrow .....	c		f	c
___ Song Sparrow .....	c		f	c
___ Lincoln's Sparrow .....	c		c	u
___ Swamp Sparrow.....				x
___ White-throated Sparrow.....	a		c	a
___ Harris's Sparrow.....	c		f	c
___ White-crowned Sparrow .....	u		u	f
___ Dark-eyed Junco.....	a		a	a
___ * Summer Tanager.....	f	f	f	
___ * Northern Cardinal .....	a	a	a	a
___ Blue Grosbeak .....		r		
___ Lazuli Bunting.....	x			
___ Indigo Bunting.....		o		
___ * Painted Bunting.....	a	a	a	
___ Dickcissel .....	r	r		
___ Red-winged Blackbird .....	f	u	f	f
___ * Eastern Meadowlark .....	a	a	a	a
___ Western Meadowlark .....				r
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird.....	x			
___ Brewer's Blackbird .....				o
___ Common Grackle.....	f	u	f	u
___ Great-tailed Grackle.....	o	o	o	o
___ * Brown-headed Cowbird .....	c	c	c	o
___ Orchard Oriole .....	u	u		
___ Baltimore Oriole.....	r	r	r	

# CITATION

Haynie, Carl B. May 2017. Birds of Dinosaur Valley State Park: a field checklist. Natural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

---

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.**

---



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