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Birds of the Texas Panhandle: Their Status, Distribution, and History.

Kenneth D. Seyffert. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001. xv + 501 pp. Map, tables, line drawings, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Birds of the Texas Panhandle is the first book to focus on the avifauna of this region of Texas. Seyffert has been studying the Panhandle's birds for

almost forty years, and no one is more qualified to provide a comprehensive overview of its bird life. His work concentrates on the twenty-six counties that make up the Panhandle, including habitats from two physiographic regions, the High Plains and the Rolling Plains. Seyffert details the occurrence of 406 avian species that have been satisfactorily documented in the study area and thirty-six others that have been reported without supporting details. Each species account includes a brief status summary and detailed information covering occurrence, nesting, and specimens.

The species accounts are well written and longer than those often found in regional treatises, one of this work's main strengths. For species of more unusual occurrence, exhaustive detail is provided about sightings, occasionally with some supporting information. Seyffert offers historical material for many species, comparing those data with current occurrence to comment about changes over the past century. Much of the volume's information is empirical in nature, based on the kinds of data that have formed the foundation of our understanding of abundance and distribution of birds over the past four to five decades. In addition to the extensive database of sight reports and documented records, Seyffert also uses data collected from the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas project, Christmas bird counts, and breeding bird surveys. He discusses questionable sight reports in order to give a thorough treatment of the available information. By not dismissing these sightings, Seyffert provides information that may in time prove to be of greater value.

This volume is one of several works describing the avifauna from a region of Texas published in recent years. Most of these center on a region defined by political boundaries, as is the case here. Seyffert, however, makes a concerted effort to compare his conclusions with information available from surrounding areas. In particular, he compares details of occurrence and abundance of species also found in northeastern New Mexico and western Oklahoma. For a few species this treatment extends to southwestern Kansas and southeastern Colorado. By comparing the avifauna of the Texas Panhandle to that of surrounding regions, Seyffert expands the book's usefulness and credibility.

Birds of the Texas Panhandle is a quality product that will benefit a wide array of readers, including conservationists and resource managers, birders, and ornithologists. **Mark Lockwood**, *Natural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin*.