

Floyd County

Overview

Floyd has a very large number of playas in the Southern High Plains, making water more abundant than it may be in other counties. Most of the county is above the caprock, but there is limited birding just below the caprock. The US62 crossing at the White River is the most accessible of the county below the caprock, along with the nearby limited access Plains Baptist Assembly. Consequently, these are good locations in the county. Generally, the areas around Floydada and Dougherty have the most locations worth checking, though Lockney has some treatment ponds and a cattle feedlot that can be good, and the Los Lingos Creek crossing up in the northern part of the county may hold birds not easily seen elsewhere in the county. In terms of general species, this county fits pretty well for the mix.

Route (from Lubbock): Take Hwy 62/82 east to Ralls. Follow Hwy 62 north into Floyd county. When it dips below the caprock, pull off into the parking area along the road to bird FLOYD CO.—US62 AT WHITE RIVER. Continue north on US62 into Floydada. Turn north onto Hwy 70 and then east on W Price St. Turn south onto 5th St with a quick turn east on W Grover St. Park along W Grover or on Main St and bird EAGLES HALL PARK. After birding EAGLES HALL PARK, continue south on Main St to bird FLOYDADA. Travel to the east side of Floydada and turn north on Hwy 207. Turn west into FLOYDADA CEMETERY to bird it. Return south on Hwy 207 to US62 and continue east. Bird the US62 PLAYAS, CR231 WETLANDS, and DOUGHERTY AREA PLAYAS. To access Lockney area spots, take US62 to Floydada and head north on Hwy 70. Turn south on Commercial St and follow the dirt road south to the LOCKNEY WWTP. Then return to Commercial St and travel north to E Shubert St. Travel east on E Shubert until you reach FM378/8th St. Travel north on FM378 until you reach CR120. Turn west on CR120 and head west to bird the WESTERN CATTLE FEEDERS AREA. Return to FM378, continue north. Just before the intersection with FM2286, bird the FM378 COW POND. Return to Lubbock by traveling south on FM378, Hwy 70 south to Hwy 62 or travel west on Hwy 70 to bird Hale county, or travel east on FM2286 to Hwy 207 and bird that area of Floyd, returning via Hwy 207 to Hwy62 west to Lubbock.

Locations

FLOYD CO.—US62 AT WHITE RIVER

Pull off and park at the rest stop. Private property lines the sides of the rest stop; do not trespass. Walk up and down the road, especially birding the tall trees and the culvert. Be careful near the road; traffic is moving at 75 mph. Cave Swallows have tried to nest under the bridge.

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The reeds may hold sparrows. The trees lining the road may hold a variety of woodpeckers, including Golden-fronted, Red-headed and Ladder-backed and Northern Flicker. Other passerines may be seen further back from the road, especially during migration.

Access: This small rest area can be freely walked. Be very mindful of the FAST traffic near the road. Cost: free

Parking: Parking lot east of the highway.

EAGLES HALL PARK

A wide range of habitats makes Eagles Hall Park worth checking when in Floydada. Park along the side of the road at the corner of Grove St and Main St. Eagles Hall Park holds some thick trees on the west side of the park near this area. The thick trees are good for Great Horned Owl, along with other woodland migrants. In wetter years, there will be water in the playa and you may find shorebirds here. In between, the open meadows are good for grassland birds. If you look south of the park, you should be able to pick up some urban birds, especially doves.

Access: This small park can be freely walked.

Cost: free

Parking: Roadside. The intersection of Grover St and Main St is a good starting point.

FLOYDADA

Like many towns on the South Plains, Floydada concentrates a relatively large number of trees and it is often worth birding the alleys and streets in search of passerines. The southern part of Floydada, especially JB Ave and Main St seem to generally hold some of the best birds. Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing and Common Grackle have all been found in this area. Look skywards for Chimney Swifts.

Access: Alleys, sidewalks and roads. Cost: free

Parking: Roadside.

FLOYDADA CEMETERY

This small cemetery tends to be hit or miss. It has the usual cemetery open tracts mixed with arbor vitae, which may hold the usual cemetery-type sparrows, doves and meadowlarks. Hawks may be observed in the nearby environs, including Swainson's Hawk, and American Kestrel.

Access: This small cemetery can be freely walked. Turn into the cemetery from Hwy 207 Cost: free

Parking: Parking along the small roads in the cemetery.

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US62 PLAYAS

Hwy62 just before CR231

Hwy62 and CR241 CR290 playa Hwy62 and CR271

Most of these playas are along US62 and are worth checking for the usual shorebirds, ducks and grassland birds in the appropriate seasons. Pull off along the side of the road to bird these. The first playa mentioned is just before CR231/FM602. There is a farm just east of this playa, which may hold Brewer's Blackbird in the winter and other farm-associated birds. CR290 playa may be worth checking for Burrowing Owls. To access it, travel south from US62 along FM602. Turn west on CR290. In wet years, there will be a playa on the north side of the road. In most years, the playa will be a barren patch of land and/or hold some greenery, possibly with Red-winged Blackbirds. For Burrowing Owls look to the south side of the county road. The second playa mentioned is just after CR241 and has held Cinnamon Teal in migration along with other ducks. The third playa is just before CR271, and is less reliable than the other two playas.

Access: Road only Cost: free Parking: Roadside

CR231 WETLANDS

In between the first two playas mentioned above is the CR231 wetlands. This stretch tends to be marshy in wetter years, with a relatively steep and deep pond near CR241. This stretch may hold breeding Dickcissels, along with other sparrows like Grasshopper and Cassin's Sparrow and the usual grassland birds. Also keep alert for the possibility of rails in wetter years.

Access: Road only Cost: free

Parking: Roadside

DOUGHERTY AREA PLAYAS Hwy62 and FM28

CR293 Cow Playa

CR319 Playa

FM28/CR232 playas

CR283 between Hwy62 and CR200

The large playa at the intersection of Hwy62 and FM28 marks the start of these playas. A scope will be helpful for many of these playas. To access CR293 Cow playa, follow FM28 south through Dougherty. When it veers east, continue south on CR293. Turn east on CR284 and then south again on CR293 until you reach the playa. Even in dry years, there is often some water for the cows closer in. This spot may hold shorebirds. CR319 playa is accessed by driving north on CR319 from Hwy62. This spot may be good for Chihuahuan Raven along with the

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usual ducks and shorebirds. To access the FM28 playas, travel north on FM28. Check the multiple playas north of CR232, as well as the residence (possible Cattle Egrets, Common Grackles). The playa just east on CR220 looks promising and often holds water, but you will probably want a scope to view it from the road.

Access: Road only Cost: free Parking: Roadside

LOCKNEY WWTP

These treatment ponds a little south of the town are good for diving ducks and other waterfowl in the winter. Longspurs and pipits may also come to the water. In migration, look for shorebirds, Black Tern and Franklin's Gull. Sparrows, raptors, gamebirds and swallows round out the rest of the likely species.

Access: Best to stay near the parking lot.

Cost: free

Parking: The parking area is just before the ponds at the end of the road.

WESTERN CATTLE FEEDERS AREA

This is a good spot for shorebirds in migration. The best birding will be along CR120 and then north along CR77. The cow pond may require a scope to adequately see. Check the various low areas for shorebirds, especially close to the road. Burrowing Owls may also be found around here. Warblers may be found in some of the taller trees in the area and hawks may be seen hunting the grasslands.

Access: Road only Cost: free Parking: Roadside

FM378 COW POND

The playa just south of the intersection between FM378 and FM2286 may be worth a stop. It has held Yellow-headed Blackbird along with shorebirds and the other usual suspects.

Access: Road only Cost: free Parking: Roadside

FM1065 LOS LINGOS CREEK CROSSING

This location has held Chuck-Will's-Widow in the past, along with a number of other marsh birds, like Marsh Wren and Bell's Vireo. For Chuck's, arrive before light and listen. Sparrows, flycatchers and Belted Kingfisher may also be found here in due season.

Access: Road only Cost: free Parking: Roadside

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