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To <Brad_Andres@fws.gov>
cc "Mary Gustafson" <Mary.Gustafson@tpwd.state.tx.us>,
"Mark Lockwood" <Mark.Lockwood@tpwd.state.tx.us>
bcc

Subject FW: Mountain Plover Conservation Plan

Hi Brad,

Longtime no talk -- hope you're doing well. All is well here.

In just glancing thru the distribution/range info in the draft Mt Plover plan, I can see that Texas is not represented well. For years, wintering plovers in Central and South Texas have been completely "off" the radar screen of almost all authors on this species.

For a great Texas range map for this plover, please see:

Mark W. Lockwood and Brush Freeman. 2004. The TOS Handbook of Texas Birds. Texas A&M Univ Press. 261 pp.

The BNA range map, in contrast, that is included in the draft plan is a perfect example of misrepresenting the overwintering of the species in Texas. Unfortunately, I have no population data to share so we have no idea of numbers, but the regularity of the birds should warrant inclusion in any published national range map.

There is a tremendous amount of habitat in Texas available for these birds in winter -- surveying for them in, for example, the strip of Blackland Prairie that abutts the Edwards Plateau that is currently under ag (i.e., plowed fields) would be a major feat. That is where many of the birds can be found. It would be nice to have an idea of numbers of individuals, but I doubt anyone is qualified to provide such a number. Understandably, CBC data do not help.

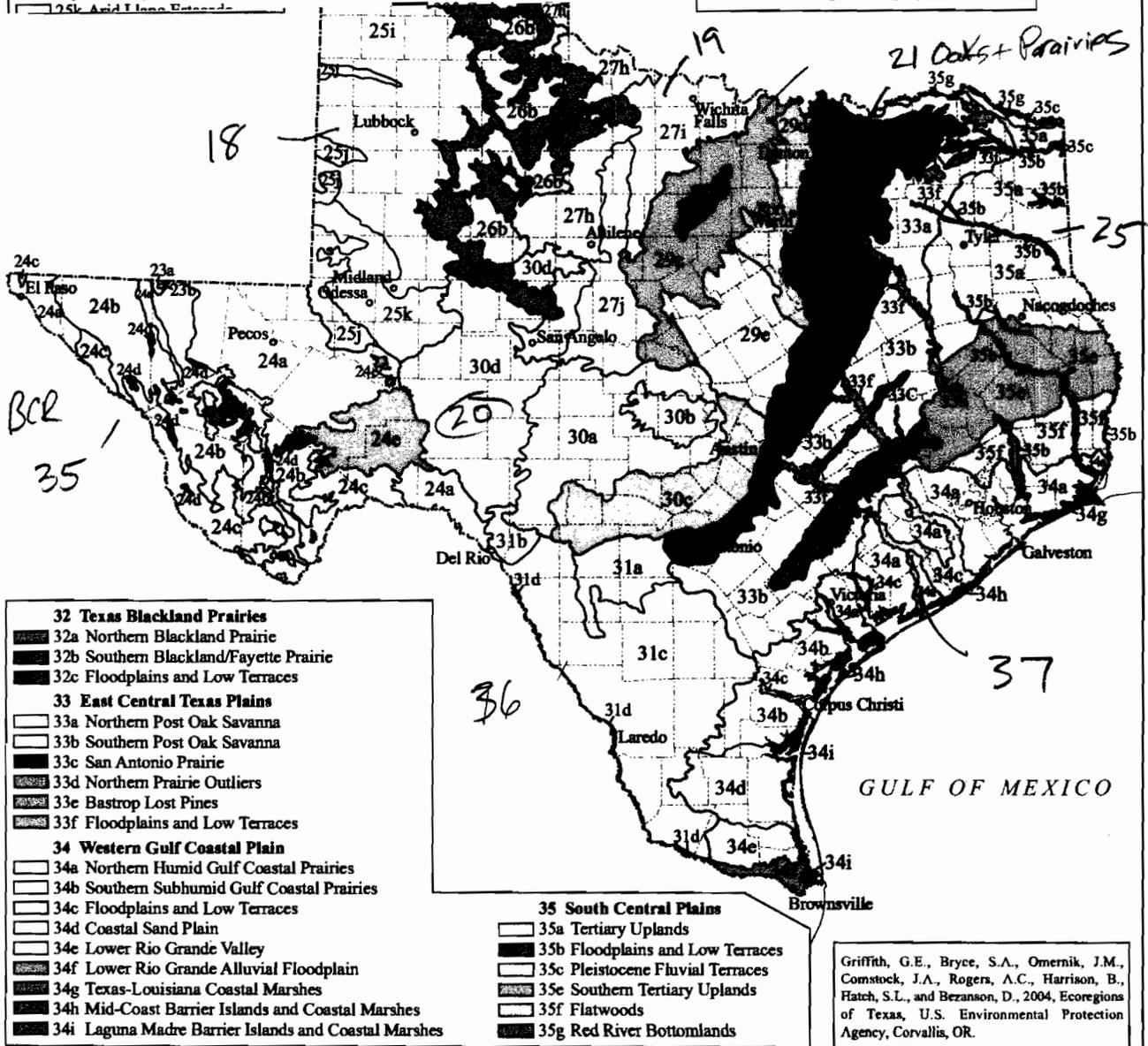
That's all I have for now. Hope this helps.

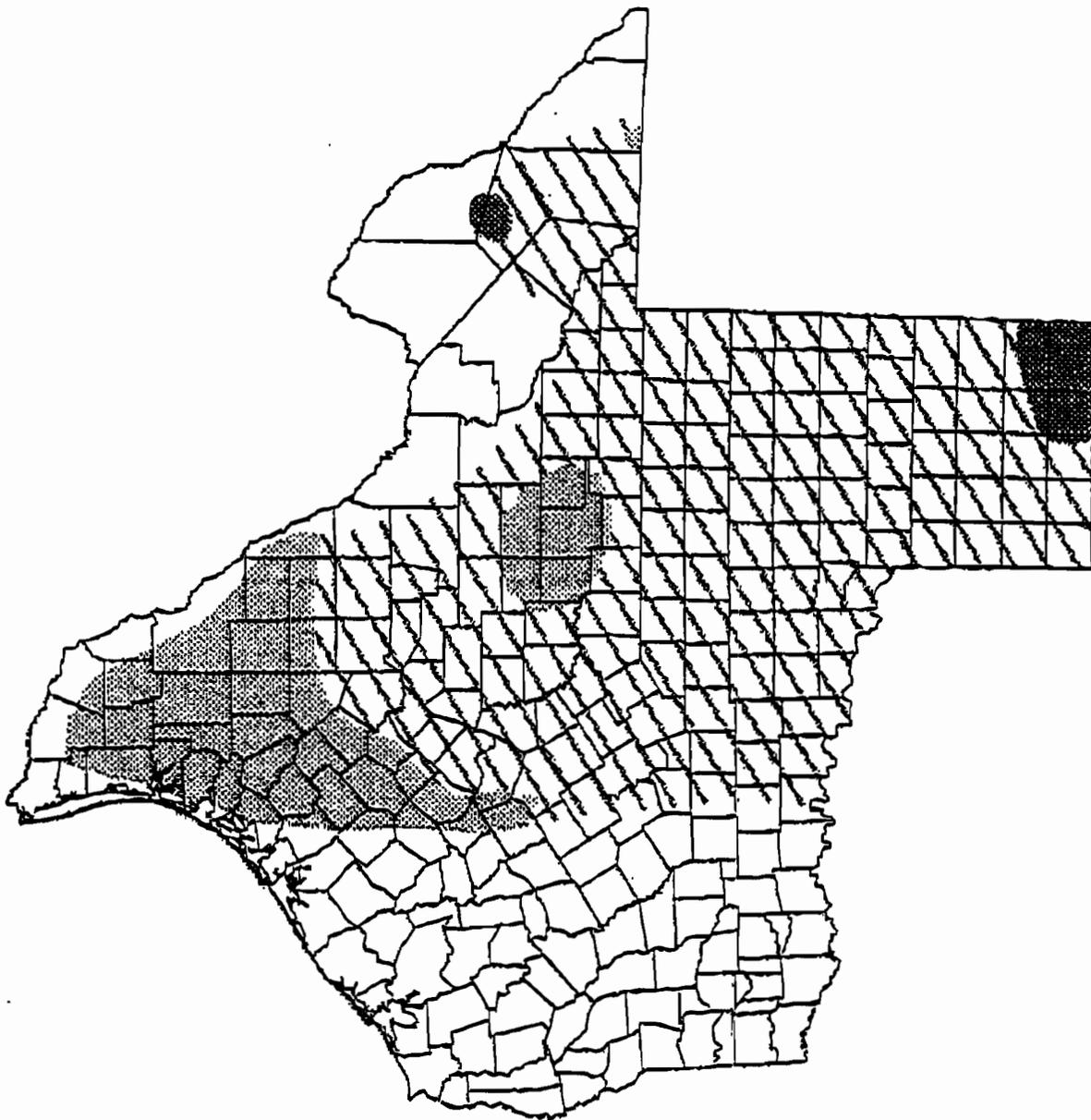
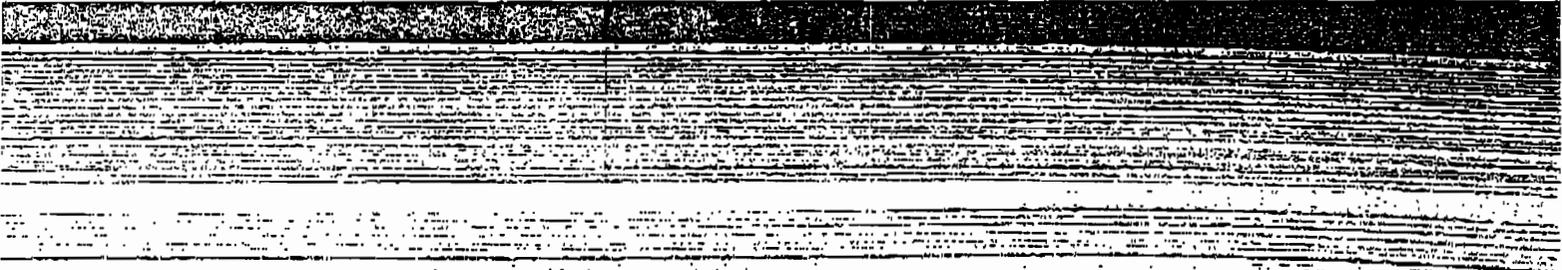
Cheers,

Cliff

Ecoregions of Texas

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 23 Arizona/New Mexico Mountains | 26 Southwestern Tablelands | 30 Edwards Plateau |
| 23a Chihuahuan Desert Slopes | 26a Canadian/Cimarron Breaks | 30a Edwards Plateau Woodland |
| 23b Montane Woodlands | 26b Flat Tablelands and Valleys | 30b Llano Uplift |
| 24 Chihuahuan Deserts | 26c Caprock Canyons, Badlands, and Breaks | 30c Balcones Canyonlands |
| 24a Chihuahuan Basins and Playas | 26d Semiarid Canadian Breaks | 30d Semiarid Edwards Plateau |
| 24b Chihuahuan Desert Grasslands | 27 Central Great Plains | 31 Southern Texas Plains |
| 24c Low Mountains and Bajadas | 27h Red Prairie | 31a Northern Nueces Alluvial Plains |
| 24d Chihuahuan Montane Woodlands | 27i Broken Red Plains | 31b Semiarid Edwards Bajada |
| 24e Stockton Plateau | 27j Limestone Plains | 31c Texas-Tamaulipan Thornscrub |
| 25 High Plains | 29 Cross Timbers | 31d Rio Grande Floodplain and Terraces |
| 25b Rolling Sand Plains | 29b Eastern Cross Timbers | |
| 25c Canadian/Cimarron High Plains | 29c Western Cross Timbers | |
| 25i Llano Estacado | 29d Grand Prairie | |
| 25j Shinnery Sands | 29e Limestone Cut Plain | |
| 25k Arid Llano Estacado | | |





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COUNTY CLERK

PLOVERS 59

inland, primarily at salt lakes, in Willacy, Hidalgo, and western Kenedy Counties. Summer residents begin returning to the coast in mid-February but are not common until early March. Most depart by late September.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER

Charadrius semipalmatus Bonaparte

Common winter resident along the coast, rare to very rare inland. Semipalmated Plovers are uncommon to common migrants in the eastern two-thirds of the state, becoming uncommon farther west. Semipalmated Plovers may at times congregate in large flocks along the coast during spring migration, sometimes including up to 1,000 individuals. The migration periods for this species are between late March and mid-May and from mid-July to mid-October. This species is a rare summer visitor on the coast.

PIPING PLOVER *Charadrius melodus* Ord

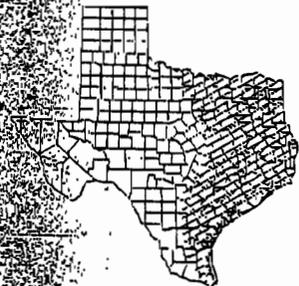
Uncommon to locally common winter resident along the coast. Piping Plover is a rare visitor along the coast in the summer. Piping Plovers are not often observed during migration at inland locations, but most appear to pass east of the Balcones Escarpment. This species is a very rare to casual migrant in the western two-thirds of the state. Recent surveys indicate that the Piping Plover continues to decline in numbers in the state (Eubanks 1994). In 2000, the Canadian Wildlife Service estimated the world's population to be around 5,900 individuals. Piping Plover is listed as Endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

KILLDEER *Charadrius vociferus* Linnacus

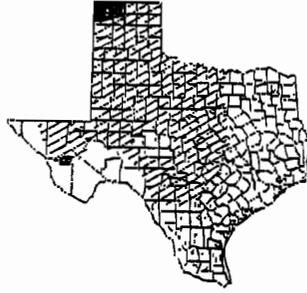
The Killdeer is one of the most ubiquitous birds in Texas. They are common to abundant summer residents in all parts of the state and increase in numbers in the central and southern parts of the state during the winter. Killdeer populations fluctuate greatly during the winter in the Panhandle where they can be common some years and virtually absent in others.

MOUNTAIN PLOVER *Charadrius montanus* Townsend

Very rare summer resident in the mid- and upper elevation grasslands of the Trans-Pecos and in open grasslands of



60 FAMILIES HAEMATOPODIDAE, RECURVIROSTRIDAE, JACANIDAE



the northwestern Panhandle. Mountain Plovers are rare and local winter residents from the southern Blackland Prairies south to the central Coastal Prairies. In recent years, they appear to occur with more consistency on the Blackland Prairies. This species also winters very locally in the Trans-Pecos, South Texas Brush Country, Concho Valley, and northwestern Edwards Plateau. Wintering birds arrive in late September to early October and are present until early April. Migrants are very rarely encountered away from the Panhandle and South Plains. Occasionally, Mountain Plovers are reported from unlikely locations when American Golden-Plover are migrating through. These reports probably pertain to basic-plumaged American Golden-Plovers. The Mountain Plover is a candidate for the Threatened Species list, and population estimates indicate that there are fewer than 9,000 individuals remaining.

Family Haematopodidae: Oystercatchers

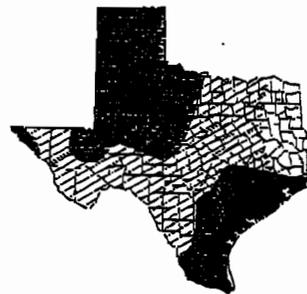
AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER

Haematopus palliatus Temminck



Locally common resident along the central coast. This species is rare to locally uncommon along the upper and lower coasts. American Oystercatchers nest primarily on or near shell ridges and are seldom found far from areas that provide an ample supply of salt water mollusks on which they feed. Breeding activities are underway in late February, and young can be encountered after mid-April.

Family Recurvirostridae: Stilts and Avocets

BLACK-NECKED STILT *Himantopus mexicanus* (Müller)

Common summer resident along the Coastal Prairies and locally common inland to the South Texas Brush Country and southern Blackland Prairies. Isolated breeding populations are also present in north and north-central Texas. Black-necked Stilts are uncommon to rare summer residents on the High Plains, western Rolling Plains, and northeastern Trans-Pecos. They are uncommon to common in El Paso and