

Details on Lakes Avalon-Brantley Christmas count:
16 December 2015
Steve West

Cattle Egret: Two Cattle Egrets were seen on the count by SW at Lake Avalon on 16 December. This species is unusual in the winter in Eddy County. They were feeding in the grassy areas on the northwest side of the lake. They were short, stocky herons with a yellow bill and yellow legs. Overall, all white plumage. Seen from a distance of about 30 m using a scope.

Turkey Vulture: One individual was seen on the day before the count (15 December) on two different occasions. The day before the count was very windy. I left the house early in the morning and it was flying just east of the house over a residential area. I was surprised to see this but I had a meeting to go to. After the meeting I drove through the area and as I got close to our house, it was seen again, flying low over the houses and going back and forth.

Typical Turkey Vulture, dihedral flight, two toned wings, forward portion of wing darker than lighter colored primaries and secondaries, red head.

Vermillion Flycatcher: Seen by SW at Lake Avalon, southeastern shore (where the Lawrence's Goldfinches were seen a few years ago). I was going along the shore, birding eastward when I saw the flycatcher. It was a female, brown above on the back, wings and head. The outside of the tail was black. The breast was streaked, with a white background and with a light pink on the strips along the stomach and vent. It also had a single white eyebrow stripe that started at the bill and went back past the eye. I came back later in the day to try and get a photo but I never saw the bird again.