

# TRAVIS AUDUBON SOCIETY BAKER SANCTUARY 2009 BCP ANNUAL REPORT

## ***Access and Trail Maintenance***

- The Sanctuary opened on January 31, 2009. The Sanctuary was closed on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 for the annual white-tailed deer harvest, at which time volunteer lease manager and Doran Bradbury and Sanctuary Steward Derik Caudill locked the gates and posted closure notices.
- On February 14<sup>th</sup> the Baker Sanctuary held a workday to line-trim the Blue Trail prior to the annual Open House scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>.
- On March 14<sup>th</sup> the Baker Sanctuary hosted a BCP Hike led by Cindy Sperry and Bill Reiner for ten guests.
- On March 15<sup>th</sup> the JAEC at the Baker Sanctuary hosted a commercial event led by Shelia Hargis and Laurie Foss for five participants.
- On March 24<sup>th</sup> Marcie Wilcox and John Wilcox helped Nancy Manning give a program to 24 people about the TAS Baker Sanctuary to the Ranch at Deer Creek Home Owners Association. Kevin Connally with Travis County also was present at this meeting and talked about the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan and the BCP Preserve system.
- On April 4<sup>th</sup> the JAEC at the Baker Sanctuary hosted the annual Open House from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM. In all, 100 people attended.
- On April 11<sup>th</sup> the JAEC hosted the CAMN Introduction to Insects and Spider Class. In all 37 people attended, including instructors.
- On April 24<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup> the Baker Sanctuary hosted three field trips for TOS members. In all, five guides showed 31 people GCWAs.
- On September 9<sup>th</sup> Sanctuary steward Mike Powers provided an evening interpretive tour on North Trail for Boy Scout group organized by TAS member Debbie Krakar
- On October 10<sup>th</sup> Sanctuary steward Mike Powers assisted Cindy Sperry with BCP guided tour for eight guests on North Trail.
- During the 2009 visitor season, the Sanctuary had 367 visitors, including those visitors that attended special events. The number of visitors that signed in at the Registration Box was 177; of these visitors, 96 were TAS members, and 81 were non members.

## ***Boundary Control***

- From January until May, John Wilcox monitored the Sanctuary boundaries and visitor access. From July until October, Mike Powers monitored the Sanctuary boundaries and visitor access. From November until January Derik Caudill monitored the Sanctuary boundaries and visitor access.

## ***General Maintenance***

- Mike Powers watered the landscapes at the residence and the JAEC five times.
- Cedar Park Plumbing repaired the supply-line water leak and flushed out the hot-water heater
- John Wilcox mowed and trimmed the Headquarters area, parking lot and around the Baker cabin four times and Derik Caudill mowed and trimmed the Headquarters area and parking lot two times.
- Derik Caudill picked up trash on the Sanctuary right-of-way three times. Mike Powers picked up trash along the Sanctuary right-of-way two times.
- Mike Powers trimmed gardens around Headquarters area three times and Derik Caudill pruned woody plants around the Headquarters area three times.

### ***Problem Animal Control***

- During the 2009-2010 White-tailed Deer harvest, volunteer lease manager Doran Bradbury put in 350 volunteer hours and with the assistance of Derik Caudill managed eight hunting leases for gun hunters.
- John Wilcox had difficulty in obtaining BHCO decoys so he began the BHCO trapping season on April 11 with five BHCO decoys (three males and two females) in Trap #1. John Wilcox left the sanctuary in late May and he shut down Trap #1 on May 6<sup>th</sup> and captured a total of five male and 14 female BHCOs. Less initial decoy stock, Mr. Wilcox trapped a total of 14 BHCOs. Mr. Wilcox had no non-target captures and no non-target fatalities.

### ***Endangered Species***

- TAS member Cindy Sperry and Dawn Houston surveyed the TAS-BS 100 acre GCW plot in 2009. Beginning on March 22 and ending June 2, they surveyed the full plot 9 times during 11 visits for a total survey time of 56 hours and 47 minutes. Based on compiled observations, including patterns of movement, counter-singing and the presence of females and fledglings, Ms. Houston and Ms. Sperry estimated that at least fourteen Golden-cheeked Warbler males established territories substantially within plot boundaries, and another four occupied territories partially within or immediately adjacent to the plot (edge territories). We feel these estimates are conservative as it is possible that, in one or more instances, we may have grouped two males into a single territory. We believe that it is preferable to risk erroneously counting two males as one, rather than assume separate identities in the absence of counter-singing or other clear evidence. These results are similar to last year's estimate of fourteen in-plot territories and seven edge territories. There were significantly fewer observations of females (six) and fledglings (seven in four territories) this year compared to 2008 (ten females and sixteen fledglings in ten territories). Females were relatively abundant on March 28, but disappeared from view after April 19. Fledglings were detected only on three surveys during May. Females are always difficult to detect but some are usually observed tending fledglings later in the season, this year there were no observations of females attending fledglings. Possible causes for reduced fledgling numbers include the continuing drought and its effect on insect availability, and the severe hail storm that hit the area in early April.

### ***Research***

- No research was done at Baker Sanctuary during 2009; because of unusually dry conditions this summer, Baker springs was dry each time a salamander survey was scheduled.

Derik Caudill, TAS Baker Sanctuary Steward  
12219 Lime Creek Road  
Leander, Texas 78641  
Phone/Fax: 219-8425  
Email: derik\_caudill@yahoo.com