



# SIGNAL SMOKE

The Newsletter of Travis Audubon Society

VOLUME 52, NO. 5

MAY 2003

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE . . .

- Audubon Membership Changes .. 1, 11
- From the Executive Director ..... 2
- Calendar of TAS Events ..... 3
- TAS Field Trips & Events ..... 4-5
- Announcements ..... 5
- TAS Meetings ..... 6
- Non-TAS Events ..... 7-8
- Education Committee Classes ..... 8
- Kids' Section ..... 9
- Volunteer Opportunity ..... 9
- Listing Challenge Results ..... 10
- New Austin-Area Bird Checklist ..... 10
- Memorial Benches Dedicated at Hornsby Bend ..... 11
- Urban Habitat Development ..... 12
- Partnership with Wildlife Rescue ..... 13
- Friends of Balcones National Wildlife Refuge ..... 13
- Backyard Birding ..... 14-15
- Book Review ..... 15
- Naturalist's Calendar ..... 16
- Sanctuary News ..... 17
- Travis Audubon Society Membership Form ..... Back page

## Important Changes in Travis Audubon Membership

Audubon members can now choose how they want to support bird conservation. If you are interested in supporting national efforts, you can join the National Audubon Society. If you are primarily interested in protecting our local birds, wildlife, and habitats in Central Texas, Travis Audubon is now offering a chapter-only membership—this is a membership in the Travis Audubon Society only. You can now be a member of National Audubon Society with Travis Audubon as your local chapter affiliation, or you can be a member of Travis Audubon only . . . or both! Confusing? Here's how it works.



The National Audubon Society has recently changed its relationship with local chapters. National Audubon is cutting back on the percentage of membership dues that it will share with each chapter. Currently, Travis Audubon only gets \$2.25 of your annual dues from National Audubon. Next year, we will only get a projected \$.64 for each member. This is not enough money to send out even one issue of our newsletter (which costs nearly \$1 to print and mail to you each month). This change in policy has prompted many chapters to initiate chapter-only memberships. The main advantages of this kind of membership are that all your dues will stay local, you will continue to receive our monthly newsletter, you will receive a discount on educational classes and workshops, and Travis Audubon will not share your name and contact information with other organizations. Instead of your dues going to New York, the Travis Audubon Society will use your dues in its education, research, and conservation programs. This is how you can support the enjoyment and preservation of local birds, wildlife, and habitats here in Central Texas.

Audubon membership is flexible, however, and you need not change your current membership if you do not want to. Here are the options that are now available to you.

### National Audubon Membership (with Travis Audubon as Your Local Chapter Affiliation)

When you joined the National Audubon Society, you were enrolled in the Travis Audubon Society as your local chapter. To continue with this membership option, you need not do anything. You will continue to receive the benefits of National Audubon

(Continued on page 11)



### TAS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING Thursday, May 15, 7 p.m.

Program: Last Chance Forever

Presenter: John Karger (executive director) and Staff

Texas Parks & Wildlife, 4200 Smith School Road

(See page 6 for details.)

## Travis Audubon Society

Email addresses are at "About Us,"  
<[www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org)>.

### Officers and Directors

<b>President</b>	
Pat Dillon	347-0452
<b>First Vice President</b>	
Shelia Hargis	291-1861
<b>Second Vice President</b>	
BJ Dertien	
<b>Treasurer</b>	
Wayne Bartholomew	507-3553
P.O. Box 40787	
Austin TX 78704-0014	
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	
Anne Donovan	472-3030
<b>Past President</b>	
Bob Warneke	443-5488
<b>Executive Director</b>	
Rob Fergus / TAS	926-0999
10803 Platt Lane	
Austin TX 78725	
<b>Directors</b>	
Barbara Anderson	346-6584
Wilma Anderson	301-5866
Mark Bentley	301-2675
Lois Burkes	261-9923
Sam Fason	474-1185
Al Green	512-357-1427
Marcie Wilcox	219-8425
John Kelly	331-8693
Richard Manson	347-8192
Russ Nelson	431-1420

### Sanctuary Caretakers

<b>TAS Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	
John Wilcox	219-8425
<b>Blair Woods</b>	
Stennie Meadours	443-8152

### ACT Representatives

John Kelly (state president)	331-8693
Bryan Hale (state treasurer)	474-5599

### Signal Smoke Editor

Rosemary Wetherold	892-1606
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### TAS Hotline: 926-8751

The hotline has information on TAS events (press 6) and rare birds in our area (press 5). To report sightings, press 1. To ask about birds, environmental issues, or TAS, press 2. No touch-tone phone? Call 474-5599.

### TAS Web Site

[www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org)

### TAS Email

[info@travisaudubon.org](mailto:info@travisaudubon.org)

### TAS Fax

892-2026

## Mission Statement

The Travis Audubon Society promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and preservation of birds, wildlife, and their habitats in Central Texas.

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In order to further promote the enjoyment and understanding of local birds, the Travis Audubon Society has just published the latest edition of the Austin-Area Bird Checklist (see page 10). This publication is based on bird records submitted to the TAS Bird Records Committee since the publication of the last edition in 1994, and it has been more than a year in production. Jeff Hanson chaired the subcommittee working on the checklist, and Shawn Ashbaugh spent hundreds of hours putting together the graphic design and overseeing the publication. It is quite possibly the best local checklist in the state, if not the country.

Most checklists indicate either how abundant each species is or how easy each species is to find. This checklist does both. Based on an idea presented by Catfish Kelly, the checklist committee came up with an innovative system to indicate not only how many of each species should be in the area during each 10-day period of the year but also the chances that the average birder will find that species in appropriate habitat. In addition, the checklist features a map with dozens of birding locations in the Austin area. To further aid birders in finding each species, the most likely mapped locations to search are also listed.

To include all of this additional information, the checklist has been expanded from a fold-out card to a pocket-sized booklet. Thanks to everyone who contributed bird sightings and helped compile and edit the checklist. This is a valuable source of information about local birds which we can all be proud to share with our friends for years to come.

—Rob Fergus

## COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS

Email addresses are available at <[www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org)> under "About Us."

<b>TAS Rare Bird Alert</b>	Isaac Sanchez	899-9414
	Alert number	926-8751
	Bob Barth	327-1173
<b>Bird Records Conservation</b>	John Kelly	331-8693
<b>Cyberspace</b>	Jenny Rasmussen	218-1580
<b>Education</b>	Shelia Hargis	291-1861
<b>Field Trips</b>	Georgia Harper	467-9700
<b>Hornsby Bend Hospitality</b>	Tim Hissam	251-6067
	Vacant	
<b>Membership Secretary Programs</b>	Chris Doggett	512-898-5500
	Al Green	512-357-1427
<b>Property and Finance Publications</b>	Pat Dillon	347-0452
<b>Publicity</b>	Rosemary Wetherold	892-1606
<b>Sales</b>	Vacant	
<b>Sanctuary</b>	Vacant	
<b>Urban Habitat Development</b>	Bryan Hale	474-5599
	Jane Tillman	794-0058

## SIGNAL SMOKE INFORMATION

### About the Newsletter

*Signal Smoke*, published monthly or bi-monthly by Travis Audubon Society, is a TAS membership benefit. To join Travis Audubon Society, see the back page of this newsletter. Notify National Audubon Society (800-274-4201) and Chris Doggett (TAS Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 1132, Round Rock TX 78680-1132) of address changes.

The post office will not forward *Signal Smoke*. All original material © 2003 Travis Audubon Society; all rights reserved.


### Newsletter Deadline


The submissions deadline is the first day of the preceding month (e.g., June 1 for the July issue). Submit articles, announcements, and uncopyrighted art to Rosemary Wetherold, <[rosemaryw@austin.rr.com](mailto:rosemaryw@austin.rr.com)>; 4507 Cliffstone Cove, Austin TX 78735-6610; 892-2026 (fax). Submissions by email or on a floppy are preferred but not required. Call Rosemary at 892-1606 if you have questions.


*Signal Smoke is printed on recycled paper.*





# May 2003 Calendar of Travis Audubon Society Events

 Field Trip—See pages 4–5

 Meeting—See page 6

 Birding Class—See page 8

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				MAY 1  Deadline for June <i>Signal Smoke</i> (p. 2)	2  <b>Texas Songbird Festival</b> (see page 7) →	3   Barton Creek Habitat Preserve, 7:30 am  Field trip to Shield Ranch, 7:30 am
4  ← <b>Texas Songbird Festival</b> (see page 7)	5   Education Committee Meeting, 7 pm	6	7   Urban Habitat Development Group Meeting, 7 pm	8   TAS Board of Directors Meeting, 6:45 pm	9	10   Monthly Bird Count, Hornsby Bend, 7 am  Palmetto State Park, 7 am  Blunn Creek Nature Preserve, 8 am  HBBO Meeting & Potluck, 11:30 am
11	12	13	14	15  TAS Regular Monthly Meeting with program, 7 pm (see page 6)	16   Interpretive Birding Workshop begins, 7 pm	17   Field trip to Fort Hood, 6 am  Bird walk, Hornsby Bend, 7:30 am  Children's nature walk, 8 am
18   Field trip to Fort Hood, 6 am  Bird walk, Meadow Lake, 4 pm	19	20	21	22   Bird Records Committee Meeting, 7 pm	23	24
25  JUNE 1 Deadline for July <i>Signal Smoke</i> (p. 2)	26	27	28	29	30	31   Ecological Literacy Day, Hornsby Bend (workday/nature walk), 9 am

# TAS FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

All TAS field trips are open to members and nonmembers and to experienced and inexperienced birders. Wear appropriate clothing and walking shoes, and bring binoculars and water. Unless otherwise noted, field trips are free. Carpoolers should expect to pay a share of the gasoline expense. **Please check the TAS website <[www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org)> or the TAS hotline (926-8751) for up-to-date information on field trips, including cancellations due to weather or other circumstances.** Because of the publication schedule of the newsletter, things can change!

Note: To provide more timely and updated information on field trips organized by the TAS Field Trip Committee, we are experimenting with providing complete details about those field trips only on the Field Trips page of the TAS website <[www.travisaudubon.org/fieldtrips.html](http://www.travisaudubon.org/fieldtrips.html)>. From there, you may print out directions and other details about specific trips. For those of you who do not have Internet access, contact phone numbers are provided below. We are hoping that this will improve our overall service to you by allowing for field trips to be organized on shorter notice and for trip changes to be available on the TAS website.

## Saturday, May 3, 7:30–11:30 am

### Field Trip to Barton Creek Habitat Preserve

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Maggie Burnett at <[mburnett@austin.rr.com](mailto:mburnett@austin.rr.com)> or call 899-0390.

## Saturday, May 3, 2003, 7:30–11:30 am

### Field Trip to Shield Ranch

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Georgia Harper at <[ggharper@utsystem.edu](mailto:ggharper@utsystem.edu)> or 467-9700.



## Saturday, May 10, 7 am

### Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend

Meet at the Center for Environmental Research

at Hornsby Bend. The Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory meeting and potluck lunch will be held at **11:30 a.m.** after the morning survey. Contact Russ Nelson, 431-1420, <[russelln@concentric.net](mailto:russelln@concentric.net)>.

## Saturday, May 10, 7 am–noon

### Field Trip to Palmetto State Park (between Luling and Gonzales)

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Erik Huebner, 448-4071 (h), <[EMHuebner@pbsj.com](mailto:EMHuebner@pbsj.com)>; or Kathy McCormack, 996-6906 (w), <[kathy.mccormack@motorola.com](mailto:kathy.mccormack@motorola.com)>.

## Saturday, May 10, 8–about 10:30 am

### Bird Walk at Blunn Creek Nature Preserve

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Wayne Bartholomew, 507-3553.

## Saturday, May 17, 6 am–3 pm OR Sunday, May 18, 6 am–3 pm

### Field Trip to Fort Hood (Killeen)

TAS members can go either Saturday or Sunday but not both days. For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Kathy McCormack 996-6906 (w), <[kathy.mccormack@motorola.com](mailto:kathy.mccormack@motorola.com)>.

## Saturday, May 17, 7:30 am–noon

### Bird Walk at Hornsby Bend

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Richard Kaskan, 748-8660, <[kaskan@ieee.org](mailto:kaskan@ieee.org)>.

## Saturday, May 17, 8–11 am

### Children's Nature Walk, Roy Guerrero Colorado River Park

Tailored for children ages 5–10 and their parents, but all are welcome. For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Charles Stephens, 600-1700, <[charles\\_stephens@yahoo.com](mailto:charles_stephens@yahoo.com)>; or Rob Fergus, 926-0999, <[fergus@travisaudubon.org](mailto:fergus@travisaudubon.org)>.

## Sunday, May 18, 4–5:30 pm

### Bird Walk at Meadow Lake

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Jenny Rasmussen, 218-1580, <[roadrunner1@mindspring.com](mailto:roadrunner1@mindspring.com)>.

## Saturday, May 31, 9 am–1 pm

### Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend

Several hours of outdoor work, such as trail maintenance, habitat restoration, or work in the native plant nursery, are followed by at least an hour of learning about local ecology.

Wear boots and work clothing; and bring binoculars. For more information, contact Kevin Anderson, 972-1960 or <[Kevin.Anderson@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:Kevin.Anderson@ci.austin.tx.us)>; or Tim Hissam, <[tphissam1@yahoo.com](mailto:tphissam1@yahoo.com)>.



## Saturday, June 7, 7:30–11:30 am

### Field Trip to Barton Creek Habitat Preserve

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Maggie Burnett at <[mburnett@austin.rr.com](mailto:mburnett@austin.rr.com)> or call 899-0390.

## Saturday, June 14, 7 am

### Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend

Meet at the Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend. The Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory meeting and

## TAS TRIPS AND EVENTS (CONTINUED)

potluck lunch will be held at **11:30 a.m.** after the morning survey. Contact Russ Nelson, <russelln@concentric.net>, 431-1420.



**Sunday, June 15,  
4–5:30 pm**

### **Bird Walk at Meadow Lake**

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Jenny Rasmussen, 218-1580, <roadrunner1@mindspring.com>.

**Saturday, June 21, 7:30 am–noon**

### **Bird Walk at Hornsby Bend**

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Richard Kaskan, 748-8660, <kaskan@ieee.org>.

**Saturday, June 21, 8–11 am**

### **Children's Nature Walk, Roy Guerrero Colorado River Park**

Tailored for children ages 5–10 and their parents, but all are welcome. For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Charles Stephens, 600-1700, <charles\_stephens@yahoo.com>; or Rob Fergus, 926-0999, <fergus@travisaudubon.org>.

## **Thursday–Sunday, July 3–13, 2003 The Galapagos Islands: A Family Adventure**

TAS and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) invite you to join Victor Emanuel and Greg Lasley in exploring the Galapagos Islands on the comfortable cruise ship *Eclipse*. The emphasis will be on birds and general natural history, and we'll try to see all of the endemic birds possible. A family cruise director will organize daily activities and meals for children onboard. Enjoy the Darwin's



finches, giant tortoises, and iguanas you've always dreamed of. For more information, contact VENT at <www.ventbird.com> or 328-5221. VENT will make a donation to TAS for each member on the trip, so mention TAS when making your reservation.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### **Save a Tree—Get Signal Smoke Online**

Each issue of *Signal Smoke* costs almost a dollar to print and mail. If you would like to save a tree and help Travis Audubon use its funds for conservation instead of printing, consider reading *Signal Smoke* online. We can send you a reminder email when the latest issue is posted on our website. To discontinue receiving a paper copy of *Signal Smoke*, send a note with your name, address, and email to Rob Fergus <fergus@travisaudubon.org>.

### **New Rare Bird Alert Compiler**

Isaac Sanchez has volunteered to be the new TAS Rare Bird Alert compiler. You can send your rare bird sightings to him at <IsaacS@austin.rr.com> or call the TAS hotline at 926-8751.

Many thanks to Isaac for taking on this public service and also to his predecessor Shawn Ashbaugh for his past year of diligent rare bird reporting.



### **Travis Audubon Email List**

Want to find out what's happening in Travis Audubon between monthly newsletters?

To receive regular emails about Travis Audubon Society events, activities, and conservation issues,

please send your name and email address to Rob Fergus at <fergus@travisaudubon.org>.



# TAS MEETINGS

**Monday, May 5, 7–9 pm**

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

North Village Branch Library. For more information, contact Shelia Hargis: 291-1861; <shargis@austin.rr.com>.

**Wednesday, May 7, 7 pm**

**URBAN HABITAT DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

1925 Rutland Dr., in Root Cause Project office. Contact Chuck Simms: 331-9630; <charlesvsi@aol.com>.

**Thursday, May 8, 6:45 pm**

**TAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Highland Park Baptist Church, 5206 Balcones Drive. Contact Pat Dillon: 347-0452.



**Saturday, May 10, 11:30 am**

**HORNSBY BEND  
BIRD OBSERVATORY  
MEETING & POTLUCK LUNCH**

Following the monthly Hornsby Bend bird count (see page 4). Center for Environmental Research (building near entrance to Hornsby bend complex). Contact Rob Fergus: 926-0999; <fergus@travisaudubon.org>.

**Thursday, May 15, 7 pm**

**TAS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

For details, see box below.

**Thursday, May 22, 7 pm**

**BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Contact Ethel Kutac: 346-7659.

**Monday, June 2, 7–9 pm**

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

North Village Branch Library. For more information, contact Shelia Hargis: 291-1861; <shargis@austin.rr.com>.

**Wednesday, June 4, 7 pm**

**URBAN HABITAT DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

1925 Rutland Dr., in Root Cause Project office. Contact Chuck Simms: 331-9630; <charlesvsi@aol.com>

**Thursday, June 12, 6:45 pm**

**TAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Highland Park Baptist Church, 5206 Balcones Drive. Contact Russ Nelson: 431-1420.

**Saturday, June 14, 11:30 am**

**HORNSBY BEND BIRD OBSERVATORY  
MEETING & POTLUCK LUNCH**

For details, see May 10 calendar item.

**Tuesday, July 8, 6:30 pm**

**SANCTUARY COMMITTEE MEETING & POTLUCK**

Baker Cabin, TAS Baker Sanctuary, at 12308 Lime Creek Road. Contact Marcie and John Wilcox: 219-8425; <jmwo@earthlink.net>.



**Thursday, May 15, 7 pm  
TAS REGULAR  
MONTHLY MEETING**

**Program:** Last Chance Forever

**Presenters:** John Karger and Staff

This last general meeting program of the season will be presented by John Karger, executive director of Last Chance Forever, and members of his staff. The San Antonio organization rehabilitates raptors and has a very interesting show with live hawks, owls, eagles, and vultures. The program is

outside, and attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on and, if rain is forecast, raincoats. The program will begin at 7 p.m. sharp, because the birds are not flown after sundown. **Location:** Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, in a field adjacent to the headquarters building. **Refreshments provided.** (The next TAS general meeting will be in September.)

# OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

The following events are not Travis Audubon Society events but may be of interest.

**Mondays–Thursdays, 1:58 pm;  
Fridays, 12:58 pm**

**“Passport to Texas”**

90-second radio program on KUT (90.5-FM) from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

**Thursdays, 6:04 pm**

**Howie Richey's Eco-Calendar**

Spot during *All Things Considered* on KUT, 90.5-FM.



**Friday–Sunday, May 2–4  
3rd Annual Texas Songbird  
Festival, Lago Vista**

Come out and enjoy this Central Texas festival headquartered in Lago Vista (on the outskirts of Austin). See the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, home to the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. Take a guided tour with

wildlife experts who can share with you rare encounters with these endangered songbirds, other unique native wildlife, and the gorgeous natural habitat of the Texas Hill Country during the peak wildflower season. Bring a camera and enjoy a real hunt as you “shoot” wildlife on a guided tour with expert wildlife photographers who will share tips on how to bring home that perfect shot. Nearly 100 different species of birds were sighted at last year’s festival. There will also be butterfly tours, a “Natural World Market” with outdoor products, seminars with nature experts, backyard habitat tours, and much more! Whether you are a novice or veteran birder, you will find something of interest to you. The Texas Songbird Festival is cosponsored by Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce. For additional information, see the flyer from the March–April issue of *Signal Smoke* visit <<http://songbirdfestival.homestead.com/>>, or contact Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce, 888-328-LAGO.

**Saturday–Sunday,  
May 10–11**

**Spring Bird Count, Bamberger  
Ranch, Johnson City**

The count is on Sunday, but you are welcome to arrive on Saturday evening after 6:00 PM and spend the night at the center (bring your own linens and towels). A potluck dinner is scheduled for 7 p.m. that night (bring food that is ready to eat or takes little preparation). We may take a walk to search for night birds that evening. Sunday morning we will be getting up bright and early for the bird count. Coffee will be available, but bring your own “no cook” breakfast and lunch in your own cooler. The count will be from 7 a.m. until 12:00 PM, when we’ll meet for the tally. The terrain is rugged, so wear sturdy shoes and field



clothes. Registration is required. Email Marsha Reimer at <Marsha.Reimer@tpwd.state.tx.us> to let her know if you are going and if you will be arriving Saturday evening (after 6 p.m.) or Sunday morning (at or before 6:30 a.m.), or if you would like to be placed on an email list for information on future bird counts. A map to the ranch is at <[www.bambergeranch.org/map.htm](http://www.bambergeranch.org/map.htm)>.

**Saturday–Sunday,  
May 17–18**

**4th Annual Dragonfly Days,  
Weslaco, Texas**

Focusing on diversity of dragonflies found in Lower Rio Grande Valley, field trips, seminars, and opportunities to see birds, butterflies, and dragonflies. Contact: Valley Nature Center, Weslaco, TX; 956-969-2475.



**Wednesday, May 21**

**Texas Amphibian Watch Seminar, Wild Basin**

Learn about the frogs and toads of Central Texas and how to census them in this evening seminar. Contact Marsha Reimer at 912-7062 or <marsha.reimer@tpwd.state.tx.us>.

**Saturday–Monday, June 21–23**

**“Creating Schoolyard Habitats” Workshop and Field  
Trip, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin**

Sponsored by National Wildlife Federation, in partnership with the Wildflower Center. Learn to use your school grounds as a wildlife habitat and teaching tool at this two-day workshop. Learn to create a schoolyard habitat, including site inventory, design, and native plant selection; understand the importance of creating a habitat team; explore how to integrate outdoor classroom activities with required curriculum content; and participate in fun, hands-on activities (K-8). The third day will be a field trip to existing schoolyard habitats in the Austin. Participants will receive up to 16 hours SBEC. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Fee. Space is limited. Registration deadline is June 6. To register, contact Marya Fowler at 476-9805 ext. 37 or <fowler@nwf.org>.

**Wednesday–Sunday, July 23–27**

**Brownsville International Bird Festival**

Pelagic trips, Laguna Madre, thorn scrub and butterfly trips, field trip into Mexico. Daily seminars, a marketplace, and evening activities. Contact David Lee, Brownsville Convention and Visitors Bureau, <[www.brownsville.org](http://www.brownsville.org)>, <dlee@brownsville.org>.

**Thursday–Monday, September 18–29**

**Ecuador–Galapagos Islands**

Birding and natural history tour sponsored by Wimberley Birding Society. Home base in Galapagos will be Finch Bay Hotel, on the nature-rich island of Santa Cruz. Twin beds,

(Continued on page 8)

# EDUCATION COMMITTEE CLASSES

## Interpretive Birding Workshop

Starting May 16

Have you ever been intrigued by the behavior of birds and wondered what function a specific behavior served? Would you like to add another dimension to your birdwatching? If you answered yes to either of these questions, consider taking part



in the Interpretive Birding workshop being offered in May.

We're bringing in Dr. Jim Davis, a passionate observer of avian behavior and editor of the *Interpretive Birding Bulletin*. And we're bringing him all the way from Minnesota! Jim received his Ph.D. from UT Austin and went on to work at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. His scientific contributions have focused on kingfisher be-

havior, including territoriality, vocal communication, and mating systems. Over the past 15 years, Jim has traveled to different parts of the world to observe and write about bird behavior. In 1997 he started the Australian edition of *Interpretive Birding Bulletin* and launched the North American edition in 2000. Check out the *Interpretive Birding Bulletin's* website at <[www.ibirding.com](http://www.ibirding.com)>.

Using an interactive style, Dr. Davis will explain the ins and outs of interpretive birding, an approach that encourages amateurs to speculate on why birds behave the way that they do and to think about what's going on in the natural world around them. The workshop's goal is to improve one's observational skills and increase the enjoyment of watching birds. Also, Jim will cover what to look for when watching behavior and offer suggestions on how to interpret firsthand observations.

The workshop also includes an overview of the behavior of specific groups of birds such as woodpeckers, herons, and others, and it covers behavioral topics such as caching, mobbing, lekking, and vocal signaling. Since identification of species is *not* the goal, this workshop is appropriate for both advanced and novice birders.



For those participants wanting to put their newfound knowledge to the test, several field trips are planned. Jim will host small groups (limited to 12 adults) interested in watching behavior. IB outings are unique and are designed to be intellectually engaging.

Participants can choose from two options: attend the lecture only or attend the lecture and a field trip. The lecture will take place on Friday night, May 16, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, 4700 Grover. The fee for attending the lecture is \$45.

The field trips will be held on Saturday morning and Sunday morning at Hornsby Bend. Participants who want to attend a field trip will be assigned to one of the two days, with every effort made to accommodate the participant's schedule. Participation in the field trip is limited, so sign up early! The field trip fee is \$20. Contact Shelia at <[shargis@austin.rr.com](mailto:shargis@austin.rr.com)> or 291-1861 to sign up.

—Shelia Hargis

### Avisys User's Class

If you have a copy of Avisys Birding Software and would like to share your expertise, need some help getting started, or wonder if you're making effective use of it, we'd like to hear from you. We'd like to know if you would like a class for beginners, for current users who need help upgrading or updating, or just a chance to get together with other users to see how you might get more out of the program with less effort. Please contact Roxie Roachat at 345-6935 or <[rroachat@austin.rr.com](mailto:rroachat@austin.rr.com)>.



## OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 7)

private baths, hot showers, yet close to wildlife, beach, tidal lagoons, cliffs, and cactus forests. Day trips on small, modern cruiser to other islands to see marine iguanas, sea lions, boobies, albatrosses, etc. Stay in Quito will include birding trips to Andean cloud forest reserves and other great birding sites. 390+ species, 38 endemics. Also included: Folkloric Ballet performance, shopping at Otavalo and other ancient Indian markets, city tour. Contact: Joe Sigg in Austin, 454-8363; Jerry Hall in Wimberley, 512-847-3730.



# KIDS' SECTION

## Writing Contest: We Have a Winner!



Elliott Gordon, the six-year-old sharp-eyed birder best known for being the first to identify an American Bittern at Riata Pond last March, earned second place in the Austin-area Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators Contest with his story of endangered Whooping Cranes. The tale, "Journey to Our Wintering Grounds: A

Story of a Whooping Crane," can be viewed at [www.klru.org/readingrainbow/index.asp](http://www.klru.org/readingrainbow/index.asp).

## Questions about the Kids' Section?

Do you have questions about the Kids' Section? Email your questions to Amy Sugeno at [amydave@thrifty.net](mailto:amydave@thrifty.net).



## ABA Young Birder of the Year Contest Winner

Congratulations to youth birder Jesse Huth of Wimberley and a recent TAS Youth Birding Camp graduate! Jesse recently won Honorable Mention awards in the categories of Bird Illustration, Bird Essay, and Young Birder of the Year. Way to go, Jesse!



## Audubon Adventures Classroom Kits Need Donations

Audubon Adventures Classroom Kits for grades 3–6 have been selling like hotcakes this winter! For the 2002–2003 school year we

have reached our quota of 70 classrooms that have signed up to use this nature curriculum, which highlights Freshwater Wetlands, Temperate Deciduous Forests and Woodlands, Coastal Environments, and Deserts this year. These materials are a gift to Austin-area schoolteachers from Travis Audubon Society. The cost is approximately \$40 per kit, which includes shipping. Please consider donating to the TAS *Audubon Adventures* program. You can send a check payable to Travis Audubon Society, to P.O. Box 40787, Austin TX 78704. Please note on the check that it is for *Audubon Adventures*. Many thanks. —Julia Balinsky

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

### Sales Committee Chair Needed

With the latest edition of our Austin-Area Bird Checklist at the printers (see page 10), the Travis Audubon Society needs a new Sales Committee chair to take and fill sales orders. This position involves selling Travis Audubon Society materials (including T-shirts and checklists) at the monthly membership meeting, as well as processing sales orders received by mail. The Sales Committee chair will also recruit and work with committee members to market the checklist and other materials in the Austin area. If you are interested in serving in this position, please send a letter of interest to Rob Fergus at [fergus@trivisaudubon.org](mailto:fergus@trivisaudubon.org). For more information, call Rob at 926-0999.

