



SIGNAL SMOKE

The Newsletter of Travis Audubon Society

VOLUME 53, NO. 4

APRIL 2004

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It's Birdathon Time!

What's a Birdathon??

Wilder than a walkathon, Birdathon is the world's biggest birdwatching event! Every year, thousands of people nationwide join us to count birds, have fun, and raise vital funds for Audubon's mission of environmental conservation, education, and advocacy.



How Does Birdathon Work?

People count birds and collect pledges from sponsors based on the number of species they see in one day. All you have to do is choose a date and time and start counting, alone or with a group. Participants range from backyard beginners to trail-seasoned experts.

Where Does the Money Go?

All funds raised through the Travis Audubon Society/Audubon Texas Birdathon will be evenly split between our two organizations to support Audubon programs in Travis County and across Texas.

How Do You Get Started?

Contact Shari Kolding, Birdathon Coordinator, at 512-306-0225 ext. 14 or skolding@audubon.org for general information, help, and "how-to" materials.



TAS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
Thursday, April 15, 6:30 p.m.

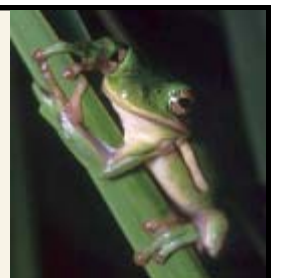
Program: Texas Nature Trackers

Presenter: Martha Reimer,

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Highland Park Baptist Church,

5206 Balcones Drive (See page 6 for details.)



Travis Audubon Society

Email addresses are at "About Us,"
www.travisaudubon.org.

Officers and Directors

President	
Pat Dillon	347-0452
First Vice President	
Shelia Hargis	291-1861
Second Vice President	
BJ Dertien	
Treasurer	
Lois Burks	261-9923
P.O. Box 40787	
Austin TX 78704	
Recording Secretary	
Anne Donovan	472-3030
Past President	
Bob Warneke	443-5488
Directors	
Barbara Anderson	346-6584
Mark Bentley	301-2675
Sam Fason	474-1185
John Kelly	331-8693
Richard Manson	347-8192
Marcie Wilcox	219-8425

Baker Sanctuary Steward

John Wilcox 219-8425

ACT Representatives

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

Signal Smoke Editor

Rosemary Wetherold 892-1606

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

TAS Email

info@travisaudubon.org

TAS Fax

892-2026



Signal Smoke is printed
on recycled paper.

Mission Statement

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

LETTER FROM THE TAS PRESIDENT

As most of you know, TAS owns 10 acres of land on East MLK, called Blair Woods. The single event that pulled me into being an active member of this society was a "Build a Birdhouse" event held there years ago. Member Sy Smeltzer cut out the wood pieces to make birdhouses, somebody nice put out cookies and punch, people came and assembled birdhouses (that they got to keep), and then John Kelly led us on a nature walk around the property. My wife, Lauren, and her father were with me, and like the others in the group there that day, we all had a good time. Lauren and I had been discussing giving back to the community. I liked what I saw of TAS and got involved.

Unfortunately, Travis Audubon has not gotten much use out of Blair Woods since. We had a live-in caretaker who kept the place up, but he moved out two or three years ago when the board for directors explored selling the property. After that, Blair Woods was generally neglected and was fast falling into disrepair. Rob Fergus introduced TAS to Wildlife Rescue Inc., and TAS agreed to let Wildlife Rescue use the property for its purposes.

One year ago Wildlife Rescue began to use Blair Woods as a rehabilitation center. The group installed a portable building and started receiving injured and

Continued on page 15

COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS

Email addresses are available at <www.travisaudubon.org> under "About Us."

TAS Rare Bird Alert	Isaac Sanchez	899-9414
	Alert number	926-8751
Bird Records	Lawrence Buford	452-6344
	Ethel Kutac	346-7659
Conservation	John Kelly	331-8693
Education	Vacant	
Field Trips	Georgia Harper	467-9700
Hornsby Bend	Kevin Anderson	972-1960
Hospitality	Vacant	
Latin America	Bob Warneke	443-5488
Membership	Chris Doggett	512-898-5500
Membership Secretary	Shirley Doggett	512-898-5500
Programs	BJ Dertien	
Property and Finance	Pat Dillon	347-0452
Publications	Rosemary Wetherold	892-1606
Publicity	Vacant	
Sales	Marcie Wilcox	219-8425
Sanctuary	John Wilcox	219-8425
Urban Habitat Development	Jane Tillman	794-0058
Webmaster	Chris Doggett	512-898-5500

ABOUT SIGNAL SMOKE

Subscription Information


Signal Smoke, published monthly or bi-monthly by Travis Audubon Society, is a TAS membership benefit. To join TAS, see the back page of this newsletter. For address or subscription changes, notify Shirley Doggett (TAS Membership Secretary), P. O. Box 1132, Round Rock TX 78680-1132; membership@travisaudubon.org; 512-898-5500. The post office will not forward Signal Smoke.


Newsletter Deadline


The submissions deadline is the first day of the preceding month (for example, May 1 for the June issue). Submit uncopyrighted articles, announcements, and art to Rosemary Wetherold, 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.

























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April 2004 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
				1 Deadline for May <i>Signal Smoke</i> (see p. 2)	2	3  Field trip, Palmetto SP, 7 am  Field trip, Barton Cr. Habitat Preserve, 7:30 am  Field trip, Bas- trop Co., 7:30 am  Backyard Birding Class, 8:30 am
4  Field trip, Williamson Co. Regional Park, 8 am	5  Education Committee Meeting, 7 pm	6  Trip to Texas City Preserve for Attwater's Prairie Chickens, 5 am  Sanctuary Committee Meeting, 6:30 pm  Spring Warbler ID Class starts, 7 pm	7	8  TAS Board of Directors Meeting, 6:45 pm	9	10  Monthly Bird Count, Hornsby Bend, 7 am & 4 pm  Field trip, Rio Vista Park and Aquarena Springs, San Marcos, 7:30 am
11  Bird walk, Emma Long Metro. Park (Turkey Creek), 7 am	12	13	14	15 TAS Regular Monthly Meeting with program, 6:30 pm (see page 6)	16	17  Bird walk, Hornsby Bend, 7:30 am  Children's nature walk, Colorado River, 8 am  Butterflies for Beginners Class, 8:30 am
18  Big-Hour Bird-Spot, Blunn Creek Preserve, 7:45 am  Bird walk, Meadow Lake, 6 pm	19  Urban Habitat Devel- opment Group Meeting, 7 pm	20	21	22  Bird Records Committee Meeting, 7 pm	23	24  Field trip, Pace Bend  Ecological Literacy Day, Hornsby, 9 am
25  Spring bird walk, Riata Pond/Yett Creek Park, 8 am	26	27	28	29  Advanced Birding Workshop starts	30	MAY 1 Texas Songbird Festival, → (see page 5) Deadline for June <i>Signal Smoke</i> (see p. 2)

TAS FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

About TAS Field Trips 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. **For complete, up-to-date information on field trips, including cancellations due to weather or other circumstances, please check the TAS Field Trips webpage at www.travisaudubon.org (click on "Field Trips") or the TAS hotline (926-8751). Because of the publication schedule of the newsletter, things can change! If you do not have Internet access, contact phone numbers are provided below.**

About Hornsby Bend Maps and other information about the Hornsby Bend facility may be found on the Hornsby Bend website at www.sbs.utexas.edu/hornsby.



**Saturday, April 3,
7 am–noon**

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

For details, see the Field Trips webpage,
or contact Ingrid Huskey, 928-1345.

**Saturday, April 3,
7:30–11:30 am**

Field Trip to Barton Creek Habitat Preserve

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Maggie
Burnett, mburnett@austin.rr.com, 899-0390.

Saturday, April 3, 7:30 am–2 pm

**Birding Field Trip along Western Bastrop County
Roads (with Optional Extension to Bastrop/
Buescher State Parks)**

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Jean Martin,
343-7053, jeanmartin@austin.rr.com.

Sunday, April 4, 8–11 am

Field Trip to Williamson County Regional Park

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Kathy
McCormack, 895-7268, kathy.mccormack@motorola.com.

**Tuesday, April 6,
5 am–late morn-
ing (or later,
as desired)**

**Trip to Nature
Conservancy's Texas
City Preserve
to View Attwater's
Prairie Chickens**



For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Scott
Haywood, 804-0819, tas406@scotthaywood.com.

Saturday, April 10, 7 am & 4 pm

Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend

Meet at the Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby
Bend. For more information, contact Kevin Anderson, 972-1960,
kevin.anderson@ci.austin.tx.us.

Saturday, April 10, 7:30–11 am

**Field Trip to Rio Vista Park and
Aquarena Springs Boardwalk, San Marcos**

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Kathy
McCormack, 895-7268, kathy.mccormack@motorola.com.

Sunday, April 11, 7 am–noon

**Bird Walk at Emma Long Metropolitan Park
(Turkey Creek)**

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Charles
Stephens, charles_stephens@yahoo.com, 600-1700.

Saturday, April 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.

Saturday, April 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; or
Rob Fergus, 478-8486, fergus@mail.utexas.edu.

Sunday, April 18, 7:45 am

**Austin/Travis Big-Hour
Team Bird-Spot,
Blunn Creek Preserve**

For details, see the Field Trips webpage,
or contact Stu Wilson, 459-1082,
stu@bga.com.



Sunday, April 18, 6–8 pm

Bird Walk at Meadow Lake

Two co-leaders are needed. For details, see the Field Trips
webpage, or contact Kathy McCormack, 895-7268,
kathy.mccormack@motorola.com

Saturday, April 24

Field Trip to Pace Bend

For details, see the Field Trips webpage.

TAS TRIPS AND EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Saturday, April 24, 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, kevin.anderson@ci.austin.tx.us; or Tim Hissam, tphissam1@yahoo.com.

Sunday, April 25, 8–11 am

Spring Bird Walk at Riata Pond/Yett Creek Park

Two co-leaders are needed. For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Mark Bentley, mebentley@austin.rr.com, 301-2675.

**Friday–Monday,
April 30–May 3**

3rd Annual Texas Songbird Festival

At this Central Texas festival, take a guided tour with wildlife experts who can help you see our local endangered songbirds, as well as the unique native plants, other wildlife, and natural habitat of the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge. Enjoy butterfly tours, seminars with nature experts, a Lake Travis cruise, and much more. Whether you are a novice or veteran birder, the festival has something of interest for you. Workshops will enhance your birding skills, add to your knowledge, and provide an opportunity to meet and chat with world-renowned birders. The festival is hosted by the Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge; Travis Audubon is a sponsor. For a registration form, contact the Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 4946, Lago Vista TX 78645, 888-328-5246, info@lagovista.org; or visit www.lagovista.org/songbirdfestival/index.html.



Saturday, May 1, 7:30–11:30 am

Field Trip to Barton Creek Habitat Preserve

For details, see April 3 calendar item.

Saturday–Sunday, May 1–2

Trip to Kickapoo Caverns and Fort Clark Springs

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Kathy McCormack, 895-7268, kathy.mccormack@motorola.com. After April 23, contact Mark Bentley, mebentley@austin.rr.com, 461-5375.

Saturday, May 8, 7 am & 4 pm

Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend

For details, see April 10 calendar item.

Saturday, May 8, 8–about 10:30 am

Field trip to Blunn Creek Nature Preserve

Meet at the preserve entrance kiosk. For details, see the Field Trips webpage.

Saturday, May 15, 7:30 am–noon

Bird Walk at Hornsby Bend

For details, see April 17 calendar item.

Saturday, May 15, 8–11 am

Children's Nature Walk, Roy Guerrero Colorado River Park

For details, see April 17 calendar item.

Sunday, May 16, 8:15 am–2 pm

Field Trip to Hamilton Pool and Westcave Preserve

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact John Kelly, 331-8693.

Saturday, May 22, 6 am–3 pm

Field trip to Fort Hood (Killeen)

For details, see the Field Trips webpage, or contact Kathy McCormack, kathy.mccormack@motorola.com, 895-7268.

Saturday, May 29, 9 am–1 pm

Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend

For details, see April 24 calendar item.



Audubon Adventures Classroom Kits Need Donations

Audubon Adventures Classroom Kits for grades 3–6 have been distributed for this school year. For 2003–2004 this nature curriculum highlights Grasslands, Nature in Your Neighborhood, Coniferous

Forests and Water, and Wildlife and People. 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 sponsoring a classroom by donating to the TAS *Audubon Adventures* program. Mail your donations to Travis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 40787, Austin TX 78704. Please note on the check that it is for *Audubon Adventures*. You may contact me if you know of an area teacher who would like to receive a Classroom Kit. Many thanks.

—Julia Balinsky, jwaxwing@employees.org

TAS MEETINGS

Monday, April 5, 7–9 pm

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

North Village Branch Library, 2139 West Anderson Lane. Contact Shelia Hargis, 291-1861, shargis@austin.rr.com.

Tuesday, April 6, 6:30 pm

SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

Contact John Wilcox, jmwoxo@earthlink.net, 219-8425. See page 18 for more details.

Thursday, April 8, 6:45 pm

TAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Thursday, April 15, 6:30 pm

TAS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

For details, see the box below.

Monday, April 19, 7 pm

URBAN HABITAT DEVELOPMENT GROUP

North Village Branch Library, 2139 West Anderson Lane. Contact Jane Tillman, 794-0058, mljt@mail.utexas.edu.

Thursday, April 22, 7 pm

BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Contact Ethel Kutac, 346-7659.

Monday, May 3, 7–9 pm

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

See April 5 calendar item for details.

Thursday, May 13, 6:45 pm

TAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

See April 8 calendar item for details.

Monday, May 17, 7 pm

URBAN HABITAT DEVELOPMENT GROUP

See April 19 item for details.

Thursday, May 20, 6:30 pm

TAS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Program details in next *Signal Smoke*.

Thursday, May 27, 7 pm

BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Contact Ethel Kutac, 346-7659.



Thursday, April 15, 6:30 pm
TAS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Program: Texas Nature Trackers

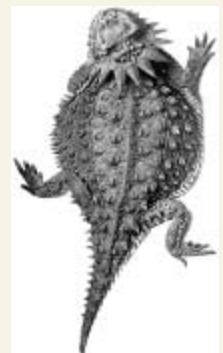
Presenter: Marsha Reimer, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Plus Annual TAS Chapter Elections

Texas Nature Trackers, associated with the Texas Master Naturalist Program, is a citizen science monitoring effort designed to involve volunteers of all ages and interest levels in gathering scientific data on species of concern in Texas through experiential learning. The goal of the effort is to enable long-term conservation of these species and appreciation among Texas citizens. Texas Nature Tracker projects include Texas Horned Lizard Watch, Texas Amphibian Watch, Texas Mussel Watch, Texas Monarch Watch, Texas Hummingbird Roundup, Project Prairie Birds, the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey, and a host of adopt-a-species projects. Marsha Reimer will present information about these projects and discuss how Texans of all ages can get involved. Marsha, a biologist for Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in the Wildlife Diversity Program, has coordinated Texas Nature Tracker projects for more than three years. She is directly involved in training volunteers to monitor populations of freshwater mussels and amphibians throughout the entire state of Texas. She received an M.S. degree in aquatic biology from Texas State University and a B.S. in wildlife biology from Texas A&M University. A long-standing member of Travis Audubon, she has been an avid birder for more than 20 years. In addition to her work with TPWD, she also coordinates the Bamberger Ranch bird counts.

The election of TAS chapter officers and directors will also be held at this meeting (see page 7).

Location: Highland Park Baptist Church, 5206 Balcones Dr. (Exit MoPac at 2222, go west on 2222, turn left on Balcones Drive, stay to the left at the fork, then turn right into church parking lot.) **Bus routes:** www.capmetro.austin.tx.us; 474-1200. **Bicycle routes:** www.ci.austin.tx.us/bicycle/bikemap.htm; 974-7240. Refreshments provided.



TAS CHAPTER ELECTION

The annual TAS election will be held at the April general meeting (see box on page 6) to fill positions among our chapter officers and board of directors. Below is the slate of candidates proposed by the TAS Nominating Committee, with biographical information for most of those who are new to the TAS board. (Mark Bentley, Richard Manson, and Marcie Wilcox will remain on the board of directors; their positions are not up for election this year.)

Candidates for Officers

President: Shelia Hargis

First Vice President: Sam Fason

Second Vice President: Barbara Anderson

Recording Secretary: Anne Donovan

Treasurer: Lois Burks

Lois has been with the same employer and the same husband for 30 years—where did the time go, she wonders! She has spent her career in various accounting and management positions and has trained employees throughout the world. At home, she enjoys reading, crafts, gardening, and backyard birdwatching.

Candidates for Board of Directors

Shawn Ashbaugh

Robert Bates

Originally from northwestern Ohio, Robert began birding while in the second grade. He attended the Ohio State University, where he obtained an undergraduate degree in wildlife biology in 2000. While living in Columbus, Ohio, he worked for Columbus Parks & Recreation and Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks as a resource manager. Robert relocated to Austin in the spring of 2001 and resides near Leander. He is currently employed as store manager at Wild Birds Unlimited at the Lakeline location. As a volunteer with Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, he does censusing and mapping of Black-capped Vireos.

Theresa Bayoud

Theresa is currently a member of Travis Audubon Society, National Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club. She is an active Capital Area Master Naturalist, graduating in the class of 2003. Theresa volunteered as a Great Texas Birding Classic chaperone for the Girl Scout troop Roughwings in 1998. While living in Houston, she was a Sierra Club board member, newsletter editor, and trip leader for the Clear Creek chapter, as well as a volunteer guide and instructor for the Armand Bayou Nature Center. Theresa is experienced in project management, strategy development, team facilitation, stress and change management, and training design and delivery. She holds a B.S. in health, leisure, and sports and an M.A. degree in human resource utilization.

John Kelly

Marsha Reimer

Marsha is a biologist for Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in the Wildlife Diversity Program. She is involved in training

volunteers to monitor populations of freshwater mussels and amphibians throughout the entire state of Texas. Marsha received an M.S. in aquatic biology from Texas State University and a B.S. in wildlife biology from Texas A&M University. She is a long-standing member of Travis Audubon and has been an avid birder for over 20 years. Marsha also coordinates the Bamberger Ranch bird counts three times a year.

Bill Reiner

Bill has been a member of the Travis Audubon Society for 11 years. He joined the organization a few years after moving to Austin from his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, where he began birding with his father more than 30 years ago. As a member of TAS he has taught sparrow identification classes and has led several field trips. He has written the Naturalist's Calendar column for *Signal Smoke* for the past four years. He is currently a biological technician at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, where he monitors Golden-cheeked Warblers and Black-capped Vireos, but his primary task is the mapping and suppression of the oak wilt fungus.

Jane Tillman

Jane is married, has two sons, and has been employed with the University of Texas at Austin as a registered dietitian in the Department of Human Ecology since 1992. She is a graduate of the Capital Area Master Naturalist program and volunteers with CAMN as its program chair. Jane volunteers with many other organizations, some of which are National Wildlife Federation, Friends of Bright Leaf, and Austin Xeriscape Advisory, and she chairs the TAS Urban Habitat Development Committee. Jane says she would like to see TAS continue to build upon its strengths and to take an active role in environmental education in Austin.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE CLASSES

Backyard Birding Class

The TAS Education Committee is offering its Backyard Birding Class on Saturday, April 3, from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Center for Environmental Research at



Hornsby Bend. This class is planned for persons who want to identify the birds in their yard and to learn of more ways to attract a greater variety of birds. The presentation will include slides and a lecture on bird identification and landscaping with native plants. There will be a break with time to examine and compare seeds, feeders, and field guides. Robert and Kathy Reeves and Martha Renfroe will be the presenters. The cost is \$15 per person. For more information or to register, contact Martha Renfroe at 418-8334 or marthar@academicplanet.com.

Spring Warbler Identification Class

Warblers will be migrating north before long. Are you ready to ID them all? If not, consider taking our Warbler Identification Class taught by Cliff Shackelford, ornithologist with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. This very popular class will focus on the warbler species likely to be seen in Texas, but other species will be included as time allows.



Lectures will take place Tuesday, April 6, and Thursdays, April 8 and 15, 7–9 p.m., at the Center for Environmental Research auditorium at Hornsby Bend. The field trip will be Saturday and Sunday, April 17–18, at High Island. Tuition is \$60 for TAS members and \$70 for nonmembers. Participants will also be expected to cover Cliff's expenses during the trip, which will be about \$15 per person.

To sign up, contact Robert Reeves at rreeves1@austin.rr.com or 779-9038 after 6:30 p.m.

Butterflies for Beginners

Mike Quinn of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department will teach Butterflies for Beginners at the Center for Environmental Research auditorium at Hornsby Bend on Saturday, April 17, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The first two hours will be in the classroom, followed by a walk to observe the many species of butterflies at Hornsby Bend.

Mike Quinn holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in wildlife and entomology, respectively, from Texas A&M. He has worked as an invertebrate biologist for Texas Parks & Wildlife since 2000. His duties include the coordination of TPWD's Texas Monarch Watch Program. He coauthored the recently published book *Monarchs, Milkweed, and More*. Mike regularly gives butterfly and other entomological presentations around the state. He is a

consultant for the 84-acre North American Butterfly Association (NABA) International Butterfly Park, which is being built in Mission, Texas, and he has been active in the Texas Butterfly Festival since 1997. In his spare time, he maintains the NABA–South Texas and his Texas Entomology websites.



Class participants will learn about butterfly diversity; identification techniques, including equipment and books; life history information, including behavior and host plant usage; history of Texas butterfly watching; and other resources for butterfly information. Cost of the class is \$15. To register for the class and for more information, contact Robert Reeves at 779-9038 or rreeves1@austin.rr.com. Additional information will also be available on the TAS website.

Advanced Birding Workshop: Structural and Vocal Clues to Identification

A workshop for advanced birders, led by Byron Stone, will be held in late April and early May. Byron has been an avid birder since 1970. He has taught the TAS sparrow identification classes and has birded throughout Texas. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations. A 3-hour class on Thursday evening, April 29, will be followed by a weekend field trip all day Saturday, May 1, and Sunday morning, May 2. The field trip will be conducted at locations along or near the central or upper coast of Texas. Lodging will be at public campsites or nearby motels. This workshop is designed for birders who have a fair amount of experience with basic birding techniques and bird identification but wish to refine their skills at distinguishing difficult species pairs and groups. Emphasis will be on structural features such as wing and tail length, bill size and shape, and body proportions, which are often overlooked in our usual focus on plumage details. Additionally, there will be ample opportunity to hear and discuss vocalizations, which can often help resolve difficult identifications. The groups of birds that are likely to receive the most attention are vireos, warblers, *Empidonax* flycatchers, and shorebirds. Early May is an excellent time to observe good numbers of late spring migrants throughout Texas. The fee is \$30 for TAS members and \$40 for nonmembers, plus travel and lodging expenses. Participants will be expected to pay Byron's travel expenses, estimated at \$10 each. The classroom session will be held at First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive. The class size will be limited to 8, so hurry and register. To register, contact Robert Reeves at 779-9038 or rreeves1@austin.rr.com.

—Martha Renfroe



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.

Saturday–Sunday, April 3–4

Attwater’s Prairie Chicken Festival, Eagle Lake, Texas

Located near the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, Eagle Lake honors this unique and indigenous bird now on the verge of extinction. Wildlife viewing tours, local arts and crafts, information booths. Contact Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, P.O. Box 519, Eagle Lake TX 77434, 979-234-3021.



**Saturday, April 10
Twin Lakes Audubon
Society Field Trip to
East Texas Pineywoods**

Destination is Boykin Springs in the Angelina National Forest (near Zavalla and Sam Rayburn Reservoir). Date and trip are tentative and dependent on Rich’s schedule.

Make your own arrangements to get to Boykin Springs and for lodging (camping in the national forest at Boykin Springs, or hotels are Lufkin, the nearest “big” city). We will look for Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Bachman’s Sparrow. Many other breeding species, from Barred Owl and Pileated Woodpecker to various warblers (e.g., Hooded, Pine, Louisiana Waterthrush), should be present, as well as a variety of migrants. Contact Rich Kostecke, 254-547-2047 (on day of field trip, 314-346-0658), rkostecke@tnc.org.

Tuesday, April 13

Twin Lakes Audubon Society Meeting

Elaine Shankle will speak on “Wildlife and Wildlife Issues in Zimbabwe.” Hosted by the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton. From I-35, take the 6th Street exit in Belton. Head west on 6th Street, then turn left onto 9th Avenue. The York Science Building is at the intersection of 9th Avenue and Moore (on the right); meetings are on the first floor. For more information, contact Rich Kostecke, rkostecke@tnc.org, 254-547-2047.

Wednesday–Sunday, April 14–18

Fifth Annual Nature Quest, Concan, Texas

Nature festival that includes birding, butterflies, wildflowers, big tree tour, geology, river ecology, and bats. Headquarters is

at House Pasture Cattle Company in Concan. For more information: 800-210-0380, www.thcrr.com, nicole@thcrr.com.

Friday, April 16, starting at 10 am

Birding events on the edge of the Big Thicket, McAfee Nature Center, 1080 CR 1010, Woodville, Texas

10 a.m.: beginning birding, by Pat McLain. **1:30 p.m.:** presentation by Donna Work of the McAfee Nature Center on the life history and status of Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers in Texas. **2 p.m.:** guided birding walk led by Donna Work. A Texas Forest Service program specialist, Donna Work manages the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in two Texas state forests and works with private landowners who have habitat for this species on their properties. For more information, contact John Matthews (in Austin), 632-0899, johoma@mail.utexas.edu.

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The Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Texas

The endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) occurs from East Texas and southeast Oklahoma across the South to the east coast. This species prefers open, mature pine forests, building its roosting and nesting cavities in live pine trees. The birds live in family groups, ideally consisting of a mated pair and one or more helpers. There is only one breeding pair per group. All members of the group help build cavities, defend the group’s territory, incubate eggs, and feed the young.

Most of the RCWs in Texas occur on national forest lands. They also can be found on industrial lands, state holdings, and nonindustrial private lands. All four of the national forests in Texas have RCWs that can be viewed by the public. The W. G. Jones State Forest south of Conroe and the I. D. Fairchild State Forest between Rusk and Palestine also have RCWs. A recovery plan for the RCW is under way across the South that involves habitat management, monitoring of nesting, and translocation of juvenile RCWs where needed. Most of these activities occur on national forest lands. See the April 16 calendar item above for an opportunity to learn more about this endangered species.



OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST (CONTINUED)

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Friday–Sunday, April 16–18 Spring Native Plant Sale & Gardening Festival, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Opportunity to purchase native plants and seeds. Expert advice available to assist with selection and growing questions. The Friday sale is for wildflower center members only. For more information, call 292-4100 or visit www.wildflower.org.

Friday–Sunday, April 16–18

11th Annual Migration Celebration, Lake Jackson, Texas

Birding field trips to national wildlife refuges, wildlife management area, five county parks, and 20 miles of Gulf Coast beaches. Also speakers and information booths. Contact Brazosport Convention and Visitors Council: 888-477-2505.

Saturday–Sunday, April 17–25

8th Annual Great Texas Birding Classic

This week-long birding tournament starts in the Upper Coast, moves to the Lower Coast, and ends in the Central Coast. Contact Birding Classic, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin TX 78744; 888-892-4737 ext. 2; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/gtbc/; shelly.scroggs@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Friday–Sunday, April 23–25

Birding in the Big Thicket, Kountze, Texas

Workshops; tours to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, High Island, Big Thicket; children's workshop. Contact Kountze Chamber of Commerce, 866-456-8689, www.kountzecoc.org.

Saturday, April 24, 10:30 am–3:30 pm

Outdoor Kids Adventure Days, Martin Middle School

Fun, hands-on outdoor activities for children and youths. For more information about the event or to volunteer at the TAS booth, see Volunteer Opportunity on page 14.

Saturday–Sunday, April 24–25

11th Annual Bluebird Festival, Wills Point, Texas



Educational and entertaining programs; driving tours that access hundreds of bluebirds and nesting boxes lining the roads into town; arts and crafts; games, food, and educational booths. Contact Wills Point Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 217, Wills Point TX 75169, 800-WPBLUBI, www.flash.net/~junction/festival.htm.

Friday–Sunday, April 30–May 2

1st Annual Chappell Hill BirdFest, Chappell Hill, Texas

Field trips and lectures by nationally known birders. For information and to register: www.chappellhillbirdfest.com, 979-277-1122.

Saturday–Sunday, May 8–9

Spring Bird Count, Bamberger Ranch, Johnson City

Registration required. The count is on Sunday, but you are welcome to arrive on Saturday evening after 6 p.m. 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. On Sunday morning we will get 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 (there will be limited space in the refrigerator). At 6:30 a.m. we will gather, and area assignments will be announced. The count will be from 7 a.m. until noon, and then we'll meet at the center for the tally. The kind folks at the Bamberger Ranch are letting us use this great facility for our potluck and sleepover, and they ask that we pick up after ourselves and leave the center in the same condition that we found it, so we should be sure to show our appreciation. The terrain is rugged, so wear sturdy shoes and field clothes, and be prepared for rain. Email Marsha Reimer at Marsha.Reimer@tpwd.state.tx.us to let her know if you are going, if you will be arriving Saturday evening (after 6 p.m.) or Sunday morning (at or before 6:30 a.m.), and if you need more details on the directions. You can also let her know if you would like to be placed on an email list for information on future bird counts. Visit www.bambergerranch.org/map.htm for map to the ranch.



Friday–Sunday, May 14–16

5th Annual Dragonfly Days, Weslaco, Texas

Field trips and speakers focusing on dragonflies and damselflies. Contact Valley Nature Center: info@valleynaturecenter.org, www.valleynaturecenter.org/ddays.htm, 956-969-2475.



Sunday–Friday, May 16–21

Trip to Orcas Island

Wimberley Birding Society trip to Orcas Island in the San Juans, where majestic forests rise above deep bays and rocky coastline and outdoor activities abound. Lodge in luxury at Rosario Resort, enjoy daily birding in prime coastal and inland habitats

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