

# The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society      Issue 244 February 2009

## President's Message

During the hiatus there has been a lot going on. CTAS and its members have been anything but dormant. Both the eastern and western Christmas Counts were successful. A field trip to the Waco Landfill and The Sparrow Workshop were formal offerings. Topping it off was an impromptu field event to see some Short Eared Owls. We have EG to thank for this. He and his son Joey spotted these birds on the eastern CBC and took us out to see them one Sunday evening at dusk. Several of us attended, and I must say it was almost a party atmosphere. Those of you who did not attend missed a wonderful opportunity. A wonderful article on the nesting eagles on Lake Waco appeared in the Trib. February hosts another grand event, The Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb. 13-16. Last year was marked by a grand article in the Waco Tribune. There were several checklist submitted from Waco and the surrounding area to Cornell. I encourage you to again participate this year. Each and every one of you contributes to CTAS and to the advocacy of birding, nature conservation, and environmental awareness in this community. For all this, I am truly grateful.

Roy C. Smallwood 3<sup>rd</sup>

## Program for February 17, Lake Waco Wetlands-7:00 pm-meet and greet-7:30 Program presented by Audubon member Jane Derrick.

"From Waco to Huntington Beach and Denver" is the topic for Jane's program. She will talk about the 123 species that she observed including 7 lifers.

The purpose of the 4,800 mile trip that she will be sharing was to go camping with friends, attend a wedding and visit her daughter and grandchildren. Paul and she both managed to pursue their interests along the way. the birding locations included Lake Balmorhea and Palo Duro Canyon, TX; Cave Creek,

Tuscon, Grand Canyon, and Walnut Canyon, AZ; Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR, Bolsa Chica and Upper Newport Bay, CA, Albuquerque and Sugarite Canyon SP, NM.

Texas naturalist, Roy Bedichek was her grandfather. " Birding for me is a way of carrying on his legacy. I have been birding since 1990. I got started on a bird walk led by a ranger at Big Bend National Park and then went on several birding trips with June Osborne." She is married to Paul Derrick, the Stargazer who writes the astronomy column in the Trib. She tries to incorporate birding into any trips that they take. She has birded in Switzerland and New Zealand. She annually birds at the Davis Mountains, while her husband goes to the Texas Star Party. The purpose of the 4,800 mile trip that she will be sharing was to go camping with friends, attend a wedding and visit her daughter and grandchildren. Jane was a contract manager with the Texas Department of Human Services for 22 years and is currently retired. Jane serves on the Board of the Community Race Relations Coalition in Waco. She and Paul have two grown and married children, Karen Davis and Mary Jane Kent and two grandchildren

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## NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

### APPLICATION

YES I'd like to join Please enroll me as a member of National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for **\$20: the introductory fee** is enclosed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send this application and check to:  
National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 52520 Boulder, CO  
80322-1001 Include chapter  
code of  
W06 7XCH

**Renewal is \$35.00**

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### Field Trips and Workshops

Eric Haskell has led two field trips in January for Central Texas Audubon Society members. The first was on January 24th to the landfill to observe

gulls. On January 31st Eric presented a workshop on sparrows followed by a field trip to Woodway Park.

### Volunteer Opportunities:

A Gardener's Gathering will be April 26th at the Carleen Bright Abroetum. The science fair at TSTC is on February 24th. The Earth Day celebration will be on April 18th and 19th. Please mark your calendars for these events and volunteer if you have some time. Let Karen know about volunteering for the science fair.

### Backyard Bird Count-February

**13-16**, submit your backyard bird counts or any place that you choose to count during these dates. For more information go to [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

### The 13th annual celebration of

**Whooping Cranes** and other birds will be in Port Aransas, Texas, from February 26-March 1. Information on events and registration is available at [www.portaransas.org](http://www.portaransas.org) or 800-45-COAST.

### "Booming"-n- "Blooming" 2009's Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival

will be April 4-5, 2009, at the Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR in Eagle Lake, Texas. For more information call the Refuge Headquarters at (979) 234-3021.

Audubon members are busy as usual educating the community about the birds they love. In February, Audubon will be well represented at South Bosque Elementary School's Community Reader Day. Pam Moes will share her adventures with the Penguins with a first-grade class, Nancy and Fred Gehlbach will thrill a group of 4th graders with their owl photos and stories, and I will discuss Backyard Birds and enjoying nature with two Kindergarten classes. I will be participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count with Mrs. Amy McNamara's 4th grade students. She is one of our

Audubon Adventure teachers, and a great one at that! I have been working with Mrs. Bonnie Casmer, the Gifted and Talented teacher for the entire Midway Elementary School system. She has chosen her district science night for the 4th grade to be centered around birds! The program will be called "For the Birds". If anyone is available to help on Thursday, April 16th from 6 - 8 pm at Spring Valley Elementary School, we would love all the help we can get! We have some fun centers planned for the kids - "edutainment" so to speak! Call me if you would like to help out - free pizza! 848.2999

### Winter birds in the Sugar Creek Preserve by Fred and Nancy Gehlbach

We echo Joe Yelder's presentation a few months ago and add that some of our "disappearing" winter birds and their decreasing numbers are related to long-term climatic warming. This is based on 29 years of data in the preserve, backed up by similar years of studying wintering North American birds in the Central American tropics. Our local list of recent "goners" includes winter wrens and purple finches and "down to one individual" includes brown creepers and yellow-bellied sapsuckers. The greatly reduced numbers group includes white-throated sparrows, ruby-crowned kinglets, and yellow-rumped warblers. The brief "irruption" of pine siskins this winter was astounding, since this bird hasn't been here regularly for a couple of decades. Have any Christmas bird counters looked at numbers of species on their counts over the last several decades? Impressions such as reduced numbers this year suggest doing that! Why this year? On the other hand climatic warming and urban-suburban sprawl brought us nesting great-tailed grackles, white-winged doves whose increasing numbers bring more wintering hawks, and now nesting

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black-bellied whistling ducks. What's next?

Bird Reports on Short-eared Owl and Common Ground Doves have been submitted by Joe Yelderman. They will be included in a future newsletter.

**The Roadrunner  
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