

The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society Issue 259 March 2011

President's Message

Looking forward to March and SPRING!! I know all of us are ready for a change in weather and returning species for the Spring bird watching fervor that seems to hit.

Eric has some field trips planned that will take us to some new sites. There are also lots of festivals coming up around the state that afford some good bird watching activity such as April 7-10-Galveston Featherfest Galveston, TX; April 9-17 Great Texas Birding Classic, Lake Jackson, TX; April 29-May 2 Wings over the Hills Fredericksburg, TX; April 29- May 2 Balcones Songbird Festival, Marble Falls, TX.

As for Eric, some of you may know that he and his family will be leaving for South Carolina later this Spring. That will leave a huge void in our group. We will need someone to coordinate the Western bird count as well as the programs for the meetings. Be thinking of who can fill this void for us. We will have to have a grand send off for the family when it gets close to time for them to leave.

If you have any good sightings, please let us know so that we can post on our yahoo and websites. We are getting visitors on the web and inquiries about where to bird in our area, so we want to keep current the best sightings.

Hope you can make the March meeting on the "Ides" that's the 15th.

See you out and about.

Janet



Redpoll, by Karen Arquette

Mar 15 walk & meeting: *Mayan Birds*

Eric Haskell will lead an Arboretum bird walk at 6:30pm. Afterwards, Dr. Fred Gehlbach, Baylor Prof. Emeritus, will give a presentation on his ongoing research in the Mayan Biosphere between Mexico and Belize. The meeting is on Tuesday at 7:30pm at Carleen Bright Arboretum on Bosque Blvd in Woodway. Refreshments will be served starting at 7pm. **Carleen Bright Arboretum is located in Woodway north of HWY84 at the intersection of Bosque and Estates Drive.**

Social- I invite anyone interested in helping with refreshments to contact me at: anngordon@hotmail.com or if necessary by phone: 848-4135.

EVENTS

- Ft. Hood Golden-cheeked Warblers!** At 8am, join TRAC leader Gil Eckrich GIL.ECKRICH@us.army.mil for a Field Trip to **Ft. Hood** on Sat. **3/29** to look for rarities there. Meet to carpool beforehand at Bosque Square on corner of Hwy 6 & Bosque Blvd. at 6:30am.
- April 9 is the annual Waco Lake Shore cleanup** from 9am-3pm at Twin Bridges Day Use Area, volunteers needed. Lunch is provided.
- Also needed are folks to staff the Audubon booth for **Earth Day at Cameron Park Zoo April 16.**
- On **April 30** at 9am (meet 8am) we're planning to visit a new site, **Russell Ranch** near Pidcoke, to look for migrant birds.

Sightings and Reports

Sandhill Cranes were observed by several, flying over the area just as February turned to March.

Eric Haskell; March will be my last meeting, since our family is moving to GA, where I start work at Strom Thurmon Dam on the GA/SC border. Yard Sale 4/2! Thanks to all for your support & birding enthusiasm!

At home **Martins** arrived on 2/24/11, and were joined by **Barn Swallows** 2/27/11, at which point they were up to 4 adult males & an immature. A **Cliff/Cave Swallow** was with them since 3/1/11.

At Waco Lake I saw my FOS **Tree Swallow** 3/2/11 when doing a prescribed burn at Bosque Park, which brought in various raptors. Also noted my first ever Spring **GC Kinglet** on Lacy Pt. Paradise Trail 3/6/11, & **Fox Sparrow** and **Canada Goose** sightings at Speegleville Park 3/1/11.

Roy C. Smallwood 3rd; Feb. 21, A group of eight visited Hornsby Bend to see ducks. That we did- Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, and Ruddy mostly. However, the best birds of the day were **Least Sandpipers**, Wilson Snipes and a **Sora**. Feb. 26, In Bastrop State Park, the best birds were the **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Pine Warbler** and a **Brown Creeper**. All the best.

Karen Arquette; I have had a very "birdy" backyard this winter. I have had one "lifer" this winter. The **Common Redpoll** which has been a regular to the finch feeder lately. I have gone out and followed some sightings for Bohemian Waxwing and Crossbills with no luck. I went to a local Audubon program recently about the status of Mute swans in Michigan. The Dept of Natural Resources have started to dispatch Mute Swans in order to aid in the return of the native Trumpeter Swan. I had a total of 21 species over the 4 days of the GBBC.

Karen Arquette : Lovells, Michigan

Jim Edwards; Not a whole lot of new stuff from Woodway Park or the Wetlands. I continue to see **winter wrens** at both sites. Also had a **marsh wren** out at the wetlands the other day. I had my first calling **white eyed vireo** on Thursday at Woodway Park along with my first barn swallow.

Odes are showing up at the wetlands now with Red Saddlebags, Common Green Darners and Familiar Bluets noted last week.

Harriet Shearer; Elysian Lane, Woodway. The **Coopers Hawks** are nesting in the original nest down on the end of the lane. A pair of great horned owls have been doing a bit of bullying with the hawks. Guess they don't want the hawks as neighbors. There has been no sight of the screech owls yet but the birds are alerting on the box so I am hopeful that we will have eggs soon. Dr. Gehlbach will be checking. I will keep you posted. There are still over a dozen goldfinches as of 3/6. The orange crowned warblers are not around my feeders anymore. I have seen no spring birds yet. I did hear the sandhill cranes flying over as reported elsewhere.

Pam Moes; There have been over 80 **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** hanging around the "Fish Pond" the past few days. A pair of **Bewick's Wrens** singing. Two Eastern Phoebes looking for a nesting place today. Lots of **American Goldfinch**, large flocks of **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Cedar Waxwings**. Saw a swallow passing over the water. Still seeing **Am Pipits**.

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Rich Kostecke; February was a tale of two seasons for the Bell-Coryell- Lampasas counties area. Early in the month, we experienced two strong cold fronts that brought freezing temperatures and wintry precipitation. These fronts undoubtedly pushed some of our wintering birds even further south. In general, although moderately cold-hardy, species such as Great Egret and **Blue-headed Vireo** for example, which were sparse already possibly due to dry conditions, seemed to become even more sparse. However, the weather quickly moderated and we were experiencing warm temperatures and the first flush of spring by the end of the month. By mid-February there was a noticeable influx of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings (difficult to say whether they were pushed south by the cold fronts or were moving northward in anticipation of spring). Several other early migrants such as ducks (including Blue-winged Teal), pelicans, cranes, and swallows were reported before month's end. However, dry conditions continue to prevail. This is setting up area lakes (Belton and Stillhouse) for a potentially interesting shorebird season as extensive mudflats are currently available. However, overall, habitat is likely to become stressed if we don't receive some spring showers.

Ann Gordon; In Harris Creek area the **Downy Woodpeckers** are very active right now, calling, chasing and feeding. I see a male and a female every day at the feeder. The Red-bellied Woodpeckers are more active now, also, especially coming to the feeders. In addition to the usual resident birds on 3/5, I had 11 Chipping Sparrows, 5 Juncos, 2 Goldfinches, 1 Lincoln Sparrow, **3 Pine Siskins, 1 Brown Creeper, and 1 Phoebe.** There are always Yellow Rumped Warblers and Orange Crowned Warblers. The Cedar Waxwings are still coming to what is left of the Ligustrum berries and to water. Recently a few Robins started coming into the yard or calling from nearby. I saw a pair of Bluebirds and a Great Blue Heron down at the creek. I hear

the Great Horned Owls calling every late afternoon and evening. Occasionally I hear a Barred Owl.

Frank Bumgardner; Jeanette and I had two **Sprague's Pipits** along Airport Trail Road in Bell County on 28 Feb. We have had a male **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in the backyard since 5 Dec 10.



Cedar Waxwing, by Bill Ravenscroft

Bill Ravenscroft; The most notable seasonal observations for my locality were: Last month's very much colder weather brought large numbers of American Goldfinches to my yard. These are now starting to develop their summer plumage particularly with black crown feathers appearing. Cedar Waxwings and American Robins were present but in far fewer numbers than in recent years. **Pine, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers** were in higher numbers as were Dark-eyed Juncos which were very numerous during the time it snowed here. We have had several visits by Chipping Sparrows and a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** still comes to the peanut feeder. Further

afield around the lake there are still a few Ospreys; American Kestrels and American Pipits are readily found.

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And don't forget, the CTAS Yahoo Group site is in Karen's capable hands in MI. You may post any sightings or relevant Audubon information there.

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