

# The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society Issue 257 November 2010

## President's Message

**Looking forward:** Our next meeting is on Nov 16. Bill Ravenscroft & Bryan Stone will present a program on photographing birds and other things in nature. We have copies of the pullout from the November Audubon magazine to give to attendees. Project Feeder Watch begins Nov 13. Go to <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw> to register. This is a great way to get your children & grandchildren involved in bird watching. Our Christmas Bird Count is coming up Dec 18. Eric will have more details. Please put this on your calendar & plan to join us – it's always a good day to get out & enjoy our countryside as well as being with fellow birding enthusiasts.

Hope you remembered to set your clocks back Nov 7 – that's not looking forward, but ...

Thanks to Mary Phillips for her presentation on Iceland – informative & picturesque. It was enjoyed by all. See you on the 16<sup>th</sup> – bring your cameras for some good tips on nature photography.

Janet Wallace



American Pipit, by Bill Ravenscroft

## Nov 16 walk & mtg: Digital Opportunities

Eric Haskell will lead an Arboretum bird walk at 5pm including Girl Scouts. Afterwards, Bryan Stone & Bill Ravenscroft will review Nov. national magazine camera recommendations, show digital bird photos & discuss camera choices at the meeting on Tuesday at 6:30pm, at Carleen Bright Arboretum on Bosque Blvd in Woodway. Refreshments will be served starting at 6pm. **Note: the meeting is 1hr earlier than usual this month due to early darkness. 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@hot.rr.com](mailto:anngordon@hot.rr.com) or if necessary by phone: 848-4135.

## EVENTS:

**111th CBC** – The 111<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Counts are a critical time to help identify bird population trends in the New World, even if you aren't an expert. Participants donate time and \$5 to spend the day counting birds, with an ideal of 3 per vehicle to note as many bird numbers as possible. You receive a copy of the count magazine which may include your efforts!

**The Crawford Christmas Bird Count** will be Sat Dec 18. Meet 8am at Bosque Sq Parking Lot (corner of Hwy 6 & Bosque Blvc) to participate.

**Ring in the New year Jan 1 with the Eastern CBC!** Participants will meet Sat 7:45am at Equipment Depot parking lot on the corner of I-35 and New Rd.

*Sun Oct 17 Booth for Children's Garden Fair at Arboretum, 2-5pm was a smashing success, with over 900 visitors at the Arboretum. Eric led 2 walks while Janet & Annette staffed the booth for many interested kids.*

*Hazel Bazemore Co. Park Hawk Watch, Corpus Christi –Eric attended Oct 9-11 this year, with a highlight kettle of over 200 Swainson's Hawks on an otherwise slow day. Peak viewing is at the end of September, but Swainson's are more prevalent in October.*

## Sightings and Reports

**Richard Kostecke, Ph.D.; Red-breasted Nuthatches** (photographed in Waco by Bill Ravenscroft in early November) are irruptive in Central Texas. What that means is that

that you can go several winters or more with few or no reports (hence their rare status). However, every now and then, probably related to a combination of poor food availability on their normal wintering grounds and perhaps weather patterns (e.g., a colder winter may push them further south), you get an irruptive southward movement. Those movements sometimes reach Central Texas. The last time we had an irruption was winter 2007/2008, when the species was relatively easy to find around these parts. Before that winter, according to my records, the last big irruptive period was probably 1998-2000. We have numerous reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches for those springs (i.e., birds that had been pushed south and then were recorded on spring point counts as they made their way north). Anyway, this year looks like it could be an irruptive year. Already there is a good spread of Red-breasted Nuthatch sightings across Texas and I am starting to hear reports of higher than usual numbers for states to the north of us where they are usually rare to uncommon during winter as well. So, keep looking for them. Another species that tends to be irruptive is the **Golden-crowned Kinglet**. Its numbers vary widely in Central Texas from winter to winter. This winter appears to be shaping up to be at least a decent one for that species. Brown Creepers also seem to be somewhat irruptive, but I have yet to observe any of them so far this fall/winter. Another irruptive species is American Robin. It has been perhaps nearly a decade since massive hordes of robins from the north descended upon TX. Because the drivers behind the movements can be different, it remains to be seen whether or not we'll get a westward irruption of Rocky Mountain species (e.g., Mountain Bluebird) this winter.

**Karen Arquette:** With a week of really strong winds my bird feeders were really busy. Purple and Gold Finches, Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks, lots of Chickadees and Titmouse. Juncos and Fox Sparrows cover the ground. I was without power for four days due to downed trees in the area. The fireplace kept the "great room" warm. I turned the club chair part of the sectional toward the window for daylight entertainment. I could not leave the house for fear of a tree hitting the house and not being here. One tree did hit and smash my temp shed. (it was the dead one that my son tried to talk me into taking down when I moved here.) With the loss of so many dead snags the wood peckers are going to be busy making new homes. I have Pileated, Downy and Hairy daily.

**Nada Wareham;** I've had a **Brown Thrasher** for 3 weeks in the back yard in Lacy Lakeview, as well as a Catbird there on Oct 28. There isn't much activity at the farm yet.

**Eric Haskell; FOS** Golden-cr Kinglets, **Spotted Towhee, & Snipe** are my highlights of late. Waco Lake experienced a surge of **Ospreys** with migration in early Oct, along with Terns & a few Gulls, but they left and new arrivals are slow. This year is late for Passerines (just seeing Vesper's, Lincoln's & Savannah Sparrows), but a few Sandpipers have been around, notably remaining **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Wetlands. **Tree Swallows** also flew through later than usual (until late Oct), while apparently **Sandhill Cranes** (10/22 & 11/1 over our house) are early. We'll see what late Autumn holds!

**Nancy and Fred Gehlbach;** "Global climate change continues, as we found fewer than ever North American migrants among permanent-resident "cousins" in Ecuador during the last two weeks of October. Red-eyed Vireos & Blackburnian Warblers were exemplary indicators. We'll present evidence from Belize, when we see you next March.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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. Seniors 62 & older and students are \$15.



**Pam Moes;** Heard my first **White-crowned Sparrow** today and the resident Am Kestrel is back chasing all of my birds. We had a flock of 80+ Meadowlarks and he kept swooping over them trying to catch some dinner. It was exciting to watch the meadowlarks flush as he flew over them. Had a flock of **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** 60+ gather and they finally left just last week. For some reason, the N. Mockingbirds are going nuts. They are chattering and chasing each other all around the yard. I think there are 4 pairs.

I suppose they could be chasing their immatures out of their territory but I've never seen this before. I have also seen this happening in other people's yards.



**Red-shouldered Hawk, by Ann Gordon**

**Ann Gordon;** I just had my FOS **Dark-eyed Junco** at 11:50 am on 10/31 in the back yard, & at 7:40 am. I saw a FOS **Hermit Thrush** at the waterfalls investigating the area and getting up on the rocks in front. I reported in the October Newsletter that I had the **Nashville Warbler** for 17 days between 9/12 and 10/1. Starting on 10/2 I continued to see the Nashville Warbler on 10 more days, the last was 10/27. On some days I had multiple visits with 1 to 2 individuals at the puddle. For the season I had 27 dates where I recorded seeing the Nashville Warbler, a most unusual thing in my yard! The **Black-throated Green Warbler** was recorded 10/11 and 10/21 at the puddle. The **Indigo Bunting** (molting) was photographed at the puddle 10/14. Last **Hummingbird** spp was 10/15. The **Cooper's Hawk** female again 10/18. The **Red-shouldered Hawk** I photographed on 10/25 on the ground.

The **Eastern Phoebe** was recorded 8 days from 10/3-10/29. **Bewick's Wren** 10/7. A possible **Chipping Sparrow** at the puddle 10/17 (see What is it album). The FOS **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** appeared 10/3 for a total of 7 days to date. FOS **Orange-crowned Warbler** appeared 10/21 for a total of 5 days to date. FOS **Yellow-rumped Warbler** appeared 10/19 for a total of 5 days to date. During October I had an explosion of Tawny Emperors and only a few Hackberry Emperors at the fruit feeders with a few Red Admirals and a dozen or so Question Marks.

**Roy Smallwood;** Oct 29. 8:30-10:45 AM Buescher State Park, Smithville, TX. Clear, Slight wind, 46F-60F with the hope that this "Cool Canadian Air" might have brought some ducks to the area. Buescher has a small picturesque lake, and upon it I did find three species of duck: a lone Ring Necked Duck, a dozen Wood Ducks and a pair of Gadwall. The surprise birds were found on the northern shore and one near the park entrance. The surprises were a Chipping Sparrow, a Pine Warbler and a Yellow Bellied Sapsucker. I was also surprised to see a Caracara over the lake. Caracaras seem to be very prevalent in this part of Texas, but I generally see them in open fields. 21 species sighted.

**Bill Ravenscroft;** Managed to get a decent photo of a **Neotropic Cormorant** in the Airport Beach Park area in mid-October. Sighted several **Ospreys** there and in other lake parks too. Ospreys are particularly plentiful this year. Photographed one of several young **Eastern Meadowlarks** on the airport fence. A small flock of **American Pipits** was seen on the shore of the lake as were several Savannah Sparrows. A flock of about 80 Coots was photographed late October in a 'raft' on the lake. An immature **Sapsucker** is visiting my yard regularly as are several **Downy Woodpeckers**. Had brief sightings of several **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**. Other migrants have been scarce here so far.

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**Neotropic Cormorant retains breeding feathers, by Bill Ravenscroft**

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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.*

**Check out the new CTAS website**  
[www.centexaudubon.org](http://www.centexaudubon.org)

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