

The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society Issue 246 April 2009

President's Message

From my vantage point, April is shaping up to be a busy month. Birding festival season has begun to occur. Feather Fest in Galveston is in the first week of this month. Beast & Blooms at the Cameron Park Zoo is coupled with Earth Day. The Balcones Songbird festival follows the next weekend. Then, there is Gardeners' Gathering. CTAS needs volunteers for the booth at Beasts & Blooms and the Gardeners' Gathering. Spring migrants are being reported everywhere. I think the March winds may have blown some hither and yond. However, I am ready to find some warblers and orioles and to listen for the call of the White Eyed Vireo. Our special guest this month will be Tom Conry of the City of Waco. CTAS and the City have a special relationship which centers around the Lake Waco Wetlands. CTAS members know of the importance of wetlands to migrating bird populations as well as to clean water and environmental good health. I would like to encourage the membership to attend this program and hope for constructive dialogue between us.

Roy C. Smallwood 3rd.

Monthly Program: April 21, 2009 Tom Conry "Status of the Wetlands"

Tom Conry, Water Quality Administrator with the City of Waco, will be presenting on the status of the Lake Waco Wetlands and the Department's commitment to the protection of public health and to the quality management of water and wastewater services. Tom was instrumental in the creation and management of the Wetlands.

Come early and see what birds are around, have refreshments and mingle. Refreshments served at 7:00pm.

Directions to Wetlands: Take Hwy 6 across the twin bridges past Speegleville Rd. to FM 185. Turn right. Go about 1/2 mile and turn left on Eichelberger Crossing Rd. Follow for a mile, parking lot will be on the right. You can also take China Spring Rd to FM 185 after crossing the bridge turn right on Eichelberger Rd.

May Program: Pot Luck, Slides & Auction

Change of Member meeting

Location: Starting in **May 2009** the location of our member meetings will be Carleen Bright Arboretum 9001 Bosque, Woodway. (Intersection of Estates and Bosque north of Hwy84)

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May 19, 2009 Meeting

Be sure not to miss our annual Pot Luck, Slide and Auction. Bring a dish to pass and slides or power point photos to share with members. This will be the third year we have had an auction. Come bid on such things as CTAS ball caps and tee shirts, native and hummingbird plants, framed bird art, bird reference books and a host of other items. This auction helps to pay for the printing and postage of our newsletter plus expenses pertaining to our programs. ALL proceeds go into the CTAS general fund. Bryan Stone will again be our auctioneer. .

April is Election Time

There is still time for nominations for officers of our Board of Directors. If you are interested contact Bev and Jim Smith bjps@hotmail.com or Bryan Stone brston73@hotmail.com . Elections will be held on April 21, 2009 at the member meeting and officers will be installed at the May meeting.



Black & White Warbler @ Bill Ravencroft
Support your Audubon Chapter

During the month of April CTAS will have booths at two events. First, we will have our annual booth in celebration of **Earth Day** at the **Beast and Blooms** at Cameron Park Zoo on April 18th and 19th . Wrist bands are available for entry to the zoo for volunteers on either day. Contact Roy Smallwood for a wrist band if you plan on attending. Second, this is our third year to take part in the **Gardeners Gathering** at **Carleen Bright Arboretum**. Since we have committed to moving our member meetings to this site we need to give volunteer time to the Arboretum. We will have members leading nature walks on the grounds during this event. Please contact Karen Arquette if you want to volunteer on **April 26th**

Donate Plants: Have you divided perennials in your garden this spring? Any extra plants started from seed? If so bring them to the April meeting so we can sell them at the Gardeners Gathering to benefit our chapter. Those day lilies and iris are healthier when divided every year or so. (You can even bring them bare root) Make sure to tag and name the plants.

Audubon Education Report

From Natalie Kutach: Just another mention of **Midway ISD Gifted and Talented Science Night "For the Birds"** Thursday, April 16th 6 - 8 pm Spring Valley Elementary.

Our Audubon Adventures curriculum has been announced for the 2009-2010 school year. Participants will enjoy **"Action for Planet Earth"**, focusing on conservation.



"Pennies for the Planet" has been delivered and ready to share with local members. Participants can collect pennies to benefit various conservation efforts. This year, proceeds go toward Four Holes Swamp - South Carolina, Project Puffin and the Seabird Restoration Project - Maine, and the Sagebrush Sea -Wyoming. Instructions are detailed in each brochure. If your family would like to participate, please contact Natalie Kutach.

Lake Waco Eagle Update

Eric Haskell reports: "The Lacy Point eagles are bringing meat (I'm told furry animal + TERNS?!) to the nest where the female tears it up, so at least 1 chick has apparently hatched. The "Hog Creek" eagles are behind by a week or 2 ... I'll try to check on them this week."

Field Trips: Eric is planning a trip to view the eagles at Lacy Point on May 16th. More information and directions next month. Also Eric is planning a return to Richland Creek this summer. More on that next month.

Sightings and reports;

Roy Smallwood: April 3, 2009 Oakwood Cemetery. The purpose of this trip was to look for orioles, vireos and warblers this morning. However, the only warblers were Yellow-rumped Warblers. No orioles or vireos. The best birds of the trip were Chipping Sparrows and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. 19 species were identified. As a side note, upon returning home and as I sat on the patio out back drinking tea my FOS hummer appeared at the feeder and it was a Black-chinned.

Jane Derrick: On Saturday, March 28th, about 7:15 pm, I saw a Golden-cheeked Warbler at the Central Texas Astronomical Societies Meyer Observatory outside of Clifton. The area has the habitat for the warbler-oaks and junipers. I also saw several Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a Carolina Chickadee and Cardinals.

Fred and Nancy Gehlbach 3/21/09

We just returned from two weeks in Costa Rica and a list of 307 tropical and North American migratory birds plus numerous other critters of interest like bright yellow Eye-lash Vipers, 25 foot American Crocodiles, Crab-eating Raccoons, Collared Peccaries, and three

species of Poison Arrow Frogs to name a few. Daily Resplendent Quetzals at 7,000 ft. in the Sevegre Valley of the Sierra Talamanca just don't get old.

We've studied North American migrants in the tropical habitats of Mexico and Central America almost yearly since the 1970s, and recorded 25 species this time. Chestnut-sided Warblers, Summer Tanagers, Baltimore Orioles, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were most common. Wood and Swainson's Thrushes, Great-crested Flycatchers, Black and White Warblers, and Louisiana Waterthrushes were also fairly abundant. Tiny electronic trackers attached to individual birds show that a Wood Thrush takes 6-9 days to fly from northern Central America to east Texas, usually arriving in the last half of April. -

Eric Haskell 3/30/09 upper coast:

While on Galveston we went to the shore front, which has been largely rebuilt since Ike last year, though a few condos are boarded up and some shops have been cleared. Much more dramatic was the Bolivar peninsula.

We crossed over the recently reopened ferry and there were many zones with piles of rubble marking whole tracts of (2nd) homes, some spots with stilts standing w/o homes, a big vehicle junkyard, and Rollover Pass is completely changed, with no asphalt, restaurant, shops, or pier. Even the pass, which attracted birds, is "gone," being dredged right now.

Karen Arquette: 4/5/09: Elm Mott

I had my FOS hummingbird a Black-chinned on March 17. On the 25th I had my FOS Ruby-throated a male and a female. I have not had the numbers of hummingbirds that I had last spring although with each cold front the numbers did increase until the front passed. This morning I found a dead Black-chinned in a flower bed and wonder if the low temperature of 32 last night was the cause. The berries on the mulberry trees are just starting to turn red. I have not seen Cedar Waxwings yet. Scissor-tails have been here for two weeks but no Western Kingbirds.

Eric Haskell 4/1/09 Lake Waco

FOS Upland Plover & Swainson's Hawk. Also FOS Clay-colored Sparrow at home. Visited dam area, Koehne, Midway, Twin Bridges, Airport Beach Parks, Waco Marina, and Flat Rock Access Area. Mallard 2, Blue-winged Teal 14, Cinnamon Teal 1, Neotropic Cormorant 2 Double-crested Cormorant 48, Great Blue Heron 2, Great Egret 3, Black Vulture 4, Turkey Vulture 15, Osprey 1, Swainson's Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 2, American Kestrel 1, American Coot 16, Killdeer 2, Greater Yellowlegs 1, Upland Sandpiper 2, Least Sandpiper 2, Ring-billed Gull 3, Forster's Tern 31, Rock Pigeon 11, Mourning Dove 2, Greater Roadrunner 1, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 5, White-eyed Vireo 1, American Crow 4, Purple Martin 11, Tree Swallow 7, Cliff Swallow 30, Barn Swallow 2, Carolina Chickadee 2, Tufted Titmouse 1, Bewick's Wren 1, Eastern Bluebird 6, Northern Mockingbird 5, European Starling 8, Savannah Sparrow 12, Lincoln's Sparrow 2, White-crowned Sparrow 12, Northern Cardinal 3, meadowlark sp. 6, Great-tailed Grackle 40, House Finch 2, House Sparrow 3

From the Editor: I am already getting ready for the auction at our May meeting. I have four flats of hummingbird plants started by seed in a south window growing fast. I am dividing perennials to take root. Again as every year I stress how important it is to plant for the hummingbirds and not depend on the feeders. Even if you live where you can not have a hummingbird garden, you can plant pots with plants for hummingbirds and butterflies. I do both because I love to sit on my porch and get up close with butterflies and hummingbirds. (good for photographs too) I was surprised that only two people from this county sent in forms for the Hummingbird Roundup with TXPW. I was one of those. It is easy to do and the information benefits these wonderful birds. Go the Texas Parks website and search for the forms .. It isn't too late.

Karen Arquette

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