

# The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society Issue 2 February

2010

Looking for constants—there are none. No organization that lasts hails the status quo nor fails to examine the future. CTAS is faced with same challenge. It must seek and employ more effective methods of recruiting members, new blood for the board that governs its activities, and update methods of communicating the goals and desires of the organization.

If we are to reach the youth who might share our desire for a verdant and prosperous world, then we need to think as they would. How do they communicate? How do they search and retrieve information? How do they stay connected with each other and with their community?

If we are content with what is, then we grow old and superfluous. It doesn't matter our sincerity or our energy or whatever we might contribute monetarily. Nothing builds an organization save its ability to attract and hold on to people with vibrant ideas and willing energy.

Therefore, I invite each and every member to attend our general meetings and programs, to find a way to contribute your time and skills, to reach across your street or community and invite your friends and neighbors to join us. I am convinced there is a multitude of people who enjoy the birds, speak passionately of a green evolution, practice recycling and energy efficiency, and long for a public discourse about a sustainable life pattern.

Onward and forward

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

## Great Backyard Bird Count(s) Feb 19-22

On Valentine/President's weekend you can put your love & respect for birds into action by taking part in the GBBC, taking place worldwide Feb 19-22. Natalie Kutach from Central Texas Audubon welcomes all to join her for a free walk (binoculars, checklists and bird guides available) Sat Feb 20 from 8-10am at the Carleen Bright Arboretum to look for winter birds. On any GBBC day, log onto the GBBC website and note all bird numbers you've seen. Data is used by Cornell Univ lab to track bird populations, as are the CBCs described below.

## Christmas Bird Counts

Both Area CBCs went off well on 12/19/09 and 1/2/10, with clear skies and no rain. Though sparrow numbers were low for the county this year, surprises more than made up for them. Crawford (Western) CBC reporters spotted a first winter record **Empidonax Flycatcher**, Gray Catbird, a total of 3 Rough-legged Hawks, 2 Scissortails, and 3 **Say's Phoebes**, as well as count week **Cave Swallows**. Waco (Eastern) count highlights included not 1 but 2 first winter (and possibly northernmost) photos of **Couch's Kingbirds** at Cameron Park East, continued abundance of 3 **Longspur** species near the Steiner/Frances Rd. junction, **Ross's** and **Cackling Geese**, and winter Black-bellied Whistling Ducks in Robinson.

**Photo: Golden-cheeked Warblers**  
by Bryan Stone

## Black-capped Vireo Program

This month on **February 16 at 7:30pm**, Fort Hood Natural Resource Specialist Dr. David Cimprich will cover the activities of endangered Black-capped Vireo, a Central Texas specialty bird whose largest breeding population is studied with his video monitoring program.

Dr. Cimprich got his bird interest and Master's degree in Ohio State, then studied gnatcatcher and catbird Fall migration behavior at the Univ of So. Mississippi before joining the Nature Conservancy vireo program at Ft. Hood. After 30 years of bird banding, he is one of only 2 certified TX trainers certified by the North American Banding Council. David also loves cycling, which he frequently combines with birding.

**Come early and enjoy the nature trails and gardens before the meeting. 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.**

## Board Members CTAS

**President**/Roy Smallwood 776- 6142

RSmall820@aol.com

**Vice President**/Janet Wallace 366-6280

cjwallace@hotmail.com

**Treasurer**/Gail Cupit 776-2838

gcupit@grandecom.net

**Rec. Secretary**/Bill Ravenscroft

772-7637 wj635@hotmail.com

**Corr. Sec.** /Harriet Shearer 772-9597

shearerh@aol.com

**Newsletter**/Vacant

**Field Trips**/Eric Haskell

**Programs**/Eric Haskell -756-5359 (w)

e\_haskell67@yahoo.com

**Education**/Natalie Kutach 848- 2999

BKUTACH@Hot.rr.com

**Membership**/Vacant

**Social**/Vacant

**State Rep/Conservation/**

Nada Wareham 799-7170

nadawaco@yahoo.com

**Checklist/ Rare bird Reports/**

Frank Bumgardner 836-4183

fbumgardner@hotmail.com

## **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

Senior 62 and older and students \$15.00

## **Field Trips**

- **Feb 13, Sat-** after Natalie's **Woodway walk**, join Twin Lakes Audubon members on Afternoon/evening trip to **Fort Hood's west range to observe burrowing owl(s)**, other raptors, and sparrows. This was a very successful field trip in 2009, and is thus on the 2010 schedule. We'll meet at 3 pm at the junction of Elijah and Georgetown roads on Fort Hood. Basically, take Highway 190 into Copperas Cove. In Copperas Cove, take Highway 116 north 5.5 miles towards Gatesville. Within the 1st mile, you will go through 2 stop signs and 2 traffic lights and the road will zig-zag a bit as you drive through downtown Copperas Cove. After 5.5 miles, you will turn right (east) onto Elijah Road. You will cross a cattle guard and enter Fort Hood at that point. Speed limit is 50 mph along Elijah Road. Then take Elijah Road east 3.1 miles to the junction of Elijah and Georgetown Roads. Your tour guide will be waiting there, most likely in a silver Ford Explorer..

- **Feb 21, Sun- Arlington Treatment Ponds** –Meet at 8am at Luby's parking lot on Loop 340 next to I-35. (Eric H)

- **February 27 Sat** - Heidi Trudell & Matt York, both local biologists and birding experts who sighted some of the CBC rarities, will lead a trip that may include gull searching at the landfill, Longspurs on Steiner Rd, Rosenfeld dairy ducks and blackbirds, and the sewage ponds. Trip will postpone to Mar 6 if weather is bad. Details at meeting.

- **March 13 Sat, Meridian SP for Golden-cheeked Warblers-** Karen Arquette Loesch will lead our annual car trip to Meridian SP as the endangered Warblers arrive. More information at the meeting.

- **Mar 27 Sat – Lake Shore Cleanup.**

Volunteers welcome from 9am-2pm, lunch included. Sign in at Twin Bridges Park group shelter.

- **April 24 to Ft Hood**-Free trip to see Goldencheeks and Blackcaps are available. We must arrive there by 7am, so leaving Bosque Square by 6am. We may do an additional week-day trip in April. The open May 1-2 trip is full.

## **Sightings and Reports**

**Frank Bumgardner;** The following birds were first observed by John Muldrow and I on dates at places indicated below:

**Cinnamon Teal** male on 19 Nov 2009 at Rosenfelds, Horned Lark; **Lapland, Chestnut-collared, McCown's Longspurs** on 5 Dec 2009 on Francis Road, Red-headed Woodpecker (2 Juvenile) on 19 Nov 2009 at the pecan grove, **Le Conte's Sparrow and Sedge Wren** on 5 Dec 2009 at Tradinghouse Creek Lake. As of 30 Jan 2009 all the above species were still present.

**Jane Derrick;** I took a trip to the Rio Grande Valley January 16 - 23 with my husband Paul, where we saw the usual specialities. There were three highlights of the trip for me. On the way down at Choke Canyon State Park, we easily saw the **northern jacana**, a lifer for me, feeding on the shore of 72 Acre Lake. At Estero Llano Grande State Park near Weslaco some other birders pointed out a day sleeping common pauraque to us on the ground at the base of a tree along a park trail. Without their help, we would have never seen it, since it was so camouflaged. And on the way home near Beeville we saw the **northern wheatear** on an Amish farm. The farmer who found it had given explicit instructions to the rare bird alert. Once we were there, he helped us find it hopping around on a fence. This was only the second sighting of

this species in Texas. It was my second sighting also, since I had seen it in Alaska with Frank Bumgardner.

**The Roadrunner**  
**Central Texas Audubon Society**  
**1308 Circlewood**  
**Waco, Texas 76712**

**Karen Arquette Loesch;** When we had the warm week I had hundreds of Cedar Waxwings and Robins everyday. They left with the cold weather, as did goldfinches I had for just two days. 2-2-10, Went to Steiner road today. Lots of Longspurs. Chestnut collared and Lapland. Took photos to confirm. Also went to Sewer Ponds, saw Blue Winged and N. Shovelors, Spotted and Least Sandpiper, Am. Kestrel, Red-tailed, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Swamp, Savannah and Lincoln Sparrows. East Lake was full of Coots and Ringed Neck.

**Eric Haskell;** Waco Lake flooded in October, then again January 29<sup>th</sup>. This has resulted in closures around the lake, tributaries overflowing, and lots of debris. At the same time, one of the Wetlands pumps had been down for maintenance, much of the water froze over with record low temperatures, and ponds were not back to capacity until late January. For birds this eliminated temporary sandbars, duck numbers were low at the wetlands but higher around the lake, and conditions may bode well for Spring migrant waders which will find scoured mudflats. Sparrows are scarce while Harriers are numerous. A number of Pied-billed Grebes joined 2 Horned Grebes around the shore, Marsh Wrens, Yellowthroats and Swamp Sparrows were more visible at the wetlands, while the Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets forming a rookery below Bosque Park have been pushed down to Cameron Park by flood gate releases. Both Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls have enjoyed the disturbances, flocking to the roiling waters. Odd visitors include a **Black Skimmer** that spent almost 2 weeks at Airport Beach, and In good news, after staying low key since their baby left in August, **Bald Eagles** were spotted bringing nest material to Lacy Point in January, and have been recently seen from Woodway Park to the wetlands.

#### **RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Help reduce paper waste and get your NEWSLETTER Faster, IN COLOR – receive it by email! Send any Board member your email address with request to receive the newsletter by email.*

**Harriet Shearer;** Bryan Stone, Peggy Hollowell and Harriet Shearer birded at the pecan bottoms at the Barlow Soccer fields off Airport Road. Our target bird was the **red headed woodpecker** that had been reported in the area. We were successful in finding an immature bird. Bryan was able to get several pictures of the bird which have been posted on the audubon website. We also saw Red bellied woodpeckers, cedar waxwings, yellow rump warblers, cardinal m & f, great blue herons and great egrets. It was a very windy day and the smaller birds were seeking cover in the denser growth. For those seeking directions, take Airport Road off Lake Shore Drive. After you cross the river, the pecan bottoms are on both sides of the road. We saw the woodpecker in the pecan bottom on the right side on the fringes near the thicker growth which is closer to the river.

#### **Earth Share's Mission**

To engage individuals and organizations in creating a healthy and sustainable environment. [www.earthshare.org/index.html](http://www.earthshare.org/index.html)

**NON PROFIT  
US POSTAGE PAID  
WACO, TEXAS  
PERMIT NO. 856**