



The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society Issue 252 March 2010

President's Message

February, I know, is the shortest of months in our calendar, and it certainly went by quickly. The cold of that month finally brought in the Northern Juncos, American Robins, Cedar waxwings and Yellow Rumped Warblers in great numbers to our back yards and surrounding areas. However, with March we look ahead with different expectation.

March is the month of transition. Our landscape begins transition from the dead of winter to spring. Tufts of green grass begin to appear in the lawn. Sunny, warmer days become more frequent. We begin to notice with glee the lengthening of daylight. Our thoughts turn to gardening. Hummingbirds begin to show along the coast. Their journey across the Gulf or through Mexico is something fascinating, awesome, and a phenomenon we look to with anticipation.

March and the following months are times of renewal and rejuvenation. We should wonder and act upon ways to accomplish the same for ourselves. We should do likewise for our society. Hmm, I wonder...

Roy C. Smallwood 3rd

Thanks to Mel Krider of Wild Birds Unlimited, and Roy Swallow, for providing bird food and feeder discounts for the new Arboretum feeding stations.

Photo: Lapland Longspurs
by Eric Haskell



5-Star Owl Program

This month on **March 16 at 7:30pm**, Baylor Prof Emeritus & owl expert Dr. Fred Gehlbach will describe how 5 different small Owl species co-exist in Southern Arizona. Before the talk, Janet Wallace & Harriet Shearer will lead a **Arboretum trail walk at 5:30pm**.

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.

CTAS photo contest for members and youth (ages 18 and under) to be placed on exhibit at the Carleen Bright Arboretum from June 14-July 19, 2010. The contestants **must be** members of Audubon (youth do not have to be members) and all pictures submitted **must be of birds**-not limited to Texas species. Contestants must submit a maximum of three reduced (150KB) digital photos to Bill Ravenscroft in size by April 15, 2010. Photographers may send their entries at any time until the cut off date. The photos will be judged by a focus group of local photographers. Photographs chosen for exhibit must be 2MB or more to print at a minimum of 8x10 inches and be mounted, matted or framed to be at least 11x14 inches. The first place contestant will have his/her photo placed on the postcard as the invitation for the reception on June 20th as well as photo placed on exhibit. Second place will have photo exhibited as well as receive an autographed copy of Hummingbirds of Texas. Youth winner will receive a membership in Audubon as well as a gift certificate and photo on exhibit.

Field Trips

Feb 13, Sat- As Bryan Stone illustrates from his photos, we had a great February 27 field trip with superb Spring weather, a nice respite from the long winter. We spotted all targeted birds (Red-headed Woodpecker, Couch's Kingbird, Longspurs), though the latter had only 1 species briefly seen. Remember on these rarities if you look for them, they count as Spring sightings from Monday onward (will be first ever for Couch's Kingbird in county).

Thanks to Matt York for co-leading the trip & adding insight & background on many of the birds!

- **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.
- **March 27, Sat 9am, Lake Shore Cleanup,** meet at Twin Bridges group shelter to help clean up various areas around the lake. Free lunch.
- **April 3, Sat, Flying W Ranch, (date changed),** meet at Luby's parking lot 8am to carpool to this ranch.
- **April 10, Sat 8:30am, Lacy Pt. Bald Eagles,** Eric Haskell will meet participants at Lacy Pt. Access Area for

a 3hr walk exploring Spring birds with a culminating view at Bald Eagle nest, which should have chick visible.

- **April 11, Sun 1-4pm, Gardener's Gathering** booth & bird walk. Help staff the Carleen Bright Arboretum booth.
- **April 17, Sat, Earth Day Cameron Park Zoo booth**
- **April 24 to Ft Hood-Sat 6am** meet at Bosque Square to commute. Free, **limited-space** trip to see Goldencheeks and Black-capped Vireo. Call or email Eric Haskell (254) 379-3642 or Gil Eckrich for details at 254-534-0061, gil.eckrich@att.net

Sightings and Reports

The most outstanding bird of the area remains one of 2 **Couch's Kingbirds** first seen Jan 2, 2010 at Cameron Park East.

Bryan Stone; Jan and I and Harriett Shearer and Anne Overall went to the valley in early February, calling in at Choke Canyon SP, where we saw the **Northern Jacana**, and at Beeville, where we saw the **Northern Wheatear**.

At Falcon SP we had excellent views of the **Roadside Hawk**. There were a group of immature birds with a lot of blue, and some uncertainty as to whether they were blue buntings or indigo buntings.

Editor's Note; Fantastic birds including those above are still being seen in the Rio Grande Valley. Though Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Amazon Kingfisher, and Aztec Thrush are not there anymore, **Hook-billed Kites, female Blue Bunting,** and a **Rose-throated Becard** are still being reported.

Heidi Trudell & Matt York (Feb 24); Matt and I birded the Corps land just south of 84 by the [south, south fork, something- or-other tributary?] Bosque and aside from our usual winter suspects, we kicked up one **LeConte's Sparrow**. It had the characteristically low, short flight

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and ran like a mouse when followed - gorgeous bright orange face and great ninja stealth skills.

From March 1, 2010 through April 30, 2010, while supplies last, the Wisconsin Humane Society's "Wings" program will once again be distributing FREE WindowAlerts (8 WindowAlerts per request) with NO CHARGE for shipping and handling, to help you protect birds from collisions with windows at your home or office this spring. For more information about protecting birds from collisions with windows and to find out how to request your free Window Alerts, visit the WIngs web site at www.wihumane.org/wildlife/wings/default.aspx

Joe Yelderman; On Feb. 25, I saw a Say's Phoebe at the Blackland experimental watershed east of Riesel and a beautiful Red-shouldered Hawk being harassed by crows below Lake Creek Dam.

Natalie Kutach; Considering the below freezing temperatures and the foggy early morning conditions, our Great Backyard Bird Count at the Carleen Bright Arboretum was a success with 11 birders. Thanks to Heidi Trudell and Matt York for leading the walk! Thanks also to Leslie Rowe, Audubon Adventures participating teacher at Midway Intermediate School, who gave extra credit to her students who participated in the GBBC.

Congratulations to Woodway Elementary Student, Matthew Barnhill for his Science Fair project, "What do Wrens Eat?" and to Midway Middle Schooler, Caroline Kutach, for her project, "Let's Eat: Does Color Influence Birds' Eating Habits?"

This month I am bringing birds to South Bosque Elementary Preschool.

Nada Wareham; Bill saw 25 sandhills over the farm at Elm Mott 3/4/10.

Eric Haskell; *Waco Lake Red-headed Woodpeckers* are still present at Bosque Park's Pecan Groves by the HOT Soccer

Fields, but White Pelicans have moved on now that the flood gates are reduced. I sighted a **Tree Swallow** 2/28/10 on the dam. Martins have arrived at the office, and the Lacy Pt. Bald Eagles are sitting on their nest, which can again be visited now that all but Koehne and Twin Bridges Parks have reopened after flooding. Many sparrows have left, and as we enter March, numerous Vesper Sparrows (on migration?) are visiting the lake.

At home the **Western Meadowlarks** were singing as the first **Martin** circled overhead 2/21/10. For the GBBC weekend I was able to add Northern Jacana at Choke Cyn, all 3 Kingfishers (the Laredo record Amazon Kingfisher was no more at that pt) on San Felipe Ck in Del Rio, and some 100 **Bronzed Cowbirds** in Uvalde WalMart parking lot.

Karen Arquette; Natalie and I attended the Whooping Crane festival in Rockport Feb 25-28. On Thursday, our first evening Natalie spotted an owl at the Birding Center at Port Aransas. Luckily I was able to get one shot of it perched in a tree. It was a Barn Owl. We watched it for another half hour working the field next to the parking lot. Friday we birded the area spending time on the beaches. Saturday we took a tour of Fennessy Ranch led by Sally aka Famous Shoes. Natalie drove us to an area close to Goose Island where she had previously seen Whooping Cranes on private property. We found two cranes at the site which was pasture in front of a private residence. Imagine sitting on your front porch watching Whooping Cranes. I showed Natalie a small park in Refugio where you can find Green Kingfisher. We heard the bird at the usual spot but it flew down the creek before we could see it. We waited awhile but it did not return. Nat spotted our first Black and White Warbler of the year. We saw or heard 107 species.

On March 4th, I saw several flocks of Sandhill Cranes flying over my Elm Mott

yard. I have notice an increase in Raptors this week seeing many Sharp-shinned and Coopers, Red Tails and one Swainsons. It is time to get those Hummingbird feeders ready!!

Earth Share's Mission

To engage individuals and organizations in creating a healthy and sustainable environment.

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

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