



The Roadrunner

Central Texas Audubon Society Issue 254 May 2010

**Elections on Apr 20 meeting:
New President 2010-11 is Janet Wallace, Eric Haskell is VP.**

(Outgoing) President's Message

I came to realize last week that this would be my last epistle as the outgoing president of CTAS. It would seem this occasion would appropriately lend itself to reflection. While it would be remiss not to be appreciative of the accomplishments of CTAS during my tenure, I consider it better served to remind and rededicate ourselves to the purpose and promise of the organization.

We are presented with the opportunity to be the best advocate within McLennan County for genuine environmental concerns, for the greening of our community, and for the advancement of outdoor activities and education.

We have work to do.

- CTAS needs to continue its efforts to work with the City of Waco in the building of blinds at the Wetlands.
- CTAS needs to continue to collaborate with the Carleen Bright Arboretum in making it a bird and birder friendly place.
- We need to initiate a relationship with the Mammoth site to augment its program.
- We need to be involved to a greater extent at the WMARSS Sewage Ponds as it develops its Management Plan for Shorebirds and Waterfowl.
- We need to assist the USCOE in efforts to maintain healthy nesting pairs of Bald Eagles at Lake Waco.
- We need to present several workshops to the public at large each year on the identification of groups of birds.
- There are many other worthy organizations and projects with which we can be involved.

I thank you for the opportunity to have served. I do not choose to say good bye, just farewell and happy birding.

Roy C. Smallwood 3rd

May 18 last mtg: Potluck & Raffle

The meeting on **May 18 at 7:30pm**, CTAS will host its fundraising raffle and potluck.

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.

Summer Tanager moulting migrant



by Bill Ravenscroft

CTAS photo contest results will be on display at the reception on June 20th. Thanks to participants.

Earth Day Booth - Thanks to volunteers staffing the Audubon Booth at Cameron Park Zoo Apr 17.

Education

April afforded Natalie three visits with 4 year-olds from two different schools: South Bosque Elementary and First United Methodist Preschool. In May she will attend Mad Scientist Night for Midway ISD 4th grade GT students and assist them with owl pellet dissection!

Congratulations to the following students for their Science Fair projects on birds: Matthew Barnhill of Woodway Elementary for "What do Wrens Eat?" and Caroline Kutach, Midway Middle School, for "Does Color Influence Birds' Eating Habits?" Caroline progressed to the Regional Science Fair. And, yes, Caroline is Natalie's daughter!

Hunter Wolf of Midway High School completed his Eagle Scout project by creating a Bird Sanctuary at Wesley Woods Alzheimer's Facility. He used native plants in the landscaping, a water feature and bird feeders to bring nature closer to the residents.

Field Trips

- **April 10 Lacy Pt trip** was successful in spotting the Eagle pair, though a Scissortail checking out the place confirmed they'd abandoned their (dead?) chick between Tue, Apr 6 & Thu, Apr 8. On Apr 24 high winds knocked the unused nest down, and no Eagles have been reported since.

- **Apr 24 Ft Hood trip** After a stormy night, the morning of 4/24/2010 was quite nice before the winds kicked in and produced some interesting birds for the small field trip that Rich Kostecke led on Fort Hood (Bell Co.). Of particular note was a heavy movement of Western Kingbirds. Firsts of the season for Rich included Willet, Prothonotary Warbler, Dickcissel and Baltimore Oriole. 3 each of endangered Black-capped Vireos and Golden-cheeked Warblers were seen.

- **May 13 Flying W Ranch** Tentatively the trip to this exotic game ranch near Hillsboro has been rescheduled to Thursday May 13. We will meet at Luby's parking lot on the corner of Lake Shore Dr. and I 35.

Sightings and Reports

Natalie Kutach; Urban birding was all I could manage in April. Wal-Mart parking lot came through for me again, providing a great look at a flock of Franklin's Gulls, the everpresent Kildeer and Western Kingbird. Movie night with Brent at Hollywood Theater added Common Nighthawk and I was more than a few minutes late picking the kids up from tennis after spotting a migrating group of American White Pelicans. Had to pull over to ooh and ahh appropriately! Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak still in my McGregor backyard, three days now.

Billie Ann Boeche;

I was just looking out my bathroom window and saw three Brown Thrashers! Last year was the first year I have ever seen them; only had two then, now there are three! I believe two males and one female but I have no idea if I am right. But I do know that there is at least one mating pair; from last year. This is very exciting news. Please let everyone know.

Matt York;

Spent some time this afternoon at Woodway Park III occupied with another taxa. However, a couple of notes. I came across EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE on two separate occasions. Heard GRAY CATBIRD in a thicket. One FORSTER'S TERN was still on that side of the lake, breeding plumage. SPOTTED SANDPIPER was quite spotted. GREEN HERON perched on a dead snag. Came across a couple of LARK SPARROW.

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

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Jim Edwards; Carolyn and I spent some time birding along the Texas Coast from San Bernard NWR to Galveston and High Island April 16-26. We totaled 199 total species which included 12 new life birds for us. Among the highlights were Cerulean, Bay Breasted, Chestnut Sided and Blue Winged Warblers, Black Whiskered Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red Knot and Hudsonian Godwit. We covered several sites including Lafitte's Cove in Galveston, Corps Woods in Galveston, Sabine Woods and all the sites at High Island. We had a wonderful time and saw more scarlet tanagers, rose breasted grosbeaks, indigo buntings and painted buntings than we have ever seen in our life. We highly recommend a trip to the coast during migration.

Bill Ravenscroft; Plenty of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Western Kingbirds have been seen recently. I saw a Spotted Sandpiper pair on the east edge of Lake Waco. A Broad-winged Hawk visited the yard for over a week from 22 April. A small flock of Chipping Sparrows passed through on 25 April and an immature male Summer Tanager was seen on 30 April (photo. attached). May started well with a glimpse of a Nashville Warbler and then one of the elusive neighborhood White-eyed Vireos showed up for its photograph on 3 May!

Eric Haskell; Waco Lake shorebird migration sightings have been low, assumedly due to high water levels, but also because I haven't gotten out as much as other years. Airport Beach hosted a flock of Avocets, a smaller flock of Willets, and early departing ducks, while Warblers haven't yet been around in numbers. Scissortail numbers remain high, and Oriole numbers are promising, including a hybrid Bullock's-Baltimore male at Airport Beach. Our neighborhood is getting more verdantly robust, going from pasture to ornamental woodland subdivision, and the birds are changing too. Cardinals nesting in the backyard passionvine had chicks 4/30/10. Fortunately we retain the Martins, Scissortails, Clay-colored Sparrow migrants, & Lark Sparrows due to nearby open fields.

Clay-colored Sparrow on Gaura



By Eric Haskell

And don't forget, the CTAS Yahoo Group site will remain in Karen's capable hands after she goes to Michigan. You may post any sightings or relevant Audubon information there.

**Check out the new CTAS website
www.centexaudubon.org**

Board Members CTAS

President /Janet Wallace 366-6280

cjwallace@hotmail.com

Vice President/Eric Haskell -756-5359 (w)

e_haskell67@yahoo.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/Programs Eric Haskell

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

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