VOLUME 17 (2021)

TEXAS Birds ANNUAL

A Publication of the
TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
www.texasbirds.org


EXIT

TEXAS Birds ANNUAL

Volume 17 2021
Table of Contents

"Birds of the Brush" 2nd Place Winners: Eastern Screech Owl by Belen Garza, 4th Grade; Indigo Bunting by Guilda Moreno 8th Grade; Crested Caracara by Jose Homero Gonzalez III, 11th Grade; Black Crested Titmouse by Anna Linda Davila, Amateur Program.

Front Cover: Crimson-collared Grosbeak (*Rhodothraupis celaeno*) Art by Lynn Delvin

MEMBERS OF THE TOS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Christine Turnbull
President & Region 5—Edwards Plateau
Email: cbsturnbull@hotmail.com

Frances Cerbins
Vice-President & Director at Large
Email: fcerbins@yahoo.com

John Berner
Treasurer & Region 1—Panhandle
Email: jcazberner@yahoo.com

Galon Brehm
Region 2-North Central Texas
Email: g-brehm@msn.com

Laura Wilson
Region 3—East Texas Timberlands
(Pineywoods)
Email: hummingbirdhill95@gmail.com

D.D. Currie
Region 4—Trans-Pecos
Email: ddbirder@gmail.com

Randy Pinkston
Region 6—Central Prairie
Email: drpinkston@sbcglobal.net

Susan Foster
Region 7—Rio Grande Brushlands
Email: idratherbebirding@gmail.com

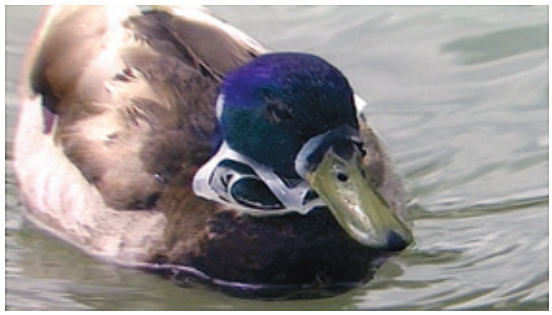
Kendra Kocab
Secretary & Region 8—Central Prairie
Email: kenner7683@gmail.com

Shelia Hargis
Past President & Director at Large
Email: shelia.hargis@gmail.com

Byron Stone
Director at Large
Email: DrBirdie@aol.com

Clay Taylor
Director at Large
Email: clay.taylor@swarovskioptik.us

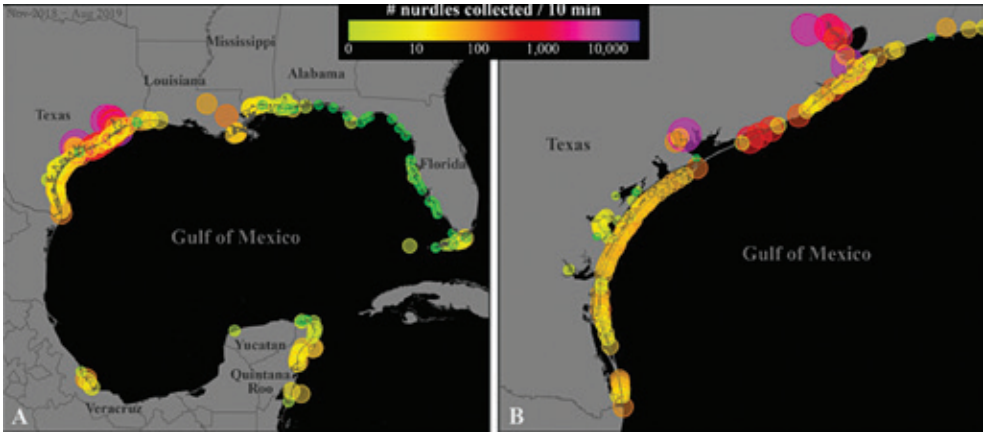
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



The problems with plastics in the environment are nothing new. Plastic bags are especially problematic as they clog drainage and water treatment infrastructure. On occasion plastic bottle holders end up tangled in the necks of shorebirds (above) . Attention has also been directed towards the long-term impact of plastics in the ecosystem as they degrade into smaller microplastics. The lack of demand for plastic by recycling factories in various foreign countries has made recycling our plastics challenging. Citizens reusing containers and bringing their own reusable grocery bags would certainly be beneficial.

Recently an article has caught my eye. In September 2018 a high number of plastic pellets (called *nurdles*) were observed on the beaches of Mustang and North Padre Islands near Corpus Christi. Nurdles serves as the raw material in the manufacture of plastic products. Small and light they can easily blow away during storage and transport. Once in the gulf they can be ingested by fish, birds, and marine mammals. As a result of the 2018 discovery a *Nurdle Patrol* was established by the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research reserve. From November 2018 to August 2019 a total of 2042 nurdle patrol surveys (>400 hours) were conducted, along the Gulf of Mexico, by 744 citizen scientists from Mahahual, Mexico to Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas of Florida. The highest number of nurdles being documented is on the upper Texas

coast in Galveston Bay *which is also the location of the majority of plastic pellet manufacturers in the United States.* The highest concentration being observed in bay systems coincide with the locations of plastic pellet manufacturers!



Map of A) the Gulf of Mexico and B) Texas showing number of plastic pellets (nurdles) collected per 10 min along shorelines from November 2018 to August 2019. Points represent means of counts taken within each square of a 0.1° (A) or 0.05° (B) grid and are colored and scaled according to the log value of the mean. Source: Measuring plastic pellet (nurdle) abundance on shorelines throughout the Gulf of Mexico using citizen scientists: Establishing a platform for policy-relevant research. Jace W. Tunnell, Kelly H. Dunning, Lindsay P. Scheef, Kathleen M. Swanson. Marine Pollution Bulletin 151 (2020) 110794

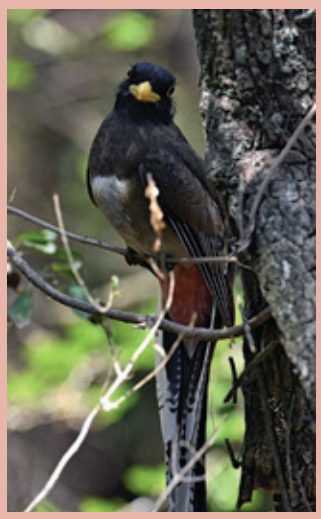
The study found plastic pellets in 13 of the 14 harbors surveyed. The Houston Ship Channel had the highest concentrations of plastic pellets recorded in the United States! However, the highest count of plastic particles of 30,846 nurdles collected in 10 minutes occurred in Galveston Bay. Current estimates for the quantity of pellets entering the environment are 230,000 tons per year globally. From the manufacturing to disposal of the final product plastics represent a serious threat to the integrity of our ecosystem. While they serve a very useful purpose we need to be careful what we do with them when their useful life is over.

Don't recycle…reuse. These people made their house from plastic bottles!

For additional information on nurdles consult: NurdlePatrol.org

Jack Clinton Eitniear
Editor/ *Texas Ornithological Society Publications*
Email/ jclintoneitniear@gmail.com

SPECIES PROFILE..ELEGANT TROGON



Greg Jackson posted on March 27 that this was his third opportunity this year to see the famed Elegant Trogon at Estero Llano Grande SP.

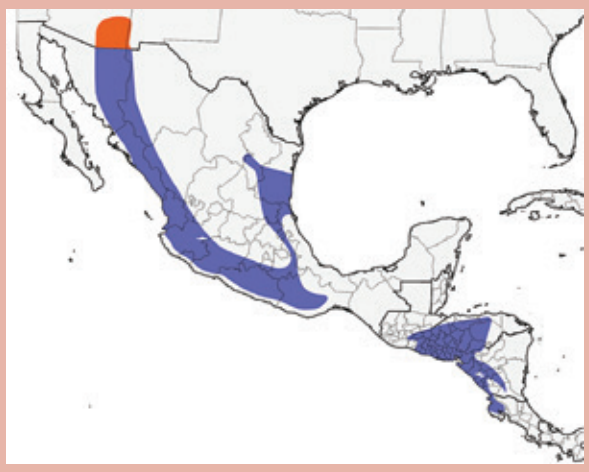
Lifer! Elegant Trogon posted by Lucy Spade on 17th of January- "Left my house yesterday morning at 3:30 am to make the 4 hour drive to Estero Llano Grande State Park to see this bird. Got 4 lifers over the course of the day (11 so far this year). Finally saw this beauty in the afternoon right as I was about to pull the plug and head home".

Admired for its vivid parrotlike colors, the Elegant Trogon's plumage is brightened by a metallic iridescence on its back and tail; hence its former name, Coppery-tailed Trogon. This species may be the most adaptable member of the family Trogonidae, living in a wide variety of habitats ranging from tropical lowland forested floodplains and high-elevation riparian woodlands to arid scrublands, woodlands, and temperate upland coniferous forests.

The Elegant Trogon is a permanent resident throughout most of its range in Mexico but is a migrant in the mountain ranges of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, as well as along the lower Rio Grande of south Texas. Although this species is widespread, the distribution is disjunct, with a significant gap between the geographic ranges of the northern and southern populations. Each of these formerly was classified as a separate species, under the names Coppery-tailed Trogon (*Trogon ambiguus*) for the three subspecies of the United States and Mexico, and "true" Elegant Trogon (*Trogon elegans*) for the two subspecies that occur from Guatemala south to Costa Rica.

Trogon (from the Greek meaning "gnawer"; refers to their hooked, dentate bill, used in grasping insects and fruit. Trogons also hover to pick insects or fruit off trees. Their diagnostic song, Ko-ah, Ko-ah, is usually compared to that of the Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) or a frog. Their diagnostic, monosyllabic or bisyllabic, call historically has been interpreted in numerous ways (see Sounds: vocalizations, vocal array).

Adult Elegant Trogons, sexually dimorphic in plumage, commonly nest in abandoned woodpecker cavities. The male shares reproductive duties with the female, from sitting on the 3 or 4 white eggs to caring for young.



DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEGANT TROGON*

Trogon elegans goldmani

Extreme S USA (S Arizona and SW New Mexico) and NW Mexico (Sonora, N Sinaloa and W Chihuahua; resident of Tres Marías Is. off of western Mexico); N populations are migratory.

Trogon elegans ambiguus

Rare north to s. Texas and resident in Mexico from Tamaulipas west to Nayarit and south to Oaxaca.

Trogon elegans elegans

Guatemala (Motagua Valley), extending into El Salvador and SW and C Honduras

Trogon elegans lubricus

Honduras to Costa Rica.

*Map data are provided by NatureServe in collaboration with Robert Ridgely, James Zook, The Nature Conservancy—Migratory Bird Program, Conservation International—CABS, World Wildlife Fund—US, and Environment Canada—WILDSPACE.

Photographed by Michael Cooper on 17 January in Estero Llano Grande SP

HISTORIC FIRST AS WHOOPING CRANES FOUND NESTING IN TEXAS

Citizens urged to give endangered birds plenty of space

For the first time in recent history, two pairs of endangered whooping cranes have been found nesting in Texas. The whooping cranes, part of a non-migratory population originally introduced in Louisiana, are currently found on private land in Jefferson and Chambers counties.

The newcomers are part of a reintroduction the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) began in 2011. This designated non-essential population was introduced into historically occupied wetland habitats at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in southwest Louisiana. Since then, the current population of around 73 birds has nested and successfully hatched and reared chicks in a variety of wetland habitats throughout Louisiana, on both private and public lands.

"We are excited to see this reintroduction effort show continued signs of success, with nesting now occurring in Texas," said Amy Lueders, the Service's Southwest Regional Director. "It's a true reflection of the power of partnerships. We would also like to thank the private landowners who have been incredibly supportive of these efforts."

"Conservation cannot happen in Texas and beyond without the support and dedication of our private landowners," said Carter Smith, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). "We look forward to our continued efforts with our vast network of partners, especially private landowners, to ensure whooping cranes, and all of our wildlife in Texas, thrive in the future."

"We appreciate the cooperation and assistance of our Texas partners, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and especially the private landowners whose properties are supporting the survival of the Louisiana cranes," LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet said. "Of course wildlife does not respect state boundaries, so our Louisiana cranes sought out suitable habitats in southeast Texas to establish territories and nests."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently completed an agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service that provides private landowners in southeast Texas similar regulatory protections that landowners hosting whooping cranes in Louisiana receive and also provides technical assistance to plan conservation actions that enhance wetland habitats for a variety of wildlife species.

"Conservation plans developed by the NRCS are voluntary and available upon producer request at no cost. These plans specify options for practices and management to meet the conservation measures for this population of whooping crane," said Frank Baca, USDA NRCS Wildlife Biologist. "Additionally, farm bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are available to provide cost assistance to producers that may want to maintain or enhance habitat for these birds or other wildlife on their working lands."

The public is reminded to keep a distance from the birds and to not trespass on private property to observe them.

"These birds are particularly sensitive to human disturbance while they are nesting, so please stay at least 1,000 feet away when viewing whooping cranes," said Wade Harrell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Whooping Crane Coordinator. "This will ensure that the birds have a chance to hatch and rear their chicks successfully."

Whooping cranes are one of the rarest birds in North America. Cranes have been

documented to live more than 30 years in the wild. Adults generally reach reproductive age at four or five years, and then lay two eggs, usually rearing only one chick during the breeding season.

The non-migratory population now found nesting in Louisiana and Texas is different from the self-sustaining wild Aransas-Wood Buffalo Population. This population of more than 500 whooping cranes breeds in the wetlands of Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada and spends the winter on the Texas coast at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge near Rockport.

More information about the whooping crane reintroduction effort can be found on the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/subhome/whooping-crane.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at http://www.youtube.com/usfws and download photos from our Flickr page at http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq.

Trail camera image of a nesting whooping crane in Louisiana courtesy of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Image of a nesting whooping crane in Jefferson County, Texas courtesy of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Aerial image of a whooping crane pair in Chambers County, Texas courtesy of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

PORCH BIRDING DURING A PANDEMIC

By Sheridan Coffey

Photos by Martin Reid

Two things happened in mid-March 2020 that changed my perception of our apartment complex backyard; I was furloughed from my corporate travel job, and we made the decision to stay home due to the pandemic. My spouse, Martin Reid, and I started spending hours a day sitting outside on our balcony, observing the migrating and breeding birds.

We already knew we had an amazing birding location. We live in northwest San Antonio. Our apartment complex sits on a ridge and has beautiful mature live oaks. We chose this apartment when we saw the balcony. We are on the second floor and sitting outside puts us up in the canopy. The yard is small, not much bigger than a basketball court. We are in the middle of the hospital district, but we knew there was potential. In the eight years we had lived here prior to the pandemic we had accumulated a balcony list of 106 species, including 25 species of warblers. We didn't spend more than 10 or 15 minutes a day looking, but still found great birds.

On March 23 I added warbler species 26, Louisiana Waterthrush. This was a shock because the only water we have is in a few plant saucers around the yard. Sitting outside in the morning we added flyover birds, like Upland Sandpiper, and Black-necked Stilt. Migrating passerines dropped in, some staying a few seconds, some, like a cooperative male Golden-winged Warbler, put on a show all afternoon. We were most excited by a female Cerulean warbler that came in during a thunderstorm. By the end of 2020 we had seen 114 species since mid-March, adding 27 new species!

Even though we were vaccinated in February, and started venturing out more, we still spent a lot of time on the balcony. We continued to add new species, including an amazing Virginia's Warbler, very far out of range, and a couple of Golden-cheeked Warblers that frequented our plant saucer birdbaths. Our 30th species of warbler was a Blue-winged Warbler seen on April 28th. We also had an Eastern Whip-poor-will surprise us one morning, flying into one of the trees and sitting all day in plain view. Our balcony list now stands at 140 species. I was called back to work on May 17th, so my time is limited again, but I am still going out as often as possible, just in case something new sneaks in. We came to realize we had a lot more going on in our yard than we ever knew.

Sheridan Coffey
E-mail: sngcanary@yahoo.com

Black and White Warbler

Redstart

Bluewinged Warbler

Ovenbird

Blackburnian warbler

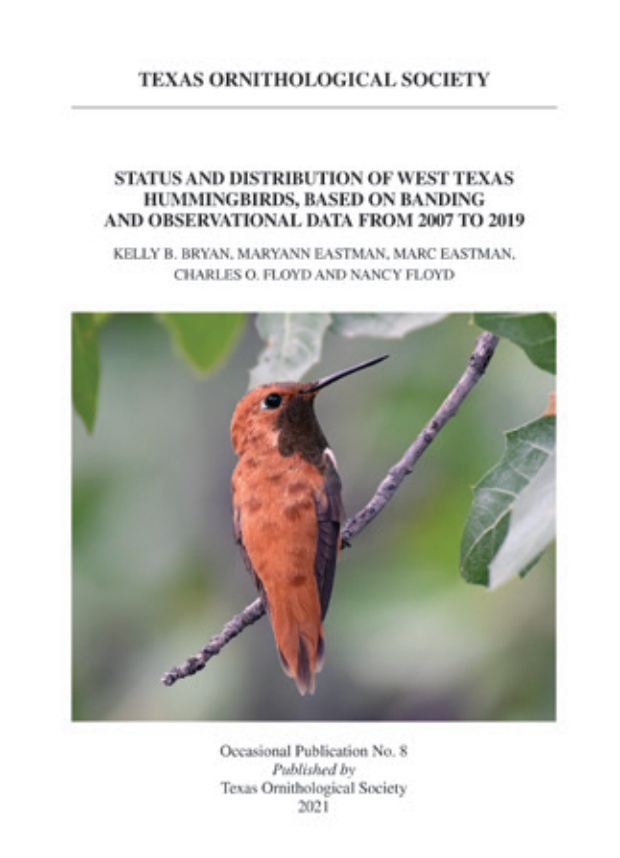
Hooded Warbler

Myrtle Warbler

Nashville and Worm eating Warbler

Wood Thrush

TOS ANNOUNCES NEW OCCASIONAL PUBLICATION



STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEST TEXAS HUMMINGBIRDS, BASED ON BANDING AND OBSERVATIONAL DATA FROM 2007 TO 2019

Abstract.—From 2007 through 2019 a concerted effort was made to determine the exact seasonal status of hummingbirds in central portions of the Trans-Pecos Region of west Texas. Primary study sites were established at several locations in Jeff Davis and Brewster counties. Study sites in the central Jeff Davis County area represented the higher elevation habitats of the region situated in and around the Davis Mountains near Fort Davis. Study sites in southern Brewster County represented the lower elevation desert habitats situated in and around the Christmas Mountains of Terlingua Ranch, and at times, at Lajitas on the Rio Grande. On occasion, locations were sampled in other portions of the region when opportunities presented themselves to add information on the status of less common species. Our primary research efforts resulted in the capture and banding of 21,525 birds of 15 different species. Herein we characterize the overall results by presenting the banding data for each species. These data provide new insight into the exact seasonal status of the 15 species encountered. Observational data enhanced banding data and seasonal information, adding 3 additional species, for a total of 18 out of the 19 species on the official Texas list. First documented Texas breeding records were established for two species and two species were added as first documented records to the regional list. One of the latter species, the Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem, provided a first record for Texas and the United States.

SAMPLE SPECIES ACCOUNT…

Blue-throated Mountain-gem (*Lampornis clemenciae*)

Regional status: The Blue-throated Mountain-gem is the common spring, summer and fall large hummingbird species in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park. It is a fairly common breeding species in the highest elevations of the mountain range, the only location in Texas with such a status. It is a rare but regular species in the Davis Mountains; however, there are no documented breeding records there. There are also no documented breeding records from the Guadalupe Mountains National Park north along the border with New Mexico. The species has been reported there, but it is the Rivoli's Hummingbird that is the expected large hummingbird in that range.

***Winter (December through February)*—2:** The first winter record for the region and the third for Texas was a male bird found and photographed at Lajitas on 17 December 2013. He was captured and banded on 8 January 2014 and was last observed a week later on 14 January. The winter of 2013/14 was an exceptional period for winter hummingbird diversity and abundance with eight species and over 60 individuals present at that location overlooking the Rio Grande, and at Study Butte. Three old winter records from El Paso were relegated to hypothetical status due to lack of documentation; however, on 29 October 2014 an adult female was photographed in the upper valley of El Paso County and was captured, banded and examined on 16 January 2015. This occurrence provided the first documented record for the County. She was last observed in early April but returned to the same location the next two years staying through the winter months.

***Spring (March through May)*—1:** In the Davis Mountains, a female banded on 11 May 2011 was still present in August. Otherwise, the spring occurrence of BTMO at our JDC study sites was normally considered rare with the exception of the drought year (2011). Several individuals were noted in the Davis Mountains that year, likely refugees from the Chisos Mountains to the south looking for adequate food resources. The two drought-year records from the SBC study sites involved adult males; the first was a one-day wonder photographed at CMO on 8 May. 2017 and 2018 brought several new records, some facilitated by the Cornell University live cam. A female was noted and documented with screen shots from 4-9 May 2017.

***Summer (June and July)*—1:** The second drought-displaced bird found in the lower desert during 2011 was a male first observed on 8 July in the southern foothills of the Christmas Mountains, captured and banded on 10 July and last observed a week later. At the JDC study sites in the upper elevations, BTMOs usually became more frequent in occurrence during the summer season. An adult male was found and photographed on 3 July 2010, during the passage of the remnants of Hurricane Alex that brought rains to the region from interior Mexico. At the same location, a female was documented by the live cam on 12 July 2017.

***Early Fall (August and September)*—1:** Two immature birds were documented from our study sites in early fall. The first was a juvenile bird photographed on 4 September 2009, a bird that had the plumage of a recently fledged individual; the second was a juvenile female caught and banded on 17 September 2010. The first BTMO documented by the live cam was an adult female on 14 September 2015. In 2018, a male showed up at our highest elevation study site in upper Limpia Canyon on 4 August, stayed a day then moved about two miles away to the east to another one of our study sites. He eventually came back to the first location and was photographed again on 13 August. He finally departed a week later. Although it was not banded, we compared photographs and could tell the bird was the same individual due to distinctive damage to the bird's tail.

Late Fall (October and November)—Providing a second confirmed record for the El Paso area, a juvenile male was observed and well-photographed in the upper valley 20-27 October 2015. Also, documented by the live cam, a male was captured by screen shot on 16 October 2015. At least one bird was observed lingering in the Davis Mountains in mid-November prior to initiation of the current study.

BTMO Banding Totals By Year And Study Area:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTALS
JDC			OBS	1	1				OBS	OBS	OBS	OBS	2
SBC					1		OBS	1					2
OAS		OBS						OBS	1				1
TOTAL	**0**	**OBS**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**OBS**	**1**	**1**	**OBS**	**OBS**	**OBS**	**5**

BTMO seasonal banding totals and observations:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
AHY M	1			obs	obs	obs	1	obs				obs	2
HY M							obs	obs		obs			obs
AHY F	1	obs	obs	obs	1	obs	obs	obs	obs	obs	obs	obs	2
HY F									1				1
Totals	**2**	**obs**	**obs**	**obs**	**1**	**obs**	**1**	**obs**	**1**	**obs**	**obs**	**obs**	**5**

BTMO morphometric data:

	N	WING CHORD	TAIL LENGTH	CULMEN	WEIGHT
AHY M	2	74.2 (74.1-74.2)	45.5 (45.0-46.0)	22.2	8.6
AHY F	2	67.4 (66.3-68.5)	44.0 (43.0-45.0)	24.6 (24.4-24.8)	6.6 (6.5-6.6)
HY F	1	70	44	26.1	6.8

Figure 12. Blue-throated Mountain-gem adult male (Kelly Bryan)

Figure 13. Blue-throated Mountain-gem juvenile male (Kelly Bryan)

TEXAS' ATTWATER'S PRAIRIE-CHICKEN WILD POPULATION REACHES 28 YEAR HIGH

By Dawn Burleigh

After decades of protection and conservation efforts, Texas' critically endangered Attwater's prairie-chicken population is at its highest since 1993. Officials with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy in Texas estimate the current population is at least 178 birds. During the 2021 spring count, a total of 89 males were spotted performing breeding displays known as "booming" at the Service's Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge and on private ranch lands participating in grassland management activities as part of the Conservancy's Refugio-Goliad Prairie Project.

This year's count demonstrates a stark turnaround from near extinction in the wild just a few years ago. Following the devastating effects of Hurricane Harvey, the 2018 spring count revealed only 13 males remaining in the wild.

"The remarkable recovery from an all-time population low following Harvey, to a population level not seen in almost 30 years, is a testament to the strength of the recovery program, and to the resiliency of the Attwater's prairie-chicken itself," said John Magera, Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge manager. "This rebound demonstrates that these birds still possess the potential for the sort of population growth needed to make recovery possible. It also provides new hope for the conservation partners that are actively engaged in helping this once iconic inhabitant of coastal Texas grasslands regain a foothold on the way to recovery."

"The population numbers this year are exciting," said Kirk Feuerbacher, Coastal Prairies Project Director at The Nature Conservancy in Texas. "The Conservancy has long partnered with private landowners to facilitate brush removal, apply fire ant treatments, conduct prescribed burns, and promote rotational grazing—all practices that help maintain the coastal grassland habitat that the Attwater's prairie-chicken relies on."

"While countless conservation initiatives and partners have been involved in these efforts, the potential for species recovery could never be possible without the engagement and critical support of individual landowners," Feuerbacher

added. "We'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for their partnership."

More than a century ago, the Attwater's prairie-chicken population was estimated to be up to a million birds in Louisiana and Texas. Because of habitat loss due to woody species invasion, and conversion to agriculture and development, the Attwater's prairie-chicken disappeared from Louisiana early in the 20th century, and by mid-century was struggling to hang on in Texas.

It now occurs in the wild at only two Texas locations—the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado County and a private ranch in Goliad County.

As early as 1937, officials with the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission (known today as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department) initiated conservation actions by closing the hunting season for Attwater's and hiring noted conservation biologist Valgene Lehmann to conduct a life history study on the species. Later the species was included in the first list of federally protected endangered species in 1967. That same year, the World Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy acquired ranch lands in Colorado County that would eventually become part of a National Wildlife Refuge bearing the bird's name. In the early 1990's a captive-breeding program was also started to preserve as much genetic representation as possible from failing populations and to provide source stock for rebuilding wild populations.

But despite these efforts—and amidst several catastrophic weather events—the species remained on the brink of extinction until researchers made a breakthrough.

"The breakthrough was finally realized when researchers found red imported fire ants were likely derailing prairie-chicken recovery efforts by reducing native insects required as food for newly hatched prairie-chicken chicks," Magera said. "Wide-scale control of fire ants in areas where prairie-chickens were released has led to promising signs from Attwater's prairie-chicken populations."

While populations still remain at risk from fire ants, extreme weather events and other threats, ongoing efforts aim to help the species recover in Texas.

Today, several captive flocks totaling about 150 birds are held at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, the Houston Zoo, the Caldwell Zoo, the Abilene Zoo and now the Sutton Avian Research Center in Oklahoma. This year, the Service's Southwest region distributed nearly $1 million in Recovery Challenge Grant funds to these facilities to support the next three years of Attwater's prairie-chicken recovery.

Several organizations are also continuing to restore prairie grasslands infested by brush or otherwise made unsuitable for prairie-chickens. On the refuge, more than 10,000 acres of native coastal prairie are sustained through the use of prescribed fire, managed grazing, brush control and by planting native prairie seeds on former farmland. Additional voluntary habitat restoration occurs on private lands managed under the Safe Harbor Agreement and on TNC's Refugio-Goliad Prairie Project, which is held by the Coastal Grazing Lands Coalition to protect several endangered species found in the area—including the Attwater's prairie-chicken.

Partners in Attwater's prairie-chicken recovery have included: Friends of Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, Abilene Zoo, Caldwell Zoo, San Antonio Zoo , Houston Zoo, Sea World—Texas, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Texas Nature Conservancy, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, Sutton Avian Research Center, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Katy Prairie Conservancy, Wildlife Habitat Federation, Texas A&M University, University of North Texas, and the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative.

To learn more about Attwater's prairie-chicken, visit https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Attwater_Prairie_Chicken.

Dawn Burleigh
E-mail:

RETURN OF THE TAMAULIPAS CROW?*

*or just visiting

Tamaulipas Crow. **Photos by Sheridan Coffey**

05 November to 05 May 2019	1-8 birds	South Padre Island
22 April 2019	1	Packery Channel
14 May 2019	1	Near Port Mansfield
10 November to 28 June 2018	1-28 Birds	Brownsville Landfill
18 April 2018	1	Aransas N.W.R.
29 December—3 January 2018	1	Near Goose Island
15 April 2018	1	Quintana
02 Nov 2017	1	44 Miles Se of Packery Channel
12 November 2017	3	Laguna Atascosa
26 November—05 December 2017	1	East Bach, Galveston
27-28 November 2017	1	San Luis Pass

Accepted records (2017-2019) of Tamaulipas Crow in Texas. From TBRC Annual reports published in the *Bulletin of the Texas Ornithological Society*.

Back in 2014 I wrote an article on the Tamaulipas Crow for the TOS bulletin*. The period from 2011- 2016 was without any documented sightings of the species. Then in 2017 the crow reappeared along the Texas coast and was documented annually since then (see table 1).

SOME BACKGROUND

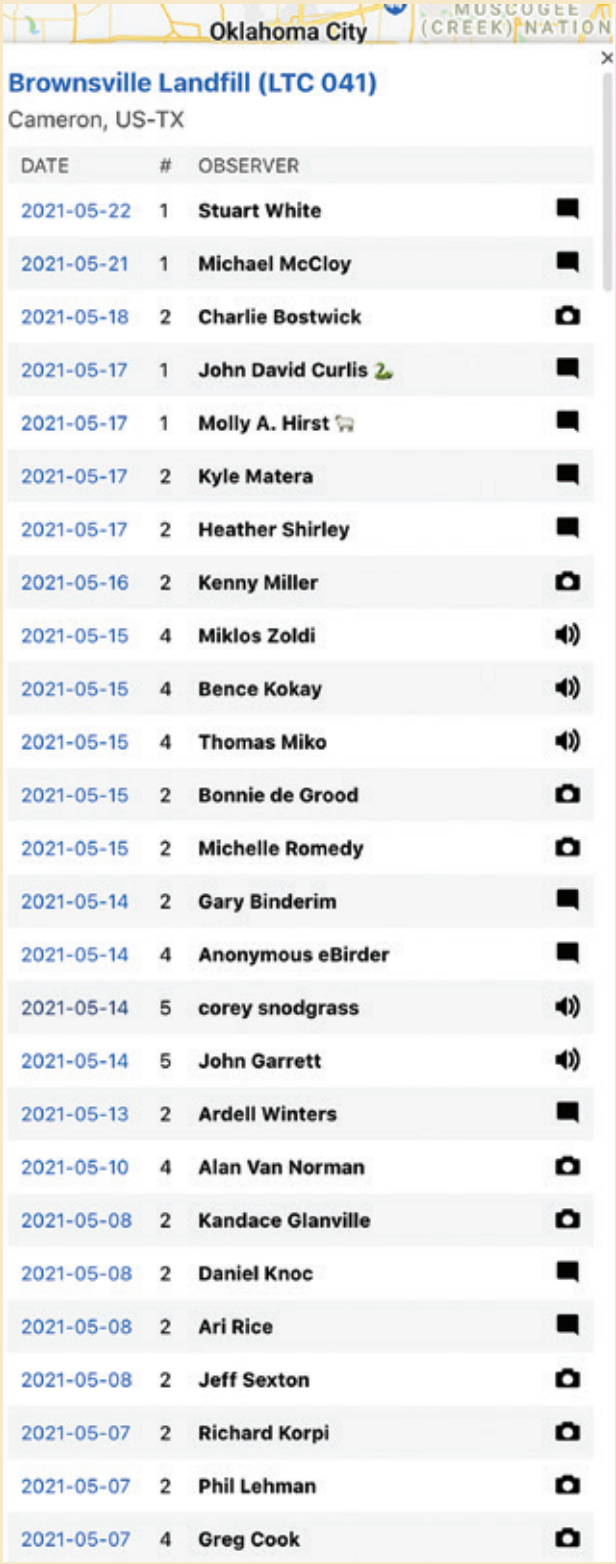
The crow's historical presence in Texas is well documented in Brush's Birds of a Tropical Frontier. (2005) In summary, the species was first recorded in Texas in 1968 with the observation of 200 birds feeding at a ranch west of Brownsville. Principally winter residents, their numbers increased with the largest flock noted being 2,300 at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge during January of 1970. The first evidence of breeding was four nests at the Port of Brownsville in 1989. Numbers and nesting attempts began to decline in the 1990s (single nest sighted irregularly from 1998–2002) with the species being added to the Texas Bird Record Committee (TBRC) "review list" in 2000. Since that time small numbers of Tamaulipas Crows have been documented in Cameron County from 2001 to 2010 (except 2009). No observations were accepted by the TBRC from 2011-2013 (E. Carpenter pers. com).

*Is the Tamaulipas Crow (*Corvus imparatus*) an "At Risk" Species? Bull. Texas Ornith. Soc. 46(1-2): 2014

Tamaulipas Crow (Left) and Great-tailed Grackle (right) at Brownsville Landfill. Photo Sheridan Coffey.

Birding and eBird submissions from north-eastern Mexico have declined over the recent years but a sighting on 7 February 2021 by Enrique Solis of 40 birds along C. Abarrotes Gogal near San Fernando, Tamaulipas (coordinates 24.842, -98.165) is noteworthy. In Texas numbers picked up from 2017-2019. Between 05 November to 05 May 2019 1-8 birds were reported on South Padre Island.

Recently on 29 April 2021 Sheridan Coffey photograhed the species at the Brownsville Landfill (dump) . Four birds were in association with Great-tailed Grackles. It's anyone's guess if the crow will continue to be observed in South Texas but odds are that a few birds will be sighted, from time to time, providing life listers with a good chase!



Recent Tamauplias Crow sightings on ebird.

PINK FLOYD IS BACK!

Our escaped flamingo friend was spotted again in Lavaca Bay last Friday (21 May) by Coastal Fisheries employees. After escaping a Kansas zoo 2005, the flamingo has been spotted several times in this area.

Read more: **https://weather.com/science/nature/news/2019-05-30-flamingo-kansas-zoo-spotted-in-texas**

9TH ANNUAL BIRDS OF THE BRUSH CONTEST A VIRTUAL SUCCESS!

By Manuel Juarez

Congratulations to all the artists who participated in our 9th Birds of the Brush art contest, a feature of the 9th Laredo Birding Festival!

Despite the pandemic, we had over 200 pieces digitally submitted by students, amateurs, and professional artists. Although we were unable to host our in-person art exhibit and awards ceremony at the Laredo Center for the Arts to kick off the festival this year, we were able to adapt and organize an interactive virtual gallery experience for the art contest and host a virtual awards ceremony as well.

Thank you to their art instructors, and their families and loved ones for supporting their work and talent that celebrates the beauty and biodiversity of the birds in Laredo!

We look forward to returning to our in-person Birds of the Brush art contest exhibit and ceremony and our 10th Laredo Birding Festival next year February 2-5, 2022!

Thanks to our panel of judges: Tony Briones, Janet Miller, and Tom Miller. Thank you to all the participants

Manuel Jarez
E-mail: manueal@rgisc.org

Best of Show-Least Sandpiper..Slyvia Rodriquez

9th Birds of the Brush Art Contest Winners!

Elementary School
1st- Elena Cano
2nd- Belen Garza
3rd- Kendra Garcia
HM- Jimena Ortiz
HM- Ava Rodriguez

Middle School
1st- Eric Garcia
2nd- Guilda Moreno
3rd- Lizbeth Pelaez
HM- Kayla Soliz
HM- Anna Lugo

High School
1st- Anahi Estrada
2nd- Jose Homero Gonzalez III
3rd- Elizabeth Estrada
HM- Xochitl Gonzalez
HM- Abisai Garcia

General Public- Amateur
1st- Paty Orduña
2nd- Anna Linda Davila
3rd- Irma Gonzalez
HM- Bianca Analee
HM- Ruben Gutierrez

General Public- Professional
1st- Hilda Zavala
2nd- Francisco Farias
3rd- Melissa Rendon
HM- Priscilla Benavides
HM- Sandra Silva

Best of Show
Sylvia Rodriguez

FIRST PLACE WINNERS

Elementary School- Great Kiskadee…. Elena Cano.

High School- Brown Pelican… Anahi Estrada.

Amateur-Rufous Hummingbirds… Paty Ordun.

Professional- American Kestrel… Hilda Zavala.

Middle School-Vermilion Flycatcher..Eric Garcia.

SEEKING NUMBER ONE!
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT CHRONOLOGY

By Brent Ortego

Many of us participate in Christmas Bird Counts each year. We do it for a variety of reasons which includes recreation, friendship, local pride, and a quest to explore property that might be available only during a Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Monitoring annual changes is definitely part of the reason. Just as finding a rare bird, finding the most birds, beating a nearby CBC, and finding out what everybody has found at the Count Down is justification for some to get up 2 hours before sunrise and spend 10 hours of intensive birding. As Geoff LeBaron mentioned during 1988, "**What is winning on a Christmas Bird Count? It is not being on the count with the most people, the most species, the best leaders, or the one with the new North American record. It is being on a count. Or two or three."**

CBC Welcome Sign in Matagorda County.

Some of us are fortunate to be able to take the CBC competition that started in 1900 a step further and compete for the highest species tallies in the Nation. As Susan Roney Drennan said in 1985 **"It is always heartening to remember that in every CBC season there is only one winner per class. Every other count is a finisher."**

I wrote this article to provide a brief chronology of the CBC and its winners in the United States. My main focus will be on the seven CBCs from California, Florida and Texas which reported the highest tallies of species in the Nation during 75% of the seasons. This means that some site other than these Top Seven won 25% of the time, and maybe your area this year has a chance.

1899 - Bird-Lore 2:192: Request for 1st Christmas Bird (Count) Census by Frank M. Chapman "Bird-Lore proposes a new kind of Christmas side hunt, in the form of a Christmas bird-census"—and sending a report of

their 'hunt' to Bird-Lore before they retire that night. Such reports should be headed by the locality, hour of starting and of returning, character of the weather, direction and force of the wind, and the temperature; the latter taken when starting. The birds observed should then be added, following the order in which they are given in the A. O. U. 'Check List.' With, if possible, the exact or approximate number of individuals of each species observed.

Promptness in sending these lists to Bird-Lore is urged in order that the best of them may be published in our February number" (*The National Editor deleted reports that did not meet standards or were late).*

Today (2021), the deadline for compilers is the end of February. Regional Editors have to submit their review and regional summary by the end of April. The results are published by National Audubon in November.

1st Season: The 1st CBC Season "Spirit of wholesome competition aroused by Bird-Lore's bird census" was reported by Chapman. Chapman was quite the visionary and salesman. He discussed how the census was both interesting and instructive when dealing with 25 counts and 27 participants nation-wide with the highest tally of 36 species and most counts reporting less than 12. Counts lasted from 0.5—5 hours. During the 1st Christmas Bird Census, Chapman discussed sites with the most species (promoting competition) and the possibility of monitoring bird populations.

Pacific Grove, CA had the Highest Tally on 12/25/1900 with 36 species.

4th Season–Knickerbocker, TX—Tom Green County. Wm Gray Harman conducted the 1st Christmas Bird Census in Texas, and it placed **# One** in the Nation with 44 species.

Santa Barbara, CA was the 1st Christmas Bird Census to report 100 species. It accomplished this during the 12th Season after more liberal rules were in place. They used two observers in 11.5 hours. Santa Barbara participated in 78 CBCs starting in the 11th Season and produced the 2nd **Highest Tallies** with 17. It got into the 150+ Species Club during the 64th Season and never left. It reached at least 200 species 41 times. Its Highest Tally was 219 species during the 83rd Season. Thirteen of its **# One** Rankings were prior to Season 33 when the record tally at the time was 140 species. It was **# Two** 14 times after the 60th Season and at least 45 times in the Top Five. Freeport and Santa Barbara had exciting competition for 20 years (72nd-91st) where they were **1st and 2nd** 14 times.

Santa Barbara was able to attract a large number of birders. It typically had at least 100 after the 73rd Season, and 150 after the 101st. They reported their most birders as 275 during the 114th Season. This undoubtedly was a major factor in their success.

15th Season—Christmas Bird Census season established as 20-30 December to standardize counting period, and it allowed birders to participate in more than one count.

16th Season—The highest species tally was 121 species reported by **Los Angeles, CA** but it occurred within a 35-mile-wide circle. This resulted in the Christmas Bird Census being further standardized by restricting future counts to a 15-mile diameter circle. Los Angeles had five more **# One** High Tallies in later years in the more conventional count circle.

San Diego, CA —Conducted at least 84 CBCs starting in the 23rd Season. It produced the Highest Tally in the Nation 12 times and was **2nd** 13 times. Five **# Ones** were from the 23rd—29th Seasons. Four were from the 67th—70th, and three were dispersed. Even though it has been 21 years since the last time it has been **# One**, San Diego has been very competitive placing 2nd six times during the last 10 years. San Diego's biggest competitors for **# One** has been Cocoa, FL and Matagorda County over the years. San Diego has produced at least 200 species 28 times and its Highest Tally was 224 species during the 70th Season.

San Diego attracted fewer birders than Santa Barbara. They typically had less than 100 prior to the 102nd Season, and consistently above 130 after the 112th Season. Larger number of birders likely contributed to their recent success in reporting the 2nd most species in the Nation.

34th Season–Santa Monica, CA started the 150+ Species Club with 156 species.

TX, Harlingen—Cameron County. Irby Davis and his team put Texas on the birding map with 10 Highest CBC Tallies during the 11 seasons in which they participated from the 36th thru 51st. There would have been more except they took a 5-year break during World War II. Harlingen CBC was not active again until the 98th Season. It reported at least 150 species 15 times during the 23 Seasons afterwards. Its highest tally was 174 species during the 105th Season.

Harlingen, TX was never able to obtain national prominence for total species after restarting in the 98th season, but it has been very competitive in high counts of individuals for species and adding South Texas specialties to the annual Texas CBC report.

The Tropical Parula is One of Many South Texas Specialties Which are Found Annually at Harlingen..

The Cape May Warbler is One of Many Species of Neotropical Migrants which Might Be Found Lingering During the CBC Season at Harlingen.

Great Kiskadee is a South Texas Specialty which is Near the Edge of its Breeding Range.

Mountain Bluebird is a Western Rarity which Rarely Makes It to the Gulf of Mexico Coast.

42nd Season—Count results is now published in Audubon Magazine Supplement and the name has been **changed from Christmas Bird Census to Christmas Bird Count.**

43rd Season–Charleston, SC was **# One** with 125 species. **Cove, TX** tied for 2nd with 101 species (now part of the Houston and Old River CBCs). Chapman said "Bird

counting in the Nation had become increasingly difficult in many places due to World War II, especially along water fronts, around reservoirs and near critical defense areas, but our observers reported fewer brushes with the authorities than last year". Seven Texas CBCs were run this season which included Glen Rose by Ben Osborn, and Richmond by Logan H. Meitzen.

45th Season–FRANK CHAPMAN DIED IN 1945.

"THE EDITORS WELL REALIZE THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE Christmas count has depended largely upon its recreational value, and that the desire to amass a long list is still prevalent. …By publishing lists of the highest counts for each species, we have succeeded in opening a new field of competition." Chandler Robbins became the 1st Editor for **The Summary of the Largest Counts of Individuals** and he produced summaries through the 53rd Season. Burt Monroe, Jr. was the primary editor afterwards until he died in 1993. I took his place during the 95th Season.

47th Season—Margaret Brooks Hickey became editor of Audubon Field Notes and it took over publishing the CBCs. Los Angeles, CA was **# One** with 151 species. Harlingen was 3rd with 128 and Houston 13th with 100.

Cocoa, FL—The Best Count in Florida history started during the 53rd Season and was run to present. Cocoa was one of the best CBC areas in the Nation until widespread development took its toll starting in the late 70's. Cocoa was primarily compiled by Allan Cruikshank until his death. It produced 14 **# Ones** and five # Twos. It produced 200 species eight times with its highest tally of 210 species occurring during the 74th Season. Its primary competitors for 1st and 2nd were San Diego, CA and Freeport, TX. The Glory Years are long gone and today, it seldom makes the 150+ Species List. Cocoa had its success with about 50 birders each year. The most birders were 88 during the 71st Season.

54th Season—"Editorial Policy—The Christmas Bird Count is rightfully regarded as a sport by some and quite rightfully by others as a contribution to knowledge. The editors of *Audubon Field* Notes have long been happy to recognize this dual function that the CBC has enjoyed. We do, however, regard it a high responsibility to bestow on each report a generous amount of scientific skepticism, to question the compilers for details about unusual records, and to regard extreme rarities as doubtful until proven otherwise. This does not imply that all men are liars until proven honest; it simply expresses a conservative approach in asking for facts to permit an independent decision on the acceptability of a report as a *scientific* fact.

National Audubon allowed listing of species seen the day before/after the CBC, but not on count day. This was the beginning of the use of **Count Week Birds** which are not counted towards the species tally and not used for population analyses.

Freeport, TX—While Harlingen was the 1st CBC to put Texas on the birding map, Freeport was the 1st CBC to cement Texas as an annual **# One Contender**. This Victor Emanuel led CBC started in the 58th Season and produced 15 **# Ones** and 15 # Twos. Its highest tally was 231 during the 103rd Season and reported at least 200 species 41 times which is tied with Santa Barbara with the most times in the **200 Species Club**. Its primary competitor over the years was Santa Barbara where they were each 1st or 2nd 14 times. Freeport was in similar close competition to Matagorda County five times, Cocoa and Corpus Christi four times each, and San Diego three.

Freeport was able to attract large numbers of birders. It had at least 100 from the 79th thru 102nd seasons with its largest group of 171 during the 85th Season. It last produced the Highest Tally in the Nation during the 92nd Season. Initial declines in the production of **# One** Tallies was not because of the lack of birds, but more because of better

Common Black Hawk is One of Many Rarities Found on the Freeport CBC over the Years.

competition developed by Corpus Christi and Matagorda County.

Corpus Christi, TX—Gene Blacklock started the Corpus Christi CBC during the 63rd Season and the CBC was conducted every year since. It placed **# One** for the Highest Tally six times and 2nd five. Its highest species count was 239 during the 105th

The Corpus Christi CBC has a Good Mix of Habitats that Contains the Nueces River Delta and Hyper Saline Flats.

with 35 birders. Its main competitor for # **One** was Matagorda County when seven times they were either 1st or 2nd, and Freeport five times.

Corpus Christi did not attract many birders. It usually had between 25 and 40 most seasons. It makes you wonder how many species they would have had if they attracted 100 birders during the years they were producing **# One** or # Two national tallies.

66th Season—Texas conducted 55 CBCs. Midland Naturalist members conducted 13 of these. Anne LeSassier compiled five, Francis Williams four, David Brown three and Terry Maxwell one. David Brown was their champion birder. He participated in 12 counts that season. Texas also produced two of the 18 CBCs which had at least 150 species. Freeport was 2nd with 193 species which was four behind Cocoa, FL and Houston was 7th with 168 species.

67th Season—Texas conducted 62 CBCs which was 14 more than 2nd place New York. Texas also produced six of the 25 CBCs which had at least 150 species. Cocoa, FL was **# One** with 206 species, Freeport 3rd with 190 species, Houston 7th with 170, Welder Wildlife Refuge 11th with 166, Laguna Atascosa NWR 19th with 158, Galveston 21st with 156, and Corpus Christi (Flour Bluff) was 25th with 154 species. The 15-mile diameter circles of CBCs were initially described as distances from road intersections. **Latitude/ Longitude** of the count center were required this season. This took a while for compilers to learn how to calculate. It was not unusual for compilers to make errors in the transforming the center description to a lat/long.

69th Season–Hong Kong Flu badly hurt many CBCs this season. Many participants had to miss the counts, but most counts were conducted.

70th Season—We are quick to forget how avian populations were historically. The National editor remarked that the **Brown Pelican** reported on the Freeport CBC was its first in its 13-year history. (What were the bays like without pelicans. Glad to not have known). There were about 5,000 in Texas when scientists started tracking their status in the early 1900's. The population started to decline in the 1920's when the species was persecuted for the belief they competed with commercial fishing. It declined further after World War II with increased use of potent pesticides in ag crops. Its lowest level in Texas was 50 reported in 1964. Change of pesticide regulations made a significant difference on the survival of the species. Six nests were found in 1973 along the Texas Coast and over 10,000 in 2021.

71st Season—The National Editor noted that this was the 1st year of widespread use of tape recordings. This eventually became a major benefit to birding. Even though reported as widespread, not many birders had access to the recordings. Birders who could mimic the calls of screech-owls were admired for their skills. I obtained my first recordings from plastic records produced by Cornell University and published by the National Geographic Society. That sweet sounding E. Screech-Owl on the record changed my birding life. Now, it is easy to obtain multiple recordings of every expected species and use the recordings on your cellphone which did not exist at the time.

72nd Season—Freeport and 86 birders led by Victor Emanuel set the record for the most species on a U.S. CBC with 226 species. Santa Barbara had 202, Point Reyes Peninsula, CA 200, Cocoa 198 and Corpus Christi 189. This was the last season Allan Cruickshank was National CBC Editor (17 years). He was replaced by a team of 25 regional editors.

73rd Season—1013 counts were accepted and 54 produced by Texas. The CBC had its roots in the Northeast and the main producer of counts was New York. Texas became the leader in count production during the 60th Season. California surpassed Texas this season with 60 counts. Cocoa and Freeport **tied for # One** with 209 species. Aransas NWR made

it over 150 for the 1st time with 175 species. **Keith Arnold** became the **1st Texas Regional Editor**.

77th Season—Freeport (97 birders) again led the Nation with 196 species and a welcome 2nd place was Corpus Christi (24 birders) with 195 species. Point Reyes Peninsula (230 birders) had 193 species and Santa Barbara (132 birders) 191. Traditional front runner Cocoa (47 birders) dropped to 7th Place with 186 species. Seven additional Texas counts made it into the 150+ club. Bolivar Peninsula and Old River were new members.

82nd Season—Santa Barbara was **# One** with 212 species, and Freeport 2nd with 204 species. In the 12 years since Freeport first broke the 200 species barrier, it has averaged 209 species; only once in the 12 years did it fall below 200. Santa Barbara, first reached the 200s a year after Freeport, and had a 12-year average of 199.4 species.

Francis Williams reported Midland had topped 100 species for the 2nd time in 34 years with the high species tally being attributed to excessive effluents the city was discharging which attracted more water birds.

83rd Season—Lois Heilbrun was CBC editor from 73rd—83rd CBC.

CBC results are due by 15 January. Those were the days where compilers and editors did not have much time to chase down details. Compilers have until the end of February now.

87th Season—Geoff LeBaron became the new CBC editor. [Note from regional editor] "Cocoa, FL count has been the cream of the Florida crop for so many years that there probably aren't many who remember when it didn't lead the state in total species, or even when it used to get 200+ species." Their 171 this year is still Florida's best, but they are rapidly losing habitat to rampant development.

Matagorda County–Mad Island Marsh, TX—1993–present, 23 **# Ones**, four 2nd, and one 6th place High Species Tallies. Set records for the most 1st places, the most 1st places in a row (14 years), and the most species on a U.S. CBC (248). Species reported ranged from 197-248. Over 230 species was reported 18 times in 28 years. Closest competitors were Corpus Christi where they were 1st and 2nd seven times, Guadalupe River Delta—McFaddin Family Ranches and San Diego six times each, and Freeport five times. San Diego has been 2nd the last five years, with four of those species tallies being six or less species separating it from Matagorda County.

Matagorda County was able to attract from 86-138 birders after the 97th Season. The 138 birders during the 112th Season produced 244 species. They used 116 birders during the 106th Season to produce the record 248 species.

One aspect of the Matagorda County CBC which is not shared by most of the other top species tally counts is the number of Largest Counts of Individuals it is able to produce. It was the top CBC 16 times for producing largest counts of individuals for species during its 28 years. Coot Bay was the only other CBC to top Matagorda County in this category with 27 1st places.

101st Season—CBC count period established as 14 December—5 January for the foreseeable future.

102nd Season—CBC issue was reduced in size by only providing count data on the CBC website. Post 9/11/2001 has created additional restricted access to government, military and other high value targets which has included cancellation of some counts in the Nation. Texas produced 95 CBCs for the 1st time.

105th Season—Texas had five counts with at least 200 species.

Guadalupe River Delta–McFaddin Family Ranches, TX—105th Season to present. Set record for the most species (212) reported the first time a CBC was conducted. Highest Tally of 225 species occurred during the 108th and 112th seasons. Never was **# One**, but was 2nd six times and was never below 202 species during its 17 seasons. Its main competition

is Matagorda County as it is for all counts trying to be **# One** in recent years.

The CBC is positioned along 15 miles of the forested Guadalupe River floodplain as it empties into a bay. This southern location provides opportunities for lingering species, South Texas specialties and western species."

Matagorda County has a Great Mix of Habitats in an Area with Landowner Support and Teamwork of Birders. The Bird Images on the Quilt Represents some of the Quality Species Reported during the First 25 Years of the CBC.

Weather Patterns have Significant Effects on Species Tallies. In this Setting on the Guadalupe River Delta CBC, a Drought Created Thousands of Acres of Shallow Water in Green Lake which Normally is too Deep for Most Birds to Use. Four New Species were Added to the CBC in this Situation. Opposite Conditions with Wind and Rain can have Devastating Effects on the Species Tally.

Wood Stork Periodically Lingers Into the CBC Season.

106th Season—Matagorda County set all-time record with 248 species. Guadalupe River Delta placed 2nd with 237 species and sent a message to not take it for granted. Texas had 101 CBCs.

107th Season—I replaced Keith Arnold as Texas CBC editor after his 34 years of service. Corpus Christi tops the 233 species at Matagorda County with 238 during Gene Blacklock's last season as compiler. Ten CBCs had at least 200 species. Santa Barbara, CA produced 224, Guadalupe River Delta 220 and Freeport 215. Crystal Springs, Morro Bay, Moss Landing, Point Reyes Peninsula and San Diego from California all had at least 200 species.

112th Season—Bill Graber celebrated his 50 years of compiling the Bolivar Peninsula CBC. TXBP was one of many CBCs that strived to reach 200 species. Their best season was during 1995 when they tied for 5th Nationally with 197. TXBP was one of 27 Texas CBCs in which I have participated. I only attended once and remember when Bill took the time to show me some Black Scoters in the surf. However, my most vivid memory of Bolivar Peninsula was not during a CBC, but shortly afterwards. I was conducting an aerial shorebird survey during the February after Hurricane Ike. I was only able to see two houses still intact along the entire length of Bolivar Peninsula. What remained were many likings that formerly supported housing and few birds in the highly disturbed beaches/wetlands.

113th Season—National Audubon switched to a web-based publication of the CBC results and did away with the unpopular activity fees which previously were needed to print the results.

120th Season—Matagorda County reported 229 species, San Diego 213, Santa

Large Numbers of Skilled Birders Are Typically Needed to Produce High Tallies. Matagorda County 12/14/2015

Finding a Rarity like the Thick-billed Kingbird Illustrated Here Is Exciting and It Helps with the Tally. However, finding all of the Regular Occurring Species Will Achieve Higher Tallies than the Addition of an Occasional Rarity. The Biggest Benefit from Rarities Is That They Attract Birders.

Barbara 203, Guadalupe River Delta 202 and Freeport 197. These five CBCs seem very similar in diversity and the numbers reported have been relatively stable over the past decade. Corpus Christi with its few birders reported 177 species whose tally has held fairly consistent over the last 15 years. Harlingen reported 167 which is very similar to the numbers reported during the 1940's when it was **# One**. Harlingen's problems are that the competition has gotten much better and the habitats within the count-circle have been severely degraded. Cocoa had 146 species. This has been quite a change from the time when it was **# One** 14 times prior to 1980. Year by year afterwards more land has been taken out of native habitats.

. . . . .

CBC competition is not fair while seeking to be **# One** in the Nation, State, Inland, Region, etc. The 15-mile diameter circle bird survey area and one calendar day during a prescribed period are the two rules which helps equal the conditions. Even with them, the **Highest National Tallies** are mostly restricted to coastal areas. Forested rivers extending all the way to the Gulf Coast provides some of the highest diversity within a 15 mile-diameter area in Texas. Freeport and Matagorda County have this setting. Corpus Christi has riparian woodlands extending all the way to the bay with a large amount of shorebird habitat. Guadalupe River Delta has a forested river extending to a bay with very limited shorebird habitat.

Access to skilled birders, land, habitats, and government resources are all highly variable and not evenly distributed. How many species would Corpus Christi have if it had 200 birders or Point Reyes Peninsula if it had

24? Availability of government conservation lands is a major asset - Lands managed for wildlife, professional staff, specialty boats and vehicles are expected to come with it. Guadalupe River Delta, Freeport and Matagorda County have these, and these resources have been a major reason for their success.

I hope you have enjoyed this chronology of CBC history. Each of the top seven CBCs discussed had its time when it was Number

One or was very competitive for it. Matagorda County has had an unprecedented streak of high species tallies. As its compiler, I hope this streak continues, odds are it will end one day. Bad weather, loss of access to land, loss of birders, and industrial development could take its toll. In the meantime, you are invited to join our teams at Matagorda County on the 1st Monday of the CBC season and Guadalupe River Delta on the 1st Thursday.

I encourage you to participate in as many of the 125 registered CBCs in Texas as you can. Each has its own history which is unique and special.

Conducting a quality "Sea Watch" along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico or large water bodies is a challenge because not many true pelagics visit the relatively shallow water near land. The "Sea Watch" typically involves investing one or more of your better birders to spend the day looking for one to five species with a relatively low chance of success. However, if they find a new species it might be one of the rarest species for your CBC. The South Texas Shearwater illustrated by Dennis Shepler for the 2019 sighting at Matagorda County CBC was considered the 2nd best species for this CBC.

SEEKING # ONE SPECIES TALLY

Abbreviation Codes: TX = Texas, FL = Florida, CA = California, CC = Corpus Christi, GF = Guadalupe River Delta, FR = Freeport, HG = Harlingen, MM = Matagorda County, CO = Cocoa, SB = Santa Barbara, SD = San Diego

Hyphenated Number Codes: 1st # = rank, 2nd # = species tally

CBC	Top count	Total Species	TXCC	TXGF	TXFR	TXHG	TXMM	FLCO	CASB	CASD
121	TX, Matagorda County	224	184	3-213	4-212	163	1-224	150	206	2-219
120	TX, Matagorda County	229	177	4-202	197	167	1-229	146	3-203	2-213
119	TX, Matagorda County	237	182	3-211	197	163	1-237	145	197	2-217
118	TX, Matagorda County	220	167	3-212	4-204	158	1-220	139	5-203	2-217
117	TX, Matagorda County	229	177	3-206	189	157	1-229	146	196	2-213
116	TX, Matagorda County	239	186	2-223	5-211	144	1-239	144	4-212	3-219
115	TX, Matagorda County	234	172	3-211	190	157	1-234	148	2-214	3-209
114	TX, Matagorda County	228	172	3-217	5-209	156	1-228	152	2-222	4-213
113	TX, Matagorda County	232	174	4-212	196	160	1-232	151	3-213	2-214
112	TX, Matagorda County	244	19-183	2-225	9-199	55-163	1-244	65-159	4-215	3-216
111	TX, Matagorda County	236	19-180	2-222	5-206	149	1-236	76-155	4-211	3-220
110	TX, Matagorda County	231	21-178	2-216	5-203	148	1-231	66-155	2-216	4-205
109	TX, Matagorda County	233	31-172	2-217	6-199	63-156	1-233	40-166	3-209	5-201
108	TX, Matagorda County	235	26-174	2-225	6-203	69-156	1-235	38-164	5-206	3-214
107	TX, Corpus Christi	238	1-238	4-220	5-215	79-151	2-233	52-162	3-224	7-207
106	TX, Matagorda County	248	2-227	3-223	4-212	58-157	1-248	35-165	5-200	5-200
105	TX, Matagorda County	246	2-239	4-212	3-214	27-174	1-246	58-158	6-200	11-193
104	TX, Matagorda County and TX, Corpus Christi	231	1-231		4-206	140	1-231	?	3-208	9-192
103	TX, Matagorda County	243	3-223		2-231	36-152	1-243	34-154	4-210	9-190
102	TX, Matagorda County	233	12-175		2-206	140	1-233	30-154	2-206	4-202
101	TX, Matagorda County	235	5-205		2-226	131	1-235	30-163	3-208	inactive
100	TX, Matagorda County	228	3-206		3-206	146	1-228	30-161	2-213	10-188
99	TX, Matagorda County	230	5-210		2-218	142	1-230	35-158	4-211	11-189
98	TX, Matagorda County	234	5-200		2-216	144	1-234	25-170	3-208	13-187
97	TX, Corpus Christi	233	1-233		7-194	inactive	2-223	30-163	3-215	11-183
96	TX, Corpus Christi	227	1-227		10-190	inactive	2-209	21-171	4-198	15-178
95	TX, Corpus Christi	217	1-217		3-204	inactive	2-205	28-166	5-203	15-183

94	CA, Moss Landing	211	2-208		2-208	inactive	6-197	27-164	5-200	16-177
93	TX, Corpus Christi	224	1-224		2-214	inactive		30-166	6-198	8-191
92	TX, Freeport	219	2-209		1-219	inactive		20-174	5-201	7-190
91	TX, Freeport	218	8-193		1-218	inactive		25-166	2-214	4-206
90	TX, Freeport	226	5-198		1-226	inactive		20-169	2-205	6-197
89	TX, Santa Barbara	218	11-183		2-208	inactive		16-169	1-218	10-186
88	TX, Freeport	215	6-211		1-215	inactive		17-177	4-212	8-200
87	TX, Freeport	212	8-197		1-212	inactive		27-170	2-207	9-195
86	TX, Freeport	207	2-200		1-207	inactive		15-174	8-193	6-195
85	TX, Freeport	222	7-194		1-222	inactive		15-179	2-210	10-191
84	CA, Santa Barbara	215	9-188		2-206	inactive		10-181	1-215	5-198
83	TX, Freeport	222	7-191		1-222	inactive		19-172	2-219	11-188
82	CA, Santa Barbara	212	7-191		2-204	inactive		8-190	1-212	4-198
81	TX, Freeport	214	3-194		1-214	inactive		8-190	2-200	5-192
80	TX, Freeport and CA, San Diego	217	7-191		1-217	inactive		12-187	3-204	1-217
79	TX, Freeport	216	6-188		1-216	inactive		5-194	2-214	4-200
78	CA, Santa Barbara	214	5-194		2-205	inactive		6-190	1-214	3-202
77	TX, Freeport	196	2-195		1-196	inactive		7-186	4-191	5-189
76	TX, Freeport	216	8-182		1-216	inactive		5-188	2-202	6-185
75	CA, San Diego	202	4-182		2-200	inactive		2-200	7-181	1-202
74	FL, Cocoa	210	7-182		2-201	inactive		1-210	6-183	2-201
73	TX, Freeport and FL, Cocoa	209	6-184		1-209	inactive		1-209	3-195	3-195
72	TX, Freeport	226	5-189		1-226	inactive		4-198	2-202	6-184
71	FL, Cocoa	205	6-180		2-204	inactive		1-205	3-195	5-191
70	CA, San Diego	224	5-180		4-188	inactive		2-196	6-178	1-224
69	CA, San Diego	217	18-155		4-179	inactive		2-203	7-165	1-217
68	CA, San Diego	209	9-164		6-172	inactive		2-195	8-165	1-209
67	CA, San Diego and FL, Cocoa	206	135		3-190	inactive		1-206	5-178	1-206
66	FL, Cocoa	197	143		2-193	inactive		1-197	6-170	3-192
65	FL, Cocoa	204	123		3-183	inactive		1-204	11-154	5-173
64	FL, Cocoa	195	126		6-165	inactive		1-195	5-166	4-170
63	FL, Cocoa	197	90		5-158	inactive		1-197	140	4-162
62	FL, Cocoa	191			134	inactive		1-191	127	3-172
61	FL, Cocoa	200			9-150	inactive		1-200	inactive	4-160
60	FL, Cocoa	196			11-148	inactive		1-196		3-163
59	FL, Cocoa	194				inactive		1-194		
58	FL, Cocoa	193			105	inactive		1-193		2-165
57	FL, Cocoa	186			inactive	inactive		1-186		2-179
56	FL, Cocoa	184				inactive		1-184		2-168
55	CA, San Diego	175				inactive		2-167		1-175
54	NC, Wilmington	162				inactive		6-147		124
53	TX, Laguna Atascosa	152				inactive		130		inactive
52	CA, Los Angeles	150				inactive		inactive		101
51	TX, Harlingen	172				1-172				121
50	TX, Harlingen	151				1-151				112
49	TX, Harlingen	146				1-146				inactive
48	TX, Harlingen	163				1-163				inactive
47	CA, Los Angeles	151				3-128				5-117

46	CA, Los Angeles	136				inactive				3-120
45	CA, Los Angeles	132				inactive				
44	SC, Charleston	123				inactive				
43	SC, Charleston	125				inactive				2-114
42	SC, Charleston	124				inactive				2-123
41	TX, Harlingen	132				1-132				2-128
40	TX, Harlingen	155				1-155				125
39	TX, Harlingen	163				1-163			114	129
38	TX, Harlingen	158				1-158			120	124
37	TX, Harlingen	164				1-164			139	117
36	TX, Harlingen	140				1-140				
35	CA, Santa Monica	166								
34	CA, Santa Monica	156								
33	FL, PALM BEACH	144								
32	CA, Santa Barbara	140							1-140	
31	CA, Santa Barbara	129							1-129	
30	CA, Santa Barbara	121							1-121	
29	CA, San Diego	120							110	1-120
28	CA, San Diego	100							100	1-118
27	CA, Santa Barbara	121							1-121	102
26	CA, Santa Barbara and CA, San Diego	106							1-106	1-106
25	unknown									
24	CA, San Diego	106								1-106
23	CA, San Diego	112								1-112
22	FL, Wakulla Co	109								
21	CA, Santa Barbara	96							1-96	
20	CA, Santa Barbara	109							1-109	
19	CA, Santa Barbara	110							1-110	
18	CA, Los Angeles	106								
17	CA, San Francisco	65								
16	CA, Los Angeles	121								
15	CA, Santa Barbara	108							1-108	
14	CA, Santa Barbara	96							1-96	
13	CA, Santa Barbara	103							1-103	
12	CA, Santa Barbara	100							1-100	
11	CA, Santa Barbara	76							1-76	
10	NY, Orient Point	51								
9	NY, Gardiner's Island	56								
8	NY, Orient Point	50								
7	NY, Orient Point	42								
6	LA, Lake Catherine	49								
5	WA, Blaine	44								
4	TX, Knickerbocker	44								
3	MA, Woods Hole	38								
2	NJ, Moorestown	24								
1	CA, Pacific Grove	36								

Brent Ortego
E-mail: brentortego@hotmail.com

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY-ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS

By Julio Cardona

Hummingbirds are the smallest birds in the world, and they're quite an impressive sight when they flock to your backyard. If you're looking for ways to get your children, nephews, or grandchildren interested in learning more about these birds, it's easy to attract them to your own yard for a fun family activity. With the right food, feeder, and setup, attracting hummingbirds is easy. Let's discover together some awesome tips that will make your family activity fun and successful. We will also learn some basic information about these incredibly fascinating birds and how to attract them. Before you know it, you'll have a fabulous flock that will make bird watching a favorite pastime for the entire family.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Before you begin attracting hummingbirds as a fun family activity, it's essential to make sure that you have the right food and feeder for these delicate birds. While a feeder is a great way to bring these tiny birds to you, native plants and flowers are also wonderful attractants. In fact, hummingbirds get most of their energy and nutrition from the sweet nectar of native plants with colorful blooms. Make sure you have lots of flowers in your garden, which will keep the hummingbirds interested in hanging around your home. It's important to know when to expect these tiny birds to arrive in your area. Different species migrate at different times of the year, but most hummingbirds should appear in early spring. They may hang around until mid to late autumn, depending on your specific location and climate.

USING THE COLOR RED TO ATTRACT HUMMINGBIRDS

When you're attracting hummingbirds to your yard, try to incorporate the color red into your backyard, like backyard structures or gardens as much as possible. This bright, lively color signals to the birds that there is sweet nectar nearby. But why do hummingbirds see red? It's due to a dense concentration of cones in the bird's retina that contain pigments and oil droplets that

range in shades of yellow to bright red. These cones act as filters that heighten the bird's sensitivity to color between the red and yellow range. The brighter and bolder the red color in your yard, the better chances you'll have at attracting hummingbirds.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FEEDERS

One key element to attracting hummingbirds is to make sure you choose the right feeder. Here are some tips for feeders so you can enjoy this fun family activity together while keeping the birds safe.

BUYING A FEEDER

Where can you buy them? You can buy

hummingbird feeders at many home improvement stores, plant nurseries, and garden stores. Look for quality, durable feeders that feature a bright red color or a combination of yellow and red.

Buy a feeder that's easy to clean. Hummingbird feeders should be easy to assemble and disassemble for quick cleaning. Look for feeders that are easy to clean thoroughly and regularly to keep the birds safe. Dirty hummingbird feeders can spread disease and cause various ailments in these tiny birds, so make sure you wash yours daily or at least every other day when possible.

Make a feeder with your kids. If you'd rather make your own feeder, it's a fun family activity that everyone can share. One easy and fun way is to make a shallow plastic dish into a feeder. You purchase or use an old shallow plastic dish. Just make sure you choose one with a red top. You can safely make holes with a hole puncher, if the lid is a thin plastic or a screw and screw driver so you don't use any sharp objects. Then you can use fishing string, Christmas ornament hanging string or even light wire that is used to hang picture frames to hang the feeder. Salt shakers with the right dimensions can become perfect containers. Always make sure to properly clean the containers or dishes before adding the nectar. There are plenty of fun creative ideas online.

Where are the best places for hummingbird feeders? Once you have your feeder ready, it's important to hang it where you'll get the most birds. You can hang the feeder from your back porch, front porch, under a tree, or a garden post. Make sure the feeder is located in a shady area, so the nectar stays cool. If you have more than one feeder, place them far apart from one another since hummingbirds can be quite territorial. Multiple feeders are a smart method for attracting hummingbirds in higher numbers, too.

MAKE YOUR NECTAR

After you choose your feeder and location, it's time to make some nectar. Here are some tips to make sure you make the best nectar possible for these tiny, beautiful birds.

Don't use red dye. Never buy hummingbird food that's colored red, and never add red dye to your nectar. This dye can contain harmful chemicals that may cause dangerous tumors and death in hummingbirds. Always use clear nectar or make it yourself to ensure that it's safe for the birds to consume.

Don't put honey or artificial sweeteners in your nectar. Never add anything to your homemade nectar other than pure white cane sugar and water. Adding extra ingredients like honey or artificial sweeteners can be extremely dangerous and deadly.

Follow the ethical hummingbird guidelines. The best way to make nectar is to follow these guidelines. Boil water for about two minutes, then add one part white sugar (pure cane sugar is best) to four parts water. Mix everything thoroughly until the sugar is dissolved, then allow it to cool completely before you fill your feeder.

PROPER MAINTENANCE TO PROTECT THE HUMMINGBIRDS

To protect these precious birds, there are a few things to keep in mind.

Don't let your feeders run out of nectar. Keep your feeders full and never let them run out of nectar. Hummingbirds have an extremely high metabolism, and they rely on having plenty of fuel and nutritious resources near them to survive.

Replacing water, nectar, or things that can harm your little visitors. If you have a birdbath or outdoor fountain, keep the water clean and change it regularly. Replace any container, including your feeders, regularly so that your little visitors have a safe and clean source of food and water.

Protect the birds from cats and other dangers. Protect hummingbirds from cats and other predators by making sure you hang the feeder at least four feet or higher from the ground. If you have a cat, keep them inside. Install a motion-detecting light to scare off other neighborhood cats, and if possible, install a fence that's at least six feet tall to deter predators from coming into your yard.

PLANTING NATIVE PLANTS FOR NATIVE HUMMINGBIRDS

While making feeders is a fun family activity, planting native plants and flowers is the best way to keep these birds healthy and return year after year.

When choosing native flowers and plants for your garden, make sure you select species that will thrive in your zone and do not affect the natural ecosystem. Use organic fertilizers and avoid using pesticides or other chemicals when planting and growing your garden. Keep the selection of native plants diverse to attract various hummingbird species and different types of birds.

Always follow ethical guidelines set forth by organizations like the National Audubon Society and others to ensure that you follow the best practices to protect these precious birds. They can also help you determine which native plants and flowers are best suited for your specific area.

You can support hummingbirds by joining a local hummingbird association or supporting your state and local conservation organizations. These groups are dedicated to the preservation and protection of hummingbirds as well as other birds and animals.

HAVING FUN WHEN THE HUMMINGBIRDS START TO VISIT

When hummingbird season arrives, it's a perfect time for some fun education and family time with your kids and other family members.

Take pictures. Practice your photography skills by taking pictures of the hummingbirds you see. These fast-moving birds can be tough to photograph, so it's a perfect opportunity for you to try your hand at taking some pretty amazing photos with a bit of patience and lots of clicking.

Bird watching. Spend some time relaxing and bird watching as you observe the hummingbirds enjoying the nectar and

interacting with each other. You can watch them from your windows or sit down on the front porch and observe them as they speedily fly by to take a sip. This is a perfect time to relax and enjoy nature and the outdoors.

Draw them with your kids. Schedule a time to sit down and draw the hummingbirds you see with your kids. This is a fun family activity that everyone can participate in, including the grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

Invite friends over to see the hummingbirds. Once you get a good number of hummingbirds to feed in your yard, invite your friends over to take a look. Schedule a nice afternoon lunch where you can sit outside, conversate, and observe these fascinating birds together. This is a great way to have playdates with your kid's best friends or neighborhood friends.

Attracting hummingbirds to your yard is a fun family activity that has so many positive attributes. It will inspire creativity, form a sense of appreciation for nature, and build on your family bonding. This idea can also be applied to educational settings; a few ideas can become school projects or classroom activities. This activity is a wonderful way to learn more about these truly amazing feathered friends. With the right feeder, healthy nectar, and some native plants, you can easily encourage these tiny birds to make your backyard their home.

One last important note; always follow ethical guidelines when attracting hummingbirds or any other species. Help protect these incredibly tiny and awe-inspiring animals so that future generations can one day try these activities themselves.

Originally posted on Porch.com

Julio Cardona
E-mail: JulioCardona-t@porch.com

American White Pelicans at Brazoria NWR June 26th 2021. Photo Ron J. Weeks

REFLECTIONS ON BIRDING: PICKING YOUR SPOT (AND STAYING LONG ENOUGH TO ENJOY IT)

By Ron Weeks

Birding is enjoyed by many different types of people in very diverse ways. Almost everyone recognizes birds and nature as a release from the real world, but some get that release just by being outdoors and enjoying its beauty. Others use it as a competitive distraction, a series of collections if you will (life list, state list, county list, patch list…) that pulls them away from the stresses of the everyday world. For my life up to present day, I would be classified as the poster child for the latter group. But inevitable with age is change—whether it be physical or mental. I experienced a bit of an epiphany recently that had me thinking more philosophically about how I bird. My trip started normally enough (my normal which is not necessarily "normal normal") with me working on my 2021 Brazoria County year list hunting for an overdue Wood Stork.

My overly practical engineer's mind had me at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge which is without a doubt the best local spot for post-breeding Wood Storks. Recent rains had flooded up the ponds making it less desirable habitat, but I reasoned that any bird that might have been attracted to the refuge's brackish marshes by the previous night's low tide might have spent the night in a local roost. I had to admit to myself that I didn't even know where the local waders roosted. But, I decided to give it a try anyway and rose early enough to be there before sunrise.

I drove my way to Crosstrails Marsh, the second freshwater pond on the auto tour loop. There I knew the waders eventually would be just across the road in the extensive brackish marshes looking for breakfast. As expected the tide was almost all the way up leaving little nearby in the way of flats. But I set up shop anyway taking the attitude of I would drink in what would happen by in the hopes that my stork would happen along if I was patient. Not sure if it was the broods of young Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and Common Gallinules or the "songs" of Seaside Sparrows and Least Bitterns across the road, but I started to relax and was in no particular hurry to go anywhere else. There were amazingly no mosquitoes and I was quite comfortable. I just stood there and took in the "show".

The "show" soon became endless strings of waders flying all around me heading out over the braskish marsh to the Intracoastal Waterway and many unseen distant marshes. I might not know where the actual overnight

A family of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Brazoria NWR June 26th 2021. Photo Ron J. Weeks

roost was but clearly I had stopped squarely in the morning flight path. I had found "the spot". Skeins of White Ibis, Tricolored Herons, Great and Cattle Egrets were everywhere. Even Black, Gull-billed, Royal, and Forster's Terns happened by. I had relaxed enough to the point that I was doing more than listing—I was taking in the "spectacle". And then I spotted a string of large white birds with black trim on their wings—surely these must be my sought-after Wood Storks. But alas, it was just a string of American White Pelicans working their way up the waterway. I counted 27 and logged them into eBird. Then I realized that another string of pelicans was much closer and heading directly for me. They split and flew on either side of me as I tallied them. Then I could see more coming. I then realized it was time to get the camera out as the birds were doing near point blank flybys. Very cool!

And then there was a different looking one in one of the pelican strings; a juvenile Wood Stork! Success! Normally I would have logged the "tick" and moved on to my next conquest. But I was quite content to stay put and continue watching the show. After an hour had passed the wader flight slowed to a trickle and then seemed to shut off entirely. I checked my eBird tallies and saw that my American White Pelican total was 135—I also saw the eBird reviewer nastygram asking for details. **Damn them** for disturbing my perfect morning…oops!, that reviewer would be me (internal chuckle). My reviewer self was right in that I had seen more pelicans than I had ever seen in Brazoria County in the dead of summer. And I would never have known about this impressive total if I hadn't stumbled onto and stayed in "my spot".

Who needs "patch" birding when you have a "spot"—no more rushing around the neighborhood? ;) And I—then and there—committed to myself to do more "spot" locating. I have a similar roost fly off I know of at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. And the ultimate spots would be the Big Sit locations used locally. Any place where there are enough birds to occupy your mind will do. Of course,

"spots" could be as convenient as your back porch or your favorite nearby pond. And yes, I can hear many of you saying "I have been doing that for years". And to that I say, "Thanks for welcoming me to the club." Some of us just need to slow down enough to see what you have been seeing all along.

And so continues the evolution of my birding. They say addicts are never fully cured, they just learn how to better manage their "problem". So, I guess I will still continue chasing county birds and building my lists. But some of the time I will be thinking up some new "spots" to try out.

Ron Weeks
E-mail: ronweeks@sbcglobal.net

(Top) Juvenile Wood Stork (Bottom) Juvenile Wood Stork flying with American White Pelicans. Both photographed at Brazoria NWR on 26 June 2021. Photos Ron J. Weeks

STATE-LISTED THREATENED SPECIES IN TEXAS

On January 22-23, 2020, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission held a meeting* during which the commission approved several changes to the State list of threatened and endangered species. The changes included removal of the Bald Eagle from the list and the addition of the Red-crowned Parrot, *rufa* race of the Red Knot and the Black rail.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).
Photographed by Robert Thompson

REVISED LIST

Common Black-hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*)
Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*)
White-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albicaudatus*)
Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*)
Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)
Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*)
Mexican Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*)
Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)
Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*)
White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)
Wood Stork *(Mycteria americana*)
Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)
Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*)
Northern Beardless-tyrannulet(*Camptostoma imberbe*)
Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*)
Tropical Parula (*Setophaga pitiayumi)*
Bachman's Sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis*)
Texas Botteri's Sparrow (*Peucaea botterii texana*)
Arizona Botteri's Sparrow (*Peucaea botterii arizonae*)
Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)
Red-crowned [Green-cheeked] Parrot (*Amazona viridigenalis*)
Rufa Red Knot *(Calidris canutus rufa*)

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)
Photographed in Texas by Greg Lavaty.

Because it prefers shallow-water environments, the Black Rail faces numerous threats to its habitat, especially the ditching and draining of marshes and, in the western U.S., agricultural demands on water resources.

Although population trends are difficult to assess accurately in this reclusive species, nearly all U.S. populations appear to have declined drastically in this century.

Red-crowned [Green-cheeked] Parrot (*Amazona viridigenalis*). Photographed by Rick Dunlap near Brownsville.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*). Photographed in Texas by Sabrina Midkiff.

The Red-crowned Parrot is native to only a small region of northeastern Mexico. In its native land, the species is listed as Endangered because of extensive habitat loss and depredation of nests to supply birds for a lucrative pet trade. Ironically, escaped pets and "released" birds in illegal transit are the driving force behind the establishment of feral populations in the United States: southern California, Texas, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Florida, where this species numbers in the hundreds if not thousands of birds.

The *rufa* race of the Red Knot *C. c. rufa* breeds in the low latitudes of Arctic Canada; winters from the Gulf of Mexico south to eastern South America [type locality = New Jersey]. In appearance it is like *C. c. canutus*, but lower flanks, vent, and undertail coverts white, ventral color paler (more soft chestnut, less deep rufous), nape grayish, and black marks on dorsum restricted with rufous marks there nearly absent (imparting a silvery gray appearance). The *rufa* and *canutus* subpopulations have both experienced population declines.

* Audio archive at https://tpwd.texas.gov/business/feedback/meetings/2020/0123/agenda/index.phtml

PLASTIC POLLUTION ON THE TEXAS COAST

By Celeste Silling, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory & Kelly Martin, American Bird Conservancy

First-time visitors to Texas beaches are often shocked by the sheer density of trash on our shores. Marine debris—defined as solid, human-made trash in the marine environment—of every size, shape, and form can be found on the coastline, from tires in the dunes to plastic shards in the wrack line. This debris is harmful to people and wildlife, and it has now drawn the attention of bird conservationists. American Bird Conservancy,[1] Gulf Coast Bird Observatory,[2] and Black Cat GIS[3] have teamed up to address this problem through our new program called SPLASh (Stopping Plastics and Litter Along Shorelines).

As the saying goes, "*everything's bigger in Texas*", and that is true of our trash problem as well. In fact, data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Ocean Conservancy has shown that Texas has the highest average weight of litter per mile surveyed of any state in the nation.[4] Each year, approximately 17.6 billion pounds of plastic enter the ocean[5] in addition to the estimated 330 billion pounds of plastic that were already in the ocean as of 2015.[6] That's an incredible amount of trash, but why is so much of it ending up in Texas in particular?

To answer this, we have to understand how trash travels. Much of the trash in the environment is plastic, which is typically light and buoyant, meaning it can easily float in water or be carried by wind. It also does not decompose easily—or at all—so while it may break down into smaller pieces called microplastics[7], it's bound to stick around in the environment well beyond human lifetimes. Due to these characteristics of plastics, it's very easy for a piece of plastic left somewhere on land to make its way into a watershed and travel by gutter, stream, river, or bayou to the

[1]www.abcbirds.org
[2]www.gcbo.org
[3]www.blackcatgis.com

[4]https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/reports/analysis-marine-debris-us
[5]https://science.sciencemag.org/content/347/6223/768.full
[6]https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/full-report-stemming-the.pdf
[7]https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/microplastics.html

American Oystercatcher entangled in fishing line. Photo by Sue Heath/GCBO

Wilson's Plover nest built within a discarded fishing net. Photo by Kristen Vale/ABC

coast. Scientists have determined that 80% of marine debris comes from land, as opposed to the other 20% that is directly dumped or spilled into the marine environment.[8] Once trash makes its way from land to sea, it can travel across the globe before washing up on a coastline somewhere else entirely. As a result, some of the trash on the Texas coast comes from other places around the world: one study found that trash accumulates ten times faster on the Texas coast than the coasts of other Gulf states.[9]

However, this doesn't mean we can blame the Texas trash pollution woes entirely on others around the world—there is no shortage of trash within the state that makes its way to the Texas coast. The Houston-Galveston region faces a particularly large challenge: this region falls within the Greater Galveston Bay Watershed, which is home to half the population of Texas, as it includes the metro areas of Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth. That means the trash of approximately 14.5 million people has a pathway to the Galveston Bay and the upper Texas coast, whether it's intentionally littered or unintentionally falls out of a trash can, dump truck, or landfill.

All this marine debris isn't just an eyesore,

[8]http://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/plastics-in-the-marine-environment/

[9]https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0025326X18308749?via%3Dihub

Valentines balloons washed up on a beach in Galveston. Photo by Kristen Vale/ABC

Trash in the wrack line on the beach. Photo by Kelly Martin/ABC

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, masks have become a common type of trash littered in the environment.
Photo by Kelly Martin/ABC

SPLASh volunteers at a trash cleanup showing off their trash grabbers. Photo by Kelly Martin/ABC

it's also a serious threat to Texas wildlife, especially to the more than 600 species of birds that spend at least some portion of their life in the state. Trash, and especially plastic, can harm wildlife in two main ways: ingestion and entanglement. The same characteristics that make it easy for plastic to travel through watersheds also make it easy for coastal and marine species to ingest them. This plastic debris in the sand or floating in the water can look a lot like their food. It also smells a lot like their food: scientists have discovered that as algae grows on plastics in the marine environment it develops a smell that can attract wildlife.[10]

When animals eat plastic, it can do damage to their digestive tract. Sharp edges can cut soft tissues, injuring the creature from inside. Often, the plastics are too big or plentiful to pass through their digestive systems and cannot be broken down by stomach acid. As a result, plastics can accumulate in the stomachs of wildlife, and, if enough plastics accumulate, the animal won't eat and may starve.

Entanglement occurs when an animal is tangled in or trapped by debris. Animals both in the water and on the beach get tangled up in fishing line, nets, and other plastic items and can't escape. This can prevent them from hunting or foraging and can dig into their skin, causing cuts, infection, and possibly even loss of a limb. Fishing line is a particularly deadly type of debris: staff at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory often discover birds so entangled in fishing line that they can't properly walk or fly. Researchers and rehabbers put hours into untangling and healing these animals from their fishing line injuries. While these birds can sometimes recover from their wounds, many aren't so lucky.

The plastic pollution problem is daunting, but there are plenty of ways that we can all work toward solving the problem. First, reducing the number of disposable things, particularly plastics, that are used on a daily basis is crucial. Even if you aren't a litterbug, trash unintentionally gets into the ocean from landfills, trash cans, sewers and so on, so reducing the amount of waste we produce is one of the best ways to reduce the amount of trash in our environment. Bringing reusable shopping bags to the store instead of using the plastic

[10]https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/2/11/e1600395

SPLASh volunteers posing with 904 pounds of trash that were removed from the area. Photo by Amanda Hackney/Black Cat GIS

ones provided is both a way to reduce plastic and avoid that frustrating situation when a bag rips and drops your groceries. Save money and help the environment by carrying a reusable bottle instead of buying bottled water when you're out and about. Finding products that use less plastic packaging and recycle the packaging that you do use is another great option for reducing clutter in your home and the environment. There are a multitude of ways to limit your plastic waste as a consumer, and by doing so, we collectively send a message to manufacturers that more sustainable, plastic-free products are not only good for the planet, but also good for their bottom line.

Another solution to the problem is to work on cleaning up the trash already in our environment. Doing a trash cleanup just by yourself, or with your family and friends, or with a whole team can make an enormous difference for wildlife. Don't have a beach nearby to clean? That's ok—picking up litter around your neighborhood can reduce the amount of trash that eventually makes its way to the coast. The amount of trash around us might seem overwhelming, but with a little time and effort we can make a huge dent and help the birds. At a recent cleanup near Houston, 16 volunteers picked up over 1,500 pounds of trash in only a few hours.

SPLASh is working to clean up Texas shorelines through community science, education, and outreach. If you are interested in volunteering at a cleanup, engaging with our education efforts, or learning more about how you can participate, please visit us at splashtx.org or follow us on social media (@SPLASh-TrashTX).

Celeste Silling
E-mail: csilling@gcbo.org

Kelly Martin
E-mail: kmartin@abcbirds.org

TIME TO ORDER YOUR NEW HOUSTON AUDUBON CONSERVATION LICENSE PLATE!

We're excited to announce the launch of our new conservation license plate, featuring an Eastern Meadowlark!

The license plate is sponsored by
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and can be purchased through the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV).

Photo of Eastern Meadowlark by Alan Murphy of Alan Murphy Photography

https://houstonaudubon.org/ways-to-help/licenseplate.html

TOS MOURNS THE LOSS OF ONE OF ITS BIGGEST SUPPORTERS

Gregory William Lasley

Gregory William Lasley, age 71, of Dripping Springs, Texas passed away on Saturday, January 30, 2021. Gregory was born November 17, 1949.

Reminiscences from his friends.

Greg was a great friend who taught me so much. We spent 20 years running around chasing dragonflies and other wildlife together...memories I will always cherish. He was always eager to not only learn himself, but share his vast knowledge with others. His legacy will live on in many ways, but particularly through all those that he impacted in such a significant way. Here Greg was enjoying a bit of ice cream in between photographing and chasing dragonflies in State College, Pennsylvania (June 2015).

—John Abbott

When I was working on my guide, "Dragonflies of the Southwest, A Beginner's Pocket Guide" I received a call from Greg, who was a stranger to me. He said that he wanted to share his photos with me because, although he was well known in the Birding world, he was an unknown in the Odonata world. His photos made my guide such a better book, and, whether it was due to my guide or not I'm not sure, but he became well known to everyone interested in Dragonflies. He is known for his generosity with his time and knowledge. He left this planet a better place than it would have been without him.

—Kathy Biggs

Greg was a prominent member of the iNaturalist community of nature enthusiasts. The iNaturalist staff wrote a blog post commemorating his generous contributions. Many, many people in the iNaturalist community have added memories and notes on that blog page: https://www.inaturalist.org/posts/46021-rest-in-peace-greg

—Chuck Sexton

I had the privilege of working for Greg when he was a sergeant at APD. He was a terrific role model and I used the lessons learned from him for the rest of my career. Later, when I was going through a rough patch, long after Greg had retired he sought me out to lend support and assure me everything would work out. Greg was a man of character and integrity.

You couldn't spend much time around Greg and not know about his passion for birds. I had only worked for him a few weeks when one morning he showed up in the parking lot where I was writing a report. My beat was on the far eastern edge of town. I had worked out there for several years. I never had a sergeant venture out that far to just visit with me. As it turned out Greg was not coming to see me. He was on his way to some retention pond to look for a rare bird he had heard was out there. At least that was his cover story. Gods Speed Sarge.

—Don Doyle

I was so sorry to hear that Greg had passed away. I knew he was fighting his illness, and I prayed he would succeed. Greg gave me opportunities as a rookie patrol officer as my first sergeant, and later as new patrol sergeant when he was a lieutenant. I was grateful for his support. His positive attitude in a tough profession served as an enduring example throughout my policing career. To Cheryl and family, please accept my heartfelt condolences I first knew of Greg through seeing his amazing dragonfly images online and was afforded the opportunity to finally meet him personally in August 2010 in Gonzales, Texas where he led me in search of a rare gem of a Texas dragonfly: the coveted "Blue-faced Ringtail." Since that memorable time, I have had the privilege to meet with him on an almost yearly basis and learn from him much about nature including birds, dragonflies and robber flies. I even had the chance to stay at his lovely home once and was so very blessed to meet his lovely wife, Cheryl. Greg was so much more than a passionate nature enthusiast, he was a dear and wise friend. A biblical Proverb sums up his life so brilliantly: "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens another. Greg was truly the "friend who sharpens" and more. All my prayers go out to his dear family especially Cheryl his wife. My heart hurts for your profound loss.

—Julie O'Brien

Here are two pictures I have that include Greg Lasley. The first is us in Boot Canyon in 1990. Included are myself, Tony Gallucci, Willie Sekula and Derek Mischalik (sp?). The

second is us in Tobe Canyon after discovering the first Colima Warbler for the Davis Mountains. Included are Ro Wauer, John Karges and myself. I have more but they are in slides and will need to be scanned (which I can do). Just depends on how many more you might want? I think all are from west Texas. KBB

—Kelly Bryan

Editor's note…..I first met Greg over 30 years ago at the Harlingen Birding Festival. Since that time, he has been my go-to photographer (amongst a few others) for TOS publications. Certainly, *Texas Birds Annual* would not be the same without his contributions. A lengthier tribute of his life and contributions will appear in the next *Texas Birds Annual*. Any member that would like to contribute to that tribute is encouraged to get in touch.

—Jack Eitniear

HILL COUNTRY LOSES A NATURALIST
WILLIAM "BILL" L. LINDEMANN

OCTOBER 12, 1937–JULY 19, 2021

Photo taken in 2000 at Christmas Mountains Oasis

William L. (Bill) Lindemann died July 19 from complications following heart surgery. Bill and his wife Janet moved to Fredericksburg in 1994 following Bill's retirement after working for Exxon-Mobile for 32 years. A celebration of Bill's life was held at Lady Bird Park on August 27. As a retiree, Bill engaged in fulfilling his love of nature. He found an available undeveloped tract of land adjoining Lady Bird Park and enlisted others to help build and maintain a nature trail which has hosted visitors from all over the world. He initiated a third-grade day at the park whereby third-grade students were bussed to the park for an array of presentations provided by local experts followed by hikes and a presentation by John Karger director of *Last Chance Forever* demonstrating flight and training of raptors his group has rescued from injury.

He served twice as president of the Native Plant Society of Texas and earned **Benny J Simpson Fellows Award** from the Native Plant Society for service by a member for the enrichment of the Society and the **Nancy Benedict Memorial Award** for an act of Conservation Public Service. He also served on the board and was president of the Land Trust.

The Fredericksburg City Council proclaimed December 4,2017 as "Bill Lindemann Day" for his contributions in developing the Nature Center in Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park.

The above photo was taken in 2000 at Christmas Mountains Oasis on Bill's first visit there of many.

—Carolyn Ohl



I will miss Bill greatly I always enjoyed birding with him at TOS meetings.

—David Sarkozi

Oh no, what a good guy and naturalist trooper. Too sad.

—John Karges

Terrible news! I will miss seeing Bill in the field and at festivals!

—Bill Sain

Sorry to hear this news. Especially sorry for Janet and the rest of his family. I first met Bill at the Wings festival about 10 years ago, and we became friends at once. He never did forgive me for losing my last "N", but he always called me Cousin. I'…

—Glen Lindeman

Fun to bird with and very knowledgeable—such a loss!

—Judy Kestner

Sad news. It was always so nice to bird with him.

—Deb Wallace

Bill was a great guy. My condolences to his family.

—Willie Sekula

Very sad

—Susan Heath

I met him at the Wings Festival many years ago. I know you will miss birding together. Such a great guy!

—Jane Crone

How sad. He was such a gentleman. My Road Scholar participants always enjoyed his birding knowledge and presentations.

—Linda Fuiman

Texas Birds Annual Staff

Jack Clinton Eitniear ..... Editor

Susan Foster, Judy Kestner, Bron Rorex,
and Kent Rylander..... Copy Readers

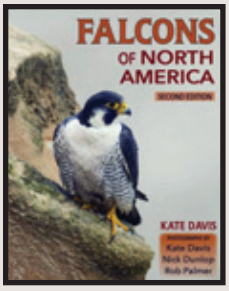
A special thank you to the Writers and Artists who contributed to this publication!

Printed by Sheridan PA Typesetting by Phil Wolfe Graphic Design

Full Chase Mode: Big Year of Birding in North America
by Vanderpoel, John
ISBN: 9780931130205, Publisher: Buteo Books, Year of Publication: 2021, Page Count: 499, Paperback

John Vanderpoel is a lifelong birder and the creator of the critically acclaimed Advanced Birding Video Series with Jon Dunn. In 2011, John set off to undertake a North American Big Year. His whirlwind adventure took him to the edges of the continent. He sailed the high seas with the Admiral of the Atlantic, the Queen Bee of the Western Sea and a modern-day mystic. He raced ATVs over the stones of St. Lawrence Island with the Czar and up a snow-covered pass on Adak Island in the middle of December with a frontier man. Along the way, he tallied more North American birds in one year than he'd seen in his entire life and met scores of interesting people, including many of the legends of the birding world. He wasn't searching for the meaning of life - he was too busy living it. For three hundred and sixty-five incredible days.

'***Full Chase Mode*** is well written and carries the excitement and flavor of a Big Year. The Gambell adventure is unlike any other experience a birder will encounter in the 'lower 48' and John takes us there - capturing the thrills, the panic, the satisfaction, the boredom, the disappointments of missed birds that were anticipated, and the surprises - both birds and otherwise.' -Jon Dunn, noted author and senior trip leader for Wings Birding Tours



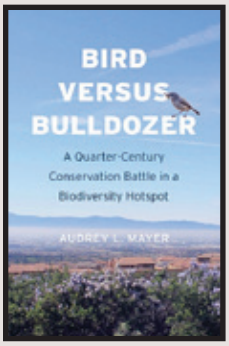
Falcons of North America, Second Edition
by Davis, Kate
ISBN: 9780878427017, Publisher: Mountain Press, Year of Publication: 2021, Page Count: 264, Weight: 1.5 lb

It should be no surprise if many people buy this book for the photos alone, because they are superb-both stunning and unique. But a glance at the text, which is eminently worth reading, draws a reader further into a raptor's world. The considerable amount of interesting information new to this edition makes it an excellent survey of the biology of North American falcons, written in a style that transmits the author's passion for the fascinating creatures that they are.'—Hans Peeters, Author, Artist, Naturalist

Bold and beautiful, falcons hold a special place in the hearts of people. In Falcons of North America, renowned raptor advocate and environmental educator Kate Davis opens a door into the lives of these extraordinary, enigmatic birds of prey.

Since the publication of the first edition 13 years ago, advances in technology have revolutionized the study of falcons. This updated and revised second edition contains completely new classifications of the six North American falcon species based on DNA studies. Population trends are explored, with discussions of the mysterious decline of the American Kestrel and the impact of global warming on falcons, particularly the arctic-dwelling Gyrfalcon. Davis also includes fascinating details on one of the greatest conservation success stories-that of the Peregrine Falcon-from a brush with extinction in North America to greater populations than ever before, even thriving as city dwellers across the continent.

Photographs by Kate Davis, Nick Dunlop, and Rob Palmer

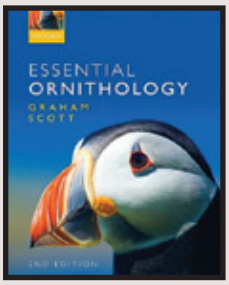


Bird versus Bulldozer: A Quarter-Century Conservation Battle in a Biodiversity Hotspot
by Mayer, Audrey L.
ISBN: 9780300247909, Publisher: Yale University Press, Year of Publication: 2021, Page Count: 296, Weight: 1.138 lb

An examination of the struggle to conserve biodiversity in urban regions, told through the story of the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher.

The story of the rare coastal California gnatcatcher is a parable for understanding the larger ongoing struggle to conserve biodiversity in regions confronted with intensifying urban development. Because this gnatcatcher depends on vanishing coastal sage scrub in Southern California, it has been regarded as a flagship species

for biodiversity protection since the early 1990s. But the uncertainty of the gnatcatcher's taxonomic classification - and whether it can be counted as a listable unit under the Endangered Species Act - has provoked contentious debate among activists, scientists, urban developers, and policy makers. Synthesizing insights from ecology, environmental history, public policy analysis, and urban planning as she tracks these debates over the course of the past twenty-five years, Audrey L. Mayer presents an ultimately optimistic take on the importance of much-neglected regional conservation planning strategies to create sustainable urban landscapes that benefit humans and wildlife alike.



Essential Ornithology: Second Edition

by Scott, Graham

ISBN: 9780198804758, Publisher: Oxford University Press, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 159, Weight: 0.85 lb

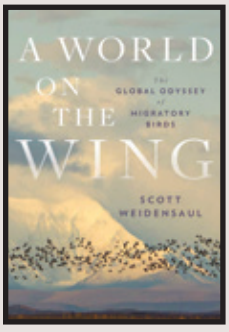
A concise, accessible introduction to ornithology, with an emphasis on applied ornithology, with global case studies incorporated throughout.

Essential Ornithology provides the reader with a concise but comprehensive introduction to the biology of birds, one of the most widely studied taxonomic groups. The book begins by considering the dinosaur origins of birds and their subsequent evolution. Development, anatomy, and physiology are then discussed followed by chapters devoted to avian reproduction, migration, ecology, and conservation. Sections dealing with aspects of bird/human relationships and bird conservation give the book an applied context.

This new edition has been thoroughly updated, providing new information from rapidly-developing fields including the avian fossil record, urban and agricultural ecology, responses to climate change, invasive species biology, technologies to track movement, avian disease, and the role of citizen scientists. There is also a greater focus on North American ornithology. Drawing extensively upon the wider scientific literature, this engaging text places the results of classical studies of avian biology alongside the most recent scientific breakthroughs. Useful case studies are presented in a concise and engaging style with the student reader foremost in mind. Key points are highlighted and suggestions for guided reading and key references are included throughout.

Essential Ornithology is a companion textbook for advanced undergraduate and graduate students taking courses in avian science, as well as a useful reference for professional researchers and consultants. Amateur ornithologists will also find this book offers a scientifically rigorous and accessible overview for a more general readership.

New to this Edition: Provides new information from rapidly-developing fields including the avian fossil record, urban and agricultural ecology, responses to climate change, invasive species biology, technologies to track movement, avian disease, and the role of citizen scientists; Increased focus on North American ornithology.



A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds

by Weidensaul, Scott

ISBN: 9780393608908, Publisher: W.W. Norton & Company, Year of Publication: 2021, Page Count: 385, Weight: 1.625 lb

An exhilarating exploration of the science and wonder of global bird migration.

In the past two decades, our understanding of the navigational and physiological feats that enable birds to cross immense oceans, fly above the highest mountains, or remain in unbroken flight for months at a stretch has exploded. What we've learned of these key migrations—how billions of birds circumnavigate the globe, flying tens of thousands of miles between hemispheres on an annual basis—is nothing short of extraordinary.

Bird migration entails almost unfathomable endurance, like a sparrow-sized sandpiper that will fly nonstop from Canada to Venezuela—the equivalent of running 126 consecutive marathons without food, water, or rest—avoiding dehydration by 'drinking' moisture from its own muscles and organs, while orienting itself using the earth's magnetic field through a form of quantum entanglement that made Einstein queasy. Crossing the Pacific Ocean in nine days of nonstop flight, as some birds do, leaves little time for sleep, but migrants can put half their brains to sleep for a few seconds at a time, alternating sides - and their reaction time actually improves.

These and other revelations convey both the wonder of bird migration and its global sweep, from the mudflats of the Yellow Sea in China to the remote mountains of northeastern India to the dusty hills of southern Cyprus. This breathtaking work of nature writing from Pulitzer Prize finalist Scott Weidensaul also introduces readers to those scientists, researchers, and bird lovers trying to preserve global migratory patterns in the face of climate change and other environmental challenges.

Drawing on his own extensive fieldwork, in A World on the Wing Weidensaul unveils with dazzling prose the miracle of nature taking place over our heads.

Raptor Prey Remains: A Guide to Identifying What's Been Eaten by a Bird of Prey

by Drewitt, Ed

ISBN: 9781784272074, Publisher: Pelagic Publishing, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 230, Weight: 0.85 lb

Practical tips for identifying over 100 commonly found prey species Over 750 detailed color photographs Clues to identifying the raptor, and fieldwork tips

Are you curious about the remains of an animal you have found? This compilation of the most likely found body parts of animals eaten by raptors will help you identify your discovery. Including over 100 species of bird and mammal prey of raptors such as sparrowhawks, peregrines and hen harriers, this photographic guide highlights the common feathers, fur and other body parts found at raptor nests, roosts, plucking posts and other opportunistic spots.

Discovering what raptors eat is an important part of confirming their feeding ecology and how this might change over time, vary on a local level or in response to changing prey populations, as well as dispelling myths and assumptions about what certain raptor species eat. Diet studies are vital for the conservation of raptor species; the more we know about what they need for survival the more we can predict and plan long-term for the protection and survival of raptors that may be vulnerable and in decline.

This is the first book to show in detail the actual parts of a bird, mammal or other animal that you are likely to find in a garden, woodland or beneath a raptor roost. As more people take an interest in raptors and watch species such as peregrines via webcams and through watch groups, there is greater opportunity for finding prey remains. This book provides the first and most important step in identifying a prey species.

The Biology of Moult in Birds

by Lukas Jenni, Raffael Winkler

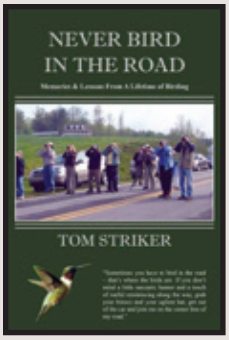
ISBN: 9781472977229, Publisher: Helm, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 320, Weight: 2.3 lb

The first comprehensive review of all aspects of the biology of molt, drawing information from across the literature and in all birds, from penguins to passerines.

Feathers are amazing structures. All birds need to renew their feathers periodically, in a process called molt. Because feathers can only be renewed as a whole, all functions of the plumage are impaired during molt, and so this process has a crucial impact on most aspects of a bird's life. Therefore the period of molt is one of the most important recurring annual events in the life of a bird, together with reproduction and, for many, migration. Given the major impacts of this process on birds, molt remains a sorely neglected field of ornithological research. This book, written by the internationally renowned ornithologists Lukas Jenni and Raffael Winkler, seeks to redress this.

Early chapters provide an overview of the functions of plumage. Later, it moves on to subjects such as plumage maintenance and feather wear, the two main functions of molt; feather-growth, the physiology, energetics and control of molt; and how molt affects plumage quality, structural quality and coloration, and the consequences of this for the bird. The book concludes with a review of the various solutions developed by birds to fit molt into their annual cycle.

Complementary to the magnificent molt and Ageing in European Passerines by the same authors and packed with color photography throughout, The Biology of molt in Birds is the first comprehensive review of all aspects of the biology of molt, drawing information from across the literature and in all birds, from penguins to passerines.



Never Bird In The Road: Memories and Lessons from a Lifetime of Birding

by Tom Striker

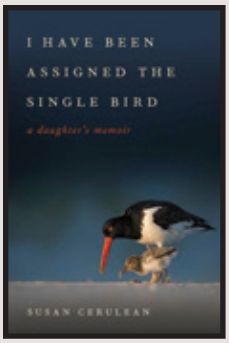
ISBN: 9781735742502, Publisher: Thomas Striker, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 260, Weight: 0.85 lb

Sometimes you have to bird in the road - that's where the birds are. If you don't mind a little sarcastic humor and a touch of rueful remeniscing along the way, grab your binocs and your ugliest hat, get out of the car and join me on the center line of the road.'

Part memoir, part birding adventures, and part how-to, this edition is a fun read packed with cool birds, cool places, and great birding info. Never Bird In The Road is for birders - new birders, veteran birders, and those who may already be birders but just don't know it yet. Part memoir, part birding adventures, and part how-to, Never Bird In The Road is a fun read, packed with cool birds, cool places and great birding info.

The birding bug stung Tom Striker in forestry grad school. An outdoor final exam in Ornithology ('See that bird? Write it down...') sealed the deal and he's been behind binoculars ever since. The Forest Service took him to Lake Tahoe, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Vermont. Never a 'timber beast,' his wildlife work included Kirtland's Warbler and the disastrous Mack Lake Fire, a 25,000 acre runaway prescribed burn that killed a co-worker and brought the Bird of Fire back from the edge of extinction. Minnesota black bears and black-backed woodpeckers, Wisconsin sharp-tailed grouse, and restoration of the Peregrine Falcon to a historic Vermont cliff were far from typical career moments.

Time out for an MBA and fifteen years with BellSouth, then early retirement to own a bird store in a quaint mountain town, headquarters for birding adventures to Florida, the Georgia Coast, the sky islands of Arizona and the below-sea-level Salton Sea. A Christmas Bird Count marred by a suicide at a favorite overlook, and a memorable charge by a Gopher Tortoise. Ten bird-filled days in Ecuador, back home to teach 'birding classes for old people,' lead hundreds of bird walks and Saturday Seminars packed with details about bird feeding, dealing with squirrels and black bears, and attracting hummers, bluebirds and purple martins. If you have no birds or want to know birds, Never Bird In The Road is a good place to start.



I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird: A Daughter's Memoir

by Cerulean, Susan, Photographs by David Moynahan

ISBN: 9780820357379, Publisher: University of Georgia Press, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 176, Weight: 1 lb

A memoir that explores the poignant parallels between natural and human life.

Susan Cerulean's memoir trains a naturalist's eye and a daughter's heart on the lingering death of a beloved parent from dementia. At the same time, the book explores an activist's lifelong search to be of service to the embattled natural world. During the years she cared for her father, Cerulean also volunteered as a steward of wild shorebirds along the Florida coast. Her territory was a tiny island just south of the Apalachicola bridge where she located and protected nesting shorebirds, including least terns and American oystercatchers. I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird weaves together intimate facets of adult caregiving and the consolation of nature, detailing Cerulean's experiences of tending to both.

The natural world is the 'sustaining body' into which we are born. In similar ways, we face not only a crisis in numbers of people diagnosed with dementia but also the crisis of the human-caused degradation of the planet itself, a type of cultural dementia. With I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird, Cerulean reminds us of the loving, necessary toil of tending to one place, one bird, one being at a time.

The Backyard Birdwatcher's Bible

by Sterry, Paul

ISBN: 9781419750533, Publisher: Abrams, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 416, Weight: 3.8 lb

An informative and eye-catching reference book for beginner and intermediate backyard bird enthusiasts.

The Backyard Birdwatcher's Bible is that rare type of book, one that is as packed with information as it is pleasing to look at. An elegant aesthetic is paired with practical tips on identifying, attracting, and caring for backyard birds, as well as crafting bird-friendly gardens and bird houses. With additional sections focused on everything from the bird life cycle to bird behavior, symbolism, and meaning in art, this authoritative book is brimming with engaging answers to all of your birdwatching questions.

Lucidly written, informative, and packed with color photographs, this book pairs a sumptuous aesthetic with advice on identifying and attracting backyard birds of North America, as well as discovering more about the evolution, history, and art of birds of the world. With detailed visual profiles of key birds, readers will learn how to identify birds by their colors, calls, and behavior, plus the best equipment and resources to use, how to create bird-friendly gardens and birdhouses, choosing the ideal food for bird types by season, and how we can become better bird advocates.

The Gull Next Door: A Portrait of a Misunderstood Bird

by Taylor, Marianne

ISBN: 9780691208961, Publisher: Wild Nature Press, Year of Publication: 2020, Page Count: 208, Weight: 1 lb

A uniquely personal meditation on Britain's gulls by one of today's leading wildlife writers

From a distance, gulls are beautiful symbols of freedom over the oceanic wilderness. Up close, however, they can be loud, aggressive and even violent. Yet gulls fascinate birdwatchers, and seafarers regard them with respect and affection. The Gull Next Door explores the natural history of gulls and their complicated relationship with humans.

Marianne Taylor grew up in an English seaside town where gulls are ever present. Today, she is a passionate advocate for these underappreciated birds. In this book, Taylor looks at the different gull species and sheds light on all aspects of the lives of gulls how they find food, raise families, socialize and migrate across sea, coastland and countryside. She discusses the herring gull, Britain s best-known and most persecuted gull species, whose numbers are declining at an alarming rate. She looks at gulls in legend, fiction and popular culture, and explains what we can do to protect gull populations around the world.

The Gull Next Door reveals deeper truths about these remarkable birds. They are thinkers and innovators, devoted partners and parents. They lead long lives and often indulge their powerful drive to explore and travel. But for all these natural gifts, many gull species are struggling to survive in the wild places they naturally inhabit, which is why they are now exploiting the opportunities of human habitats. This book shows how we might live more harmoniously with these majestic yet misunderstood birds.

2021 BULLETIN DONATIONS

Sanctuaries Fund—
2020 Annual Appeal

Jacque Austin
Sandy & Don Behrman
Kenneth Butler
Frances Cerbins
David & Margaret DeSha
Frank & Margaret Farese
Laurie Foss
Shelia Hargis
Marie Jordan
Susan Kosoris
David Matson
Robert Mitchum
Jerry & Karen Moulder
Dee Oke
Don Quaintance
Mark & Debra Scheuerman
Sandi Wheeler
Catherine Winans
Mary Wood

Sanctuaries Fund

Joanne & Sheldon Boyce
Sonny & Iris Bratz
Rick & Doris Brown
Frank Bumgardner
Karen Carpenter
Dawn Dickson
Dianne Duke
Barry Leaton & Family
Lori Markoff—*in memory of Greg Lasley*
Lori Markoff—
in memory of Dennis Shepler
Louise Ridlon
Carolyn Worsham—
in honor of John and Jana Whittle
Teri Zambon—*Steve Gross Memorial*

General Fund

Meredith Anderson *(non-member)*
Gary Byerly *(non-member)*
Leslie Calvert
Bryn Crowell *(non-member)*
Jan Dauphin—
in memory of David Dauphin
Michael & Rozanna Francis
Linda Gindler & John Prentice
Bill & Georgette Guernsey
Rich & Sandy Jespersen
Gail Keirn (non-member)
Thomas Kihn
Gail & Terry Nickel
Norman Ross—*in memory of Edna Ross*
Charles & Wanda Smith
Georgina Schwartz—*Publications*
Paul Sellin—
in memory of Dennis Shepler
Chuck Sexton
Michael Wolfson—
in memory of Greg Lasley

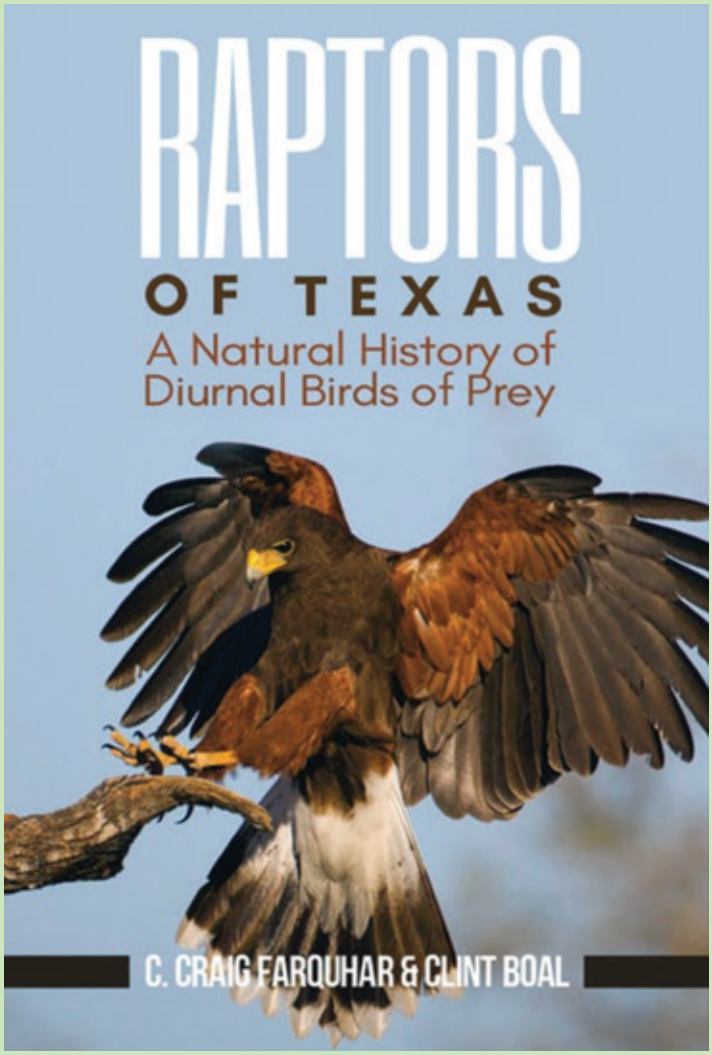
New Life Members

Megan Ahlgren
Frank Bumgardner
David & Margaret DeSha
John S. Gibson
John & Joy Hale
Christopher Holmes
Kendra Kocab
Chris & Pam Pipes
Nancy Radding
Janey Woodley

Monthly Supporters

Frances Cerbins
Tom & Patsy Inglet
Judy Kestner
Thomas Kihn

Texas Ornithological Society
11101-9 Leopard Sq.
PMB 1039
Corpus Christi, TX 78410



A Natural History of Diurnal Birds of Prey

By **C. Craig Farquhar** and **Clint W. Boal**

978-1-62349-920-4 Hardcover (Printed Case)
8 x 11 x 0 in
348 pp. 91 color, 1 b&w photos. 30 drawings. 3 appendixes. Bib. Index.
Pub Date: 02/15/2022
Prepublication - Pre-Order Now

https://www.tamupress.com/book/9781623499204/raptors-of-texas/

TEXAS BIRDS ANNUAL VOLUME 17 (2021)