

## President's Message



Shelia Hargis TOS President.

Little did I know when I wrote my columns for the summer newsletter and for *Texas Birds Annual* that we would face even more challenges than I mentioned in those columns. I thought the threat of a border wall through Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, the threat of delisting the Golden-cheeked Warbler, and constant threats to abolish or dismantle the Endangered Species Act were enough threats. Addressing those threats seemed like plenty to

keep us busy. Sadly, even more threats and challenges have presented themselves since then.

Hurricane Harvey devastated our coast, impacting the homes of people and wildlife. Many of our members were in harm's way, and many of our fellow conservation organizations were hit hard. Bird sanctuaries were damaged, some severely. I reached out to our members through email to let those in the affected areas know that we were thinking of them. I also contacted numerous people in hopes of finding out as much about the damage to the sanctuaries as possible. Thanks to numerous people who took the time to respond to me, I was able to compile the information as well as information regarding opportunities to donate and help during work days and send it out to TOS members via email. An article with updated information is available in this newsletter. There is much work ahead of us to rebuild and restore the places damaged by Harvey. I encourage you to help however you can.

Although it was emotionally taxing to gather the information on the sanctuaries, I'm so glad I did that. In the process, I connected with people that I didn't know very well before this. I now know Debra Corpora, President of Aransas Bird and Nature Club, and Martha McLeod, elementary teacher at Fulton 4 – 5 Learning Center, a little better. These women are phenomenal and such inspirations. I knew a little about them before this disaster, but they were even more amazing than their reputations led me to believe. The world is a much better place because of their passion and hard work. I am honored to call them my friends. They are both TOS members too, so if you have a chance to talk with them, I highly recommend you take advantage of that opportunity!

Another threat that I learned more about during this time was the US Fish & Wildlife Service's plans to delist the Black-capped Vireo. TOS Life Member Jeff Mundy is following this closely. Jeff is a lawyer who frequently works on endangered species cases, and he has serious concerns about the reasoning used to justify the delisting. Also, he has never known a species to go from endangered to no protection. Most have gone from

endangered to threatened and then, with time and if warranted, to no protection. I will keep you posted as I learn more.

On a more positive note, David Sarkozi volunteered to coordinate our Facebook presence. He will respond to questions and posts from others and is working to put together a team of writers for a TOS blog. Knowledgeable and interesting birders, conservationists and teachers will write blogs on a variety of bird-related topics. Some of the topics will include profiles of TOS sanctuaries, profiles of new birding sites, travelogues of birding trips or chases, and beginning birder articles. This project is just getting underway, but you can access the blog at <https://thetosblog.blogspot.com/>. The blog posts will also be posted to Facebook. Please contact David or me if you'd like to contribute to this effort.

If you have access to the internet, you can access your TOS account through our website. We have basic membership information on all of our members in our membership database, NEON. You can add other information to your account such as your email address, phone number and even a profile photo. Over the last several months I have sent out two or three emails. These were sent to our members who have their email address in the database. If you didn't receive those emails, please update your information to include your email address so that you can stay up-to-date on what is happening with TOS. Also, if you move, please update your information. This will help decrease the amount of money we waste on returned mail. And don't worry. We're not going to sell your information. We're only going to use it to communicate with you about TOS. If you have any trouble accessing or updating your account, contact our Membership Secretary Judy Kestner. She will be happy to help you. You can contact Judy at [tosmember@yahoo.com](mailto:tosmember@yahoo.com) or 361-387-7329.

By the time you read this, the Board will have held their annual Board retreat. We will have visited our sanctuaries on the Upper Texas Coast to better familiarize ourselves with what needs to be done at each one. We will have met with John Whittle who manages Sabine Woods for us and with Peter Deichmann of Houston Audubon. And we'll do some team building. "Team building" in this context is code for going birding together! I'm looking forward to a fun and productive weekend with my fellow Board members. I plan to write a blog post about the retreat, so watch for that.

I'm a big citizen science geek, so this time of year is especially exciting for me with Christmas Bird Counts coming soon. Given that I have to still work for a living, I can't participate in all the CBCs I want to do, but I still manage to do five or six each year. Each one is unique in its own way and great fun. Well, they are fun unless the temperature is 17 degrees. Then, it's not quite so much fun for this cold weather wimp, but after I warm up, even the cold ones are fun! Did you know that the Christmas Bird Count is the longest running wildlife survey in the world? They have been happening since 1900. The CBC data is very beneficial to ornithologists and

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other researchers. It helps them better understand the changes that have happened with birds over that time frame. If you are new to CBCs, check out Audubon's CBC website, <http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>. They have lots of interesting information available. Also, our friends at Houston Audubon make it easy to find out about CBCs in Texas. See <https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-counts/> for a list of Texas CBCs and details on

how to participate. I highly encourage you to participate in as many CBCs as you can!

In closing, thank you to everyone who contributed to the information in this newsletter. And a very special thanks to our friends at Pineywoods Audubon for agreeing to host our winter meeting in Nacogdoches. They have put together a wonderful lineup of field trips and presentations. It's going to be fantastic! See you in there in January.

—Shelia Hargis, TOS President

## Sabine Woods Work Day

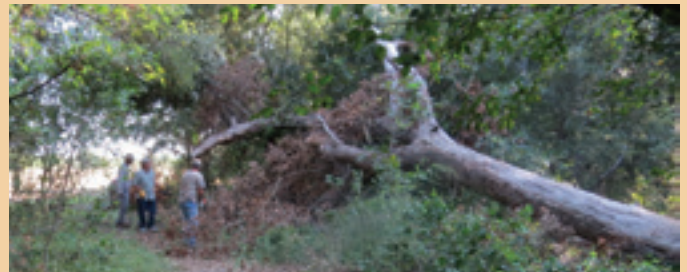
Sabine Woods sanctuary is owned by TOS and managed by Golden Triangle Audubon. John Whittle, long-time TOS member, coordinates the management activities and keeps the sanctuary in great shape thanks to the help of volunteers and a contractor who does the heavy mowing. Below is his report for the fall work day.

We held a very successful Work Day on Saturday September 30. All needed maintenance was accomplished by the 20 volunteers participating and several others who worked in advance of the Work Day itself. The meadow areas are now all mowed, the large tree that came down across a trail in Harvey has been cut up and removed. Routine trail maintenance was accomplished and a myriad of smaller tasks completed. Our contractor has mostly completed brush hogging the northern areas of the sanctuary, so we are in good shape, and our next Work Day will not until early spring sometime.

There were a reasonable number of migrants around – I heard there were probably 10 or 11 warbler species. A male Vermilion Flycatcher, not particularly rare in the area, but unusual in the Woods themselves, was seen by a lucky few. A Chuck-will's-widow was found perching on a low branch with an unobstructed line of sight for the photographers, something that does not happen often.

Volunteers this time were: Andy Allen, Laurie Baker, Michael Cooper, Howard Davis, Ashley Fuselier, Craig Geoffroy, Cathy Hay, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Denise and Gary Kelley, Steve Mayes, Sally and Chuck Moffet, Dana Nelson, Michelle Rometry, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Carolyn and Bill Worsham. We sincerely thank each and every one of them.

—John A. Whittle, Manager, Sabine Woods



*One of the Hurricane Ike-killed oaks came down during Hurricane Harvey.*



*Lunch break for our wonderful volunteers!*



*One of our local residents. A Chuck-will's-widow trying to sleep, unsuccessfully, through the work day.*



*Gary mowing the East Meadow. Gotta save those ears for birding!*



*Now down to business, birding!*



## Update on Coastal Sanctuaries After Hurricane Harvey

For those of you who have your email address in our membership database, you have received a couple of emails from me with information on the status of sanctuaries after Hurricane Harvey. This is another update on some of those special places.

Fortunately, the TOS sanctuaries fared well and experienced very little damage. Other sanctuaries experienced much more damage, some of them were heavily damaged. Below are reports from Kiersten Stanzel of Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, Colleen Simpson from the City of Port Aransas, Debra Corpora of Aransas Bird and Nature Club and Aransas Pathways, Peter Deichmann of Houston Audubon, and Martin Hagne of Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. Thank you Kiersten, Colleen, Debra, Peter and Martin for taking the time to update us.

There are many other organizations negatively impacted by Hurricane Harvey that aren't included. The Peregrine Fund had numerous Aplomado Falcon platforms damaged or destroyed. The International Crane Foundation's office building in Rockport was destroyed. Other gaps in the information provided include Goose Island State Park, and Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Hopefully we will know more about those locations soon.

The following reports are presented roughly in the order that Harvey impacted them. The reports are hard to read and the photos are heart breaking, but what stood out to me during my communications with these amazing people is their deep love of these special places and their commitment to restoring them. It has also been emotionally gratifying to watch our members step up to help, both with financial support and with help during work days. I've been on the verge of tears numerous times – both from a sense of sadness and from a sense of hope and inspiration. By the time you read this, the TOS Board will have met for our annual Board retreat and will have discussed how TOS will help the coast recover. Watch for an update on that and on future work days. If you haven't had a chance to help yet, use this information to decide how you can help and then take action. Your contribution will be very much appreciated.

—Shelia Hargis



### **Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, Kiersten Stanzel, Director of Partnerships:**

The rookery islands of the Coastal Bend provide critical habitat for nesting colonial waterbirds, such as Great Blue Herons, Roseate Spoonbills, Reddish Egrets, and Black Skimmers. These birds fill an important role in our bays and estuaries, and the Coastal Bird Program at the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP) has worked diligently on managing these crucial islands for decades to ensure the best chances for birds to raise the next generation—tackling everything from

installation of nesting platforms and informational signage, to planting woody vegetation and removing exotic plants.

Hurricane Harvey made landfall near Port Aransas, Texas on August 25, 2017, bringing sustained winds between 100-130 mph, a storm surge of up to 12 ft, and historic rainfall that affected a major portion of the Texas coast. This major storm impacted nearly every rookery island in the Coastal Bend, setting back much of the management progress that had been achieved over the years. High winds and tidal surge washed away protective signage and nesting platforms, killed native vegetation, heavily eroded the islands, and brought in large amounts of debris.

The CBBEP Coastal Bird Program has a plan to make sure these birds have the space, nesting structure, and protection they need when they return to nest on these islands in only four short months! Signs and artificial heron nesting platforms will be constructed and placed in appropriate areas, and 500 native plants will be transplanted to key rookery islands during the non-breeding season using established planting techniques that involve protective tree tubes and specialized fertilizer. Two specialized native grow tables will also be constructed during the non-breeding season, and native seed will be collected through the spring as needed to begin raising up to 2,000 native seedlings for future planting.

It's hard work, but the CBBEP Coastal Bird Program is committed to doing all we can to ensure a brighter future for these amazing coastal birds.



*Most Coastal Bend rookery islands were inundated by storm surge during Hurricane Harvey, eroding them and damaging vegetation used by nesting waterbirds. Photo courtesy of CBBEP.*

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*The strong winds and storm surge associated with Hurricane Harvey destroyed signs posted on and near rookery islands, warning boaters, anglers and paddlers not to encroach during nesting season. Photo courtesy of CBBEP.*



**City of Port Aransas Nature Preserves, Colleen Simpson, Port Aransas Nature Preserve Manager:**

The Port Aransas Nature Preserve consists of five birding hotspots spanning 1,280 acres of wind driven tidal mud flats, salt marsh, freshwater wetlands and Gulf Coast prairie habitat on the northern tip of Mustang Island in Port Aransas, Texas. Hurricane Harvey made landfall on San Jose Island immediately north of Port Aransas, TX around 10 PM on August 25th 2017.

Evidence on structures within the Preserve indicate a storm surge at least 6 feet high was blown over the bay side of the island into the flats of the Nature Preserve. The powerful storm caused the bulkhead and revetment along the Corpus Christi Ship Channel to wash out in four separate areas. Hurricane Harvey filled freshwater habitat with saltwater, smothered plants, downed trees and destroyed important habitat for migrating neo-tropical birds.

The new cuts along the ship channel along with recent high tides has caused severe erosion of the upland and prairie habitats that formerly protected the sensitive algal flats. A damage assessment from City engineers estimated that there have been over 1.4 million dollars in damages to infrastructure due to Hurricane Harvey.

In addition to the structural losses suffered, the habitat behind the revetment is a critical unit for wintering Piping Plovers and summer nesting grounds for Wilson's and Snowy Plovers, Common Nighthawks and Least Terns. With more frequent flooding it would be expected that foraging and nesting rates will decline.

The Nature Preserve sites are internationally renowned eco-tourism destinations, with an average of 1000 visitors each month. The boardwalks that traversed the area were pulled out and blow away, many of which ended up along the eastern boundary of the Preserve at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center. The Birding Center boardwalks were pummeled with debris and broke apart into several pieces. Paradise Pond's boardwalk floated up about a foot and a half, the pond was filled with salt water, trees limbs and fences came down.

After the storm the two resident alligators there were located in town and moved back to the pond near the water treatment plant. On Oct. 4th volunteer crews descended on the birding sites to help repair damage from Hurricane Harvey. Firefighters from Cleburne, Abilene and Fort Worth areas repaired the Paradise Pond boardwalk. The FTW saw crew cleared downed trees and fences. Greg Carr and La Palmilla Resort and Golf Club staff pumped the salt water out of Paradise Pond.

A crew from Colorado led by Rick Gillan, Ginny King and Sandy Pralle, H2 and Duraroot, cleared downed trees at the Birding Center and removed large chunks of boardwalk debris. Katie Swanson of the Mission Aransas Reserve and Dr. Joan and Scott Holt helped make it all come together.

As we continue to move forward we are working on securing state and federal funding for repairs to the bulkhead and revetments. We are applying for grant funding to clear more downed trees and invasive species while replanting native trees. We have a group of students from Texas A&M Kingsville that have offered to help rebuild fences and planters for pollinator plants.

We will continue to need volunteer support and monetary donations. Volunteers can contact Colleen Simpson at [csimpson@cityofportaransas.org](mailto:csimpson@cityofportaransas.org) and The Recreation Foundation of Port Aransas is collecting online donations for the Preserves at [www.recreationporta.org](http://www.recreationporta.org)



*Figure 1. Drone imagery from high school student Grayson Armstrong over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel showing the first cut through the bulkhead into the Nature Preserve. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.*



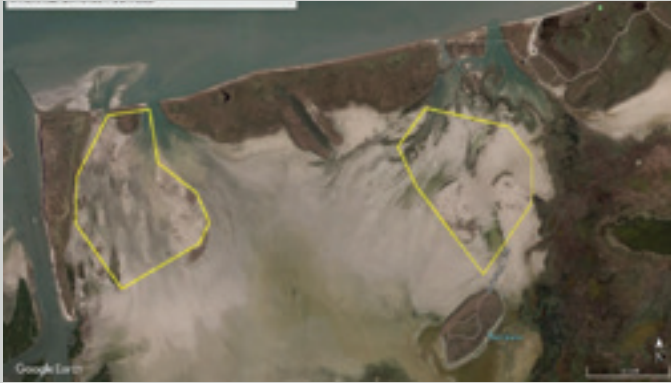


Figure 2. Snowy and Wilson's Plover nesting areas in 2016-2017 are shown here in yellow, overtop the new satellite imagery of the Preserve. Note the four breaches along the shoreline from Piper Channel on the left to the end of Port St. at the traffic circle on the right. Figure provided by Kristina MacCaulay at the American Bird Conservancy and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.



Figure 3. Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center June 26, 2017 before Hurricane Harvey. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.



Figure 4. Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center Monday August 28th after Hurricane Harvey. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.



Figure 5. Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center October 6, 2017 after volunteers finished working. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.



Figure 6. Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond after Hurricane Harvey. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.



Figure 7. Firefighters helped level the boardwalk by spraying water around each deck piling until it sank back into place. Photo courtesy of City of Port Aransas.



**Aransas Pathways Sanctuaries (Rockport Area), Debra Corpora, President of Aransas Bird and Nature Club**

**Linda S. Castro Nature Sanctuary**—

The wildflower areas around the slab and parking lot are full of grass burs and starting to get a good crop of Guinea grass. These areas need to be edited (weeded). There are some good plants in there, so we need to take our time when working the beds. Along the driveway and parking lot, there are mid-sized bushes and small trees that leaned over and their roots are partially exposed. Decisions need to be made if they should be left alone, staked, or cut back. One of our bird drips, near the slab, now has a very large tree laying on top of it. We made a decision to leave the tree in place. In 7 weeks, grapevines are now covering the dead tree. I think it will become good habitat for wildlife. Volunteers put in our 5 bird drips several years ago. We hope volunteers will help us put in a new drip near this fallen tree. Along the path near the back of the property, there are branches everywhere. The Live Oaks that went down in this area all fell in a straight line into the woods. The branches need to be sorted into

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piles. Right now some of them are laying on little bluestem. The water well started working again on Wednesday so now the Monarch Waystation has irrigation. This butterfly garden really suffered because of the storm. Mulch and top soil is just gone. The taller plants in the bed disappeared. A section of a fence was on part of it. We hope with irrigation, we can get some of the plants to come back. We need mulch and soil. We also will need volunteers to help us rescue some of the great native plants that are coming up all over the property. They need to be dug up, and kept in pots for awhile. Thank you for your donations to our tree fund. You will be getting a receipt for your taxes. We have received about \$1500. Your generosity will enable us to replace some of our lost trees.



*Linda S. Castro Monarch Waystation before Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*



*Linda S. Castro Monarch Waystation after Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*

**Tule Marsh East/ Demo Garden**—Amazingly, this boardwalk remained intact. We did lose some of the old bent Live Oaks in the back of the property. County crews are still clearing the trails. Right now, they are shoving the downed trees along the path. Because of the vegetation loss in this part of the trail, we can see the people next door on their porch. It would be great if we could install some lattice panels or fencing along stretches of the trail so we can have

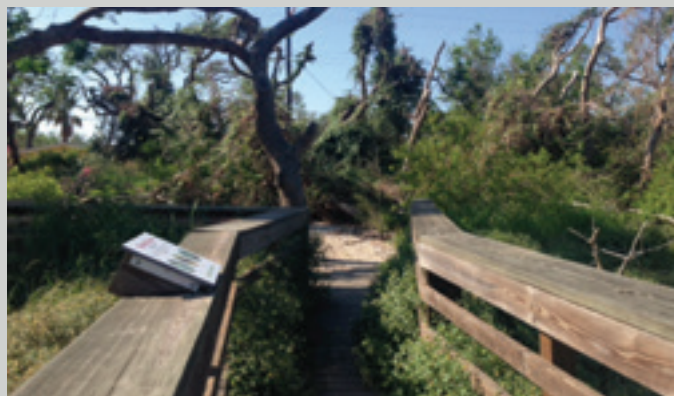
our “secret garden” back. Our solar panels on the well were not damaged and are working. The black willow trees along the boardwalk look great. The Hummingbird garden is full of Guinea grass and needs some TLC.



*Tule Marsh East / Demo Garden before Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*



*Tule Marsh East / Demo Garden after Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*



*Tule Marsh East after Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*



**Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary**—Many volunteer groups from around the state are showing this site a lot of love. The Master Gardeners and the biology graduate students at Texas State University are having multiple work days at this site. It looks great.



*Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary before Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*



*Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary after Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*

**Ivy Lane Bird and Nature Venue**—This is 28 acres of Live Oak trees. You can imagine what it looked like after the storm. There have been several work days with local groups

and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries. There are still downed trees blocking trails. It will be an ongoing project getting the trails cleared.



*Ivy Lane before Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*



*Ivy Lane after Hurricane Harvey. Photo credit: Debra Corpora*

Aransas County lost between 30–40% of our Live Oak trees. Most of the fallen trees were very old. There was one good piece of news. Originally, it was reported by the City of Rockport that one of the most well-known Live Oak trees in the state, the Zachary Taylor Oak, fell during the storm. The old middle section was propped up, and it survived... battered and not pretty...but it is still here, like the residents of Rockport.

## **TOSNEWS Staff**

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### **Houston Audubon Sanctuaries, Peter Deichmann, Sanctuaries Manager:**

Houston Audubon's urban sanctuaries took the biggest hit with very high water from Rummel Creek at Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary (ELMNS) in West Houston. For those familiar with the property, water

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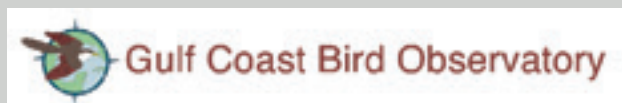


was backed up all the way from Buffalo Bayou and over the brand new bridge, which appears to have weathered the inundation well. A large Southern Red Oak and a few others came down in the storm at ELMNS. Sims Bayou Urban Nature Center in Southeast Houston had water up well over the new boardwalks near the bayou and nearly to the barn. The coastal sanctuaries fared well. A few small trees fell over and debris scattered over trails. Coastal marshes, prairies, and woodlots are maintained by these regularly occurring inundations.

Houston Audubon hosts volunteer workdays in High Island on the second Saturday of the month from October to March in preparation for thousands of visitors in the spring and 10's of thousands of migrating birds. Activities include trail and infrastructure maintenance, invasive species removal, prairie plantings, and litter removal. We meet at 8:30am in front of Boy Scout Woods Sanctuary, work until Noon, then enjoy lunch (fresh homemade hamburgers with all the fixins) provided by Houston Audubon. If you're interested in attending, please contact Pete Deichmann, Sanctuaries Manager at [pdeichmann@houstonaudubon.org](mailto:pdeichmann@houstonaudubon.org).



*Bridge 4 at Edith Moore Sanctuary. We actually had it on schedule to replace this year—but now it has to happen much faster. Photo courtesy of Houston Audubon.*



**Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Martin Hagne, Executive Director:**

The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory is located next to the Buffalo Camp Bayou in Brazoria County. The bayou overflowed about a week after Hurricane Harvey and the 34 acre property stayed flooded for about three weeks. Luckily our newer main building is elevated but it still received damage to the subfloor. The Field House and garage

workshop, that houses staff and visiting biologists, was flooded for about a week, and is now totally gutted. Several trail bridges were lifted up by the flood waters and moved. Our outdoor bathrooms, pump house, and the pavilion was covered in a layer of slimy mud. Of course flowerbeds, and some vegetation, were affected by flood water. The Neotropic Bird Sanctuaries at Quintana fared really well and were spared any real damage. Water has been off to the water features, but hope to have that going again soon.

GCBO is still accepting donations towards rebuilding the Field House. You can mail a check, call or go online our website with a credit card, or go to our Facebook page and look for the Harvey Recovery drive. We still have recovery workdays on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon at GCBO in Lake Jackson. The work now consists of power washing, mowing and weed eating, pulling dead vegetation, applying weed killer, and laying crushed granite on the walkways.



*The GCBO Field House was totally gutted after flood waters. Photo Credit: Martin Hagne.*



*The Buffalo Camp Bayou flooded the entire area, include all of the GCBO grounds. Photo credit: Drone Photo by Darrell Taylor.*



# Winter TOS Meeting in Nacogdoches

Hello TOS members,

I'm excited to present the details for our January 11–14, 2018 winter meeting. We will be headquartered in Nacogdoches, and Pineywoods Audubon Society is hosting the meeting. Members of Pineywoods Audubon have pulled out the stops to put together a fantastic meeting with field trips to a variety of habitats covering numerous counties, interesting and knowledgeable speakers, a silent auction with lots of cool items as well as unique experiences, and the opportunity to stay at a historic hotel which was recently renovated. Bottom line, you are going to want to attend this meeting!

East Texas is a wonderful place to bird any time of the year. I think you will be very happy with the winter species we are likely to find. Some of the highlights for me include Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Henslow's Sparrow, Bachman's Sparrow, and nuthatches. Some might even have the opportunity to see/hear displaying American Woodcock. We won't know about the woodcock trip for sure until closer to the meeting time, but cross your fingers that the birds cooperate. The field trips will cover numerous counties with the main ones being Nacogdoches, Angelina, Houston, and Jasper. To get a complete picture of the species in the area, you can see the eBird checklist for Nacogdoches, Angelina, Houston and Jasper counties at <http://ebird.org/ebird/barc hart?byr=2010&eyr=2017&bmo=1&emo=1&r=US-TX-005,US-TX-225,US-TX-241,US-TX-347>. Century Club field trips will explore other counties – Anderson, Sabine, and St. Augustine. *Birds of the Pineywoods of Eastern Texas, A Field Checklist* is available at [https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd\\_bk\\_w7000\\_0603.pdf](https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_w7000_0603.pdf). Good luck narrowing down your options to three field trips!

We will be headquartered at the Fredonia Hotel, a historic hotel in downtown Nacogdoches. Field trips will depart from there. Walkie-talkies will be beneficial for trips with lots of driving. Be prepared to carpool to minimize the number of vehicles and maximize the likelihood of spotting birds along the way.

And just so you know, we felt it was necessary to increase the meeting fee for this meeting. Some of the locations we choose for our meetings are more expensive than others due to limited options for meeting space and the cost of that meeting space. That is the case for Nacogdoches. Our agreement with host organizations is that we split the “profits” equally between TOS and the host organization. We want our host organizations to feel it is worth their time and effort to work with us, so that goes into our calculation when determining the price for each meeting. Even though you will pay a little more for this meeting, I believe it is still a great deal, maybe even a steal for all the amazing birds you will see and the memories you will take home. Online registration opens in mid-November. Watch for an email from me a few days beforehand.

I hope to see you in Nacogdoches!

—Shelia Hargis

## Hotel Information

### Fredonia Hotel—Meeting Headquarters



The Fredonia Hotel & Convention Center will be the headquarters for the Winter Meeting. All TOS events will be held at the hotel and field trips will depart from its parking areas. This historic hotel is located in downtown Nacogdoches at 200 N. Fredonia Street. It was completely renovated in 2017.

The Fredonia Hotel is holding a block of 50 rooms of various configurations for TOS guests. The group rate will be \$119 per night. These rooms may be booked by calling the Fredonia Hotel at 936-564-1234, extension 3. Reference “Texas Ornithological Society Room Block”. **These rooms will be held only until December 25<sup>th</sup>.** Any cancellations must be made 72 hours prior to the arrival date in order to avoid a one-night room charge.

Breakfast will be available starting at 5:00 a.m.

### Hampton Inn



TOS has also arranged for a block of 20 rooms at the Hampton Inn, located four miles south of the Fredonia Hotel & Convention Center, at 3625 South Street, Nacogdoches, TX 75964. The TOS group rate is \$96. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel at 936-560-9901 and asking for the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) group rate. **These rooms will also be held until December 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Breakfast will be available starting at 5:00 a.m.

# Meeting Agenda

All meeting events will be held at the Fredonia Hotel with most in Convention Room B.

## Thursday, January 11

- 3:30-5:30 PM Board Meeting—Anna Raguette Room  
4:00-7:00 PM Registration/Silent Auction/T-Shirt sales begin  
4:30–6:00 PM Woodcock Courting Display Field Trip (tentative)  
6:15-6:45 PM Welcome/Pub Quiz  
6:45-7:00 PM Introductions/Announcements  
7:00 PM Speaker: David Wolf—“Birds of the Piney Woods—Our Ever-changing Avifauna”

## Friday, January 12

- 5:00-6:45 AM Breakfast Buffet  
6:00-7:00 AM Box Lunch Pick-up and Field Trip Departures  
6:00 AM-4:00 PM Field Trips  
4:00-7:00 PM Registration/Silent Auction  
6:15 PM Welcome/Announcements/Field Trip Reports  
7:00 PM Speaker: Brent Burt—“A Sparrow, a Nuthatch and a Woodpecker Fly into a Pine Savanna”

## Saturday, January 13

- 5:00-6:45 AM Breakfast Buffet  
6:00-7:00 AM Box Lunch Pick-up and Field Trip Departures  
6:00 AM-4:00 PM Field Trips  
4:00-6:00 PM Silent Auction and Social Time (cash bar will be available)  
6:00 PM Silent Auction Closes  
6:00-7:00 PM Dinner/Banquet  
7:00-7:30 PM Announcements/Field Trip Reports  
7:30 PM Keynote Speaker—Charles Dean Fisher—“Roads, Peoples, Birds, Mountaintops, and Billabongs”

## Sunday, January 14

- 5:00-6:45 AM Breakfast Buffet  
6:00-7:00 AM Box Lunch Pick-up and Field Trip Departures  
6:00 AM–Mid-afternoon Field Trips

## Registration Information

Registration is online at the Texas Ornithological Society’s website, [texasbirds.org](http://texasbirds.org). Registration will open in mid-November. To get an email with the exact date, be sure your email address is included in your TOS account information! Once registration opens, there will be directions on the website to assist you. If you DO NOT have access to the internet, you may call Judy Kestner at 361-387-7329 or Frances Cerbins at 512-372-9039 for assistance with

registration. If you don’t get an answer, leave a message and Judy or Frances will call you back when they are available.

Registration Fee:	\$65	TOS members
	\$90	Non-TOS members (includes a one-year membership)
	\$20	Late fee after December 31
Box Lunches	\$12	
Saturday Banquet	\$35	

## Box Lunches Available Friday, Saturday, and Sunday Mornings

Box lunch selections for each day are:

- Smoked ham and cheddar cheese on wheat bread, leaf lettuce, tomato, red onion, mustard and mayo on the side, fruit, chips, granola bar, water.
- Smoked turkey and bacon on wheat bread, leaf lettuce, tomato, red onion, mustard and mayo on the side, fruit, chips, granola bar, water.
- Veggie wrap, spinach, cucumber, tomato, green and red bell pepper, black olives, ranch dressing and Italian vinaigrette on the side, fruit, chips, granola bar, water.

## Saturday Banquet Options

The sit-down banquet entrée choices are:

- Chicken Florentine – Spinach, Garlic Butter Sauce
- Grilled Atlantic Salmon – Lemon Butter, Capers
- Vegetable Napoleon – Portobello Mushroom, Spinach, Mozzarella & Red Pepper, Tomato Coulis

\*\*If you have dietary restrictions, we will have more information on the website when you register. If you have any questions, email Shelia at [Shelia.hargis@gmail.com](mailto:Shelia.hargis@gmail.com). Shelia has all sorts of dietary restrictions, so she will be able to relate and get answers to your questions.

## Speakers

### Thursday Night:



David Wolf—“Birds of the Piney Woods—Our Ever-changing Avifauna”

David Wolf is a senior member of the Victor Emanuel Nature Tours staff and one of their most experienced tour leaders. Born in rural Ohio, he moved to New York City at age 6. His interest in birds began here, at the New York Public Library, where he discovered the section on birds and started compiling his own “Birds of the World Checklist” as he perused them in books! A move to San Antonio at age 12 opened the world of living birds to him. In 1969, he came to SFASU studying under Dr. Charles Dean Fisher who mentored him in what became a lifelong passion for birds. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1973.



## Speakers *(continued)*

After birding much of Texas, the U.S. and Mexico for over a decade, in 1975 he spent a year studying the wildlife of the African continent. Upon his return he was recruited by Victor Emanuel to be a tour guide for the fledgling company. As a VENT tour leader, David has birded extensively throughout the world, emphasizing North America, Africa, and the Neotropics. He unites great birding skills with a wide-ranging interest in all aspects of natural history.

David has also birded East Texas intensively for 40 years when not on tour and has kept extensive records of bird sightings during this time. He is probably the most knowledgeable person in the region regarding area bird populations—breeding, migrant and vagrant—and enjoys freely sharing this information with others. David and his wife, Mimi, live on a small farm in Nacogdoches, Texas, with assorted horses, cats, and dogs.

### Friday Night:



Brent Burt—“A Sparrow, a Nuthatch and a Woodpecker Fly into a Pine Savanna”

Brent got his learnin’ at Angelo State University and the Universities of Kansas and Arizona. He is a Professor of Biology at Stephen F. Austin State University where he has been for 21 years. He and his students and colleagues have studied bee-eaters, sparrows, nuthatches, woodpeckers, frogs, pit-vipers and mussels in such far-flung places as Taiwan, Argentina and Nacogdoches. He has two lovely daughters and yet spends most of his time these days brewing beer and tasting said products with his amazing, co-brewing wife. He really hopes you enjoy his presentation but is mildly afraid it will be interrupted by a runaway mule.

(You’ll have to attend his presentation to find out exactly what that means!)

### Saturday Night:

Charles Dean Fisher—“Roads, Peoples, Birds, Mountaintops, and Billabongs—The Unparalleled 3-Year Adventure Around the World by Two Young Men: A passionate ornithologist and an aspiring entrepreneur in an overweight Jeep camping van, 1959-1962”



Charles Dean Fisher was born in Topeka, Kansas. At age 13 he identified a Red-breasted Nuthatch and thought, “How many different kinds of birds could I see if I started looking for them? The answer turned out to be 6,500. At one time that was a world record.

Dr. Fisher has spent a life-time pursuing birds, first completing a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Michigan where he received the Olean E. Scott award for Distinguished Scholarship in Science in 1954. In the summer of 1970, he completed his PH.D. and came to Texas to teach in the Biology Department of Stephen F. Austin. He continued traveling, taking his students all over Texas as well as Mexico, Costa Rica and Ecuador. In 1977-1979 he was tapped to serve as President of the Texas Ornithological Society.

However, his longest birding trip took place between 1959 through 1961, when he went on a three-year expedition travelling around the world in a Jeep with a comrade he met in the Navy. For years friends urged him to write a book about this remarkable experience and he did—soon to be in publication. TOS members will be greatly entertained by his account of this birding adventure which he will share with us as the keynote speaker.

## Field Trips

Number	Field Trip & Description	County	Difficulty	Hours	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	<b>Nacogdoches Airport:</b> One of our few short-grass areas open to the public, it consistently produces wintering Henslow’s and Le Conte’s Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Sprague’s Pipit and occasionally longspurs. None of these are easy to find but we will specifically search for them. Northern Harrier, Wilson’s Snipe and a good assortment of wintering sparrows are also possible. This trip requires considerable walking, sometimes over uneven and damp terrain.	Nacogdoches	Moderate/ Difficult	6:45 am - mid- afternoon		X	X	X
2	<b>Davy Crockett National Forest/Lake Ratcliff:</b> Trails wind through a diverse forest of towering pines, bottomland hardwoods, boggy sloughs, and upland mixed forests. We will specifically seek Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman’s Sparrow, and Brown-headed Nuthatch, plus a variety of other woodpeckers and winter woodland birds.	Houston, Trinity	Moderate	6:00 am - mid- afternoon		X	X	X

**Field Trips** (continued)

Number	Field Trip & Description	County	Difficulty	Hours	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
3	<b>Kurth Lake:</b> Kurth Lake is a 560 acre reservoir located 6 miles north of the City of Lufkin. In the winter, it attracts a diverse assortment of waterfowl, plus Common Loon, Horned Grebe and Bald Eagle. Some years Greater Scaup and Bonaparte's Gulls are present plus this is our best area for rare strays. Surrounding woodlands attract many winter land birds.	Angelina	Easy/ Moderate	6:30 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
4	<b>Ellen Trout Lake:</b> Ellen Trout Lake is in the city of Lufkin right across from the zoo. This small lake attracts a good variety of wintering waterfowl that can be seen at close range including Wood Duck, Canvasback, and Hooded Merganser. Bald Eagles nest close to the lake and both the nest and birds should be seen. A walking trail loops around the 31-acre lake through a mixed pine-hardwood forest with a typical assortment of wintering land birds, including Blue-headed Vireo, Brown Creeper and Pine Warbler.	Angelina	Easy/Moderate	6:30 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
5	<b>Nacogdoches Sewage Ponds/Saints Rest Road:</b> The sewage ponds are the first stop on this field trip south of Nacogdoches to the Angelina River bottoms, passing through a wide variety of habitats. There will be some waterfowl at the ponds, most likely Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser and wintering land birds all along the way to Saints Rest Road which is a raised bed of an old logging tramway that goes down to the River. Participants will likely see Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, numerous sparrows, Hairy and Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee and possibly Rusty Blackbird and Purple Finch.	Nacogdoches	Moderate	6:45 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
6	<b>Alazan Bayou WMA/Experimental Forest:</b> The Alazan Bayou Wildlife Management Area preserves 2,063 acres of mature bottomland hardwood forests along the Angelina River as well as open grassland interspersed with thickets, secondary woodland and seasonal ponds, while the adjacent Stephen F. Austin Experimental Forest offers easy access to a large area of upland mixed forest. Resident and wintering birds are diverse, the possibilities including Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, 7 species of woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter and Sedge Wren, Eastern Towhee and numerous sparrows, including Field, Le Conte's, Fox, Swamp, White-crowned and Harris's. This is one of our best areas for Rusty Blackbird and Purple Finch in the years they are present. Note: The required limited use permit will be waived for TOS participants.	Nacogdoches	Moderate/Difficult	6:30 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
7	<b>Lake Sam Rayburn:</b> Texas's largest inland lake attracts a variety of waterfowl and other water birds in winter. This driving field trip will check a number of vantage points in search of them. Possibilities include Canvasback, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye (irregular), Common Loon, Horned Grebe, American White Pelican, Bald Eagle and Bonaparte's Gull among others. Hawks, woodland and brush birds are possible at all stops.	Nacogdoches, Angelina, Jasper	Easy/Moderate	6:00 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
8	<b>Boykin Springs:</b> Located in the Angelina National Forest, this recreation area which includes a rare long-leaf pine forest, is probably the best place to find Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow in the winter. Other species found in the pines include Brown-headed Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Pine Warbler and Chipping Sparrow, while nearby deciduous forests offer a different set of interesting birds.	Angelina, Jasper	Moderate	6:00 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
9	<b>Boggy Slough:</b> In 2013, the T.L.L. Temple Foundation acquired over 19,000 acres of vital bottomland hardwood forests along an eighteen mile stretch of the Neches River known as Boggy Slough Conservation Area. A conservation easement donated to The Conservation Fund assures the perpetual stewardship of the exceptional wildlife habitat within the river bottom west of Lufkin in Trinity Co. It's one of our state's few private properties with Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, which we plan to see. <i>For entry, signed liability waivers are required of each participant one full week in advance.</i>	Trinity	Moderate/Difficult	6:00 am - mid-afternoon		X		
10	<b>Round and About Town:</b> Nacogdoches field trip which includes Pecan Park, Native Plant Center and brushy areas around town to see a nice assortment of typical local birds including Red-headed Woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatch. This trip will also showcase some of our more attractive natural areas in town in case people wish to return in other seasons.	Nacogdoches	Easy	7:00 am - mid-afternoon		X	X	X
11	<b>Bird Photography Class at Alazan Wildlife Management Area:</b> Ron Thill is a retired Forest Service Director and is the instructor for this class. This trip is for beginning bird photographers who want to know more about how to take really good bird photos. Ron's specialty is Canon Cameras. Those with other brands need to be familiar with the menu for their camera. Fee: \$20.	Nacogdoches	Easy	8:00 am - 1:00 pm			X	



**Field Trips** (continued)

Number	Field Trip & Description	County	Difficulty	Hours	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12	<b>Century Club Trip to Sabine County:</b> We will drive from Nacogdoches via Highway 21 to the San Augustine County line and then along Highway 21 and Highway 1 to the Sabine County line. We will then work our way along Highway 1, CR 1592, and Highway 184 to Hemphill, looking for forest, pond, open field, and pond species. A restroom/ foraging break in Hemphill to Sabine County is roughly 50 miles, we will drive roughly 75 miles in Sabine County, and the return to Nacogdoches will be roughly 50 miles. 90 species have been listed from Sabine County during the past ten Januaries. We have a good shot at 80 species during the day but we might do a tad better. <b>Century Club Trip to San Augustine County:</b> We will drive from Nacogdoches via Highway 59 and Highway 103 to the San Augustine County line. We will continue along Highway 103, CR 1277, and CR 2923 to Townsend Park for field, forest, and water birds. We will continue down CR 1277, Highway 147, and CR 2851 to Jackson Hill Marina, another good site for a broad San Augustine County is roughly 40 miles, we will drive around 80 miles in San Augustine County, and the return to Nacogdoches is roughly 25 miles. 66 species have been listed from the county during the last ten Januaries. We have a good shot at 80 species and, if deepwater visits pay off and we can find some good open fields, we might well do better.	Sabine	Easy	6:00 am - 4:00 pm		X		
13	<b>Century Club Trip to San Augustine County:</b> We will drive from Nacogdoches via Highway 59 and Highway 103 to the San Augustine County line. We will continue along Highway 103, CR 1277, and CR 2923 to Townsend Park for field, forest, and water birds. We will continue down CR 1277, Highway 147, and CR 2851 to Jackson Hill Marina, another good site for a broad spectrum of birds. We will then continue along Highway 147 to the 147 Causeway for deepwater birds. We will then proceed north on Highway 147, east on Highway 83, and south on CR 1751 to San Augustine Park, hopefully plugging in a few more deepwater gaps. We will then wander northward along CR 1751 and Highway 96 to San Augustine, picking up some open field and town species before returning to Nacogdoches via Highway 21. The drive to San Augustine County is roughly 40 miles, we will drive around 80 miles in San Augustine County, and the return to Nacogdoches is roughly 25 miles. 66 species have been listed from the county during the last ten Januaries. We have a good shot at 80 species and, if deepwater visits pay off and we can find some good open fields, we might well do better.	San Augustine	Easy	6:15 am - 4:00 pm			X	
14	<b>Century Club Trip to Anderson County:</b> We will drive from Nacogdoches via Highways 21 and 69 to Rusk and thence along Highway 84 to the Anderson County Line, hitting Anderson County by first light. We will then drive along Highway 84 to the Texas State Railroad SHP, just east of Palestine, for open field, woodland, and small pond birding. We will then work our way westward along Highway 84, Loop 256, and FM 320 to Waterworks Road, picking up the needed town birds. The cruise north along Waterworks Road will allow stops at Lower and Upper City Lakes, known hotspots for water-loving species. We will then drive along Highway 19, Highway 287, and FM 860 to CR 473 and finish the ‘half day’ by driving westward along CR 473, southward along CR 476, and westward along Highway 287 to the Anderson/Freestone County line ... in search of any remaining forest and field species. The drive from Nacogdoches to Anderson County is a tad less than 60 miles and total mileage within Anderson County will be under 60 miles. 110 species have been listed from Anderson County during the past ten Januaries. We have a good shot at 80 species during a partial day but we might well do better.	Anderson	Easy	6:00 am - 1:00 pm				X
15	<b>Woodcock Courtship Displays – **Thursday evening only and limited to 12 participants.**</b> This trip will involve being on-site shortly before dusk as we hope to watch and hear American Woodcock on their “singing grounds.” This species breeds in East Texas during the late winter and early spring. It is very difficult, far in advance, to predict where woodcocks will be displaying so the leaders will be doing some scouting the weeks prior. Woodcock are quite the “Goldilocks species” where everything has to be “just right” – the soil moisture, the height of the vegetation, and so on. We will make a game-time decision on where to go, but hopefully within a 30-minute drive of Nacogdoches so participants can get back for the Thursday night speaker. <b>NOTE: We would love for everyone who wants to attend this field trip to be able to, but there are restrictions that we have to abide by. To be fair to everyone, we will choose who gets to go on the trip using a raffle. If you want to go on the trip, register for it during the registration process. The names of all who are registered by December 15 will be put in a hat and 12 names will be drawn. Several alternates will also be chosen. The 12 people will be notified that they are on the trip so they can plan accordingly.</b>	TBD	Moderate	4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	X			

## Texas Ornithological Society's Life Members

TOS is fortunate to have many members who join at the highest level, our Life Membership. As of early October, we had 318 Life Memberships. As you would expect, the vast majority are from Texas with every TOS region represented (267 total). We also have 50 Life Members who live in the U.S. but outside of Texas. And we even have one Life Member living in Switzerland. All in favor of going to visit him, raise your hand!

A Life Membership for one person is \$400. For a couple, it is \$500. That's a pretty good deal and an excellent way to

show your support of TOS. Below is a list of our current Life Members. *Dear Life Members, thank you very much for your commitment to TOS!*

—Shelia Hargis

PS If your name is not on this list, feel free to correct that asap. Our amazing Membership Secretary Judy Kestner can answer any questions you have about increasing your membership level. Email Judy at [tosmember@yahoo.com](mailto:tosmember@yahoo.com).

### Life Members:

JOSEPH ACOSTA  
ELAINE ADAMS  
DR. LETICIA ALAMIA  
JEFF ALLEN  
HENRY ARMISTEAD  
DR. KEITH ARNOLD  
SHAWN ASHBAUGH  
MARIE & ODIE ASSCHERICK  
DR. MICHAEL AUSTIN  
JOHN BAIRD & JANE HERRING  
TERRY BALDWIN  
LYNN BARBER  
SHERYLL BARKER  
PETER BARNES  
ALMA BARRERA  
JACK BARTLEY  
BOYD BAUER  
JIM BAYLISS  
JAMES BEACH III  
PHILIP & KAREN BEEKMAN  
MIKAEL BEHRENS  
BOB & DARLENE BERMAN  
CLAYTON & SUSIE BLACK  
LYTLE BLANKENSHIP  
COLIN BLUDAU  
NEIL M. & KATHLEEN BOGUE  
DR. ERIC BOLEN  
MARGIE BONNES  
RON & MARCIA BRAUN  
DeLAINE BRISCOE  
LUANNE & DAVID BROTHERTON  
DAN BROWN  
KELLY BRYAN  
CLYDE & LARCIE BURNETT  
SHELLY BURNETT  
HELEN BURT  
JIMMA & JOHN BYRD  
DR. BRIAN CAIN  
CAROLINE CALLERY  
DENNIS CAPUTO  
DAMIEN & CAROLINE CAREY  
PEGGY CARNAHAN  
ERIC CARPENTER  
DR. WILLIAM CARTER  
STANLEY CASTO  
FRANCES CERBINS  
RICHARD CLEARMAN  
SHERIDAN COFFEY  
CARLTON COLLIER

GEORGE FRED COLLINS II  
ANN & DON CONNELL  
JANE CONNELLY  
DR. RICHARD CONNER  
MARK CONWAY  
GREG COOK  
DENNIS & KATHY COOKE  
RICHARD & CHARLOTTE COOPER  
MRS EDWARD CORSON  
PHILLIP CRABILL  
ROBERT & E.J. CREGLOW  
CAPT. GEORGE CROOKS  
SAM CROWE  
CHARLIE & JEAN CURLEE  
RICHARD DAMRON  
JAN DAUPHIN  
TRIPP DAVENPORT  
CHUCK DAVIS  
FRANCE DAVIS  
STACIA & WALTER DeBILL  
DIANE DeGRAFF  
JEFF DETWEILER  
NANCY J. DEVLIN & M. DICLEMENTE  
JIM & KAROL DEVRIES  
DREW DICKERT  
RICHARD DIXON & NANCY GRASON  
MARY DODSON  
ANN DREFKE  
JOHN DUGDALE  
JON DUNN  
CHARLES EASLEY  
GIL ECKRICH  
ELEANOR EDMONDSON  
CAROL EDWARDS  
MARK ELWONGER  
DRS. DODGE & LORNA ENGLEMAN  
DRS. LILY ENGLIS & JAMES REVELEY  
DR. JOHN & JUNE ESTES  
TED EUBANKS JR  
JEAN FERGUSON  
TRUDY FLORENCE  
ROBERT & LYNN FORSTER  
LAURIE J. FOSS  
MARSHALL & FONDA FOX  
PHYLLIS & TONY FRANK  
BRUSH FREEMAN  
DR. BERT FRENZ  
BOB FRIEDRICHS  
LEONARD FROST

WALTER & JULIA FUCHS  
JAMES GAY  
MR & MRS WILLIAM GAYDEN  
BRIAN GIBBONS  
JERRY GIPS  
BILL GOLOBY  
JOHN GOWER  
JEAN GREENHALGH  
JAMES GRIFFING  
DONALD GWYNN  
KATHRYN HALE  
MARTIN HAGNE  
KARL HALLER  
DR. JAMES HAMOUS  
MARY HANNIGAN  
DAN & JOAN HARMON  
WENDY HARTE  
KEN & SIEW BEE HARTMAN  
BETSY HARWOOD  
MARK HASSELL  
PATRICIA HEIRS  
JAMES HENDERSON  
BERNADINE HENSON  
GREG HEPPNER  
MICHAEL HERNANDEZ  
ED & BARBARA HICKL  
DANIEL HODGES  
DIANNA HODGES  
GARETT HODNE  
BARBARA HOFFMANN  
BILL & JEAN HOLMES  
BERNICE HOTMAN  
J R HOVERMAN  
PATRICIA HOWELL  
JOHN & RUTH HRUSKA  
CYNTHIA HUDSON  
CYNTHIA HUGHES  
P D HULCE  
MICHAEL & AMANDA HUSAK  
ROSS IRVIN  
DR. & MRS. J. NEVIN ISENBERG  
JEROME JACKSON  
JIMMY JACKSON  
SIMONE & WILLIAM JENION  
K W & JOYE JOHNSON  
MARK JOHNSON  
ROBERT JOHNSON  
ESTHER JONES  
DAVID & SANDY JUNKIN



DR. IMRE KARAFIATH  
 TIM KASPAR  
 KIMBER & NATRAJ KAUSHIK  
 TERESA KECK  
 CECIL KERSTING  
 JAMES WILLIAM KESSLER  
 THOMAS KIHN  
 CAROL KILGORE  
 RON KRAMER  
 ETHEL KUTAC  
 STEPHEN LABUDA JR.  
 GREG LASLEY  
 CRYSTAL LEDEZMA  
 ANN LEMON  
 JOHN & IRMA LEVINE  
 THOMAS & BRENDA LIGHTFOOT  
 RAY LITTLE  
 RACHEL LOW  
 DAVID LOWREY  
 LORRIE LOWRIE  
 DR. CHARLES LYON  
 TRUE MANN  
 BERT & LOUISE MARCOM  
 LORI MARKOFF  
 DR. DAVID MARRACK  
 JULIA MARSDEN  
 JEAN MARTIN  
 JIM & BETSY MASSEY  
 DAVID MATSON  
 JENNIFER & STEPHEN MAXWELL  
 RICHARD MAY M.D.  
 STEVE MAYES  
 JOHN T. McBRIDE JR.  
 MARK McCLELLAND  
 DAVID McDONALD  
 MARILYN McGILL  
 CHERYL MCGRATH  
 STEPHEN McMAHON  
 MIMI McMILLEN  
 VIVIAN MENZEL  
 BOB & DOROTHY METZLER  
 MARK MEYER  
 WAYNE MEYER  
 CHRISTINA MILD  
 MRS WILLIAM MILLER  
 PENNY MILLER  
 CHARLES MILLS  
 BILL MINYARD  
 PAM MOES  
 ELSIE MOGCK  
 RALPH MOLDENHAUER  
 CAPT. TOMMY MOORE  
 WILLIAM MOSER JR  
 PATRICIA MOYNAHAN  
 JOAN MUKHERJEE  
 MICKEY MUMFORD  
 JEFFERY MUNDY  
 RUSSELL C NELSON  
 CAL NEWNAM  
 BROOKE NICOTRA  
 DIANE NUNLEY  
 MRS E R ODOM  
 ALICE ANNE O'DONELL  
 JOSEPH ORR  
 DR. BRENT ORTEGO

MICHAEL OVERTON  
 PAUL & NANCY PALMER  
 JIM PATON  
 MIRANNE PELLERIN  
 ROYCE PENDERGAST  
 JIM PETERSON  
 ELLEN PICKETT  
 VERNA PICKREN  
 BARRETT PIERCE  
 RANDY PINKSTON  
 CARL & MINDEE POLDRACK III  
 TED PRICE  
 SISSY PURYEAR  
 CRAIG RASMUSSEN  
 DANETTE RAY  
 WILLIAM KYLE REISER  
 WARREN RESELL  
 MRS JOHN RIBBLE  
 MARK RICHARDS  
 DON & LEE RICHARDSON  
 MARGUERITE RIEDEL  
 DONALD RILEY  
 WILL & JAN RISSER  
 CINDY RODRIGUEZ  
 BRONWEN ROREX  
 ROGER & HELEN ROWE  
 ERIC RUNFELDT  
 KAREN RUSSELL  
 DR. MICHAEL KENT RYLANDER  
 DEREK & THERESA SANDBERG  
 DANNY SANSONE  
 DON & SUSAN SCHAEZLER  
 MARK & DEBRA SCHEUERMAN  
 THOMAS SCHULENBERG  
 GEORGINA SCHWARTZ  
 JOHN & JENNY SCHWETMAN  
 JIM & PHOEBE LOU SEALY  
 RICHARD SENECHAL  
 CHARLES SEXTON  
 CLIFF & JULIE SHACKELFORD  
 CLIFF SHARER  
 JONI, SHEREDA, & BRIAN MCKENNA  
 H T & LORRIE SHERRON  
 BOB & MARGRET SIMMONS  
 JOEL & VICKIE SIMON  
 JIM SINCLAIR & MARGARET A LAND  
 DAVID & MARILYN SITZ  
 JOHN SMELSER  
 KIM SMITH  
 MARCY SPEARS & FAMILY  
 DR. MARTIN SPIESS  
 JULIE KELLEHER STACY  
 MRS ETHEL STARKEY  
 GALEN & DIANA STEWART  
 HARLAN STEWART  
 MICHAEL STEWART  
 JAMES STEWART JR  
 DR. BYRON STONE  
 HATTON & LINDA SUMNER  
 PEDER SVINGEN  
 CLAYTON TAYLOR  
 TOM TAYLOR  
 DR. CLARK TERRELL  
 CAROL THOMPSON  
 CLARK & JANET THOMPSON

DANIEL THOMPSON  
 JEFF, JEAN, & KATHRYN TRAHAN  
 HEIDI TRUDELL  
 RICHARD UZAR  
 STAN VANSANDT  
 ANN VAUGHAN  
 LELIA VAUGHAN  
 BETTY VERMEIRE  
 DON VERSER  
 KELLY WALKER  
 LEE & DEB WALLACE  
 WILLIAM LLOYD WALSH  
 F HOWARD WALSH JR  
 CINDY WARD  
 NADA WAREHAM  
 BOB & JEAN WARNEKE  
 RON WEEKS  
 HERBERT WESSLING  
 STEVE WEST  
 ANGELA WESTMORELAND  
 SANDI WHEELER  
 BOB WHITE  
 JOHN & JANA WHITTLE  
 JANE WICKER  
 R CHARLES WIEDENFELD  
 SUE WIEDENFELD  
 ANN & STEPHEN WILLIAMS  
 MORRIS WILLIAMS  
 JUDI WILLIAMSON  
 DAESENE WILLMANN  
 MARY WILSON  
 KATHLEEN WITHERS  
 JANICE WOBHENHORST  
 JEFF & CONNIE WOODMAN  
 R M & JAN WOOLHEATER  
 BILL WRIGHT  
 PHYLLIS YOCHER  
 MATTHEW YORK  
 GAIL DIANE YOVANOVICH  
 ED & DOTTIE YTURRI  
 ELIZABETH ZIVLEY

**TOS Members, July 2017**



## Rare Birds in Real Time

Technological advancements over the past several years have made it much easier for birders to keep track of, and to report, their sightings. Most avid birders use eBird or some similar mobile app to create and submit checklists. For at least a couple of reasons, these advancements have not translated quite as easily into allowing Texas birders to immediately keep track of the sightings of others. On the posting end, not all birders immediately post to eBird from the field and others may report to Texbirds several hours after a sighting or not at all. On the receiving end, many birders only receive Texbird digest reports at night long after the initial sightings included in those digests or do not sign up to receive eBird rare bird alerts for their area. Even if they do sign up for the eBird alerts, they are delayed by at least an hour.

This reporting and receiving disconnect results in a significant lag time between the sighting of a particularly rare bird by one individual and the ability to re-locate that same bird by another. This disconnect is likely what inspired David Sarkozi a few years ago to suggest the creation of a statewide rare bird texting group. I do not know if David's effort got off the ground. Since I live in Austin, I would not particularly benefit from knowing immediately that a Red Crossbill was located 40 miles north of Amarillo, and I expect that there are many others that would be just as satisfied with discovering distant rare bird information on Texbirds or through eBird.

David's idea, however, did inspire me to think about the significance of quickly knowing about a rare bird within striking distance. As a Travis County birder, I would be particularly interested in a rare bird sighting at Hornsby Bend or Commons Ford Ranch. Consequently, I created a rare bird texting group primarily for the Travis County area.

The main goal of the group is to allow a birder to have a realistic chance of re-locating a rare bird if he or she had immediate knowledge of it. While I don't enforce any hard and fast rules, we use roughly a 50-mile radius as the report "circle". A sighting in San Antonio or Belton is probably not appropriate for our group, but a sighting at Granger Lake is worth a post.

We now have nearly 80 members so that means 80 people receive a text every time there is a report. I encourage people to be succinct but provide enough information to allow others to locate the bird. While it may be a bit overzealous to report that a bird has moved from limb A to limb B, it is certainly worth an update to advise that a bird has moved substantially from the location of the initial or most recent report. Also, I try to keep people on task in terms of providing information solely about a rare bird location and leaving banter and chatter to direct person-to-person emails or to Texbirds posts. Eighty people do not really need to get a text that says "great find" when that does not really help them locate the bird.

Of course, opinions might differ as to what is a rare bird worthy of a report. Still, no blackline rules, but if it is a species not regularly seen in the area, then that is close enough. On the other hand, first of season sightings are not really appropriate. Also, I have mixed feeling about substantial raptor migration. The kettles and streams might not include an actual rare bird, but it is pretty cool to watch 1,000+ Swainson's Hawks fly over Lake Austin and others might want to know about that if the birds are coming their way.

Our group is remarkably self-moderating. This has remained true even with the continued growth of membership. I send a detailed explanatory email to each new member with guidelines and this has been helpful. Overall, the texting system has been very successful with few complaints (although we do have the occasional accidental post of "honey, don't forget to stop at the store and get bread") and has, without a doubt, allowed area birders to immediately go after and locate a rare bird. I can attest to that from personal experience as well as from activity within the group. The group was particularly active during Hurricane Harvey resulting in many birders adding new species to their county lists.

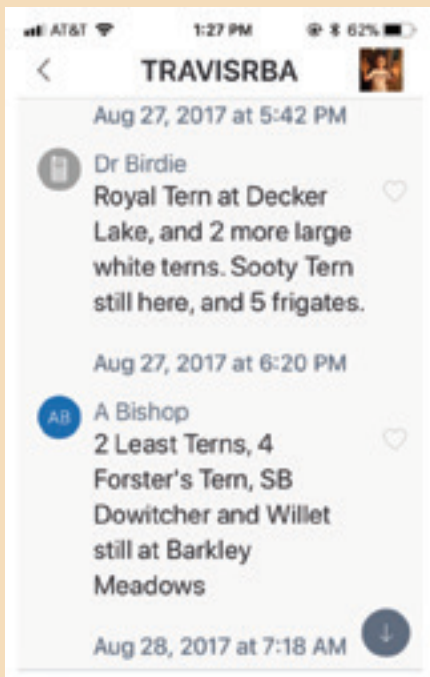
One of the remarkable points is that creating and maintaining the texting group is free. I initially created it using one service that eventually began charging a fee. We then "migrated" over to another free service called GroupMe, <https://groupme.com/en-US/>. With GroupMe, it is very easy for an administrator (and there can be multiple administrators) to add new members and even remove them if it comes to that. Further, GroupMe has a mobile app which allows sending and receiving posts directly from within the app, although one can participate without it. All you need is a mobile phone that can send and receive texts and a service that allows texting. You can also use the GroupMe webpage, but that sort of defeats the purpose of the real-time posting concept.

As I noted earlier, it might not be of interest for a DFW area birder to have immediate knowledge of a Travis County rare bird, but certainly it would be of interest to her to quickly know about a rare bird found at White Rock Lake or McInnis Park. The same would be true in Houston, San Antonio and any other area of the state. It may be that other birders are already operating similar texting groups. If not, I would encourage every Audubon organization in Texas to consider creating one. It will no doubt add to the ability of birders to find rare birds in their area and increase the enjoyment of birding. Feel free to contact me at [Ed@ezflaw.com](mailto:Ed@ezflaw.com) if you have any questions about setting up a rare bird alert system for your area of Texas.

—Ed Fair



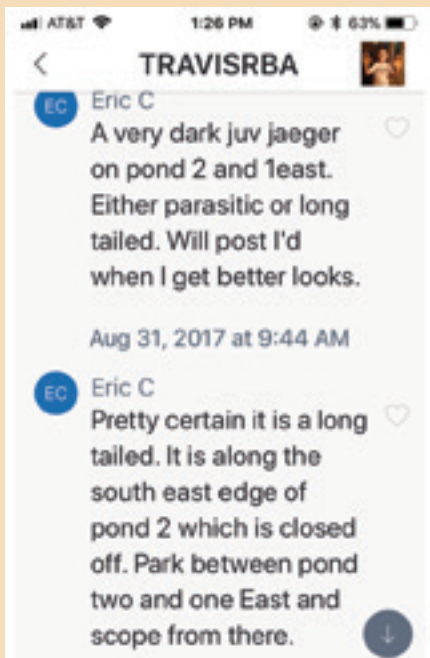
Screen shots courtesy of Ed Fair and Shelia Hargis. Photo courtesy of Shelia Hargis.



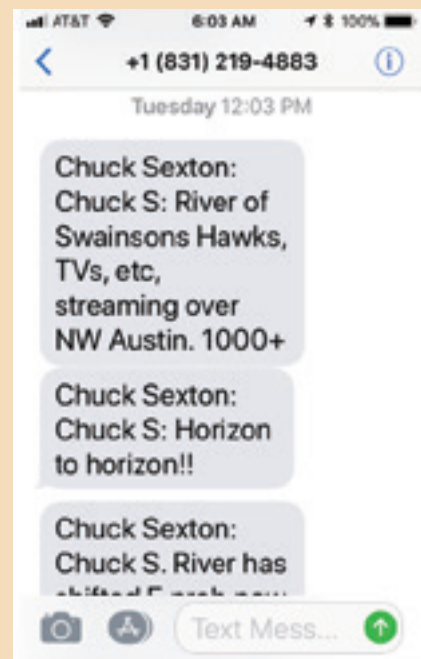
Example of a text alert showing some of the birds in Austin as a result of Hurricane Harvey.



Paparazzi at Hornsby following Eric's post of the Long-tailed Jaeger.



Another example of an exciting find and getting the word out.



Example of migration excitement.

## Save Santa Ana Border Wall March

*Photo credit: Shelia Hargis*

On August 13, 2017, two moments of consequence occurred. First, I hugged a tree I had long been curious to encounter, a Sabal Palm. Second, I linked arms and protested against the proposed border wall with 700 birders and social activists. Both occurred on a clear and warm Sunday morning inside the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. Located along the border near Alamo, Texas, Santa Ana provides critical habitat for wildlife at the juncture of two major flyways. Visitors to Santa Ana are offered an exceptionally rare opportunity. As they stroll along the paths and trails of the preserve, the confluence of several ecosystems present visitors with a staggering diversity of wildlife. The refuge is a biological hotspot, home to over 300 species of butterflies, 400 species of birds, the endangered Texas ocelot and Gulf Coast jaguarundi, and rarities such as the indigo snake and Altamira Oriole.

Santa Ana is also an economic hotspot, infusing a struggling rural community with tourist dollars from American and foreign visitors. These tourists spend an average of three to seven nights in local hotels and bed and breakfasts. They dine in local cafes, visit farmers' markets, coffee shops, and bookstores, and generally stay out of trouble. Ecotourists are beneficial visitors, pollinating the economies of small town America. In the case of Santa Ana, visitors to this single refuge contribute \$34 million dollars each year to the local economy. Within Santa Ana, the proposed border wall will most likely be constructed along the northern boundary of the 2,088 acre

refuge, blocking access to 99% percent of the property. If the wall is constructed, public access will be limited to the parking lot and visitor center. Thirteen miles of hiking trails, Willow and Pintail Lakes (actively managed for habitat), and the 3 tall observation towers will be off limits. The de-facto closure of this wildlife refuge will damage local economies, halt essential research, and prevent refuge management from accessing this critical habitat. From a social perspective, the wall will also prevent families from visiting religious sites south of the wall and ancestors interred in Santa Ana's cemetery.

My first visit to Santa Ana was the day of the August protest. Having been warned by many about the wisdom of midday protesting and birding in the warm embrace of the Rio Grande Valley, I entered the valley well hydrated. Honestly, the weather didn't seem much different from Austin. There was a gentle breeze and the dappled shade provided ample cover. As I strolled the trails of Santa Ana for the first time, it was clear this land was crucial for the survival of many species. From its sub-tropical riparian woodlands through its arid brushlands and thickets, there were birds and butterflies everywhere. My lifers that day included a chocolaty Swainson's Hawk, the jungle fowl Chachalaca, Great Kiskadee, Altamira Oriole, and Buff-bellied Hummingbird. I encourage everyone to visit Santa Ana soon. The staff is knowledgeable and accommodating. The reserve is located approximately an hour west of Brownsville, Texas.

—Jordan Price



*Jordan's first encounter with a Sabal Palm.*



*Shelia Hargis, Petra Hockey and Eric Carpenter with Petra's very popular sign.*





*Petra and Eric modeling the other side of Petra's very popular sign.*



*The Brush family and others lined up along the levee where the border wall will likely be built.*



*A great view of what we are trying to save.*



*One of Jordan's life birds from the visit.*

## July 18–Oct. 13, 2017 Donations

### Sanctuaries

Mark & Bonnie Edmund  
 Thomas Ashbaugh  
 Lori Markoff

### Harvey recovery

Donna Hall  
 Don Quaintance  
 Mike & Pam Goolsby  
 Tom & Patsy Inglet  
 Thomas Haase  
 Buffie Eicher  
 Dawn Houston

### Harvey recovery (continued)

Jane Poss  
 Connie Barr

### Harvey recovery at Sabine Woods and High Island

Barbara Anderson

### Sabine Woods

Pineywoods Audubon

### General fund

Statira Overstreet

## Victor Emanuel Award Luncheon Honoring Mickey Burleson

*Photos courtesy of Brenda Ladd*

TOS was pleased to sponsor a table at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Victor Emanuel Conservation Award Luncheon held in Austin, on October 14. Conservation hero, Mickey Burleson, was the 2017 honoree. Decades ago, Mickey and her late husband Bob, began the process of prairie restoration on their property in Bell County. They have been called the first prairie restorationists in Texas. Together they co-authored a guide for others, *The New Southern Reconstruction-Home Grown Prairies*. Mickey has partnered with Travis Audubon, Native Prairie Association of Texas, Texas Master Naturalists, and served on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. She has given of her time to numerous boards including Nature Conservancy of Texas, Texas Land Conservancy, and Texas Audubon Society.

Travis Audubon Society organizes the luncheon each fall. TOS board members made the decision to support this important conservation fundraiser for two reasons. We wished to contribute to a worthy cause and to increase visibility of TOS at an event attended by statewide conservationists.

One speaker, Valerie Bristol, a past recipient and instrumental in establishing Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, reminded us how one dedicated person can make a big difference in conservation. Victor Emanuel spoke of the importance of engaging youth with the outdoors-for development of the individual and to foster responsibility to the earth. Mickey Burleson shared how she was most inspired from time spent out of doors or while in the company of others with a shared passion for healing the earth's ecosystems. Her personal story of family involvement and continuing commitment to the land touched us all.

The tables were elegantly set with centerpieces of native grasses. The meal was tasty, and dessert was a delightful chocolate bird nest with three exquisite candy eggs. During the meal, a live auction of 5 very special offerings kept us entertained as bidding on the silent auction closed. An announcement was made at the end of the luncheon that over \$104,000.00 had been raised to help Travis Audubon continue their mission of "Inspiring Conservation Through Birding." It felt right for TOS to be present at such a gathering.

—Jimma Byrd



*Victor Emanuel and Mickey Burleson*



*Travis Audubon Board of Directors and Executive Director.*



*Valerie Bristol, 2016 Victor Emanuel Conservation Award Honoree and Travis Audubon Past President*



## Coastal Species Invade the Austin Area

All photos © Arman Moreno.



Hurricane Harvey made landfall as a Category 4 along the Texas coast on 25 August 2017 and was one of the strongest storms to hit the U.S. since 2005. This was a particularly slow-moving storm and experts were predicting record rainfall and flooding. It succeeded in proving those predictions accurate. Rockport, Port Aransas and other areas of the Coastal Bend were hit with Harvey's full force but as it turned towards Southeast Texas, it unleashed torrential rainfall, with peak accumulations of over 64 inches in some areas. In contrast, the Austin area received high winds and lots of rain but was spared the destruction of our coastal neighbors. As Harvey's outer bands reached Austin, birds began dropping in.

Saturday morning (26 Aug), I awoke to dark skies but relatively little rain. I decided to head to Decker Lake first, which is the nearest large body of water to my house. I scanned the skies as I headed towards the park hoping for something good to fly over. The lake is generally not visible from the road except for one or two spots where there's a slight rise. At the first rise, I saw the unmistakable shape of four Magnificent Frigatebirds hovering in the distance. I pulled over to snap a few photos and send out a text alert to our local rare bird group. The birds were quite distant and anticipation of what else might be found kept me from staying too long.

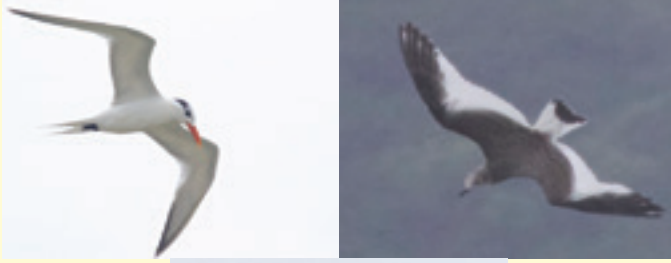


Upon entering the park, I noticed a few Forster's Terns flying around the boat ramp but nothing else of note. Just as birders were starting to arrive, two more frigatebirds came into view, never coming terribly close but offering much better views than the first group. Not an hour later, reports started coming in that there were over ten frigates at the initial location, an unthinkable number this far inland. With two birds still in view, I estimated there had to be at least 12 birds present (the high count was eventually 15). Meanwhile, reports continued to come in of birds all across Central Texas. Bird-wise, this was shaping up to be a pretty interesting weekend.

Rain started to come down harder and while the sight of an inland frigatebird never gets old, I decided to make my way to a few other locations in search of rarities. Several stops later, at Barkley Meadows Park in SE Austin, I found a couple of Least Terns, a species that migrates regularly over Central Texas, but can be easily missed some years. Good numbers of shorebirds were also present but I didn't see anything else of note. By late afternoon, the rain was coming down hard. My rain jacket was quickly soaked and I realized I hadn't brought enough towels. Water was starting to seep through the plastic bag around my camera. I decided to get out of the rain for a bit and do a little more driving. I ended the day along the road by the lake, watching 12 frigates hovering in the direction of the wind.

Sunday (27 Aug) would turn out to be the best day of the weekend. An early report confirmed that frigatebirds were still present at Decker Lake and I figured there would be enough eyes there in case something good turned up so I decided to work the western part of the county. I started at Windy Point Park on Lake Travis. For the first two hours of scanning, I was only able to turn up two more Least Terns, which fluttered quite close to shore. By late morning, I watched two frigatebirds come into view just over a rise. One of the birds continued until it was directly over Mansfield Dam Park. After three hours of scanning from the protection of a covered pavilion, I decided to head over to the south side of the lake.

The problem with my plan is that I was now facing the full brunt of the wind and rain. Several times, I returned to my car as it was coming down very hard and the wind was blowing so forcefully I was afraid of falling branches. When it died down a bit, I returned to the end of the rock jetty to continue scanning. An hour into my vigil, I glanced towards the dam and noticed a large white bird flying directly towards me. Royal Tern! I watched in amazement as the bird flew directly over me and into the cove to my left. I hadn't even noticed that one of the frigatebirds was directly overhead as well. Just then, something else white caught my eye; two white triangles with black leading edges. A juvenile Sabine's Gull! I couldn't believe my luck as I had all three birds in view at one time. The gull flew so close to me that I couldn't even focus my camera. It disappeared after a few minutes but I enjoyed prolonged looks at the tern, a bird I didn't expect to see anytime soon in my home county.



But all of this excitement would soon be overshadowed by another rarity. Justin Bosler had just reported a Sooty Tern from Decker Lake. I was tempted to leave right away but birds appeared to be dropping in quickly and I didn't want to miss anything else that might turn up. After another hour of trying to keep my camera, binoculars and myself dry, I made my way to the east side of town.

At Decker Lake, I ran into Eric and Maggie Carpenter, who helped get me on the bird. It was getting darker and the rain hadn't let up all day so it was hard to get great looks but out over the back portion of the lake, a Sooty Tern was flying back and forth and occasionally diving for prey. Frigatebirds were still patrolling the shoreline and one even swooped down in front of me to pick a fish out of the water. Two Royal Terns flew by casually. There were also Forster's, Black, and one alternate-plumaged Caspian Tern circling the lake. I've visited this location many times and while it has hosted its share of rarities over the years, it is very much hit-or-miss birding (mostly miss). There are times when there's nothing on the water. It was a very surreal experience to see these normally inshore/pelagic species all at this inland spot.



On Monday morning (28 Aug), after spending nearly the entire weekend outside in the wind and rain, I was sitting at work when a text alert came through of a Sandwich Tern

at Decker Lake. There was light rain but it was starting to dissipate and blue skies were creeping through the clouds. I feared these birds weren't going to wait for me to get off work. I wrapped up a few pressing tasks and headed out. When I arrived, the Sooty Tern was still present and I enjoyed better looks in sunshine. A Royal Tern cruised by causing momentary alarm. Nearly two hours later, a white tern flew directly over the boat ramp and out to the nearest buoy. Sandwich Tern! It gave great views but did not stay long and disappeared after 5 minutes.



That would be the last time it was seen. The Sooty Tern stayed through the end of the day and at least one frigatebird hung around until Tuesday, but most of the birds took off with the change in weather. One of the things I think I'll remember most was the camaraderie between a lot of the local birders. Many people spread out to cover as much ground as possible. As a result, a lot of species were found and by utilizing our text alert system, we were able to get the word out quickly. Incredibly, most of the birds stayed put long enough to be observed by whoever wanted to see them. A day later, a juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger turned up at Hornsby Bend and stuck around for three days, capping off a memorable week of Travis County birding.



### Summary of Hurricane Harvey Birds

The following is a summary of the coastal species believed to be associated with Hurricane Harvey that were found in Central Texas between 25-29 Aug 2017. A sum of birds can be found next to the species name. Where applicable, I've excluded birds that were viewed from different parts of the same lake (i.e. Sabine's Gull viewed from Windy Point and Mansfield Dam Park is probably the same bird). The Brown Booby is likely a continuing bird from earlier this year and not storm-associated, but still notable.

#### MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (58-68 total)

- 16—Prairie Park, Lake Fayette, Fayette County (8/26)
- 15—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/26- 8/29)
- 6-16—Lakeway/Lake Travis, Travis County (8/27—8/28)
- 5—Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County (8/26)
- 4—Capital of Texas Highway, Travis County (8/26)
- 3—Plum Creek Golf Course, Hays County (8/27)
- 3—Llano County Park, Lake Buchanan (8/27)
- 2—Granger Lake, Williamson County (8/27—8/28)
- 2—Cranes Mill Park, Canyon Lake, Comal County (8/27)



1—Toll 130 & FM 973 area, Travis County (8/26)  
1—Hwy 183 & Great Hills Trail, Travis County (8/27)

#### BROWN BOOBY (1)

1—Overlook Park, Canyon Lake, Comal County (Likely continuing bird)

#### SABINE'S GULL (1)

1—Mansfield Dam Park, Travis County (8/27—8/29)

#### Laughing Gull (7)

2—Salt Lake, Guadalupe County (8/27)  
2—Granger Lake, Williamson County (8/28—8/29)  
1—Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County (8/26)  
1—Canyon Lake Park, Comal County (8/27)  
1—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/25)

#### SOOTY TERN (1)

1—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/27—8/28)

#### SANDWICH TERN (1)

1—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/28)

#### ROYAL TERN (13)

3—Granger Lake, Williamson County (8/28)  
2—Temple Lake Park, Bell County (8/28)  
2—Canyon Lake Park, Comal County (8/27)  
2—Mansfield Dam Park, Travis County (8/27—8/28)  
2—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/27—8/28)  
1—Pace Bend Park, Travis County (8/28)  
1—Salt Lake Road, Guadalupe County (8/28)

#### Least Tern (34)

12—Temple Lake Park, Bell County (8/26—8/28)  
4—Granger Lake, Williamson County (8/27—8/28)  
2—Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County (8/26)  
2—CR 232 & CR 266, Hays County (8/28)  
2—San Marcos Fish Hatchery, Hays County (8/28)  
2—Windy Point Park, Lake Travis, Travis County (8/27—8/28)  
2—Barkley Meadows, Travis County (8/26—8/28)  
2—Hornsby Bend, Travis County (8/28)  
2—Pace Bend Park, Travis County (8/27)  
1—Salt Lake Road, Guadalupe County (8/28)  
1—Lake Buchanan, Llano County (8/27)  
1—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/28)  
1—Lake Pflugerville, Travis County (8/28)

#### Common Tern (6)

4—Windy Point Park, Lake Travis (8/28)  
2—Jones Brothers Park, Travis County (8/28)

#### Caspian Tern (5)

2—Granger Lake Dam, Williamson County (8/28)  
1—Welch Park, Lake Somerville, Burleson County (8/26)  
1—Walter E. Long Park, Decker Lake, Travis County (8/27—8/28)  
1—Mansfield Dam Park, Travis County (8/28)

#### White-tailed Kite (1)

1—Mansfield Dam Park, Travis County (8/28)

#### White-tailed Hawk (1)

1—CR 232 & CR 266, Hays County (8/28)

— Arman Moreno

## Regional Reports

### Region 4—(Trans Pecos)

As I am writing, reports are already trickling of what appears to be a good irruptive year with Cassin's Finches, increased numbers of Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsuckers, good numbers of Stellar's Jay and more. This might be a great winter to make a trip to the Trans Pecos region.

The Fort Davis Hummingbird Festival had the highest attendance ever and the highlight was a Broad-billed Hummingbird that was observed by many at Davis Mountains State Park. Another Broad-billed Hummingbird was recorded at Carolyn Ohl's place in Alpine.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, Lake Balmorhea yielded a Magnificent Frigatebird and near Country Club Estates Road in Alpine, a White Pelican was found just sitting in the area. Not sure what became of it because this bird was likely injured or sick.

The Davis Mountains produced some nice sightings this past summer as Kelly Bryan's place up high in the mountains had not one but two Dusky-capped Flycatchers that were caught and banded in early July. This same location had a female Black-throated Green Warbler (quite rare that far west), a female Tennessee Warbler (again quite rare in these

mountains), a Hooded Oriole (unusual at high elevations), and calling Spotted Owls. The Davis' also produced a dark-morph Short-tailed Hawk soaring in late May at the Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve, also at the preserve were at least 3 Green-tailed Towhees at the base of Mount Livermore (this is the only location they are known to breed in Texas), and an adult Gray Hawk in upper Limpia Canyon hung around for over a month starting in early July. An early Lewis' Woodpecker was in a private yard on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Finally, a Green Kingfisher was seen along Limpia Creek on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

County Road 505 continues to be an excellent spot for raptors with a juvenile Aplomado Falcon in mid-June, several Golden Eagles, breeding White-tailed Kites, and a small flock of Long-billed Curlews was a nice find by Stephen Hambright. South of Marfa on FM 2810, an Aplomado Falcon was photographed sitting on a fence.

I found a singing Colima Warbler right at the Lost Mines Trailhead parking lot in Big Bend which is the lowest I have ever found one and my wife was excited that she wouldn't have to make the hike to see one higher. And the

*Continued on page 24*

## Regional Reports (Continued)

higher elevations in the park did produce a White-eared Hummingbird in Boot Canyon which was photographed and well documented. Pine Canyon was home to a Red-faced Warbler on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Further west, the Guadalupe Mountains yielded calling Flammulated Owl, a light-morph Short-tailed Hawk, Stellar's Jays, and October 1<sup>st</sup> a Common Black-Hawk. Perhaps the best bird of all though was male Black-throated Blue Warbler seen by Willie Sekula and Derek Muschalek in McKittrick Canyon!

For those hoping to see a Baird's Sparrow in Texas this winter, helping Denis Perez as she works on research near Marfa will be one of your best opportunities. She is seeking volunteers for each day from December 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Work will begin at 8:00 am and you will spend the next 4 to 8 hours in the grassland. Besides Baird's Sparrows, other birds caught and banded included Grasshopper Sparrows, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs, and Sprague's Pipits. For more info, join the FaceBook group "Trans-Pecos Birds & Birding."

FYI, the next open date for the Davis Mountain's Preserve will be December 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> and with the possible irruptive species, it might be a great trip to make out west. If you have never participated in some of the Christmas Counts out here, you should definitely try this year as it could be an unusual season out west.

—Lee Hoy, Regional Director

### Region 5—Edwards Plateau

It's October as I write these words, and the temperatures are still in the high eighties. Even so, we've had our first cool nights. Leaves are turning yellow and beginning to fall. Hooray! We've survived another Texas summer and are rewarded with cooler temps, migrants and winter resident birds.

When deciduous trees have no leaves, it makes it easier to find arboreal birds. It's good to keep this in mind when guiding new birders. If you have the opportunity to lead a field trip or teach a class, consider starting when conditions are optimal for those just learning to use binoculars. No leaves and pleasant weather can get beginners off to a good start in learning about the pleasures of birding.

Here's a group that may be of interest if you live in the eastern part of the Edwards Plateau:

The Highland Lakes Birding and Wildflower Society meets monthly in the Marble Falls, Burnet, Kingsland, Texas, area and is organized to promote the study, conservation, enjoyment, and public awareness of birds and wildflowers, chiefly in the Highland Lakes area of the central Texas Hill Country. Any person interested in the objectives of this organization is invited to join the group.

The HLBWS meets the first Thursday of each month September to June at the Marble Falls Library meeting room at 9:30 AM for social time and 10 AM for the meeting and speaker. Come at 8:30 AM for an interesting bird walk. Meet across the street from the Library. The public is always welcome.

—Jimma Byrd, Regional Director

## ERRATUM.



White-faced Ibis foraging on the USDOE Pantex Plant.  
Photo courtesy of Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC.

On page 63 of TEXAS BIRDS ANNUAL (vol 13, 2017) the right bird is a White-faced Ibis as stated in the caption, but the left bird is a Glossy Ibis.

An advertisement for Port Aransas &amp; Mustang Island. At the top, it says "YOUR NEXT VACATION, SIMPLIFIED. STAY. PLAY. BIRD." Below this are three photos: a group of people sitting on beach chairs, a pink bird in flight, and a sunset over water with birds. At the bottom, it says "Texas Island Style" in red, "Port Aransas &amp; MUSTANG ISLAND" in large black letters, and "www.PORTARANSAS.ORG | 409-45-COAST" in a green banner.




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