

President's Message



Christine Turnbull TOS President.

Greetings Everyone,
Signs of spring are springing up around us. Migrants are on the move, flowers are emerging, and butterflies and other wildlife are appearing—signs of hope as fellow Texans and our ecosystem recover from storms, the pandemic and travel and gathering restrictions. I sincerely hope that you are all well.

As always we want to thank you for your support during this trying year. TOS, like so many others, had to pivot and change some of its processes during all of this uncertainty. The fact that we have so many great people and teams involved in many aspects of the organization made it possible for us to make progress despite the ongoing challenges.

We switched to virtual platforms to deliver programs and meetings, as our partners and colleagues did. We offered virtual raptor and hummingbird classes in the fall, held our January meeting virtually and are again offering virtual classes (“Advanced Raptor Field Identification” with Bill Clark, and “Spanish for Birders” with Christy Esmahan), and our spring meeting will be virtual as well. It’s been a learning experience, and your patience and willingness to provide thoughtful comments have been extremely appreciated!

Our sanctuary teams have been working continuously and as many of you know much has been happening at Hooks Woods. Currently, a grant that the team put together has enabled them to purchase bleachers that visitors can use to enjoy the birds and wildlife that visit the water feature and sanctuary. Members alerted us to 100 Monarchs that were recently observed there. I am hoping to make a visit this spring to see the exciting progress! At Sabine Woods, ongoing research takes place throughout the year by professors and students.

The small, dedicated team at Magic Ridge continues to define boundaries, meet with neighbors and devise strategies for the sanctuary. The team can use assistance as we strive to protect this area. Please send me an email if you have any interest.

We continue our support of youth birding by again sponsoring approximately seven youth teams in the Great Texas Birding Classic, and are partnering with Texas A&M AgriLife and Bryan Calk to sponsor the Rio Diablo Youth Birding Camp that will debut this May. We are dedicated to supporting youth birding and appreciate all of your support to make this happen.

While we still can’t gather together in large groups, we can do so virtually and we hope to connect with everyone at T.O.S. NEWS—Spring 2021

our spring meeting via Zoom, and that you can explore your neighborhoods, parks and sanctuaries and enjoy the birds this spring. (As I am typing this, Black-Crested Titmice are singing loudly outside my window.)

Please continue to contact us with your observations, ideas and thoughts. I anticipate seeing you in the field soon.

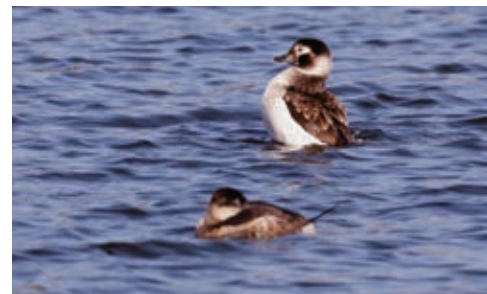
—Christine Turnbull

TOS Cooperative Birding Blitz Daily Journal.....A success!!

Jan15—We had a great start to our first ever 3-Day Collaborative Birding Blitz. As of this evening, we received over 160 checklists from 53 counties and tallied 244 species! Keep an eye out for an email with the top 125 birds we still need for the weekend. We are only counting species shared with TOS, so don’t forget to share your eBird lists!

Rarities: We added a number of rare birds to the list today, including Eurasian Wigeon, Pacific Loon, Elegant Trogan, Rose-throated Becard, and Golden-crowned Sparrow. Some species that have been reported lately that we still need include the infamous Spotted Rail, Mew Gull in El Paso, Iceland Gull in Nueces Co, Glaucous Gull in Dallas, Common Black Hawk, Hammond’s Flycatcher, and Lazuli Bunting in Brownsville, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, and Crimson-collared Grosbeak at Quinta Mazatlan, Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Texas City, Rufous-backed Robin in El Paso, Hermit Warbler at McAllen Nature Center, Painted Redstart in Harris Co, Blue Bunting at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, and Morelet’s Seedeater at Salineno. Keep in mind, some people may have seen these birds today and just haven’t shared their lists with TOS yet. Otherwise, you may try for some of these if you live within 50 miles of them.

Here are some photos we received from birders around the state. You can send photos you’d like to share to kenner7683@gmail.com.



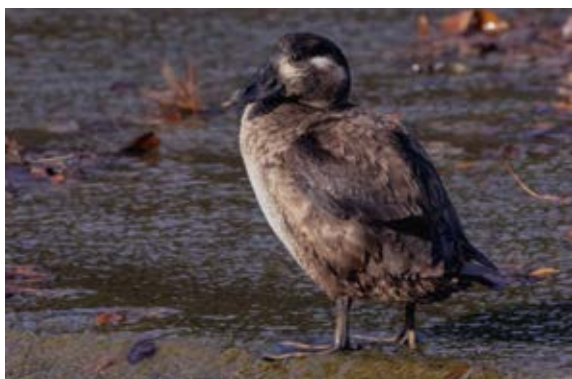
From Janey Woodley—Rare visitor to Fort Bend County! (Long-tailed Duck)



From Susan Foster—Goose Island and Big Tree Ranch, Aransas County

Jan 16—TOS Cooperative Birding Blitz Day 2! As of now, we are up to 307 species reported for Friday and Saturday. We have over 370 checklists from 85 counties.

We are still missing several species from the coast (like Black Skimmer, Common Golden-eye, Stilt Sandpiper, Semipalmated & Piping Plovers, Gull-billed Tern, and Seaside Sparrow) as well as from the Valley (like Tropical Kingbird, Hooded Oriole, Green Parakeet, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and Red-crowned Parrot). We are also missing



From Mike Cameron—Surf Scoter (Dallas Co)

some of those chase birds like Spotted Rail and Fork-tailed Flycatcher.

One more day for the blitz...how many more species (and counties) can we add??!!

Thanks to those who shared photos from their birding adventures today!

Jan 17—THANK YOU to everyone who participated in our Texas Collaborative Birding Blitz. As of 8 PM tonight, we have tallied 339 species, with over 500 lists coming from 102 counties! We may still receive a few lists or updates over the next few days, and we will let you know if anything changes.

Below are a few more pictures from the weekend. We hope everyone enjoyed the meeting!



From Louise Ridlon—Anna Stalcup and Kathy McAleese birding at Yegua Knobs Preserve



From Mike Cameron—Mountain Bluebird (Collin Co)



From Mike Gray—Phainopepla (TNC's Davis Mountains Preserve)

TEXAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Below is a summary of the records that the Texas Bird Records Committee (TBRC) has reviewed and come to a decision on since September 5th, 2020. The MAJOR HIGHLIGHT of this batch is the addition of Blue-and-white Swallow to the state list, which now stands at 655.

Accepted Records (28):

2020-72—Masked Duck (1) 13 Feb 1977, North Padre Island, Kleberg County
2020-75—Mexican Violetear (1) 27 Apr 2019, Harper, Gillespie County
2020-71—Mexican Violetear (1) 20 Jun 2019, Mountain Home, Kerr County
2020-62—Green-breasted Mango (1) 27 Jul - 3 Aug 2020, Weslaco, Hidalgo County
2020-49—White-eared Hummingbird (1) 30 Jun - 12 Sep 2020, west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County
2020-68—Violet-crowned Hummingbird (1) 20 Jul - 25 Aug 2020, west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County
2020-69—Violet-crowned Hummingbird (1) 27 Jul - 22 Aug 2020, northwest of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County
2020-73—Mew Gull (1) 4 Dec 2013, McNary Reservoir, Hudspeth County
2020-61—Red-billed Tropicbird (1) 26 Jul 2020, Port Aransas, Nueces County
2020-77—Great Shearwater (1) 2 Oct 2019, Mustang Island, Nueces County
2020-78—Great Shearwater (1) 4 Oct 2019, Mustang Island, Nueces County
2020-63—Manx Shearwater (1) 27 Jul 2020, near jetty, Mustang Island State Park, Nueces County
2020-83—Rose-throated Becard (1) 7-9 May 1977, Santa Ana N.W.R., Hidalgo County
1996-37 (resubmission)—Dusky-capped Flycatcher (1) 1 Feb 1996, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Cameron County
2020-67—Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (1) 8-9 Apr 2015, Boy Scout Woods, High Island, Galveston County
2020-76—Fork-tailed Flycatcher (1) 16 Nov 2016, northwest of Texas City, Galveston County
2020-82—Fork-tailed Flycatcher (1) 13-15 Apr 2019, Smith Oaks, High Island, Galveston County
2020-84—Tufted Flycatcher (1) 13-14 Aug 2020, west of Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County
2020-94—Greater Pewee (1) 20 Aug 2020, Alpine, Brewster County
2020-65—Black-whiskered Vireo (1) 9 May 2012, Smith Oaks, High Island, Galveston County
2020-66—Black-whiskered Vireo (1) 30 Apr - 2 May 2014, near 'The Willows' at Sea Rim S.P., Jefferson County
2020-59—Blue-and-white Swallow (1) 20-21 Jul 2020, south of Progreso, Hidalgo County
2020-79—Evening Grosbeak (2) 27 Oct 2012, McKittrick Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains N.P., Culberson County

2020-88—Yellow-eyed Junco (1) 26-28 Sep 2020, El Paso, El Paso County

2020-86—Golden-crowned Sparrow (1) 30 Sep - 1 Oct 2020, Amarillo, Randall County

2020-35—Rufous-capped Warbler (1) 28 Mar - 12 May 2020, Benavides, Duval County

2020-46—Slate-throated Redstart (1) 16-19 Jun 2020, Boot Canyon, Chisos Mountains, Big Bend National Park, Brewster County

2020-64—Crimson-collared Grosbeak (1) 6 Feb 2019, Resaca de la Palma S.P., Cameron County

Not Accepted (4):

2020-81—Brown Noddy (1) 15 Aug 2020, ~3 miles offshore from Mustang Island, Nueces County

2020-55—Short-tailed Hawk (1) 11 Sep 2015, Bentsen-Rio Grande S.P., Hidalgo County

2020-70—Fork-tailed Flycatcher (1) 15 Feb 2017, northwest of Texas City, Galveston County

2020-47—Streak-backed Oriole (1) 8-23 Jun 2020, Fort Pena Colorado Park, Marathon, Brewster County

[[Note: The number in parenthesis following the species name is the number of individuals of that species involved in the record.]]

A number of factors may contribute to a record being denied acceptance. It is quite uncommon for a record to not be accepted due to a bird being obviously misidentified. More commonly, a record is not accepted because the material submitted was incomplete, insufficient, superficial, or just too vague to properly document the reported occurrence while eliminating all other similar species. Also, written documentation or descriptions prepared entirely from memory weeks, months, or years after a sighting are seldom voted on favorably. It is important that the simple act of not accepting a particular record should by no means indicate that the TBRC or any of its members feel the record did not occur as reported. The non-acceptance of any record simply reflects the opinion of the TBRC that the documentation, as submitted, did not meet the rigorous standards appropriate for adding data to the formal historical record.

The TBRC makes every effort to be as fair and objective as possible regarding each record. If the committee is unsure about any particular record, it prefers to err on the conservative side and not accept a good record rather than validate a bad one. All records whether accepted or not, remain on file and can be re-submitted to the committee if additional substantive material is presented.

If you have any questions on any of these results, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thanks to all of you who have taken the time to submit documentation to the TBRC—it is very much appreciated.



The TBRC is excited to announce that Blue-and-white Swallow (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) has officially been added to the state list, bringing it to 655! Keen-eyed Dan Jones should be commended for being alert to this possibility while sorting through a mixed swallow group in his own yard (south of Progreso, Hidalgo County) as well as picking this one out & photographing it over a two day period this summer (20- 21 July) . The photos match up well with the migratory *P.c. patagonica* subspecies from southern South America, a subspecies a few folks have been expecting to make an appearance in the ABA region eventually. The ABA Checklist Committee will now consider this same record for addition to the official ABA checklist.

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Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*) to be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act



Immature Least Tern; Texas, June. First summer bird; South Padre Is., TX. Juvenal plumage. Photographer Brian L. Sullivan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that the Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*) has recovered and therefore will be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

According to the USFWS, the Interior Least Tern population has grown from less than 2,000 birds in a few dozen nesting sites in 1985, when the bird was listed under the ESA, to more than 18,000 individuals at more than 480 nesting sites in 18 states today.

The final rule notes that the recent change to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, excluding incidental take from its scope, could effect Interior Least Terns. “There is the

potential that with removal of the protections of the Act and the proposed regulation that defines the scope of the MBTA, incidental take may increase on some nesting areas,” states the final rule. It continues, “Any adoption of proposed changes to reduce the scope of the take provisions of the MBTA is not likely to affect management commitments currently in place, which are expected to continue following delisting of the Interior least tern, as BMPs and SOPs to avoid incidental take of the tern will continue to be implemented across more than 90 percent of the species’ range. We also believe that Federal and State agencies, as well as private industries and individuals, recognize that it is in the public interest to minimize the impacts of lawful activities to Interior least tern and other migratory birds, and the Service shall continue to work with them to do so.”

The proposed rule to remove the Interior Least Tern was published in October, 2019. The final rule delisting the bird was published on January 13 and goes into effect on February 12.

We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), propose to remove the inland population of the least tern (Interior least tern) (*Sterna* (now *Sternula*) *antillarum*), from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. The Interior least tern is a bird that nests adjacent to major rivers of the Great Plains and Lower Mississippi Valley. This proposed action is based on a thorough review of the best available scientific and commercial data, which indicate that the Interior least tern has recovered and no longer meets the definition of an endangered or a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). Our review shows that threats identified for the species at the time of listing, *i.e.*, habitat loss, curtailment of range, predation, and inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms, have been eliminated or reduced, and the Interior least tern has increased in abundance and range. We also announce the availability of a draft post-delisting monitoring (PDM) plan for the Interior least tern. We seek information, data, and comments from the public regarding this proposed rule and the associated draft PDM plan.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 2021 TOS Spring Meeting is coming up very soon and you won't want to miss it. Block off your calendar for April 29–May 2, 2021 for this virtual event with exciting speakers and fun birding opportunities.

See you then!

Are You a Twitcher?

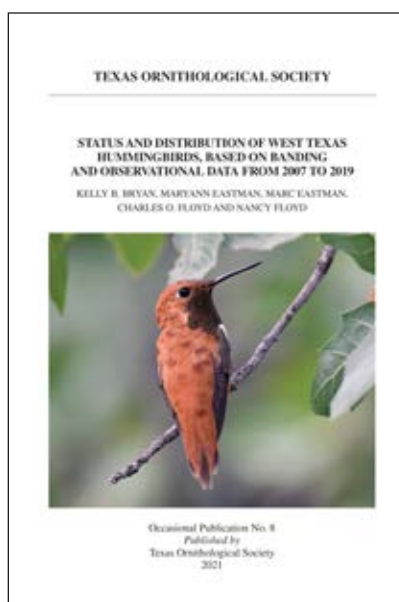
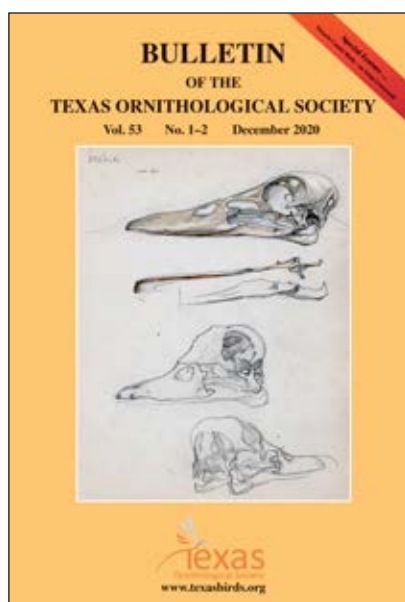
If you have ever driven over two hours to see a rare bird, you're a twitcher!

As we all know, birders have their own lingo. From endearing terms for various species of birds (butter-butt for Yellow-rumped Warbler), to shorthand names based on the American Birding Association's four-letter abbreviations (NoMo for Northern Mockingbird), we find ways of communication that are colorful and quick—just like the birds we chase.

Here are some other terms used by U.S. birders that you may need to know out in the field:

- **Burn up, or flog:** Attempt to flush a bird from the undergrowth by disturbing the vegetation. (Not very nice...)
- **Crush, or hammer:** Get a great photo of a bird after a good flogging.
- **Dip:** Miss seeing a target bird you were hoping to crush.
- **Empid:** One of the Empidonax species of flycatchers, notoriously difficult to identify without hearing a vocalization.
- **GISS, or jizz:** General impression of size and shape, which can give you the first inklings of identification. NOT usually helpful with Empids.
- **LBJ:** Little brown job - a small, drab bird that is hard to identify. This is usually the main jizz after burning up the bushes.
- **Lifer (or life bird):** The first-ever sighting of a bird species by the observer (LBJ is not a species.)
- **Nemesis:** A bird that has eluded the observer after many attempts.

- **Patagonia Picnic Table (or Roadside Rest) Effect:** A phenomenon that takes place when someone's nemesis bird is found at a remote location and other birders travel to see it, only to find other interesting species there. Named after an actual roadside rest area near Patagonia, AZ.
- **Patch:** A birder's favorite local birding site. Probably there is a picnic table there.
- **Pish:** To make a bird-like noise ("pshh, pshh, pshh") in an attempt to draw birds in. (Although there are some birds that will respond favorably, this usually has the exact opposite effect.)
- **Siesta time, or the doldrums:** Mid-afternoon, when bird activity is very slow.
- **S.O.B.:** Spouse of birder. Be very, very careful when using this term.
- **Spark bird:** The species that piques someone's interest in birding. S.O.B.s are immune.
- **Spuh:** A bird that is only identifiable at genus level (thrush spuh, sandpiper spuh), from the abbreviation sp. for species.
- **Stringer:** Someone who intentionally misleads and falsifies bird sightings. Such a person's life list is a string (i.e. dubious), probably composed mostly of spuh.
- **Warbler neck:** A crick in the neck from watching LBJs and other spuh in the treetops, especially common during migration periods.



Available in digital and hard copy format
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In Search of the Spotted rail



Photo by Angie Engledow



Photo by Carlton Collier

Got there at 8:00 this morning. There were already about 30 people there. I saw glimpses of the bird within about 10 minutes. I was able to get a few pictures after about another 30 minutes. It was smaller than I thought it would be. Pretty elusive for being so close to everyone.

—Curt Harwerth



Regional Reports

Region 1—Panhandle

Per the US Drought Monitor, 90% of Region 1 is currently in moderate to severe drought especially along the New Mexico border. This has led to a sometimes startling level of concentration of water bird at our few remaining wetlands. On a regional basis, though, this is deceptive. It has also led, I believe, to a fairly drastic reduction in the amount of forage (seed and insects) available and an associated reduction in songbirds away from urban havens.

Despite the local drought, there has been a regional irruption of Pine Siskins, Downy Woodpeckers as well as Cedar Waxwings.

Notes on a few Recent Special Birds:

- EURASIAN WIGEON: 1 male was found at Stone Lake on 1/3/21, was relocated at Casey Park and then stayed at Leftwich Park (all 3 in Lubbock) throughout January. Only—ONE OF A HANDFUL OF RECORDS FOR THE ENTIRE REGION.
- EVENING GROSBEAK: 1 at White River Lake (Crosby) on 1/2/21 (photographs)—ACCIDENTAL TO THE REGION
- BLACK PHOEBE: 1 at the Plainview Apartments Playa (Hale) on 1/8/21 and 1 at Lake Six (Lubbock) on 1/14/21—OVER THE LAST
- TWO DECADES THE SPECIES HAS GONE FROM ACCIDENTAL TO THE REGION TO ANNUAL IN THE REGION WITH REPORTS SPREADING STEADILY NORTHWARD.
- BRONZED COWBIRD: 2 males east of Plainview (Hale) on 1/12/21 (photographs)—OUR FIRST JANUARY RECORD for the 15 County Lubbock region. PUTTING US ONE MONTH CLOSER TO OVERWINTERING FOR THE SPECIES.

Note: Data from Anthony Hewetson

—John Berner

Region 2—North Central Texas

—Galon Brehm

Region 3—East Texas Timberlands (Pineywoods)

Pretty quiet here in the Eastern part of the Texas. Our 15 CBCs had a good turnout with social distancing and protocols in place.

Seeing some early migrants here, with a few that haven't left, but deciding to "winter over." Looking forward to the Great Backyard Bird Count and Spring migration.

Stay safe, be well.

—Laura Wilson

Region 4—Trans-Pecos

General Comments for Trans-Pecos Region: VERY DRY all reporting period, then Hell Froze Over February 15 – 17, 2021

Interesting sightings as follows: Tundra Swans (5), Balmorhea Lake 12/6/2020; Eurasian Wigeon, Balmorhea

Lake 12/26/2020, 1/1/2021, and 1/5/2021; Surf Scoter, Balmorhea Lake 11/5/2020 and 11/12/2020; Least Grebes continued throughout the reporting period with sightings in Lajitas Golf Course Pond, Candelaria Wetlands, Big Bend NP-Daniels Ranch, Study Butte WTP, and Christmas Mountain Oasis; **Ruddy Ground Dove**, Lajitas Golf Course Pond 12/12/2020 and Davis Mountains State Park 12/19/2021; Groove-billed Ani, Balmorhea Lake 11/3/2020; Sanderling, Fort Hancock Sewage Ponds 1/18/2021; Dunlin, Fort Quitman Lake 2 1/18/2021; American Woodcock, Big Bend NP – Cottonwood Campground 12/28/2020; Red Phalarope, Jonathan Rogers WTP (El Paso) 11/8/2020; Pacific Loons (2), Balmorhea Lake 12/6/2020; **Yellow-billed Loon** previously reported continued at Balmorhea Lake until 11/5/2020; American Bittern, Lajitas Golf Course Pond 11/15/2020; Long-eared Owl Hueco Tanks SP 11/21/2020; Green Kingfisher, Big Bend NP - Rio Grande Village Nature Trail 11/21/2020 and Candelaria Wetlands 1/10/2021; Lewis's Woodpecker, Guadalupe Mts. NP--Friajole Ranch 11/5/2020; **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**, Big Bend NP--Rio Grande Village 12/8/2020; **Pinyon Jay**, Private Residence in Alpine 11/8/2020; **Clark's Nutcracker**, Kokernot Park area, Alpine 11/30/2020; **American Dipper**, Guadalupe Mts. NP--McKittrick Canyon 2/7/2021; Wood Thrush, Gage Gardens, Marathon 12/5/2020; **Rufous-backed Robin**, Mountain View Park, El Paso 1/8/2021; **Evening Grosbeak**, Guadalupe Mtns. NP – Pine Springs 11/20/2020; **Lawrence's Goldfinch**, near Van Horn 11/14/2020; **Yellow-eyed Junco**, Coronado Country Club neighborhood, 11/1/2020; Golden-crowned Sparrow, Balmorhea Lake 1/15/2021; Northern Parula, Hill Park, Monahans 11/21/2020; Blackpoll Warbler, Winkler County Golf Course 11/1/2020; Pine Warbler, Culberson county 11/6/2020 and Big Bend NP – Cottonwood Campground 11/24/2020; Yellow-throated Warbler, Fort Pena Colorado Park, Marathon 11/19/2020; Black-throated Green Warbler, Gage Gardens, Marathon 11/1/2020 and Big Bend NP – Chisos Basin Loop Area 11/21/2020; Summer Tanager, Big Bend NP – Rio Grande Village 12/8/2020; and Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Private Residence Fort Davis, 11/30/2020 and Private Residence in El Paso 11/13/2020.

—DD Currie

Region 5—Edwards Plateau Report

Birding backyards and back roads in the region (and throughout the state) has produced interesting sightings by many people this winter. Western birds have dotted the landscape for several months now, appearing throughout the region. In Bexar County, a friend and I were able to observe Mountain, Western and Eastern Bluebirds at the same time in one location. Western Hummingbirds began passing through in the fall and several species took up winter residences in the region, with Travis County having a remarkable variety. The region hosts Rufous, Allen's, Calliope, Broad-tailed and others in various locations including backyards and public parks. The San Antonio Botanical Gardens has hosted an Allen's, Broad-tailed and Calliope Hummingbird this winter as well as multiple Rufous and selasphorus sp.

Regional Reports (continued)

Birders have also reported Sage Thrashers in various parts of the region, along with a few Purple Finch reports, and Green-tailed Towhees. Two Green-tailed Towhees in a park in San Antonio, were recently seen carrying nesting material, so stay tuned. Large numbers of Pine Siskins, Cedar Waxwings and Robins have caught the attention of non-birders, and I am often asked about them when I am out birding. The neighborhood river corridor when filled with berries, was also filled with flocks and flocks of these birds.

—Christine Turnbull

Region 6—Central Prairie

—Daniel Hodges

Region 7—Rio Grande Brushlands

On Saturday, while a polar vortex gripped most of the country, birding enthusiasts zeroed in on Laredo to virtually “bird the border.”

Approximately 137 registrants from as far away as Minneapolis, North Carolina, and the U.K. participated in the 9th Laredo Birding Festival to learn more about prized local birds, listen to guest speakers, view stunning artwork and have fun with interactive bird ID trivia.

Our virtual format enabled us to share the beauty and biodiversity of Laredo in a brand new way to even more local, national, and international birders,” said Manuel Juarez, director of community engagement for the Rio Grande International Study Center, a partner in the annual festival that’s co-hosted by the Monte Mucho Audubon Society and the Laredo Convention & Visitors Bureau. (Continued on page 12 of newsletter).

—Raul Delgado

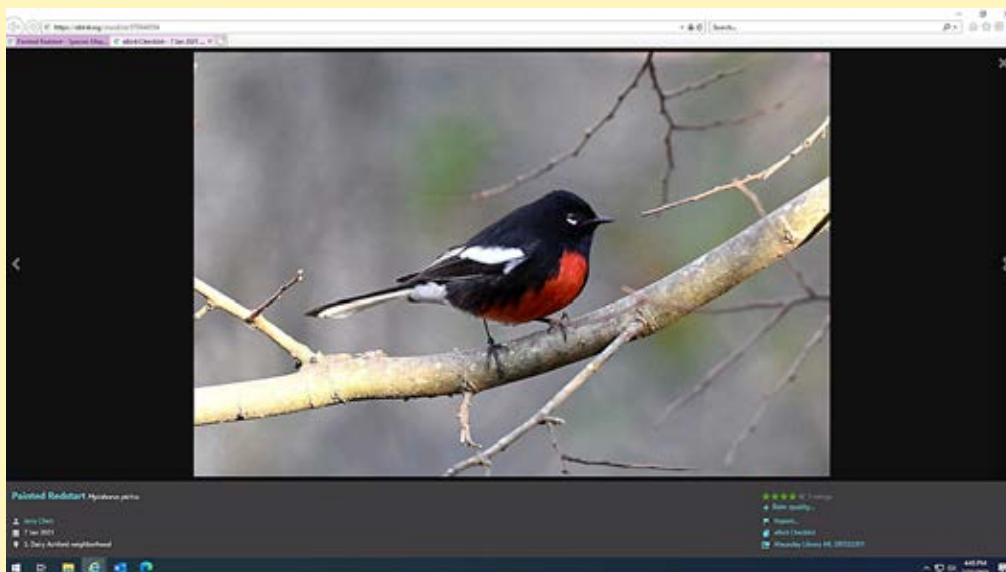
Region 8—Central Prairie

This winter has been extremely productive for our region, with too many rare birds to list. Here are just a few of the more notable finds: Galveston County had reports of a **Band-tailed Pigeon** on November 26 (R. Liebler) and a **Purple Sandpiper** on December 11 (C. Leopold). Several rare hawk species have been reported this winter, including **Zone-tailed Hawks** at Brazos Bend State Park and Kleb Woods Nature Preserve, a **Common Black Hawk** in Brazoria Co. in December and January, and a **Rough-legged Hawk** in Calhoun Co. on January 8 (D. Walker). Harris County had a number of other rare birds: **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were reported in two different locations, a **Hooded Oriole** has been seen at a private residence since mid-January, and a **Painted Redstart**, originally reported on November 18, continued to be seen at least through February 21. **Fork-tailed Flycatchers** have been reported in Galveston, Colorado, and Jackson Co. A **Dusky Flycatcher** at San Bernard NWR was seen by many from late December through early January, and a **Cassin’s Vireo** was reported on January 8 in Wharton Co. (J. Bosler).

Western Invasion

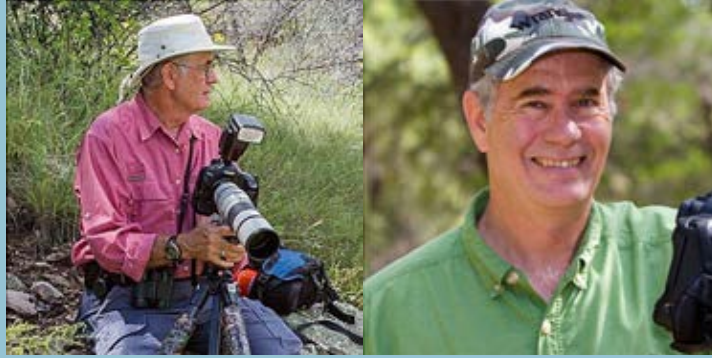
You may have noticed that several of the birds mentioned above are western species. Fires and drought are among the reasons many speculate we had an invasion of western species across the state. **Anna’s Hummingbirds**, which occasionally winter in a few locations in Region 8, were reported in Harris, Brazoria, Matagorda, and Jackson Co. **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** are rare in Texas, but they were seen all over the state, including Harris, Fort Bend, Matagorda, and Brazoria Co. **Mountain Bluebirds** were found in Calhoun, Harris, and Galveston Co. First county records for **Brewer’s Sparrow** were reported in Waller and Harris Co. Green-tailed Towhees have been seen in Waller, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Colorado, and Wharton Co. Finally, **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were reported in Chambers, Harris, Galveston, Brazoria, and Fort Bend Co.

—Kendra Kocab, Director



Painted Redstart (photo by Jerry Chen)

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



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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 this 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



Laredo Birding Festival

@LaredoBirdingFestival · Nonprofit Organization

9th LAREDO BIRDING FESTIVAL A FLUTTERY SUCCESS!!

Virtual eco-tourism event draws nearly 140 registrants from 24 states, Canada and the United Kingdom

LAREDO, TX—On Saturday, while a polar vortex gripped most of the country, birding enthusiasts zeroed in on Laredo to virtually “bird the border.”

Approximately 137 registrants from as far away as Minneapolis, North Carolina, and the U.K. participated in the 9th Laredo Birding Festival to learn more about prized local birds, listen to guest speakers, view stunning artwork and have fun with interactive bird ID trivia.

“Our virtual format enabled us to share the beauty and biodiversity of Laredo in a brand new way to even more local, national, and international birders,” said Manuel Juarez, director of community engagement for the Rio Grande International Study Center, a partner in the annual festival that’s co-hosted by the Monte Mucho Audubon Society and the Laredo Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Located on the 100th meridian, Laredo is a vibrant eco-hotspot for hundreds of species of birds since it serves as a meeting point between the Central and Mississippi flyways. This South Texas region along the Rio Grande is part of the “birdiest” corridor in the entire North American continent.

Daniel Perales, MMAS president, said “I hope that all the viewers enjoyed our first virtual Laredo Birding Festival

as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Kudos to the staff at the Rio Grande International Study Center for their hard work, especially Manuel Juarez, who was instrumental in the editing and presentation of the videos”.

On Saturday, birders were treated to a lively presentation by British birder Richard Crossley who injected humor and jokes about a cross-country birding trip to Alaska. Birders also heard about the healing power of birding—“ornithotherapy”—by Holly Merker who shared her own personal testimony. Some registrants also shared their own stories of how birding and nature helped them navigate difficult moments in their lives, as well as the isolating pressures of the pandemic.

Birders also had a chance to view 5 excursion videos, like this one at Rancho Rio Verde in northwest Laredo, and meet 3 local ranchers from Webb and Zapata counties.

Festival goers also viewed some of the 200 inspiring art pieces from the Festival’s annual Birds of Brush art contest, which can be viewed here. Some pieces are also for sale. Winners for this year’s art show will be announced Saturday, February 27.

In Memory of Dennis Shepler



With great sorrow, I regret that the time has come to write a tribute to GCBO’s long-time friend Dennis Shepler. Dennis passed away on February 18th at his home in Houston. He had suffered along bout with pulmonary fibrosis and passed away peacefully in his sleep early in the morning.

Dennis supported GCBO in too many ways to count, but the two primary ways were through our Site Partner Network and his artwork. While Dennis was teaching at The Kinkaid School in Houston, he set up a fantastic “school backyard” along Buffalo Bayou for student research projects, and this was one of our Site Partner Network sites. I met him for the first time there in the fall of 2007 just after I started working at GCBO. Later, after he retired, he supported us endlessly by providing artwork for shirts and silent auctions. Our current Quintana t-shirt with the moon and three warblers taking off (appropriately

called “LiftOff”) was painted by Dennis. In the last few years when I ran into him birding, I asked how he was doing. His response was the same every time: “Well, I’m supposed to be dead, so I’m doing pretty well!” His enthusiasm for life was infectious, and he never met a stranger. He birded until he could bird no longer, and I felt so sad when I saw his Facebook post saying that he’d bid goodbye to the west Texas mountains. I know they were a favorite birding spot of his.

When I think of Dennis the following Hunter S. Thompson quote comes to mind: “Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming “Wow! What a Ride!” That was Dennis all the way. Although we mourn his loss, I am sure he wouldn’t want us sitting around crying over him. He would want us all outside, searching for the next great bird, and enjoying the camaraderie of our fellow birders. Bird on, Dennis. You will be missed.

—Sue Heath

Welcome to the TOS 2021 Virtual Spring Meeting!

TOS is excited to announce our Virtual Spring Meeting, taking place Thursday April 29 through Sunday, May 2, 2021. This event is open to anyone—not just TOS members—so please help us spread the word.

Due to the pandemic, we are continuing an online format for this meeting. While it will be different from a typical meeting, there are multiple ways that you can participate and have fun! Join us for an exciting lineup of speakers and collaborative birding, as we strive to find as many species as possible across the Lone Star State. We will also present our annual meeting and election results, and will recognize Century Club members as well.

Again we will conduct a **FREE 3-Day Statewide Collaborative Birding Blitz**, and we invite everyone - TOS member or not—to help us search every nook and cranny across Texas. At the end of each day, we will share stories and interesting sightings from that day's birding efforts.

A speaker package is again offered for a small fee (TOS members receive a discounted rate), allowing you to attend fascinating virtual workshops each afternoon on topics such as shorebird identification. (Is there anyone who doesn't need some help with this group of birds?) Other presentations will take you to the Christmas Mountains or around the world, educate you on eBird, gardening for birds, and much more.

All participants will be required to register online so that we can share instructions, resources, and details with you. Because we welcome both TOS members and those who are not among our numbers to participate, be sure to spread the word and invite friends, family, and fellow birders to sign up for the event once registration opens!

Online registration will open in early April and close on Earth Day, April 22, 2021. Don't wait!

We eagerly look forward to "seeing" you during the meeting via digital and social media platforms. Most importantly - be safe, have fun, and find birds!

—Christine Turnbull

What is the 3-Day Statewide Spring Collaborative Birding Blitz?

Everything's still bigger in Texas! Collaborating together on April 30-May 2, we will bird our local patches, hotspots, and backyards. Everyone's eBird reports will be compiled over the course of those three days to create one Texas-sized bird list.

Ways to Participate

- Search for rare/specialty birds
You can contribute by focusing on those hard-to-get species in your area. Do you live within driving range of a stakeout for Blue Bunting, Cackling Goose, Sooty Tern or Black-chinned Sparrow? Consider spending time looking for those birds or other local specialties. This will help grow our collective list.
- Have your own Big Sit
Have a Big Sit at your house or a local public area. You are welcome to invite others to assist you, or you may bird on your own. Please follow federal, state,

and local guidelines with regards to travel, masks, and social distancing. You can get more information about Big Sit rules and suggestions at [THIS PAGE](#).

- Local Patch-athon
Challenge yourself to see how many birds you can find in your local patch. Not sure what a patch is? Find out [HERE](#).
- Just get out and bird!

Only have an hour or two? You can still be a part of our meeting! TOS encourages you to bird at any time in your yard, at work, or wherever you happen to be.

Registrants will need to remember to share eBird lists from Friday, Saturday and Sunday with the Texas Ornithological Society eBird account. (Instructions will be sent for this activity.) Each night during the announcements and field reports we will tally the numbers to see how many species were found and a "needs list" will be available so you can plan your next day's activities.

COVID Safety during the Birding Blitz

For the health and safety of everyone, TOS asks that participants adhere to the following guidelines, which have been modified to be in compliance with Gov. Greg Abbott's **Executive Order GA-34**:

1. The 50-mile radius restriction has been removed.
2. Continue to maintain social distance (at least 6 feet between participants) and/or wear a mask while in the field.
3. While Big Sit teams now have no restriction on the number of birders, please plan your shifts to allow for appropriate social distancing.
4. There are no restrictions on who can bird together. You may carpool with your "flock" if you wish.
5. Comply with guidelines set by private businesses and municipal entities.

Meeting Agenda

All meeting events will be held virtually via Zoom. Birding will take place in person, outside, wherever you like across Texas!

Thursday, April 29

3:30-5:30 PM TOS Board Meeting
6:30-7:00 PM Welcome/Introductions/Announcements via Zoom (Lots of useful information is given during this time, so please attend.)
7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Carolyn Ohl—*Christmas Mountains Oasis*

Friday, April 30

All Day Birding—3-Day Statewide Spring Collaborative Birding Blitz
3:30-4:30 PM Speaker: David Sarkozi—*Allow Me to Get Technical*
4:45-5:45 PM Speaker: Cin-Ty Lee—*Shorebird Identification Made Easy*
6:00-7:00 PM Announcements/Birding Reports/Social

Event Prices

3-Day Spring Collaborative Birding Blitz: FREE

Speaker Package, including access to TEN exciting presentations:

\$25 for TOS members
\$35 for Non-TOS members
\$60 for Non-TOS members (includes a one-year membership)
Free registration for students

2 Hour Saturday Virtual Photography Class:

\$10 for TOS members
\$15 for Non-TOS members

**** Every presentation above will be recorded so that those who purchase them will be able to watch later at your convenience. ****

Photography Class

Saturday, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Cost: \$10 for members/\$15 for non-members

Description: *Bird Photography—Identification or Pretty Pictures?*

There are MANY reasons why we take bird photos—record-keeping, identification challenges, confirming rarities, getting a pretty picture, etc., etc. The cameras and lenses that we use are almost as varied—some people are still using film, others Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) or SuperZoom cameras, and many of us use our SmartPhones (with varying degrees of success) through our spotting scopes or binoculars.

Clay will discuss some options for equipment choices, pros and cons of each system, and give some field tips to hopefully maximize your results.

Bio: Clay Taylor started in photography back in 1970, when all cameras used 35mm film and all settings were manually-operated. He became hooked on bird photography in 1975, and is still trying to get the “perfect” bird shot.

In 1999 he started working for Swarovski Optik as their “birder” and after many trips to bird festivals in Texas, he and his family moved to Corpus Christi in 2008. His yard list is currently 254 species of birds, and 99 butterflies, many of which he has photographed. Or at least TRIED to....



Clay Taylor

Hour
7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Steve Shunk—*How Woodpeckers Can Save the World (or at least your local woodland!)*

Saturday, May 1

All Day Birding—3-Day Statewide Spring Collaborative Birding Blitz
9:00 - 11:00 AM Photography Class with Clay Taylor—*Bird Photography—Identification or Pretty Pictures?*
3:30-4:30 PM Speakers: Dr. Mieke Titulaer and Alejandro Chávez Treviño—*Grassland Birds*
4:45-5:45 PM Speaker: Jay Packer—*Taylor County Big Year*
6:00-7:00 PM Announcements/Birding Reports/Annual Meeting/Century Club recognition
7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Richard Crossley—*There and Back*

Sunday, May 2

All Day Birding—3-Day Statewide Spring Collaborative Birding Blitz
3:30-4:30 PM Speaker: Jane Tillman—*Gardening for Birds*
4:45-5:45 PM Speaker: Chuck Davis—*History of Hooks Woods*
6:00-7:00 PM Announcements/Birding Reports/Social Hour
7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Kevin Cochran—*Introduction to the LaZer Focused Field Guide Series, by Kevin Cochran, Dave Allen and Mel Cooksey*

Registration Information

An email containing the link to registration on the Texas Ornithological Society’s website, www.texasbirds.org, will be sent in early April, so be sure your email address and membership dues payments are up-to-date in your TOS account.

Please help us spread the word by posting on your favorite social media outlets, and sharing the link to invite non-TOS members and any local birding friends, clubs, and groups we may miss, as ALL are welcome to join this birding effort!

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 will close on April 22, 2021.

Meeting Presentations

Thursday Evening

7:00 PM

Title: *Christmas Mountains Oasis*

Presenter: Carolyn Ohl

Description: Carolyn will talk about how her childhood views on what was valuable to plant all changed and morphed as she created a unique birding habitat. Her talk will be illustrated with many old photos never shown before.

Bio: Carolyn Ohl was born and raised in Iowa, but always hated the cold. As a child she was introduced to birding by an uncle who was four years older. She didn't know birding was an adult game too, so quit and moved on with life as an adult. Eventually, she ended up in Texas



Carolyn Ohl

with a dream of living in remote mountains. After buying land in the Christmas Mountains, she built a home and started a garden. During her childhood nothing was ever planted that didn't provide food, so she never thought about planting trees. She has lived in the Christmas Mountains since 1976, and started her oasis in 1996.

Friday Afternoon

3:30 PM

Title: *Allow Me to Get Technical*

Presenter: David Sarkozi

Description: Don't be scared. Using eBird and getting the most out of it and the BirdsEye app isn't a technical nightmare. eBird is always evolving and there are many new exciting features. Learn what eBird has for you and how to get more out of birding by using it.

Bio: David Sarkozi started birding as a teenager in central Texas. College distracted from that but after college it soon became an obsession. He has been birding for more than 30 years now and still has his first field guide.



David Sarkozi

David has served as Chairman of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club – Ornithology Group, President of the Friends of Anahuac Refuge, and President of the Texas Ornithological Society. He served on the board of TOS for 16 years and has been an active leader of field trips across the state. He has a special interest in Belize and has organized more than 30 birding trips to Belize under the name KoziBirding.com.

In 2016 David retired after 35 years with the University of Houston where he was Manager of Public Safety Systems.

David has completed two Texas Big Years, recording 500 species in 2015 and 509 species in 2017, and in 2019 he completed the challenge of birding in every one of Texas' 254 counties in a single year. David likes inventing birding games and created the Texas Local Patch Challenge and the Texas Century Club.

Outside birding David enjoys cooking great food and craft beer. He boasts a beer life list of over 1200 beers and has visited more than 70 breweries now. Recently he renewed his interest in ham radio and holds an Extra Class License.

4:45 PM

Title: *Shorebird Identification Made Easy*

Presenter: Cin-Ty Lee

Description: Cin-Ty Lee will discuss the basics of shorebird identification. Rather than dwell on all the fine details of plumage, Cin-Ty will explore the power of using structure and overall behavior to pick out and identify shorebirds. How does one separate Least, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers from a distance? How do you identify dowitchers? Emphasis will be on shorebirds that migrate through Texas. This lecture will have information for both experts and beginners.

Bio: Cin-Ty is a professor of geology at Rice University in Houston, TX. He is Professor and Department Chair (Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences), and Faculty Fellow, Center for Energy Studies, Baker Institute. He has been birding for 35 years, 18 of them in Texas.



Cin-Ty

Cin-Ty has written numerous identification articles, which include difficult topics as dowitchers, immature orioles, pipit subspecies, and Arctic and Pacific Loons. He is currently working on a new article on the identification of Empidonax flycatchers. He spends much of his spare time recording nocturnal flight calls.

Friday Evening

7:00 PM

Title: *How Woodpeckers Can Save the World (or at least your local woodland!)*

Presenter: Steve Shunk

Description: North American woodpeckers perform multiple keystone roles in the ecology of our forests and woodlands. More than 40 North American bird species, dozens of mammals, and innumerable invertebrates depend upon woodpeckers for their own lifestyles. However, humans need habitat, too, as well as wood products and agricultural resources. By clearing forests, felling snags, and suppressing fire, we have prevented woodpeckers from doing their jobs. Learn the basics of woodpecker natural history, anatomy,

and ecology, and prepare to become new ambassadors for forest and woodpecker conservation.

Bio: Stephen A. Shunk was raised with a deep love and respect for nature, and he went on to study Meteorology and Environmental Studies at San Jose State University. Steve began birding in the Bay Area in 1989, and he started teaching birding classes in 1992. After moving to central Oregon in 1997, he founded the Paradise Birding tour company. Now an accomplished professional naturalist, Steve leads birding and natural history tours throughout the Americas, as well as destinations in Asia and Europe.



Stephen A. Shunk

While in central Oregon, Steve co-founded the East Cascades Bird Conservancy—now the East Cascades Audubon Society—and served as its first President. Steve co-founded the Oregon Birding Trails program and coordinated its flagship project, the Oregon Cascades Birding Trail. He served as a 15-year compiler for two Christmas bird counts, and he has worked as a field biologist off and on for over 20 years. Most recently, Steve conducted Black-backed Woodpecker surveys for the Institute for Bird Populations in California’s Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains.

Over 20 years ago, Steve recognized the amazing woodpecker diversity on the eastern slope of the Oregon Cascades, where 11 woodpecker species annually raise their young. He began studying the lives of woodpeckers across the continent, and he founded the Woodpecker Wonderland Festival in Camp Sherman, Oregon in 2008.

His first book, *The Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America*, was published in May 2016.

Saturday Afternoon

3:30 PM

Title: *Grassland Birds*

Presenters: Dr. Mieke Titulaer and Alejandro Chávez Treviño

Description: Their presentation will consist of two parts. Alex will offer his thesis project titled “Bird early response to a chemical treatment for shrub removal in encroached grasslands of West Texas.” Mieke will present on the outreach program at Sul Ross University’s Borderlands Research Institute, the Borderlands Birding Bonanza outreach activities, international collaborative efforts, and plans for the citizen science project.

Bios: Dr. Mieke Titulaer is a full-time professor at the University of Chihuahua and a part time research scientist with the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University. She has a broad interest in avian ecology and conservation.

Her main research focus is on conservation of grassland songbirds that overwinter in the Chihuahuan Desert. Her research interests include grassland bird-habitat relationships

and the influence of habitat alterations and disturbances such as invasive exotic grasses, shrub encroachment and grazing management on grassland bird populations. She also coordinates international collaborative efforts and outreach activities focused on birds.



Dr. Mieke Titulaer

In 2015 Mieke received her Ph.D. in Natural Resource Management from Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua in Mexico. For her dissertation, she studied the winter diet of grassland sparrows in the Chihuahuan Desert of northern Mexico. She graduated in 2005 with a BS in Psychology from Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and in 2008 with a BS in Animal Management from the University of Applied Sciences Van Hall-Larenstein in the Netherlands. Mieke received an MS in Animal Sciences from Wageningen University, the Netherlands, in 2010. For her Master’s thesis she performed research on personality and cognition in the Great Tit (*Parus major*) at the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW). After receiving her MS she performed research at NIOO-KNAW on the effects of artificial light on reproduction and survival of songbirds.

Alejandro Chávez Treviño is a graduate student with the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University. His research focuses on the effect of grassland restoration to bird communities.



Alejandro Chávez Treviño

Alex graduated from Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León in Mexico in 2016

where he developed his passion for science and birds. During college, he collaborated on different research teams on genetics, microbiology and ecology. As an undergraduate he developed a method to assess genetic diversity of immune system genes on fast declining grassland sparrows.

After graduation he worked as a field technician which took him to explore North America from Canada to South Mexico collecting data for ecology and conservation research. He also enjoys drawing scientific and conceptual illustrations inspired on the landscapes and species he encounters in the field.

4:45 PM

Presenter: Jay Packer

Title: *Taylor County Big Year*

Description: What’s it like to look for birds in Taylor County for 365 days in a row? And how many birds can you see in a year? These were the questions Jay Packer set out

to answer in 2019 as he conducted an intense Big Year of a West Texas county halfway between Dallas/Fort Worth and Midland/Odessa. Through freezing rain and searing heat, he went somewhere every single day. What started out an exhilarating search soon became a relentless slog as the year wore on. What did he learn? Why did he do it? And best of all, who did he meet along the way? Join Jay's presentation to experience all the highs (and the lows) without any of the sunburn, frostbite, or mosquitoes.

Bio: Born and raised in Abilene, TX, Jay Packer started birding at the age of 12 after an extended family road trip to the great national parks of the Western U.S. He quickly began traveling across Texas, then the U.S. and, at 20 years old, took his first trip to the tropics in Costa Rica. Epic road



Jay Parker

trips to Mexico ensued, where he and friends subsisted on peanut butter and tortillas for days as they looked for Mexico's rarest birds, pulling the car into the woods to camp and getting a hotel once a week for the shower. More recently, Jay and his wife Amy have traveled for birds to Europe, then Ecuador, Australia, Brazil, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. Closer to home, Jay is passionate about the Texas Century Club (seeing over 100 species in each county of Texas) and finding new county records. Jay loves sharing and talking about his passion for birding and photography.

Saturday Evening

7:00 PM

Title: *There and Back*

Presenter: Richard Crossley

Description: While working on *The Crossley ID Guide: Waterfowl*, Richard decided he needed to drive to the Arctic Ocean, northern Alaska – from his home in Cape May, NJ. Told in a thick Yorkshire accent, with a sense of humor, and a disdain for PC, Richard will talk about his 16,000 mile adventure. Living out of his truck, Richard chats about the incredible places he travelled and the inspiring people he met who changed his thoughts.

Bio: Richard Crossley is an internationally acclaimed birder, photographer and award-winning author of 'The Crossley ID Guide' series. Born in Yorkshire, he also lived in Japan, and birded worldwide before settling down in his beloved Cape May, NJ.



Richard Crossley

After one of his frequent midlife crises at the turn of the millennium, Richard decided it was time to spend less time obsessively birding and to focus on paying it forward. Sometimes called crazy (his badge of honor), wildly passionate, and driven, Richard's focus is youth birding, and connecting people to a fuller appreciation and understanding of nature; its benefits to mind, body, and soul.

Richard's latest book, *The Crossley ID Guide: Waterfowl*, continues to push boundaries. Self-published, the new guide encourages all outdoor conservation groups to view each other as one.

Richard's next book, *The Crossley ID Guide: Western Birds and Ornithery* (co-authored with Holly Merker and Sophie Crossley), will be published in March, 2021. Both books continue to connect us all to nature with a stronger appreciation and understanding of our common ground and its many health benefits.

Richard also co-founded the global birding initiative Pledge to Fledge, Race4Birds and The Cape May Young Birders Club. He served on the board of directors at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. He has contributed to most major birding publications, is frequently heard on radio, and is a sought-after public speaker.

Sunday Afternoon

3:30 PM

Title: *Gardening For Birds*

Presenter: Jane Tillman

Description: Your gardening/landscaping practices and your plant choices have an impact on birds. Find out what you can do to increase your yard, greenbelt or park's appeal to migrants and resident species, and bring your landscape to life.

Bio: Jane Tillman is a past president of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), Austin chapter. She was part of the team that developed the new NPSOT Native Landscape for Birds NLCP Companion class. As an active Travis Audubon Society member and Capital Area Master Naturalists, she



Jane Tillman

gives talks and teaches classes to garden clubs, neighborhood associations, lifelong learning groups, bird festivals, and libraries about Central Texas birds and gardening for birds. Her yard has a Best of Texas Backyard Wildlife Habitat certification. Jane travels around Texas to see birds and the different ecoregions they inhabit, recently completing the Texas Ornithological Society's Century Club challenge to see 100 species in 100 Texas counties.

Yes, let's go birding!!!!

4:45 PM

Title: *History of Hooks Woods*

Presenter: Chuck Davis

Description: Hook's Woods is a rather small bird sanctuary located on the Upper Texas Coast in High Island. Somewhat overshadowed by the larger Houston Audubon Society sanctuaries, Hooks Woods is nonetheless known for its outstanding birding, particularly during spring migration.

Less well known is the fascinating, almost James Michener-like, history behind Hooks Woods. This workshop will discuss a cast of characters including:

- The conquistador, Cabeza de Vaca (1527)
- The French explorer, La Salle (1685)
- A later French Explorer, Bellisle (1719)
- The pirate, Jean Lafitte, and his cabin boy Charles Cronea (1817)
- The rancher, Captain Cade (1880s)
- The wildcatter, Marris McLean (1916)
- The ornithologist, Harry Oberholser of *The Bird Life of Texas* (aka BLOT) fame (ca. 1900)
- And Corrie Hooks (1876 - 1963), the namesake of Hooks Woods and the Corrie Herring Hooks Series at the UT Press and her children Verna, Joe, and Corrie.

Bio: Chuck is a retired educator and lives in La Porte near the northwest shore of Galveston Bay. He began developing his interest in the history of Bolivar Peninsula and Hooks Woods in the late 1990s when he bought a weekend place at Rollover Pass.



Chuck Davis

Chuck is a former Regional Director of the Texas Ornithological Society and currently serves on the Board of Directors for both the Friends of Anahuac Refuge and the La Porte Education Foundation. He has led field trips for past TOS meetings and for the

Galveston FeatherFest Birding and Photography Festival. He's also the current Program Leader for FledglingFest (part of Galveston FeatherFest in non-COVID years). In addition, he serves as a Court-appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for children in the foster care system and mentors a class of 3 and 4 year-olds in Head Start.

Sunday Evening

7:00 PM

Title: *Introduction to the LaZer Focused Field Guide Series, by Kevin Cochran, Dave Allen and Mel Cooksey*

Presenter: Kevin Cochran

Description: In the presentation, Kevin uses anecdotes and a video to describe the roles each person played in creating the LaZer series of guides. He also presents information describing the basic concept and format of the books and attempts to reveal how these guides differ from most conventional references of this type.

Bio: A lifelong lover of nature and outdoor activities, Kevin is a professional fishing guide and writer. In 1985, he graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, with a B.A. in English. Kevin taught high school English for 14 years, and has written a total of 14 books. He has also written a feature column in Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine since 1998. For the last nine years, he has been an avid birder.



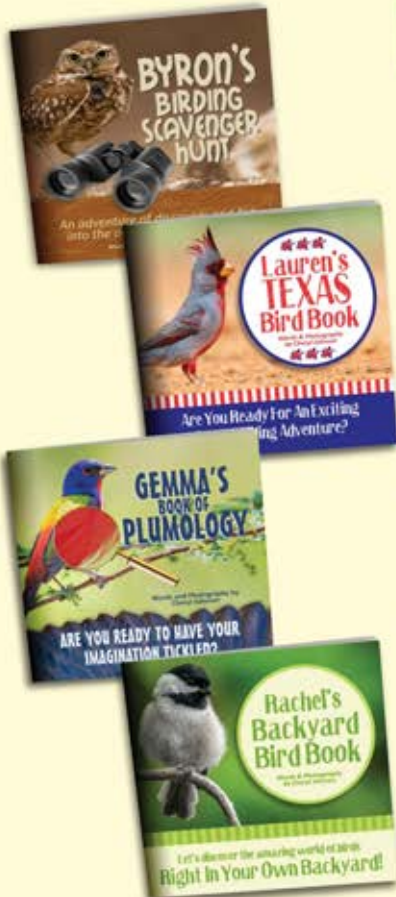
Kevin Cochran

Kevin lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado. He is a former editor of the quarterly journal Colorado Birds and one of the developers of the Colorado County Birding Website and the Colorado Birding Trail.

Kevin regularly gives talks about bird sounds to bird clubs and ornithological societies.



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