



## President's Message



Byron Stone TOS President.

I hope this newsletter finds you preparing enthusiastically for spring migration. I enjoy hawks and sparrows in the winter, but look forward to the great spectacle of spring migration in the state, whether passerine fallout following a spring coastal thunderstorm or shorebirds foraging frenetically at the edge of a shallow south plains playa before continuing their journey northward for a brief arctic breeding season.

Your organization has been busy. We had a great winter meeting in McKinney in January (see Gailon Brehm's article) and are finalizing preparations for a Uvalde meeting in Uvalde in May, organized by Region 5 Director Jimma Byrd.

Separately in the *Bulletin* you should have received a ballot to vote on a TOS Bylaws revision. Your board unanimously endorsed the proposed revised Bylaws, and it is now up to you, the membership, to vote. I described the reasons for adopting new Bylaws in my Fall 2015 President's Letter, but this is worthy of some repetition.

During the past few years, it has become clear that existing articles and bylaws were in serious need of updating and revision in order to bring them into compliance with statutory requirements, to resolve inconsistencies and ambiguities and to improve organizational efficiency. During the summer the board agreed to hire a consultant to help with this revision. At a board retreat in early September we discussed the needs and goals of the organization and reviewed potential bylaw changes. The Proposed Bylaws submitted for your approval are a result of many hours of board discussion. The intention is to bring current practices up to date with statutory and regulatory requirements and incorporate changes the board believes will improve the TOS's ability to govern itself effectively and efficiently.

When these bylaw revisions are approved, they will change the way TOS elections are conducted and change the way the board is constituted. They call for contested elections for all positions, when possible; they will retain positions for 8 Regional Directors but henceforth all members will vote for all Regional Directors. During consultation with legal and organizational professionals, we learned that a membership organization like ours is legally required to allow all members to vote for all board positions. Most of us preferred the idea of Regional Directors elected only by members residing in their region, but decided to follow the law. All members will also vote for 4 At-Large board members. The number of board positions would be pared from 13 to 12, as the office of President-Elect will be eliminated, leaving 4 officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The board will consist of 8 Regional

Directors and 4 At-Large Directors. The bylaws revision will institute term-limits for board members, the maximum term to be served is two consecutive 3-year terms. The final change is that the board will elect or re-elect the 4 officers annually; those 4 officers coming from the pool of 8 Regional and 4 At-Large Directors. Those 4 officers would then constitute an Executive Board, with authority to make day-to-day TOS decisions, but would be answerable to the full board, and, of course, to the membership. This change should allow TOS to function more efficiently and respond more rapidly. It will also necessitate more frequent board meetings, a change that has already taken place, as we are currently meeting every other month, either via phone conference or in person.

I hope you will take time to review the proposed bylaws at the end of the *Bulletin*, mark the ballot and mail it by the deadline, using the provided self-addressed ballot. Merely remove the ballot from the back of the *Bulletin*, affix a postage stamp, add your return address and place your ballot into the mail. If you have questions, feel free to contact me or any other officer, or your Regional Director. Contact information is on the "About TOS" webpage at <<http://www.texasbirds.org/aboutTOS.php>>

Your officers and board of directors have spent a great deal of time discussing these revisions, and they unanimously endorse acceptance. Please cast your ballot to endorse these changes to help TOS function more effectively on behalf of your organization.

—Byron Stone, President TOS

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## 2015 TBRC Annual Meeting

The 2015 annual meeting of the Texas Bird Records Committee (hereafter committee or TBRC) was held at 11:00 AM on 1 August 2015 at the Biodiversity Researching and Teaching Collections in College Station, Texas. Keith Arnold served as host. Six members were present in person; four members attended via conference call. In attendance were:

### Members

- Randy Pinkston, Chair
- Eric Carpenter, Secretary
- Keith Arnold, Academician
- Greg Cook
- Mark Lockwood (via conference call)
- Jim Paton (via conference call)
- Byron Stone
- Tim Fennell
- Mary Gustafson (via conference call)
- Petra Hockey (via conference call)

Due to some technical difficulties with access to the

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building and setting up the conference call, the meeting was convened at 11:45 AM.

### Election of Members

Pinkston, Carpenter, Arnold were the only nominees respectively for the Chair, Secretary, Academician positions. Cook's and Lockwood's first term both expired at the meeting and both had indicated their willingness to serve a second term. Stone moved that everyone be re-elected by acclamation. This was seconded by Lockwood and voting was unanimous in favor.

Gustafson's and Fennell's 2<sup>nd</sup>-term both expired at the Annual Meeting. Nominations for the open position were Dan Jones (nominated by Randy Pinkston), Stephan Lorenz (nominated by Petra Hockey), Chris Runk (nominated by Byron Stone), and Ron Weeks (nominated by Mark Lockwood). Discussions were had about each of the candidates and then the members voted. Dan Jones and Stephan Lorenz received the most votes and were elected to fill the open positions.

Effective at the end of the Annual Meeting, current membership and term of service are as follows:

- Randy Pinkston, Chair—term expires in 2017; can be re-elected
- Eric Carpenter, Secretary (not a Voting Member)—term expires in 2016; can be re-elected
- Keith Arnold, Academician—term is as listed for Secretary; can be re-elected
- Dan Jones—1<sup>st</sup> term expires in 2018, can be re-elected
- Stephan Lorenz—1<sup>st</sup> term expired in 2018, can be re-elected

- Petra Hockey—1<sup>st</sup> term expires in 2017, can be re-elected
- Greg Cook—2<sup>nd</sup> term expires in 2018
- Mark Lockwood—2<sup>nd</sup> term expires in 2018
- Jim Paton—2<sup>nd</sup> term expires in 2016
- Byron Stone—2<sup>nd</sup> term expires in 2016

The sequence of members for voting becomes:

Jones  
Lorenz  
Hockey  
Cook  
Lockwood  
Paton  
Stone  
Arnold  
Pinkston

### Fourth Round Records

There was 1 fourth round record that was discussed and voted on:

2013-29 – Red-necked Grebe  
16-18 Feb 2013, near Packery Channel, Nueces Co.  
**not accepted 0-9**

### Adjournment

With no other formal business on the agenda and no Any Other Business items raised, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Carpenter  
Secretary, Texas Bird Records Committee

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## TOS Supporter Profile....THOMAS MOORE FEED



If you're reading this article I'm 99% sure you love birds. And there are a million ways to enjoy birds: whether you're tramping through the forest, being blown away on the beach, or sitting in your own backyard.

Thomas Moore Feed is a feed company located in Navasota, Texas. Where's that you ask? About an hour north of Houston. The mill sits near the Brazos River surrounded by land that has been in the Moore family for 5 generations. Growing everything from corn, milo, and black oil sunflower seeds all these grains are included in the Thomas Moore Feed's line of bird seed products. While TMF produces horse feed, cattle feed and even rabbit food, the most important, of course, is their wild bird seed.

Over a year ago Thomas Moore Feed and the Texas Ornithological Society formed a bond. We proudly sponsor the Texas Ornithological Society and their work of spreading bird knowledge and encouraging the work of bird conservation. Through our bond we are able to find bird sanctuaries throughout Texas that are in need of bird seed. Our longest relationship includes our work with Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary

located in Cibolo, Texas where we donate our bird seed to be used by the sanctuary. We believe that if we can remove an added cost to bird centers and sanctuaries that money saved can go towards bettering the environment for the birds.

We have products that range from the basics: Texas Wild Bird filled with black oil sunflower seeds, millet, corn and milo to the more specialized Songbird Blend filled with black oil sunflower seeds, striped sunflower seeds, and safflower. Looking for Niger or suet? We've got that too. You can find our products in grocery stores: HEB and Brookshires, to feed stores as Thomas Moore Feed and independent pet food stores as Nature's Cafe located throughout the major cities of Texas: Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, and San Antonio. And for you westerners out there, we're making our way to El Paso too! So keep an eye out for us!

It has been an honor to be included in the TOS semi-annual meetings, we have always felt included and welcomed, and see the most spectacular birds. I hope that our team and products can help you the way that you have helped us!

—Lauren Lescure

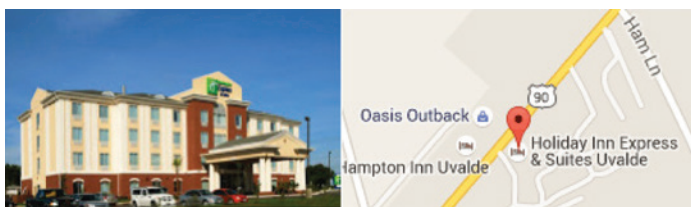
# SPRING TOS MEETING IN UVALDE

## MAY 5-8, 2016

The Edwards Plateau is an area of unmatched beauty in the spring. How exciting that Uvalde is the setting for the Spring meeting May 5-8, 2016! Local birders have arranged for excellent field trips to areas with limited public access and known hotspots. The Plateau is home to two endangered bird species: Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. The former will be the theme of the meeting. The speaker lineup is outstanding. We will have the chance to learn about population dynamics and genetic influences in Golden-cheeked Warblers. We will also have the opportunity to find Montezuma Quail, Gray Vireo, and spring migrants. Plan your escape to small town Texas and bird the back roads!

### HOTELS

Due to Uvalde's limited number of rooms, no single hotel is able to provide all our accommodations. You may book a room at either hotel; they are just across the street from each other. HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS UVALDE, 2801 E. Main St., Uvalde, TX 78801 Phone: (830) 278-7300 [www.ihg.com](http://www.ihg.com) or HAMPTON INN UVALDE, 2714 E. Main St. Uvalde, TX 78801, Phone: (830) 278-1300, [www.hamptoninn3.hilton.com](http://www.hamptoninn3.hilton.com). Special TOS rates for either hotel is \$95 two Queen beds with breakfast, rate code TOS. Registration for the meeting is \$50 for TOS members, \$75 non-members with a \$10 late fee after 4/21/2016.



All events will be held and field trips depart from the Herby Ham Activity Center, 248 FM 3447, Uvalde, one half mile from the hotels. Please note that alcohol and tobacco are prohibited on the premises of the Herby Ham Center.



### Meeting Schedule

#### Thursday, May 5

Registration 4:00-7:00 pm at Herby Ham Activity Center  
Welcome-Birding Games Icebreaker  
7:00-9:00 pm at the Herby Ham Activity Center, 248 FM 3447, Uvalde, TX

#### Friday, May 6

Field Trip Departures—6:00–7:00 am from Herby Ham Activity Center

Registration—4:00-7:00 pm at Herby Ham Activity Center

Speaker—4:00 pm—Zach Pearson of Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Presenting research on Montezuma Quail being conducted in Kinney/Edwards counties—Herby Ham Activity Center.

Trip Reports and Announcements—7:00–7:30 pm—Herby Ham Center

Speaker—7:30–9:00 pm—Dr. Giri Athrey, PhD.—Herby Ham Center

#### Saturday, May 7

Field Trip Departures—6:00–7:00 am from Herby Ham Center

Trip reports and Announcements—6:30–7:00 pm at the Herby Ham Center

Banquet—7:00–8:00 pm at the Herby Ham Center

Speaker—8:00–9:00 pm—William Reiner, “Learning More About Our Native Texan, the Golden-cheeked Warbler”- Herby Ham Center

## SPEAKER

### Friday night speaker



**Dr. Giri Athrey** - ‘The Past and Present of Golden-cheeked Warbler Populations: What Genetics Tells us About Recovery’

Bio: Dr. Giri Athrey, Ph.D, is an Assistant Professor of Avian Genetics and Functional Genomics at Texas A&M University, College Station. He is a member of the Department of

Poultry Science, and the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. His broad interests are in Avian health, evolution and conservation. His past (and in a limited way, present) work focused on songbird population ecology and genetics—working on golden checked-warblers and black-capped vireos. His research program focuses on the genetics of avian diseases, avian immune system interactions and comparative genomics, using the chicken as a model. He is part of the Heath Hen Advisory group, where he is working on the genetics of North-American Grouse species, and is also leading the assembly of the Whooping Crane genome. Away from work he enjoys watching birds, spending time with his family and digging for fossils with his five year old son.



## Speakers *(continued)*

### Saturday night speakers



Bill Reiner is a City of Austin biologist, part of a team that monitors and manages the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve for eight federally-listed endangered animal species, along with other rare animals and plants. He has been on the staff of the City's Wildland Conservation Division since 2006.

Prior to his position with the City of Austin, Bill worked for five years as a biological technician at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, where a seasonal responsibility was mapping territories of Golden-cheeked Warblers and Black-capped Vireos. Before that, he contracted seasonally with an Austin environmental consulting firm to conduct presence/absence and territory-mapping surveys for these species.

Originally from Ohio, Bill has been a Texan for more than 25 years. An avid birder since childhood, he is fascinated by all aspects of natural history and ecology, especially with how plants and animals fill niches in their environments and form communities. He explores these themes in a bi-monthly nature column that he writes for the Travis Audubon Society's newsletter, the *Signal Smoke*.

### Uvalde TOS Field Trips—May 06, 07, 08, 2016

#### General Considerations:

- South Texas can be hot; so wear appropriate layers and closed toe shoes/boots. Wear a hat and bring sunscreen.
- Wet, muddy ground is possible on some trips; so consider waterproof boots.
- Bring water and snacks/lunch.
- Stops for gas, food or restrooms will be kept short in order to maximize time spent birding.
- Bring walkie-talkies if you have them, preferably set to channel 11-22. They are indispensable for communicating between vehicles in a car caravan.
- Several of the Sunday trips have been designed with "leaving town" in mind.
- Keep in mind that trip leaders are volunteering their time and talents to help you see birds—please treat them cordially

#### FRIDAY

**1. Kickapoo Caverns and Kinney County Hotspots**—Kickapoo Caverns State Park will provide the opportunity to find 8-9 vireo species including Black-capped and Gray, all buntings (Varied, Indigo, Painted, are resident, and a migrant Lazuli is possible), Elf Owl, Montezuma Quail, Canyon Wren, and Rock Wren. We will also visit Fort Clark Springs in Brackettville, which will provide a few more brush-country birds, and also offers lush riparian corridors and pecan groves. *6 am–3 pm.*

**2. Love Creek Ranch**—The mesic spring-fed canyons, shrubland, and woodland of Love Creek Preserve will provide opportunities to observe a variety of breeding species such as Zone-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk (rare), Acadian Flycatcher, 6 species of vireo including Black-capped and Hutton's, Canyon Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, and Painted and Indigo Buntings among others. Brush country species such Olive Sparrow and Audubon's Oriole are possible. A variety of migrants should also be observed. Moderate hiking on rough trails at times. Bring lunch and water. *6 am–4 pm.*

**3. Maverick County Hotspots**—Eagle Pass and Quemado - Shelby Park is situated along the Rio Grande River in Eagle Pass and offers the area's best chance for White-collared Seedeaters. Other South Texas specialties like Couch's Kingbird, Ringed Kingfisher, and Great Kiskadee are common. Farm land around Quemado and Normandy may be good for lingering waterfowl, grasspipers, and cranes. *6:15 am–3:30 pm.*

**4. Del Rio**—Del Rio and Lake Amistad, located along the Rio Grande, are the gateway to the Trans-Pecos region of Texas. Here, you can still expect to see some south Texas specialties like Green Jay and Kiskadee, but there is also the possibility for river-clinging birds such as White-collared Seedeaters and Gray Hawk. Amistad will provide the opportunity to find any lingering waterfowl, gulls, and shorebirds. Brush-country birds such as Black-throated Sparrow, Pyrrhuloxia, and Cactus Wren should be common. Leader Mike Gleason *6 am–4 pm.*

**5. Concan**—Concan is a beautiful hill country destination on the Frio River. Large bluffs and old cypress trees line the water which cuts through classic Texas Hill Country. Birds such as Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, Hutton's Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, and other hill country specialties are expected. *Tropical Parula has been sporadically recorded here in the past.* Leader TBD *6 am–3 pm.*

**6. Fort Clark Springs**—A historical military fort turned residential municipality, Fort Clark offers extensive riparian corridors along Las Moras Creek, water treatment ponds, and Tamaulipan scrub. This diverse habitat makes for a wide variety of possible species. Many subtropical species like Great Kiskadee, Green Jays, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, and Olive Sparrows occur near the northern extent of their ranges, and pecan groves and oak forests offer supreme migrant traps. *6 am–2:30 pm.*

**7. Cook's Slough/Ft Inge/Fish Hatchery**—Cook's Slough consists of a series of large ponds and canals surrounded by a variety of woodland and open habitat. Birds expected include Great Kiskadees, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, Wood Duck, Groove-billed Ani, Audubon's Oriole, and other birds indigenous to Tamaulipan scrub. The fish hatchery may provide breeding and migratory shorebirds, wading birds, and lingering waterfowl. If time allows, we will visit historical Fort Inge, a densely wooded park situated along the Leona River. Many sub-tropical species can be expected here. *6:30 am–1 pm.*

**8. Transition Ranch Photography**—Sandy Hurwitz has agreed to open his private property just north of Brackettville on the edge of the Balcones Escarpment. He hosts Golden-cheeked Warblers, Montezuma Quail, Gray Vireo, Varied Bunting, Scott's Oriole, and more. He has recently added a few photography blinds to the property at water features. *6:30 am–1:30 pm.*

**9. Big Springs Ranch**—Rugged, scenic private property in southern Real County. Expect a moderate amount of walking on gravel trails on this trip. Bring your lunch. Golden-cheeked and Yellow-throated Warblers are regular and relatively common here. Louisiana Waterthrush nests here. Green Kingfisher likely. Zone-tailed Hawk possible. Friday and Saturday trips will be accompanied by one or more experts on Golden-cheeked Warbler breeding biology to help trip participants better understand the special habitat and conservation requirements of Texas' only endemic breeding bird. *6:15 am–3:30 pm.*

#### SATURDAY

**10. Lost Maples SNA**—Steep limestone canyons, bubbling springs, and the confluence of the Sabinal River with Can Creek make for a beautiful setting for birding. Look through the bigtooth maples and ashe juniper for hill country specialties like Golden-cheeked Warblers, Black-capped Vireos, and Western Scrub-jays. Other resident birds include Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-throated Warblers, and more. Expect moderately strenuous hiking on rocky trails at times. *6 am–4 pm.*

**11. Zavala County CC**—Visit multiple locations in Zavala County to try to maximize the number of species seen, trying to get 100 or more species for the day. This trip will be fast-paced. Bring lunch and water or soft drinks, as conveniences are likely to be minimal. *6:15 am–4 pm.*

**12. Love Creek Ranch**—The mesic spring-fed canyons, shrubland, and woodland of Love Creek Preserve will provide opportunities to observe a variety of breeding species such as Zone-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk (rare), Acadian Flycatcher, 6 species of vireo including Black-capped and Hutton's, Canyon Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, and Painted and Indigo Buntings among others. Brush country species such as Olive Sparrow and Audubon's Oriole are possible. A variety of migrants should also be observed. Moderate hiking on rough trails at times. Bring lunch and water. *6 am–4 pm.*

**13. Kinney County CC**—A big day style trip across Kinney County. The day will start early at Kickapoo Caverns State Park to target Gray, Hutton's, and Black-capped Vireos, Varied Bunting, Bush-tit, and more until late morning. We will then move on to Fort Clark Springs and hit some of the hot areas there in pursuit of Green Jays, kingfishers, waterfowl, etc. We will then briefly visit some private property just west of Brackettville to look for Black-tailed Gnatcatchers and other brush-country birds. Finally, we will explore some of the area's richer county roads as time allows to round-out our list. Pack lunches, snacks, and plenty of water. *6 am–5 pm.*

**14. Uvalde County Hotspots**—Selected locations, including one or more private properties, in Uvalde County, covering a variety of habitats, including wetlands, brush country, and portions of hill country. *6:30 am – 4 pm.*

**15. Big Springs Ranch**—Rugged, scenic private property in southern Real County. Expect a moderate amount of walking on gravel trails on this trip. Bring your lunch. Golden-cheeked and Yellow-throated Warblers are regular and relatively common here. Louisiana Waterthrush nests here. Green Kingfisher likely. Zone-tailed Hawk possible. Friday and Saturday trips will be accompanied by one or more experts on Golden-cheeked Warbler breeding biology to help trip participants better understand the special habitat and conservation requirements of Texas' only endemic breeding bird. *6:15 am–3:30 pm.*

**16. Fort Clark Springs**—A historical military fort turned residential municipality, Fort Clark offers extensive riparian corridors along Las Moras Creek, water treatment ponds, and Tamaulipan scrub. This diverse habitat makes for a wide variety of possible species. Many subtropical species like Great Kiskadee, Green Jays, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, and Olive Sparrows occur near the northern extent of their ranges, and pecan groves and oak forests offer supreme migrant traps. *6:30 am–3:00 pm.*

**17. Bader Ranch**—This parcel of private property just west of Brackettville offers a rare opportunity to see the bounty that the Tamaulipan scrub of Kinney County really has to offer. Kathy Bader maintains many feeders and a large, beautiful garden. Bullock's, Hooded, and Orchard Orioles come in to the feeders at close range, Couch's Kingbird, Brown-crested Flycatchers, and Curve-billed Thrashers nest around the house, and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Canyon Towhee, and lingering species such as Green-tailed Towhee, Lark Bunting, Sage Thrasher, and other sparrows are possible. *6:30 am – 3 pm.*

**18. Cook's Slough/Ft Inge/Fish Hatchery**—Cook's Slough consists of a series of large ponds and canals surrounded by a variety of woodland and open habitat. Birds expected include Great Kiskadees, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, Wood Duck, Groove-billed Ani, Audubon's Oriole, and other birds indigenous to Tamaulipan scrub. The fish hatchery may provide breeding and migratory shorebirds, wading birds, and lingering waterfowl. If time allows, we will visit historical Fort Inge, a densely wooded park situated along the Leona River. Many sub-tropical species can be expected here. *6:30 am – 1 pm.*

**19. Transition Ranch Photography**—Sandy Hurwitz has agreed to open his private property just north of Brackettville on the edge of the Balcones Escarpment. He hosts Golden-cheeked Warblers, Montezuma Quail, Gray Vireo, Varied Bunting, Scott's Oriole, and more. He has recently added a few photography blinds to the property at water features. *6:30 am–1:30 pm.*

## SUNDAY

**20. Transition Ranch Photography**—Sandy Hurwitz has agreed to open his private property just north of Brackettville on the edge of the Balcones Escarpment. He hosts Golden-cheeked Warblers, Montezuma Quail, Gray Vireo, Varied Bunting, Scott's Oriole, and more. He has recently added a few photography blinds to the property at water features. *6:30 am – 1:30 pm.*

**21. Lost Maples SNA**—Steep limestone canyons, bubbling springs, and the confluence of the Sabinal River with Can Creek make for a beautiful setting for birding. Look through the bigtooth maples and ashe juniper for hill country specialties like Golden-cheeked Warblers, Black-capped Vireos, and Western Scrub-jays. Other resident birds include Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-throated Warblers, and more. Expect moderately strenuous hiking on rocky trails at times. Leader Richard Redmond *6 am–4 pm.*

**22. Love Creek Ranch**—The mesic spring-fed canyons, shrubland, and woodland of Love Creek Preserve will provide opportunities to observe a variety of breeding species such as Zone-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk (rare), Acadian Flycatcher, 6 species of vireo including Black-capped and Hutton's, Canyon Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, and Painted and Indigo Buntings among others. Brush country species such as Olive Sparrow and Audubon's Oriole are possible. A variety of migrants should also be observed. Moderate hiking on rough trails at times. Bring lunch and water. *6:15 am–4 pm.*

**23. Big Springs Ranch**—Rugged, scenic private property in southern Real County. Expect a moderate amount of walking on gravel trails on this trip. Bring your lunch. Golden-cheeked and Yellow-throated Warblers are regular and relatively common here. Louisiana Waterthrush nests here. Green Kingfisher likely. Zone-tailed Hawk possible. Friday and Saturday trips will be accompanied by one or more experts on Golden-cheeked Warbler breeding biology to help trip participants better understand the special habitat and conservation requirements of Texas' only endemic breeding bird. *6 am–4 pm.*

**24. Concan**—Concan is a beautiful hill country destination on the Frio River. Large bluffs and old cypress trees line the water which cuts through classic Texas Hill Country. Birds such as Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, Hutton's Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, and other hill country specialties are expected. Tropical Parula has been sporadically recorded here in the past. *6 am–2:30 pm.*

**25. Fort Clark Springs**—A historical military fort turned residential municipality, Fort Clark offers extensive riparian corridors along Las Moras Creek, water treatment ponds, and Tamaulipan scrub. This diverse habitat makes for a wide variety of possible species. Many subtropical species like Great Kiskadee, Green Jays, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, and Olive Sparrows occur near the northern extent of their ranges, and pecan groves and oak forests offer supreme migrant traps. *6:30 am–3 pm.*

**26. Edwards County CC**—Short trip (probably ending at 1 p.m. Or so) trying to get as many species as possible in Edwards County. Will visit one or more private properties if access can be arranged. Leader will be "leaving town," so trip will end in Edwards County, 1 hour or more from Uvalde. Likely target species include Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and other Edwards Plateau specialties. 50 to 60 species likely. Bring lunch and water. *6 am–1:30 pm.*

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

This meeting's registration is online only. For those with internet access, go to the meeting page on TOS website, <http://texasbirds.org> and follow the directions there. If you receive registration materials only via hard copy and DO NOT have access to the internet, you may call Judy Kestner (361) 387-7329, or Frances Cerbins (512) 372-9039 for assistance with registration. If you don't get an answer, leave a message with your name and phone number and you will get a call back when someone is available.

## Regional Reports

### Region 1—Panhandle

Region 1 continues to struggle due to a gradual decline in the number of active birders living in the region and due to the perception that, by Texas standards, birding is slow in the region. The region's Audubon chapters are generally hanging on by virtue of having one to three solid officers and enough members to sustain monthly field trips, monthly newsletters and regional reports, and quarterly public meeting. Despite these struggles, the region's Christmas Bird Counts got done and local volunteers are looking forward to this year's Breeding Bird Surveys— both of which are subsidized, to some extent, by local Audubon chapters.

—Anthony Hewetson

### Region 2—North Central

The news for Region 2 during the winter period this year has been flooding of the area lakes and areas downstream. Significant rainfall in October and November concluding with a downpour weekend after thanksgiving filled flood control lakes up to some ten feet into flood stage. This flooded many shoreline birding areas and public access was curtailed at most lakeside recreation areas where birders are able to view the water and bird the associated wooded areas. Afterward, during the several week period when water was being discharged to bring lakes were back to normal levels, parks and birding areas downstream were flooded. This whole process was repeated at the end of December, with heavy rain causing significant lake level rises and downstream flooding persisting for most of January. Good birders have compensated for the inconvenience of limited lakeside access by birding county roads and viewing shorelines and open water from normally dry areas. Overall species count of birds does not seem to be significantly impacted, but the general feeling is that overall numbers of birds observed is down. This is likely related more to reduced birding or difficulties in accessing where those birds may be than it is to a true decline in the bird population.

—Gailon Brehm

### Region 3—Piney Woods

The T.O.S. winter meeting was a great success. Prairie and Timbers Audubon did a great job. I saw a few T.O.S. members from region 3 at the meeting. Hope they had as good of time birding as I did.

I would like to high light a few good birding spots in East Texas. A fun place to bird is The East Texas freshwater Fish Hatchery in Athens, Texas. It has a bird list of 120 plus bird, beautiful ground, and plenty to do and see. If you get tired of birding watching (never) you can always fish.

The Edwin L. Cox, Jr., Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) combines visitation and outdoor education with a production fish hatchery. Its mission is to provide an educational, entertaining visitor experience that promotes Freshwater sport fishing and the enhancement, conservation and stewardship of aquatic resources in Texas. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/spdest/visitorcenters/tffc/>

Another great place to bird is East Texas Arboretum also in Athens.

One hundred acres of wooded beauty, trees, flowers, and wildlife await your discovery at the East Texas Arboretum. The forest appears to come alive as you meander along two miles of woodland trails. Camouflaged frogs, insects, and even deer often scurry away as you pass. Make your way along winding, spring-fed streams connected by a 115-foot suspension bridge. With a bird list of 100 plus. <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/>

—Linda Belssner



### Region 4—Trans-Pecos

—Melanie Hoffman

### Region 5—Edwards Plateau

There are plenty of birdy happenings in Region 5 (Edwards Plateau) this spring. Sparrowfest celebrated its 12<sup>th</sup> year February 6, 2016. The annual event is held at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge. This workshop is a great way to learn your winter sparrows. The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Balcones Songbird Festival April 22-24, 2016, is also held at the Refuge. This festival features speakers, nature trips, and social events. Registration opens Feb. 14 and usually sells out. Wings Over the Hills in Fredericksburg, celebrates it's 6<sup>th</sup> year April 29-May 1, 2016. This festival is described as

“A celebration of natural flight saluting the unique winged wildlife of the Texas Hill country offering opportunities for education and entertainment for the whole family”. Event headquarters for “Wings” is Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park just south of Fredericksburg. Registration information for all these events can be found online.

—*Jimma Byrd*

### Region 6—Central Prairie

The most frequent comment heard on Christmas Bird Counts in this region was, “Where are the birds?” But despite low numbers of individuals, species numbers weren’t too far off the mean. Ducks and geese were noticeably lacking in Brazos County, for example, but we were delighted by a pair of Pyrrhuloxia in the count circle and another just outside it. Similar sightings occurred in other CBCs in the region. Hotspots such as Warbler Woods and the Granger Lake area continue to delight visitors, as always.

—*Betty Vermeire*

### Region 7—Brushlands

The coastal brushlands of South Texas has been busy this winter with reports of “good” bird sightings from Laredo to South Padre Island and north to Refugio’s Lion’s Park. Birds of interest seen recently by birders: Greater Pewee, Golden-crowned Warbler, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, White-throated Thrush, Northern Jacana, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and Blue Bunting. Thursdays bring Mary Gustafson’s weekly posting of “Lower Rio Grande Valley Rare Bird Alert”, an excellent resource for recent bird sightings in the area.

Recent birding events in the area include Laredo Birding Festival (February 3-7). Coming shortly is the Port Aransas Whooping Crane Festival (February 25-28). Both events host excellent websites covering birding activities.

—*Bron Rorex*

### Region 8—Coastal Prairie

—*Chuck Davis*

## TOS Goes to Maine (June 12-18, 2015)



*Atlantic Puffin*

Join the Texas Ornithological Society for some Down East birding in Maine, June 12-18, 2016 We’ll meet up Sunday afternoon in Bangor, ME at the airport and join our guide Michael Goode from Down East Nature Tours. We’ll make the 90 minute drive to Millinocket, ME. After spending the night in Millinocket we’ll spend the day at Baxter State Park where the main target of the day will be Bicknell’s Thrush. For the thrush we’ll have to hike up about 2000’ to get above the tree line. Expect the round trip to take about 7 hours. This trip is a strenuous hike, about the equivalent of Boot Springs in Big Bend or the Bowl in the Guadalupe Mountains. If you don’t feel up to the hike, a party can stay in the “lowlands” at the trailhead and still expect most of the boreal species on our target list like, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruffed Grouse, 20+ species of warblers and northern finches like Purple Finch, White-winged Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak.

The next day we’ll mop up our target list for the area and in particular look for Black-backed Woodpecker and Three-toed Woodpecker. We will probably drive the Golden Road. Expect no restroom facilities except those that nature provides until after lunch. After lunch we’ll head for Mount Desert Island (MDI) and Acadia National Park, about a 3 hour drive. After spending the night on MDI we’ll take the morning whale watching trip out of Bar Harbor, ME and over the next 4

hours hope to snag Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Common Murre, Black Guillemot, jaegers, Sooty and Greater Shearwater, and Wilson’s and Leach’s Storm-Petrels.

You’ll want to dress warm because temperatures drop into the 40’s on the Gulf of Maine.

That afternoon and for the next two full days we’ll hit the hotspots on MDI and in Acadia National Park. We’ll take advantage of birds found the week before during the Acadia Festival. More than 20 species of singing warblers are possible, plus thrushes, tanagers, and bobolinks. In the evenings we’ll take in as much of the fine local seafood as we can.

Saturday morning we’ll have breakfast then head for the airport in Bangor, ME. We’ll leave for Bangor about 8 am. Expect between 150-160 species for this trip. We should be able to find 20-30 species never seen or rarely recorded in Texas. Expect temperatures in the 50’s at night and highs 70-80 during the day. All the birding should be easy traveling except the trip up the mountain for Bicknell’s Thrush.

Birding till you drop is certainly possible since we’ll have light from 4:30 am till about 9:30 pm.

Our guide Michael Goode has been leading and organizing tours since 1993 and lives on MDI. He operates Down East Nature Tours (<http://www.downeastnaturetours.com/>) In 2009 he was selected as the Best Birdwatching Guide by Yankee Magazine. Personally I got to bird with him in 2013 at the Acadia Birding Festival and found him a wealth of knowledge in the field and great fun to be around.

Contact David Sarkozi for details. [david@sarkozi.net](mailto:david@sarkozi.net) or 713-412-4409.

The fee covers guide fees, transportation, the whale watching trip, and entry fees to the state park and national park. It does not include your transportation to or from Bangor, ME, meals, incidentals, or lodging. Please arrive in Bangor by 4:40 pm and please do not book a return flight earlier than 11 am on the 18th.

—*David Sarkozi*

## 2016 TOS Winter Meeting is a Success!

The TOS Winter Meeting this year was held in McKinney, January 14-17. It ran very smoothly with excellent hotel accommodations, great speakers each evening plus workshop speakers two afternoons, and successful field trips. Our co-sponsor, the Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society, worked tirelessly to prepare and execute this event. Attendance was approximately 120 people and 27 field trips were conducted.

An excellent assortment of field trips led by experienced local birders were chosen to emphasize local birdlife, including winter specialties like waterfowl and sparrows. The expected wide range of species were reported, including five species of geese. It turned out to be a year in which numerous Purple Finches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Pine Siskins were being seen and most field trips reported them. The ever declining Rusty Blackbirds were seen in small numbers as well. Field trips were diverse and provided general coverage and hotspots in Collin, Dallas, Rockwall, Rains, Hunt, Fannin, Denton, Grayson, and Cooke Counties. Local flooding was a factor in most of the field trips. Planned trips to Lake Lewisville had to be cancelled, but otherwise our experienced field trip leaders were able to work around the flooded roads and closed parks.

The evening speakers each had a different focus with all related to the North Central Texas region: Wayne Meyer lectured on sparrow identification tips, Erich Neupert discussed raptor rehabilitation with live bird demonstrations, and Brent Ortego discussed the history of Texas Christmas bird counts.

The headquarters hotel was the Hilton Garden Inn just south of McKinney on US 75 and Bethany in Allen. This location provided ready highway access for all field trips and a comfortable, full-service setting. Registration, vendor tables, and display of silent auction and raffle items was set up in one large room for convenience. Swarovski, our faithful, long time sponsor, was there as was Thomas Moore Seeds, our newest.

The event highlight was the Saturday evening banquet. Each table had a beautiful woodland centerpiece featuring natural plant materials hiding a small bird figurine. These centerpieces were given to a certain person at each table who was selected by a secret mechanism announced at dessert time. Raffles were held each evening with various donated items given away and the results of the silent auction were announced Saturday. These latter activities generated significant additional profit to support future TOS activities.

And now looking forward to Uvalde!

—Gailon Brehm







## Birding Results from the Winter 2016 TOS Meeting, McKinney, Texas.

This is, as promised, the checkerboard report from our winter meeting in McKinney. Our efforts as a group of birders yield, given the scouting efforts of the trip leaders and the incredible skills of our participants, a solid survey of what is out there—to call it a snapshot would be an insult. With seven field trips on Friday, ten field trips from Saturday, and ten field trips from Sunday reporting in, I managed to get data from every single team, and I think we did a fantastic job!

Before I get into our results I want to explain how the checkerboard was built this time around. I used eBird to generate a list of every species that had been seen during the last fifteen Januarys in every county we were to explore (Collin, Cooke, Dallas, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Hunt, Kaufmann, Rains, Rockwall, Tarrant, and Van Zandt). This yielded a list of 239 species. From this list I removed species that the ABA does not consider countable (such as Graylag Goose). I ran this list by a couple of regional experts (Greg Cook and Byron Stone) and we removed any species that we felt to be on the list either by error (such as Yellow-billed Cuckoo) or just whopping improbable (such as Whooping Crane). This left me with a list of 221 species and field trip participants with the task of competing with every eBirder who had spent time in those counties from 1990 through 2015.

### How did we do?

We saw, as a group, 147 species. That works out to about 66% and given that we were, in effect, competing against every hard-core county birder and rarity chaser that had worked those counties over a twenty-five year period I think that is pretty respectable. We (and by 'we' I mean the Dallas Hotspots Team) even found a species that was off the forecast when Saturday's efforts kicked out a quite impressive Vermilion Flycatcher.

Birders are a competitive bunch so a few highlights are in order. By the numbers, the Cooke County TCC group prevailed on Friday with 86 species, the Rockwall County TCC group prevailed on Saturday with 85 species, and the Rockwall County TCC group repeated the feat on Sunday with 89 species. Several teams contributed species uniquely to the list. The Dallas Hotspots crew found the only Greater White-fronted Goose (Saturday), the Rockwall County TCC group the only Greater Scaup (Sunday), the Lake Tawakoni group the only Common Goldeneye (Friday), Hagerman NWR teams the only Wild Turkey (Friday and Saturday), the Collin County TCC group the only Sora (Sunday), the Denton County TCC group the only Lesser Yellowlegs (Saturday), the Lake Lavon group the only Laughing Gull (Friday and Saturday), Hagerman NWR groups the only Inca Dove (Saturday and Sunday), the Rockwall County TCC group the only Eastern Screech-Owl (Saturday), Lake Tawakoni groups the only Great Horned Owl (Friday and Sunday), the Photography crew the only Monk Parakeet (Sunday), the Dallas Hotspots crew the only Vermilion Flycatcher (Saturday), the Lake Tawakoni group the only Tree and Cave Swallows (Sunday), Heard Museum groups the only Sprague's Pipit (Friday and Sunday), Lake Tawakoni groups the only Smith's Longspur (all three days), Lake Tawakoni groups the only Black-and-white Warbler (Friday and Saturday), and a renegade group to Hagerman NWR the only Lark Sparrow (Sunday).

One other thing: people think that things slow down on Sunday as everybody is heading home, the trips tend to be a little shorter, and everybody is (allegedly) tired. For what it's worth we racked up 128 species on Friday, 128 species on Saturday, and 132 species on Sunday. Maybe it's worth hanging around for some of those Sunday field trips.


Most of you have seen more than a few lists from me over the years ... so here's one more. Without further ado, the list from the Winter 2016 TOS meeting in McKinney, Texas: Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Bonaparte's Gull, Laughing Gull, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Forster's Tern, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared Dove, Inca Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Crested Caracara, American Kestrel, Merlin, Monk Parakeet, Eastern Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Cave Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Carolina Wren, Bewick's Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Pipit, Sprague's Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Smith's Longspur, Black-and-white Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

—Anthony 'Fat Tony' Hewatson





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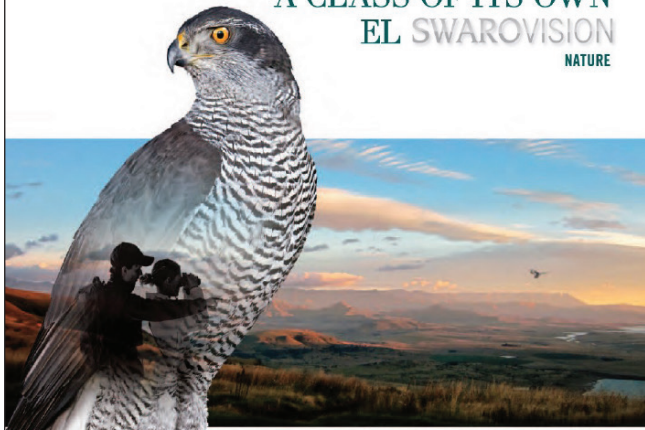

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