

## President's Message



Byron Stone TOS President.

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. Good food, cooler weather, a guaranteed day off of work, and time for some birding. Thanksgiving reminds us of the importance of focusing on gratitude. Rather than getting bogged down with bad news, I try to focus on what I'm grateful for. Birds, nature open spaces, and good friends and family to share them with. This month I've had

the pleasure of participating again in the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, then participating in a TOS Weekender in Rockport, and then, of course, Thanksgiving. Great fun, great birds, great people. But there is still work to do - birds and the habitats they depend on need our help. I'm grateful for the chance to work with TOS members, and with your dedicated TOS board members to further the study, enjoyment and preservation of our wonderful Texas birds. Giving Tuesday will have come and gone by the time you read this, but you can still express your gratitude by making a donation to TOS to help fund our programs. I hope you all have a great Christmas, winter break and CBC season. And I look forward to seeing many of you and birding with you again in Weslaco in January.

Good birding ya'll,  
Sincerely,

—Byron "Doc" Stone,  
TOS President, 2022-2023



Carter Crouch and Sam Wolfe, a Gulf Coast Shorebird Biologist, were on hand to discuss cranes and to answer questions about birding in the area.

Saturday morning, Susan Foster led us to the first stop in Goose Island State Park, the "pasture." Whoopers were seen in the distance, and perhaps the most concentrated numbers of shorebird species were in the wetlands close to the fence on the Lamar Beach Road. Avocets, yellowlegs, dowitchers, pipers, gulls and ibis delighted our crowd. A close fly-by a lone American Bittern was most memorable. 52 species here.

Continuing in the Park, we visited a beach, levee, and pier. Shorebirds encountered at close range were Franklin's Gull, Skimmers, Terns, White Pelicans, Reddish Egret, Little Blue Heron, amongst 46 species total. At the end of the Pier, a lone Common Loon floated and dove at a distance; 2 Oystercatchers poked along a sandbar. Overhead, we had 300 Black Bellied Whistling-Duck, 55 Pintails, gulls, and terns.

Next, we headed to the Linda S. Castro Nature Sanctuary, a 4-1/2 acre hotspot sold by the family to Aransas County after Linda S. Castro died in 2014. In the 3 habitats here we found a wide array of interesting birds. We sighted Couch's Kingbird, American Kestrel, Orange Crowned and Yellow Rumped Warblers, Kingfisher, Black Crested Titmouse, Blue Gray Gnatcatcher, hawks and others. A few species of native wildflowers were still blooming. Well manicured trails led us close to the water to better view the assorted shorebirds. The mature oak motte and the drips also contribute to making this an important migratory bird stopover as well as Butterfly Waystation.

On to Port Bay Road: 27 species were observed in less than an hour. A few gulls, terns, and a few cormorants flew over. 200 White Pelicans flew in formation at a distance. A Roseate Spoonbill flashed some color in a silver gray sky. Other species: two Osprey, 3 Cara Cara's, Loggerhead Shrikes, egrets, herons and only one sparrow species, the Savannah.

Saturday's last stop was Rockport's Demo Garden. The first bird sitting on a tall dead palm stump was a Red

## TOS Whooping Crane Field Trip 11/17-19/2023

The Rockport Whooping Crane Weekender began with Deb Corpora's generous invitation to the group to meet and greet at her newly renovated Birder's Hideaway: "The Nest." Debra, the Bird Lady of Rockport, made welcoming remarks, explained the evolution of her charming abode, and mentioned her fantastic 100+ year old Live Oaks and two types of Turk's Cap, along with other native flowers and plants. Later, at our hotel, the Inn at Fulton Harbor, Carter Crouch of the International Crane Foundation gave an informative account of the Cranes' rescue from the brink of extinction by dedicated ornithologists with financial support of many interested birders.

Continued on page 3



## Highlights from the Rockport Weekender

First day of Rockport TOS Weekender. Visited Rockport hotspots and Aransas Pathways sites. Delicious meals at Moondogs and Charlotte Plummers and excellent hospitality from the Inn at Fulton Harbor. Special thanks to Debra Corpora for hosting our welcome reception at her cottage, The Nest, which is available for birders to rent. Tomorrow is a private tour of the Big Tree Ranch by TPWD's Ben Horstman.





Day Two of TOS Rockport Weekender. Excellent tour by TPWD's Ben Horstman. Great weather, birds, and camaraderie.



*Continued from page 1*

Shouldered Hawk. Statuesque, not too shy. We passed by a handsome new bench placed in memory of Deb Corpora's husband. Then, a N. Mockingbird and Yellow rumped Warbler caught our eye, but that was it.

Sunday, still in Goose Island SP, Ben Horstman, Interpretive Ranger with Texas Parks and Wildlife, gave us a private tour of a newly acquired ranch behind The Big Tree. At the gated entrance, several passerines flitted about in the Live Oaks: vireos, warblers, gnatcatchers, and 2 Northern Parula. Along the entry road, we passed a Brown Thrasher, posing for a few minutes, displaying his gorgeous brown hues. The first birders flushed a Great Horned Owl. Whooping Cranes and Sandhill Cranes kept their distance further into the property. Sparrow species seen in one hedgerow: Grasshopper, Vesper, Savannah, Lincoln's, and Swamp. We passed 11 Eastern Meadowlarks, 4 Robins,

11 Eastern Phoebe's, and 8 N. Mockingbirds. We enjoyed another cooperative Belted Kingfisher, flock of 22 Roseate Spoonbills, flock of 114 White Pelicans, Brown Pelicans, Ibis, plus Harriers, Ospreys, and Ladder-backed Woodpecker.

Susan planned a perfect birder's weekend. All the birding hotspots were covered, and the target bird, The Whooping Crane, was very much in evidence. We had many views but perhaps the time when the Sandhill Cranes joined up with the Whoopers was the best.

Susan guaranteed our creature comforts by planning a great lunch at Moondog Seaside Eatery, dinner at Charlotte Plummer's on the Pier, and spending the night at the Inn at Fulton Harbor. The staff at all three places were friendly, cordial and helpful.

Louise Smyth graciously did all of the trip ebird reports.

— Karen Terrell

## Regional Reports

### Region 1—Panhandle

### Region 2—North Central Texas

—Lorrie Mathers

### Region 3—East Texas Timberlands (Pineywoods)

Howdy y'all!!

Been fairly quiet in East Texas. But we are currently gearing up for our 11 local Christmas bird counts! Do you need 100 in any of the 46 counties? I can connect you with a CBC team leader, that would appreciate the help! We have some more great news, the past President of TOS, Jim Hailey is resuscitating the Richland Chambers CBC after years of dormancy. Look him up if you have an interest in joining us! Lots of our winter sparrows are arriving. So glad to see them, cooler weather is coming. Another gem that is so new, is with the Texas Land Conservancy (Ivy Payne Preserve) it has opened a new tract in Elkhart, Texas. Headed that way November 18-19.

See you on the trail! Laura

—Laura Wilson

Email: [hummingbirdhill95@gmail.com](mailto:hummingbirdhill95@gmail.com)

### Region 4—Trans-Pecos

—Pamela Pipes

Email: [pspipes@gmail.com](mailto:pspipes@gmail.com)

### Region 5—Edwards Plateau Report



Limpkin : Dwayne Flores, Bexar County

This fall has witnessed some notable movements in the region. Just a few of the highlights, and by no means complete include a Broad-billed Hummingbird at feeders in Medina County, Fort Clark Springs WTP in Kinney County had 3 Red-breasted Mergansers (a 1<sup>st</sup> record for the County) 3 American White Pelicans (a 4<sup>th</sup> record for the county) and



Green-tailed Towhee : Dina Perry, Bexar County

a Red-necked Phalarope (1<sup>st</sup> county record) and others. A Brown Booby at Canyon Lake (the dam) in Comal County and a sprinkling of Sprague's Pipits, Rock Wrens in a few counties. Limpkins finally made it further into the region with Kerr County seeing its first one along with Comal (1) and Bexar (2 individuals). Green-tailed Towhees have landed in Bexar County in at least 9 locations averaging over 20 individuals. Lots of great birding to be had out there in the Edwards Plateau region! Please email Christine Turnbull [cbsturnbull@hotmail.com](mailto:cbsturnbull@hotmail.com) if you have interesting sightings or a hidden gem to visit or just a great place to highlight in your area.

—Christine Turnbull

Email: [cbsturnbull@hotmail.com](mailto:cbsturnbull@hotmail.com)

### Region 6—Central Prairie

—Randy Pinkston

Email: [drpinkston@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drpinkston@sbcglobal.net)

### Region 7—Rio Grande Brushlands

Interesting things have been happening on the coast! Eight Brown Boobies at the end of Port Bay Road on pilings in Rockport found by Bob Showler and photographed by Ben Horstmann. A Bar-tailed Godwit was found and photographed at the Portland soccer fields for the second year in a row by Skip Cantrell. Shelia Hargis had a Brown Noddy at the Port Aransas Jetty in October. Franklin's Gulls were reported migrating in the thousands, even hundreds of thousands, by Petra Hockey.

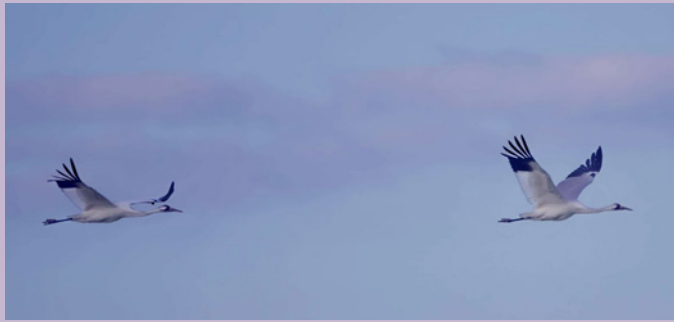
Flamingo photos by Frank Farese, Fred Collins, and Carol Bell.





Rockport held its first Arbor Day Celebration and named the largest Live Oak in the park after 100-year-old Ray Little. This is planned to be an annual event. Also in Rockport, I am gearing up for the next TOS Weekender where we will be hearing from Carter Crouch of the International Crane Foundation as well as seeing how many Whooping Cranes we can find around Aransas County. While birding a few days ago with Gino Ellison, Big Year birder, we had a family group of Whooping Cranes and another adult. The juvenile is mottled shades of cinnamon and white. There were also three adults in the pasture by the Big Tree and one in the field by Fourth Street. *Photos by Frank Farese.*





### Lower Rio Grande Valley

American Flamingos have shown up in the LRGV also, with two being reported at Laguna Atascosa. With the LRGV Birding Festival kicking into gear this week, birders are flocking to the Valley and finding many rarities. Bill Sain reports a Tropical Parula in the parking lot at Estero Llano Grande. I love parking lot birds, and I'm sure Bill is heading for the *lonches* at Nana's. A Limpkin has also been seen at Estero. Golden-crowned Warbler, Blue Buntings, and California Gull are other recent rare birds that have been reported. Expect to see more reports this week from all the excellent guides who'll be leading trips for the festival.

### Laredo and the Upper Rio Grande Valley

While nothing unusual to be reported, Carlos Escamilla continues to post gorgeous photos of the beautiful birds of Webb County, namely these photos of a Gray Hawk and Red-billed Pigeons at the Max Mandel Golf Course. The Laredo Christmas Bird Count is slated for December 30th, and the Laredo Birding Festival will be held February 7-10, 2024. This year's speakers are Robert M. Peck, Christina Baal, and Cin-Ty Lee. Registration is now underway. I will see you at both of these events!



—Susan Foster

Email: [idratherbebirding@gmail.com](mailto:idratherbebirding@gmail.com)

### Region 8 Coastal Prairie

It was a relatively quiet summer on the Upper Texas Coast, with extreme heat keeping birders indoors and bird activity low. However, a few notable species were found amidst the record temps. In early July, Harris County's first record of Long-billed Thrasher was seen by many birders over 4 days, and Galveston County had two sightings each for Sooty Tern and Masked Booby, all from shore or slightly inland. Speaking of pelagic birds, the 48-hour trip hosted by Texas Pelagics this September gave 29 birders incredible looks at Red-footed Booby, a first for any of their offshore trips.

Fall migration brought western birds to our eastern shores. Notable sightings included Western Wood-Pewee (Galveston Co.), Western Flycatcher (Brazoria and Galveston Co.), Lesser Goldfinch (Galveston Co.), Brewer's Sparrow (Fort Bend Co.), Lark Bunting (Harris Co.), Green-tailed Towhee (Austin Co.), Black-headed Grosbeak (Fort Bend, Harris, and Galveston Co.), and Lazuli Bunting (Fort Bend and Matagorda Co.).

Our region also had a number of vagrants from the south. The first Chambers County record for Ringed Kingfisher was photographed on August 27, Harris County's Greater Pewee returned on October 19, and Fort Bend County hosted a Tropical Parula from October 15-16. But the stars of the season were five American Flamingos in Galveston County

in early September. These birds, likely displaced from a hurricane, were seen by dozens of birders despite being one day wonders...or so we thought. Excitingly, three flamingos were spotted in the same general area a month later. And we weren't the only ones graced with the presence of these gorgeously absurd birds. This fall, flamingos have been spotted in Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande Valley, as well as up the eastern seaboard to Virginia and inland locations like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kansas, and Wisconsin!

With cooler temps and the Christmas Bird Count season upon us, grab your binoculars and head outdoors, where every sighting is a gift wrapped in nature's finest plumage!



*Long-billed Thrasher. Photo Andrew Hamlett*



*Red-footed Booby. Photo Mark Scheuerma*



*American Flamingo. Photo Wyatt Egelhoff*

—Kendra Kocab  
 Emil: [kenner7683@gmail.com](mailto:kenner7683@gmail.com)

### Director-at-Large Report

Being a Director-at-Large means in theory I can write about bird happenings all over the state. However, I would like to talk about late summer-early fall at Canyon Lake, what I consider my “local patch”. Since late July, I have added 9 species to my Comal County list, all in the Canyon Lake area. And I missed a few more new Ebird records for the area, such as Sanderling and Black-necked Stilt.

A year ago, at the end of November the lake was 81% full. As of November 28, the lake is at 61.9%. When you look at your Ebird track for a bird walk, it looks like you are walking on water. As more of the lakebed dried up, the shorebirds arrived. Birders got good looks at Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, and Snowy Plover. Two hopping hotspot areas were the Old Hancock Trail/Hancock Road Trailhead and Crane’s Mill Park.

More Buff-breasted Sandpiper, White Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, and a few White-faced Ibis were recorded from Crane’s Mill park area. A Roseate Spoonbill was present from August to mid-September. Previous Ebird records for spoonbill were two birds reported by four birders at the end of August 2018. The pond those birds were in dried up and the birds were only there for a few days. A Brown Booby, not always a yearly occurrence, showed up on the actual dam in early October and was still present into November. Around ten warbler species were also found on the nature trail below the dam in early September. Waiting to see what the winter weather will bring to Canyon Lake. All three scoter species were present this past winter.

—Lynn Thompson

## TOSNEWS Staff

Jack Eitnrear

Editor

Judy Kestner

Proofreader

Susan Foster

Proofreader

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

Printed by Sheridan PA

Typesetting by Phil Wolfe Graphic Design

Copyright ©2023 Texas Ornithological Society



# Texans in the Tropics

## Texas Ornithological Society Panama Trip 2023

By Carter Crouch, edited by Sam Wolfe

In late August, twelve Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) members made the trip south to Panama for a TOS birding adventure led by Susan Foster. The trip was coordinated with the Canopy Family and included stays at both the Canopy Lodge and the Canopy Tower.

Our group ranged from people that had traveled across the globe on birding trips to those who had never done an international birding trip. For my wife, Sam, and me, this was our first birding trip in the tropics, and we were excited but quite intimidated by the long list of species. It felt like no amount of studying could prepare us for that amount of avian diversity.

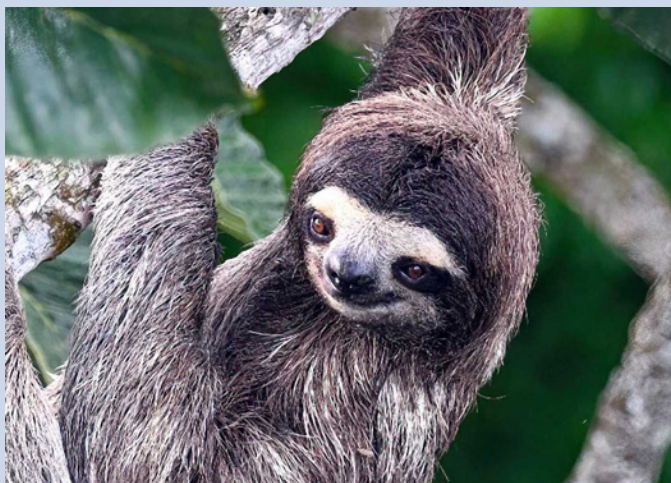
Luckily for us, the guides were incredible and knew where to go, how to find the birds, and more importantly how to get everyone's eyes on the birds. The last one is no small task with 12 birders who were often distracted by interesting plants, butterflies, mammals, and other birds!

Carlos Bethancourt was our primary guide. In addition to Carlos, we had 1 to 2 additional local guides each day. All the guides were incredible and could identify birds by sight and sound. But far more impressive was the fact that all of them could mimic many of the birds with a whistle. They were always in good spirits and made the trip incredibly enjoyable for all. They even spoiled us with mid-morning coffee and snack breaks.

Another memorable part of the trip was the open-air lodging we had at both Canopy Lodge and Canopy Tower. The atmosphere at both locations was extremely peaceful, with every facet well thought out— a true birder's paradise. Each meal with fresh squeezed juice was a treat, and the homemade hot sauce went well with everything, at least it did on my plate. The staff were friendly, and the hospitality was top notch. Additionally, I was pleasantly surprised at the comfortable nighttime temperatures, the surprising lack of biting insects, and the luck we had with the rain, considering we were there in the rainy season. Everything about the trip exceeded my expectations!



Keel-billed Toucans were a frequent showstopper throughout the trip.  
Photo by Mark Fuller



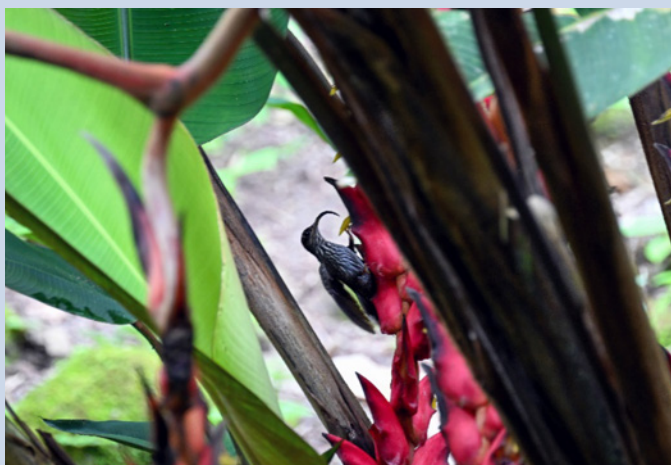
The brown-throated three-toed sloth was one of many remarkable mammals of the trip.  
Photo by Sandy Sorkin

Some of our group landed on August 25, and the rest of the group landed on the 26th. My first Panama bird was a familiar Cattle Egret, Susan's was a Turkey Vulture, and Kathie's was a Great-tailed Grackle. However, we quickly replaced familiar birds with unfamiliar ones.

After a long travel day, the August 26th travelers arrived at Canopy Lodge with the rest of the group. We sat down for the first of many excellent meals. Unfortunately, we arrived well after sunset, so birding at Canopy Lodge would have to wait until morning. At least we thought it would, as we settled into our rooms after dinner, we were serenaded by a Tropical Screech-Owl.

The next morning kicked off a week of surreal birding, adventure, and seeing some remarkable reptiles and mammals. Each day we traveled to a new spot with new birds, new habitats, new mammals, new reptiles, and new scenery. Our life list continued to grow each day, with no sign of slowing!

It would be hard to pick the best bird of the trip. I asked group members throughout the trip what their favorite was,



The White-tipped Sicklebill was worth the wait.  
Photo by Sandy Sorkin





*The guides were able to get this singing Streak-chested Antpitta in the spotting scope through an immense tangle of forest vegetation.  
Photo by Sandy Sorkin*

but everyone struggled. I guess when you've seen well over 200 birds in just over a week, and most of them are lifers, picking a favorite is nearly impossible. The shockingly small Pearl Kite and Little Hawk were adorable! I have been an American Kestrel fan for years, so seeing these other tiny raptors was certainly a highlight for me. The toucans and toucanets were incredible and gorgeous, and I never got sick of looking at the Keel-billed Toucans that we saw almost daily. All the motmots and trogons were beautiful, but how do you pick the best one? The Blue Cotinga was electric. The Boat-billed Heron was one of the most unique looking birds I've ever seen. The Black-and-white Owl was a spectacular bird. The White-tipped Sicklebill, a hummingbird with a near 90-degree bend in its bill, provided a challenge and took many stakeouts at Canopy Lodge. Finally, on the last morning at the Lodge, we got to watch it feed on a heliconia, one of their primary sources of nectar.

Our group's experience with the Black-crowned Antpitta was one I'll never forget, and certainly one of the "best" birds of the trip. On the first day trying, we had an incredible mixed flock come into the calls. A Streak-chested Antpitta came in, landed on a branch, and put on a show while singing its heart out. However, there was no sign of the Black-crowned Antpitta.

On the second day trying for the Black-crowned, we tried for it at 3-5 stops along the trail. At each spot, the guides would have the group cluster together, we couldn't talk or move for fear of spooking the approaching bird. At the last spot, we were about to throw in the towel, when the second guide heard one in the distance. We walked back up the trail, clustered together, and tried again. We all held our breath when there was a quick glimpse of it, moving behind the thick vegetation, but it disappeared into the dark forest. We continued down the trail, now spread out and unprepared. While walking, I looked down and there it was, not 5 feet from my boots! My jaw nearly hit the forest floor! The Black-crowned Antpitta is a ground dweller, and I expected it to walk like a quail or maybe hop like a robin, but this bird jumped like a bull frog, leaping a good 1-2 feet each jump. It jumped to the right of the group, then jumped across the trail, and wrapped around and crossed the trail behind us. After many prepared stops, this bird caught

everyone off guard, but after a few minutes of pure chaos, the group had all seen the Black-crowned Antpitta, and everyone walked out of the forest with a big smile.

One of the birds I was most excited about seeing were the tinamous. Tinamous are an ancient lineage of birds,



*After days of hearing the secretive Great Tinamou, I was beginning to accept that the only one I was going to see this trip was the one on the Canopy Tower mural. Luckily fate, and some incredible bird guides, had other plans.*

*Photo by Sam Wolfe*

related to emus, rheas, and ostriches. Little Tinamou and Great Tinamou were both on the Canopy lists. While we heard Little Tinamou at one location near Canopy Lodge, Great Tinamous seemed to be everywhere we went around Canopy Tower. Their haunting whistling calls at sunrise and sunset drew me in, seemingly taunting me. Instead of relaxing before dinner, I'd go wandering down the road hoping one would pop out and give me a look. More seasoned travelers kept telling me they've heard tinamous on many trips, but had never seen them, due to their secretive nature. I was determined, but as the days continued to disappear, I began accepting that Great Tinamou may be a "heard only" bird for me.

On our last full day of birding, while at an army ant swarm, I heard Carlos gasp and announce a Great Tinamou was coming in from the right! Finally, I was looking at the bird that had haunted me for days. Not only that, but it was within 20-feet of us, right in the open AND there was a second one! Both tinamous were sizing each other up and trying to claim the front row at the army ant swarm. They put on a show for 20-30 minutes right in front of us, grabbing



insects flushed from the ants. What a highlight to wrap up the week!

I was unable to pick a best bird of the trip while leaving Panama, and a few weeks of reflection has not added any clarity. But I will never forget the Pearl Kite, the Tiny Hawk, the Boat-billed Heron, the Blue Cotinga, the White-Tipped Sicklebill, the toucans, the motmots, the trogons, the Black-and-white Owl, and the Great Tinamous, and every time I think about that bull frog-leaping Black-crowned Antpitta, I will have a smile on my face! Susan Foster will be leading the same trip next year, and Sam and I would highly recommend it. Good luck picking your own best bird of the trip!



*The famously secretive Great Tinamou forgot about its secretive nature at an army ant swarm. Photo by Sandy Sorkin*

## TOS 2024 WINTER MEETING IN WESLACO

The 2024 winter meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society will take place in Weslaco on January 11-14, 2024. The Rio Grande Valley is one of the best birding locations in North America, even in winter. The weather is usually mild, and the hospitality is congenial, so this should be a fun experience.

The planning committee has worked with Hollie Johnston, board member of the Valley Nature Center (VNC) in Weslaco, to create unique field trips in the area, where we can expect to see not only winter migrants but also a variety of Valley specialties such as Plain Chachalaca, Altamira Oriole, Gray Hawks and Aplomado Falcons. There are chances to see Mangrove Warblers on a special boat trip, and we have scheduled a visit to King Ranch. Field trips offer excellent birding on private ranches, in state parks, and at local hot spots, with six Century Club trips.



Our meeting speakers on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights will introduce us to the flora and fauna of the Lower Rio Grande Valley so please do attend these exciting talks. Prior to the Friday and Saturday evening programs we will share stories and interesting sightings from the day's birding efforts.

On Friday evening there will be an option for an informal self-guided trip to view the parrots and parakeets in Oliveira Park in Brownsville at sunset, as flocks of these tropical birds come to roost for the evening. Directions provided at the meeting.

We will conduct the event check-in at our host hotel, the Holiday Inn Express in Weslaco. They offer a special nightly rate of \$98 plus tax. Registration information appears below. **DEADLINE TO REGISTER AT THE HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS IS DEC. 18, 2023.**

At the VNC we will conduct a silent auction, with the opportunity to bid on birding experiences with some of our board members. These were a hit several years ago, and we know the bidding will be spirited! Our TOS merchandise will also be on sale.

Field trip departures, evening speakers, and our Saturday banquet will also be held at the VNC.

We eagerly look forward to seeing you at this meeting in the beautiful Rio Grande Valley.

—Christine Turnbull,  
TOS Past-President/Planning Committee Chair

**EVENT REGISTRATION:** Online registration will open on **December 4, 2023 at 6:00 a.m.**, and will close on **Jan. 3, 2024 at 11:55 p.m.** You will receive a confirmation email once your payment is complete. Details in Registration Information below.

The fee for the event is \$100 per TOS member. It is \$135 for non-members, which includes a one-year membership. Students may attend for free. There is a \$10 increase in price on Dec. 30, 2023. An administrative fee of \$35 will be deducted from refunds made between December 30, 2023, and January 5, 2024. **No refunds can be made after January 5, 2024.**

**LUNCH SELECTION:** Attendees may pre-order lunches, which will be distributed each morning at the VNC. See Lunches section below. Must be submitted by **Dec. 29, 2023.** No refunds after this date.

**BANQUET SELECTION:** Meal choices, including a vegetarian, gluten-free option, are offered on the online registration form and must be submitted by **Dec. 29, 2023.** No refunds after this date.

**FIELD TRIP DEPARTURE:** Caravans to field trip sites will leave from the parking lot of the VNC, 301 S. Border Ave., Weslaco 78596. Please be prepared to carpool to birding locations. Our evening presentations and Saturday banquet will also be held at the VNC.



## COVID Safety During the Meeting

For the health and safety of everyone, TOS asks that participants comply with guidelines set by private businesses and municipal entities.

## Hotel and Breakfast

Our host hotel and location of event check-in is the Holiday Inn Express at 421 S. International Blvd., Weslaco, TX 78596.

You must make hotel reservations **BY DEC. 18, 2023**. Use code **BG1** for the special group rate of \$98 plus tax. You may call them at 956-973-2222 to reserve your room, or reserve online. To enter the code online, click the Rate Preference drop-down menu and enter the code under Group Rate.

Breakfast is included in that price and will be available at 5:30 a.m. daily. Breakfast grab-and-go bags will be available at 5:00 a.m. for early trip participants on Friday and Saturday.

## Lunches

Event attendees and field trip leaders may pre-order box lunches which will be distributed at the VNC each morning. The cost is \$11.00 per meal and your order must be submitted by **Dec. 29, 2023**. No refunds will be given after that date. You may place your order now.

The menu with payment portal appears HERE.

## Saturday Night Banquet

We will offer a South Texas Mexican buffet for our Saturday banquet. A gluten-free/vegetarian option will be available. **MAKE YOUR SELECTION WHEN YOU REGISTER FOR THE MEETING ONLINE. ORDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DEC. 29, 2023.** No refunds will be given after that date.

## Meeting Agenda

### Thursday, January 11, 2024

- 4:00-6:00 PM Event check-in at the Holiday Inn Express/silent auction opens at the VNC
- 6:15 PM First-time meeting attendee reception at the VNC
- 6:30 PM Welcome/Introductions/Announcements at the VNC (Lots of useful information is given during this time, so please attend.)
- 7:00 PM Byron Stone, TOS President – Welcome and Meeting Information
- 7:30-8:00 PM Speaker: Ryan Rodriguez – *Specialties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley*

### Friday, January 12

- All Day Birding – caravans leave from the VNC between 5:30 and 7:00 a.m.
- 4:00-5:00 PM Event check-in at the Holiday Inn Express
- Sunset OPTIONAL TRIP: Parrots & Parakeets in Brownsville (45 minutes from Weslaco)
- 6:30 PM Announcements/Birding Reports at the VNC

- 7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Tom Langschied—*The Birds of King Ranch: Reflecting on the 30+ years of exploring the avifauna of this legendary place.*

### Saturday, January 13

- All Day Birding—caravans leave from the VNC between 5:30 and 7:00 a.m.
- 5:00 PM Silent auction closes at the VNC
- 5:00-6:00 PM Social hour at the VNC—cash bar
- 6:00-7:00 PM Banquet/Announcements/Birding Reports at the VNC
- 7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Luciano Guerra—*Birding Texas Style in the Rio Grande Valley*

### Sunday, January 14

- All Day Birding—caravans leave the VNC between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m.; depart for home.

## Registration Information

The registration link will be activated on **December 4, 2023, at 6:00 a.m.** There are two ways to register:

1. You may click the link HERE and register.
2. From the home page of our website, you may log in to your TOS account and register there.

Please have in mind your first and second choices of field trips, as some trips fill fast. If you would like to be on a waitlist for a trip, contact Judy Kestner at 361-701-1962 or tosmember@yahoo.com. Be sure to mention your name, the trip number and how many spaces you'll need.

Please also be sure your email address and membership dues payments are up to date. (To confirm, just visit www.texasbirds.org and click Member Login to view your account.)

Once your event fee payment is received by TOS, you will receive a confirmation email showing the trips and banquet meal, if any, that you have selected. Another email will be sent closer to the meeting with further details.

For any questions, or if you do not have access to the internet, you may call Judy Kestner at 361-701-1962 or Frances Cerbins at 512-694-7924 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.

## Event Prices

The Winter Meeting Package includes three field trips (excluding special entry fees) and three evening presentations.

\$100 for TOS members

\$135 for non-TOS members (includes a one-year membership)

FREE for all students

The Saturday night banquet is \$35 per person, and lunches are available for \$11 (see Lunches above).

**Registration cost will increase by \$10 on December 30, 2023. A \$35 administrative fee will be deducted from refunds issued between Dec. 30, 2023, and Jan. 5, 2024. No refunds after January 5, 2024.**



## Meeting Presentations

### Thursday Evening

7:30 PM

**Title:** *Specialties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley*

**Presenter:** Ryan Rodriguez

**Description:** Ryan will be talking about the birds and butterflies found mainly in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, accompanied by his fabulous photographs. Many of these species will be seen on our field trips, so this is a wonderful way to prepare for what's to come!



Ryan Rodriguez

**Bio:** Ryan Rodriguez is a 16-year-old birder and photographer from McAllen, Texas. Ryan has been birding from a very young age starting in his backyard in McAllen. He is now guiding across the Valley. He volunteers as an eBird reviewer for the LRGV region and enjoys volunteering as a

hawk counter atop the Bentsen Hawk Tower.

### Friday Evening

7:00 PM

**Title:** *The Birds of King Ranch: Reflecting on the 30+ years of exploring the avifauna of this legendary place.*

**Presenter:** Tom Langschied

**Description:** Tom started the King Ranch Nature Tour program back in the fall of 1994. He will cover his experiences with birds and their habitat on the King Ranch, and share guiding anecdotes from his long tenure there.

**Bio:** Tom Langschied is former director of the King Ranch Visitor Program and coordinator of King Ranch's Nature Tour Program.



Tom Langschied

Originally from Fort Wayne, IN, Tom came down to South Texas in January of 1991 to get his master's degree from Texas A&M University- Kingsville and his thesis evaluated seasonal changes in bird

communities on King Ranch. While Tom has worked for King Ranch since 1994, he left his full-time position in the summer of 2005 to work full time as a Research Associate for

the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute coordinating a South Texas wintering birds program.

Then in November 2013 he returned to the King Ranch full time to coordinate the King Ranch Nature Tour Program once again and later to oversee the overall King Ranch visitor program.

Tom left King Ranch in June of this year to pursue other job opportunities. Besides his passion for birds and birding, he also has a strong interest in butterflies, moths, dragonflies and discovering other interesting components of nature. Tom is married and has two grown kids.

### Saturday Evening

7:00 PM

**Title:** *Birding Texas Style in the Rio Grande Valley*

**Presenter:** Luciano Guerra

**Description:** Get up close and personal to many of the birds that make south Texas their home with "Birding Texas Style in the Rio Grande Valley." An award-winning photographer and life-long Valley resident, Guerra uses his photography to present a unique, informative, and entertaining program that features hundreds of his bird images displayed in unison with the playing of the different birds' songs for a complete indoor birding experience. In addition, Guerra



Luciano Guerra

shares background information about photos he has captured as well as photography tips that will help photographers of all skill levels improve their photography.

**Bio:** Mr. Guerra is a life-long resident of Mission, Texas. He has been an avid photographer ever since he was given his first

35mm camera as a teenager. He has developed a passion for nature and wildlife photography over the years and he loves to use his photography to share the incredible diversity of wildlife we are blessed to have in south Texas with others. He has won several awards and contests with his nature and wildlife photography including Best of Contest and the People's Choice award in the Small Tract Competition of the Valley Land Fund's wildlife photo contest. His photos have been featured in newspapers, magazines, such as Texas Monthly, calendars, books, advertisements, postcards and on the cover of two different editions of the Valley's YP phone directory.

For the past nine years Mr. Guerra has been employed as the National Butterfly Center's staff photographer and outreach coordinator. As a result, his most recent bird and butterfly photography and videos can be seen on the National Butterfly Center's Facebook page.

# TOS Field Trips – Weslaco, Winter 2024

**Friday – 11 trips    Saturday – 13 trips    Sunday – 7 trips**

*Please select a first and second option each day, as some trips fill quickly.*

NOTE: Participants must meet their field trip group at the Valley Nature Center, 301 S. Border Ave, Weslaco at least 15 minutes prior to start time. Due to logistical complications, it is not possible for individuals to meet the group at any other location. Please plan accordingly. Also, there will be entrance fees at some locations. Please have small bills available as well as bringing your state and national parks passes. Sunday trips will be modified by the trip leaders to allow ample time to drive home.

NUMBER	FIELD TRIP AND DESCRIPTION	COUNTY	DIFFICULTY	DEPARTURE & HOTEL RETURN TIMES	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	<p><b>BIRDY BROWNSVILLE:</b> Discover the coastal prairie and riparian treasures near Brownsville. Explore renowned sites such as the <b>Sabal Palm Sanctuary</b>, home to one of the last remaining tracts of Sabal Palm forest in the USA. This unique habitat, with its wetlands, forests, and proximity to the Rio Grande attracts many bird species including exciting rarities. Uncover the hidden gems of the Coastal Prairie, where the Cassin’s Sparrow, Gull-billed Tern, and Aplomado Falcon thrive.</p> <p>On Friday and Saturday our journey also takes us to <b>Resaca de la Palma State Park</b> in Brownsville, where water birds await our observation.</p> <p><i>Note: There is a \$5 admission fee at Sabal Palm. There will be some walking at both parks.</i></p>	CAMERON	MODERATE	6:30 am-3:00 pm	X	X	X
2A	<p><b>COASTAL EXTRAVAGANZA:</b> <i>(These activities are identical to those in trip 2B, but in different sequence.)</i> Participants from trips 2A and 2B begin with a quest for Aplomado Falcons in the <b>coastal prairie</b>. Then trip 2A travelers will experience a captivating <b>sailing journey</b> from Port Isabel. Accompanied by Captain Henry, we’ll explore island bays where the elusive Mangrove Yellow Warbler nests. Witness the spectacle of Red Knots, American Oystercatchers, Reddish Egrets, and more, all while enjoying the possibility of Bottlenose dolphins in the bow’s wake.</p> <p>Our day continues on <b>South Padre Island</b> with the pursuit of coastal specialties up and down the island, including the <b>SPI Birding and Nature Center and Alligator Sanctuary</b> grounds and the <b>Valley Land Fund Migratory Bird Lots</b> on Sheepshead St. and the <b>Convention Center</b> property.</p> <p>We will finish the day checking the <b>resacas on Hwy 100</b> (think Amazon Kingfisher!). Early registration is crucial due to Coast Guard boat occupancy limits.</p> <p><i>Please note: There is a \$50 fee for the boat trip paid upon registration – maximum of 5 participants. Fee of \$8 - \$10 required at the SPI Birding Sanctuary. Must be able to get in and out of the boat. Somewhat lengthy walking on the boardwalk at SPI Nature Center.</i></p>	CAMERON	MODERATE	6:30 am–3:30 pm	X	X	
2B	<p><b>COASTAL EXTRAVAGANZA:</b> <i>(These activities are identical to those in trip 2A, but in different sequence.)</i> Participants from trips 2A and 2B begin with a quest for Aplomado Falcons in the <b>coastal prairie</b>. Then trip 2B travelers continue on <b>South Padre Island</b> with the pursuit of coastal specialties up and down the island, including the <b>SPI Birding and Nature Center and Alligator Sanctuary</b> grounds and the <b>Valley Land Fund Migratory Bird Lots</b> on Sheepshead St. and the <b>Convention Center</b> property.</p> <p>This is followed by a captivating <b>sailing journey</b> from Port Isabel. Accompanied by Captain Henry, we’ll explore island bays where the elusive Mangrove Yellow Warbler nests. Witness the spectacle of Red Knots, American Oystercatchers, Reddish Egrets, and more, all while enjoying the possibility of Bottlenose dolphins in the bow’s wake.</p> <p>We will finish the day checking the <b>resacas on Hwy 100</b> (think Amazon Kingfisher!). Early registration is crucial due to Coast Guard boat occupancy limits.</p> <p><i>Please note: There is a \$50 fee for the boat trip paid upon registration – maximum of 5 participants. Fee of \$8 - \$10 required at the SPI Birding Sanctuary. Must be able to get in and out of the boat. Somewhat lengthy walking on the boardwalk at SPI Nature Center.</i></p>	CAMERON	MODERATE	6:30 am–3:30 pm	X	X	
3	<p><b>SPI SPECIALTY EXPLORATION:</b> This trip is similar to trips 2A and 2B but without the boat trip. The day begins with a quest for Aplomado Falcons in the <b>coastal prairie</b>. We move to <b>South Padre Island</b> looking for coastal specialties up and down the island, including the <b>SPI Birding, Nature Center and Alligator Sanctuary</b> grounds and the <b>Valley Land Fund Migratory Bird Lots</b> on Sheepshead St. and the <b>Convention Center</b> property.</p> <p>We will finish the day checking the <b>resacas on Hwy 100</b> (think Amazon Kingfisher!).</p> <p><i>Note: Fee of \$8 - \$10 required at the SPI Birding Sanctuary. Somewhat lengthy walking on the boardwalk at SPI Nature Center; birding from the car and paved walks.</i></p>	CAMERON	EASY	6:30 am–3:00 pm	X	X	



4	<p><b>KING RANCH (KLEBERG COUNTY CENTURY CLUB TRIP):</b> Indulge in the exclusivity of the King Ranch (Sta. Gertrudis Division) bird tour. This legendary property, with its oak mottes, grasslands, and rolling terrain, is the original site of Captain King's first cow camp and contains the ranch headquarters. Abundant birds and occasional rarities make this tour truly exceptional. We could see between 70 and 80 species here. On the return home we will visit the <b>Sarita rest stop</b> about 30 miles south of Kingsville for lunch and to walk the trails and pick up a few extra species.</p> <p><i>Please note: There is a \$65 entrance fee for King Ranch that covers a local guide and van transportation.</i></p> <p><i>Short walks from the King Ranch van; short trail at the rest stop.</i></p>	KLEBERG	EASY	5:45 am–3:30 pm			X	
5	<p><b>LAGUNA ATASCOSA: Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge</b>, situated along the Laguna Madre's shores, stands as a haven for avian enthusiasts. With the highest bird species count of any National Wildlife Refuge in the country, it is also home to the largest remaining population of protected ocelots in the USA. Expect encounters with Reddish Egrets, White-tailed Hawks, and much more.</p> <p>On Saturday we will also check out <b>Hwy. 100 resacas</b> on the way back.</p> <p><i>Walking on mud flats; short walks from the car.</i></p>	CAMERON	MODERATE	6:15 am–3:00 pm			X	X
6	<p><b>MISSION/MCALLEN:</b> Enjoy the esteemed <b>National Butterfly Center</b> for the ease with which visitors get to see so many target species, including the distinctive Green Jay, the vibrant Altamira Oriole, the elusive Olive Sparrow, the charming Clay-colored Thrush, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Gray Hawk. Access to the Rio Grande here also provides the opportunity for the coveted kingfisher trifecta.</p> <p>At the renowned <b>Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park</b>, the Hawk Tower overlooking the oxbow offers an exceptional vantage point to witness raptors soaring through the skies.</p> <p>The afternoon will be spent in McAllen at <b>Quinta Mazatlan</b> in McAllen observing features that may inspire replication, as they invite numerous species to stop, rest, and take a drink.</p> <p><i>Please note: There is a \$5 entry fee at the butterfly center and \$2-\$3 at Quinta Mazatlan.</i></p> <p><i>Walking on smooth or paved trails.</i></p>	HIDALGO	MODERATE	6:30 am–3:00 pm	X		X	
7	<p><b>SALT LAKES AND PLAYAS:</b> We will explore the avian wonders of the <b>salt lakes north of Edinburg</b>. Amidst the dry thorn scrub, we'll encounter an intriguing mix of birds, from shorebirds to sparrows and wrens.</p> <p>Our journey continues to <b>Delta Lake</b> for lunch to view a captivating array of waterbirds and winter birds.</p> <p>On Saturday we'll uncover more wetland gems along <b>roadside sites</b>, including ducks, a variety of shorebirds, Northern Bobwhite, and more.</p> <p><i>Walking in un-shaded habitat at the salt lakes; short walks from the car.</i></p>	HIDALGO	MODERATE	6:30 am–3:00 pm			X	X
8	<p><b>SANTAANA AND THE HIDALGO PUMPHOUSE:</b> Delve into the enchanting realms of the <b>Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge</b>. Witness Lower Rio Grande Valley specialties and raptors in the productive wetland and riparian habitats. Towering trees and scenic trails offer exceptional observation opportunities.</p> <p>Following this, we'll journey to the <b>Hidalgo Pumphouse</b> where many intriguing species await.</p> <p><i>Walking trails at Santa Ana; paved walks at the Pumphouse.</i></p>	HIDALGO	MODERATE	6:30 am–3:00 pm	X			X
9	<p><b>WESLACO:</b> This lush locale boasts three rich nature sites: <b>Estero Llano Grande State Park</b>, the <b>Valley Nature Center</b>, and <b>Frontera Audubon</b>.</p> <p>Prepare to encounter a diverse array of local specialties and keep an eye out for possible rarities.</p> <p><i>Please note: Entry fee of \$3-\$5 at Frontera Audubon.</i></p> <p><i>Short distance walking on paved and smooth gravel paths.</i></p>	HIDALGO	EASY	6:45 am – 3:00 pm	X		X	X
10	<p><b>JIM HOGG COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Join our fearless leaders in this severely under-birded county of south Texas. Targets include Rio Grande Valley Turkey, Lark Bunting, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Pyrrhuloxia. Extensive driving to/from sites in Hebbronville and extensive roadside birding with leaders who have birded this tough county before. Target: 60+ species were found on a similar 2017 TOS trip.</p> <p><i>Birding close to the vehicles.</i></p>	JIM HOGG	EASY	6:00 am–4:00 pm	X		X	
11	<p><b>WILLACY COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Located on the eastern side of the Rio Grande Valley, Willacy County boasts a variety of habitats: agricultural fields, mudflats, beaches, resacas, coastal prairies, thornscrub, and wetlands.</p> <p>We will work our way east to west hitting the Teniente and East Lake Tracts of Lower Rio Grande NWR to Raymondville and ultimately Port Mansfield. We will try for rare residents like N. Beardless-Tyrannulet, Clay-colored Thrush, and Black-throated Sparrow but our focus will be on species diversity and finding water if current drought conditions remain into January.</p> <p><i>Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding.</i></p>	WILLACY	EASY	6:15 am –4:00 pm	X		X	

12	<b>BROOKS COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Go on a quest to get your life list to 100 species in the wilds of this county with a population of just 7,223 people. Brooks County includes the famous Falfurrias Rest Stop which has been home to quite a few rarities over the years. The quirky <b>Sacred Heart Cemetery</b> in Falfurrias has an impressive list of species. <i>Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding close to the vehicles.</i>	BROOKS	EASY	6:15 am–3:30 pm		X	X
13	<b>ZAPATA COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Try to knock this county off your Century Club list. Targets include Greater Roadrunner, Red-billed Pigeon, Hooded and Audubon’s Orioles, and Black-throated Sparrow. Possible fees. <i>Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding close to the vehicles.</i>	ZAPATA	EASY	5:30 am–4:00 pm	X	X	
14	<b>STARR COUNTY CENTURY CLUB TRIP:</b> Starr County lies in the western part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, along the banks of the Rio Grande. Possible sightings include Red-billed Pigeons, Audubon’s Orioles, Morelet’s Seedeater, and more. Arid areas reveal avian wonders like the iconic Greater Roadrunner, the captivating Cactus Wren, the elusive Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, and Scaled Quail. Our journey begins at <b>Santa Margarita Ranch</b> with a stunning Rio Grande River overlook and probable Brown Jay sightings, followed by exploration at <b>Salineño</b> and <b>Falcon State Park</b> . <b>NOTE: \$45 admission fee at Santa Margarita Ranch.</b> <i>Hiking up and down hills in full sun on uneven ground at Santa Margarita; walking stick helpful. Uneven trails at Salineño.</i>	STARR	DIFICULT	6:00 am.–3:30 pm	X	X	X

## BYE TO BACHMAN’S WARBLER

Related to the previous news item, it’s time to say goodbye to the Bachman’s Warbler.

In this case, it’s not necessarily because Lutheran minister John Bachman condoned slavery and was a slave owner, was an unyielding defender of states’ rights, championed the secession of South Carolina, or worked vigorously to support the Confederacy. It’s because the Bachman’s Warbler was “delisted” last month from the Endangered Species Act due to the Fish & Wildlife Service’s determination that the species is extinct.

Although this Southern species was first described in 1833, it remained relatively unnoticed for roughly the next 50 years. Populations were probably never large and seemed to have been “very low” after the 1920s, according to the official findings of the USFWS. The last confirmed nest was documented in 1937, and a dramatic decline occurred sometime between the early 1900s and 1940 or 1950.

Awareness of this situation resulted in the 1967 listing of the species under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966. In fact, and according to the USFWS, subsequent reports of the Bachman’s Warbler in the U.S. “have not been officially accepted, documented observations.” And in Cuba, no wintering records have been verified since the 1980s.

You can source the information from the USFWS press release of 16 October, found here:

<https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2023-10/21-species-delisted-endangered-species-act-due-extinction>

From Birding Community E-Bulletin Newsletter November 2023

## GOODBYE COOPER’S HAWK!

Get ready to say farewell to Cooper’s Hawk, Anna’s Hummingbird, Gambel’s Quail, Hammond’s Flycatcher, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Bewick’s Wren, Brewer’s Sparrow, Bullock’s Oriole, and a good many more birds.

No, these birds are not extinct. Their names are being changed.

The governing Council of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) recently announced three important commitments related to English “common names” of birds:

1. The AOS commits to changing all English-language names of birds within its geographic jurisdiction that are named directly after people (eponyms), along with other names deemed offensive and exclusionary, focusing first on those species that occur primarily within the U.S. or Canada.
2. The AOS commits to establishing a new committee to oversee the assignment of all English common names for species within the AOS’s jurisdiction; this committee will broaden participation by including a diverse representation of individuals with expertise in the social sciences, communications, ornithology, and taxonomy.
3. The AOS commits to actively involving the public in the process of selecting new English bird names.

Judith Scarl, the Executive Director, and CEO of AOS, said in a statement that there has long been historic bias in how birds have been named, and scientists should work to eliminate that bias. “Exclusionary naming conventions developed in the 1800s, clouded by racism and misogyny, don’t work for us today, and the time has come for us to transform this process and redirect the focus to the birds, where it belongs.”

The elimination of *all* eponyms makes this a sweeping project. The process, rationale, and opportunity are all explained here:

<https://americanornithology.org/about/english-bird-names-project/american-ornithological-society-council-statement-on-english-bird-names/>



## BIRD-O-KU

Each row, column and square (boldly outlined, with 9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the letters in the bird's name without repeating any letters within the same

row, column or square. Using the process of elimination makes guessing unnecessary.

### GOLDFINCH

<b>N</b>		<b>I</b>			<b>C</b>			<b>G</b>
	<b>D</b>			<b>L</b>		<b>N</b>		
		<b>G</b>		<b>N</b>			<b>F</b>	<b>I</b>
	<b>I</b>			<b>C</b>				<b>O</b>
	<b>C</b>		<b>D</b>					<b>N</b>
		<b>N</b>			<b>H</b>		<b>C</b>	
<b>G</b>							<b>D</b>	
	<b>L</b>		<b>O</b>	<b>D</b>		<b>H</b>		
<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>			<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>G</b>		<b>C</b>

### GYRFALCON

	<b>C</b>				<b>Y</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>R</b>	
<b>F</b>			<b>O</b>					<b>N</b>
<b>L</b>			<b>R</b>			<b>O</b>		
		<b>O</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>R</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>L</b>
	<b>L</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>O</b>		<b>Y</b>	
		<b>C</b>		<b>Y</b>		<b>A</b>		
<b>A</b>					<b>N</b>			<b>R</b>
	<b>N</b>						<b>L</b>	
<b>R</b>		<b>L</b>		<b>O</b>				<b>A</b>

## Bird-o-ku example: WHIMBRELS

Each row, column and square (boldly outlined, with 9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the letters in the bird's name without repeating any letters within the same row, column or square. Using the process of elimination makes guessing unnecessary.

There are several ways to figure out where each letter goes. In the puzzle below, the missing letters have been filled in each empty cell.

1. In the bottom row in red, there is only one cell where the letter H appears, so it can be eliminated from the other cells in that row, in that column, and in that square.
2. In the example in green, the letters M and E are the only option in the two cells in the top row. If one cell has to be the M, and the other has to be the E, they cannot appear in any other cells in that square or that row and can be eliminated from all other cells in that square and that row.
3. Cross-column (or cross-row) checking is another way to find the correct letters. In the center of the puzzle the letter B appears in the first and second columns already, and only one cell in the third column contains a B. The W and L can be eliminated from that cell, and the B eliminated from all other cells in the row in which it appears.

<b>M, E</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>M, E</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R, E</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>I, E</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>W, B, E, S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I, L, S</b>	<b>E, L, S</b>	<b>E, L</b>	<b>W, H, M</b>	<b>H, B, E</b>	<b>W, H, B</b>
<b>B, E, S</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>W, B, E, S</b>	<b>I, S</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W, I</b>	<b>I, B, E</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W, I, B, S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I, S</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>I, B</b>	<b>W, I, B</b>
<b>B, E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W, H, I, B, E</b>	<b>W, I, L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W, B, L</b>	<b>H, I, L</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>H, I, B</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>B, S</b>	<b>B, S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L, S</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R, L</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>I, E</b>	<b>H, I, E</b>	<b>W, H, L</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>W, H, I, L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W, H, I</b>
<b>M, S</b>	<b>I, S</b>	<b>H, I, M, S</b>	<b>W, H, L</b>	<b>R, L</b>	<b>W, R, L</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>H, L</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>B, E, S</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>B, E</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>H, S</b>

## Recent noteworthy sightings...

### Bar-tailed Godwit

“The other day” our friend Skip Cantrell, found a Bar-tailed Godwit in with a flock of Marbled Godwits, in Portland Texas, just north of Corpus Christi, TX. This is an extremely rare bird in Texas, only the third sighting. Making this thinking it is a returning bird. The first Bar-tailed Godwit for Texas was found in 2014 by Mel Cooksey in Corpus Christi, but it was the European subspecies, while this bird is the Siberian subspecies. This one was in a little sports complex with proper football (ie soccer for Americans) pitches. Kids were playing this morning, but the bird was still hanging out with Marbled Godwits and Long-billed Curlews. *Facebook Contributor Sheridan Chattin Coffey*



### Cattle Tyrant

When I arrived at the Cattle Tyrant site at Chaparral and Shatzell in Corpus Christi all I could find were a bunch of wet birders. Eventually I found it a block to the south where it was feeding along the street with House Sparrows. Facebook. Check eBird for updates. Photo Dan Jones From Texbirds Facebook Group



I'm sure many of you have heard about our little celebrity!

If you have not, this little guy has decided to take a vacation in Corpus Christi, Texas, making him the first ever of his kind to grace the US and the first record north of the Panama Canal.

Cattle Tyrant. Photo Karen Weid From Birds of Texas Facebook Group



Photo Sabrina Lunceford

A rare visitor from Central/South America has landed in Corpus Christi, TX. It primarily inhabits cities and parks and has been observed frequenting a dumpster, grabbing bugs from windows, roves and sidewalks. This is a first record for the U.S.



Cattle Tyrant in Corpus Christi, TX. 1st ABA record. A ray of sunshine on a cold wet day 11/12/23. Lee Wallace



## Turn Out Your Lights (and address your windows too!)

Fall migration is upon us. The time when billions of birds make their annual trek south through Canada, the U.S. and beyond.

As birders, we know birds face many challenges during their migration. There is one specific challenge that can lead to the loss of many individuals. It is estimated that over 1 billion birds are killed annually by collisions with glass every year in the U.S. Artificial lights can disorient migrating birds at night resulting in increased bird collisions. While light may draw birds closer to buildings, it is the collision with glass that is deadly. There are many ways to reduce or eliminate collisions that have been tested and approved such as “dot” markers applied to windows, hanging cords, strings, or ribbons, or using tempera paint, etc. You can help ease their journey by simply turning off lights overnight, making your windows safer for birds, and advocating for birds by asking others to take these action as well.

The BBL (Bird Banding Lab) is collaborating with the USFWS (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service) to study the impacts of window collisions on bird populations, utilizing the lab’s 100 years of banding and encounter data. The BBL has begun the process of analyzing these data with the goal of contributing to collision science and future conservation management actions!



*A striking image: Here lay a number of dead birds killed due to collisions and collected during a 2013 fall migration building survey. Photo credit: USGS Native Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab.*

## GIVING TUESDAY CAMPAIGN A GREAT SUCCESS

In the middle of October, the fundraising team of Judy Kestner, Lorrie Mathers, Kendra Kocab and Romey Swanson began putting together a campaign to raise funds for the expansion and enhancement of our Sabine Woods Sanctuary.

There had been a recent agreement to lease 14 acres of land bordering the sanctuary on the west and TOS had an obligation to improve the area, as well as a need to add additional water features in the existing property, and a desire to improve the parking situation there.

The secure, cloud-based storage platform that we use offered some email templates and a manual of ideas on how to join forces with the annual Giving Tuesday event.

According to GivingTuesday.org, this day of giving was founded in 2012 by New York’s 92nd Street Y in partnership with the United Nations Foundation as a day that encourages people to do good. The best way birders can do good is to protect and augment the natural habitat used by our avian friends, and so it was decided that “Support Sabine” would be the ideal theme of the TOS Giving Tuesday activities.

Last year our inaugural Giving Tuesday campaign raised just over \$4,700, and we wanted to beat that this year. Would \$6,000 be enough? How about \$8,000? Knowing that the cost of additional water lines would be upwards of \$10,000, that was the goal we settled on.

Lorrie put together an eye-catching flyer. Kendra worked up the wording that would best communicate our objectives. Romey kept us on the straight and narrow with his expertise in this area. Judy glued it all together, and we began our email campaign.

We contacted every person who was a current member, had been a member in the past, visited one of our sanctuaries and paid using the QR code, or who had spoken at a meeting, led a field trip, or attended an event as a guest. The response blew us away.

We are on the verge of hitting \$20,000 in total donations, and it’s all due to the love and compassion of bird-lovers across Texas and beyond.

So, we send our thanks, our admiration, our awe, to everyone who was able to contribute to Support Sabine. Remember that any time is a good time to make a donation to help us help the birds. Remember too that we are always needing volunteer labor and in-kind donations throughout the year. Just send an email to [info@texasbirds.org](mailto:info@texasbirds.org) and ask how you can help.

As Kendra emailed once we went over \$10,000, “WE DID IT!” Well... YOU did it! Thank you.

## Giving Tuesday Donors

Rohit Agarwal & Family	Jim Hailey	Brent Ortego
Charles Alberty	Mary Hannigan	Carol & Doug Owings
Kenneth Anderson & Family	Sheila K Hebert	Sandra Annette Parker
Judith Bailey	Annika Hoover	Patty and Greg Pasztor
Mary Ann Beauchemin & Gary Gray	Erik Huebner	Guy Patterson
Sara Bettencourt & Family	Margo Johnson	Daniel Perales
Gary Binderim	Jerri Kerr	Pamela Pipes
Rachel Bishop	Judy Kestner	Gene & Nancy Prejean
Joanne Boyce	Judy Kestner	Nancy Radding
Valarie Bristol	Vicki & Larry Kirby	Richard E. Redmond & Family
Charles Brown	Jocelyn Kocab	Helen Rejzek
Phillip Brown	Ann Kovich	Joan Risinger
Tammy Brown	Harvey Laas	Buena Robison
Tim & Catherine Brush	Darrell Lanford	Elaine Rushing
Winifred Burkett	Barry Leaton & Family	Phyllis Scott
Jimma Byrd	Buck Lee	Stephanie Sexton
Joseph Collins	Jim Lee	Gayle Sheffield & Betty Fisher
Ellen Coombs & Family	Ryan Leimbach	Joni Shereda & Brian Mckenna
Shannon Davies	Ann Lemon	Gael & Leslie Simons
France Davis	Cindy K Lieurance & Family	Dean Singleton
Barbara Duncan	Sheryl Maruca	Pam Smolen
Jennifer Eberlein	Steve & Cindy Matherly	Louise Smyth
Sue Elliott	Lorrie Mathers	David Stekoll & Margie McAllister
Debra Engler	Larry Mays	Robert Stewart
John Faber	Suzanne McCann	Byron Stone
Frank & Margaret Farese	Mark McClelland	Simon Tan
Marianne Feeney	John Thomas Mccoppin Iii	Karen Terrell
Terry Ferguson	Cheryl Mcgrath	David Thatcher
Miranda Fontaine	Patrick McGuffey	John Thomlinson & Family
Lynn Forster	Mary Belle Meitzen	Lynn Thompson
Brush Freeman	Fritz Meyer	Barbara Tilton
Charmaine Ganson & Family	Kelley Miller	Christine Turnbull
Penny Garsee	Charles & Terrie Minero	Tyler Audubon
Linda Gilbert	Michael & Janet Monahan	Morton Voller
Jerry Gips	Terry Morgan	Melissa Weaver
Nathan Goldberg	Gail Morris	Sandi Wheeler
Mary L Goldsby	Cal Newnam	Joanna & Hanna Willars
Pamela Goolsby	Brooke Nicotra	Laura Wilson
Peter Gottschling	Frank Ohrt	Diane & Michael Wonio
Jean Greenhalgh	Glenn Olsen	Janey Woodley
		Elizabeth Worsham



“

*"Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble." -Roger Tory Peterson*

The Texas Ornithological Society is committed to protecting birds and their habitats. Your support will make a difference in the future of our feathered friends.

## Support Sabine



### SABINE WOODS: A TOS SANCTUARY



### Green Kingfisher chosen for new t-shirt.....



*TOS T-Shirt is now available.  
Log in to your TOS account and select Store from the menu.*

Sizes XXL and XXXL are now available

\$29.00 each

\$20.00 plus \$7.00 (covers S&H and tax)

Make checks payable to Texas Ornithological Society

Mail to: Daniel Hodges  
2288 N. US Hwy 281  
Lampasas 76550

Order online at <http://www.texasbirds.org>

Select the Member Information page  
and access your account.  
Then select Store from the menu.

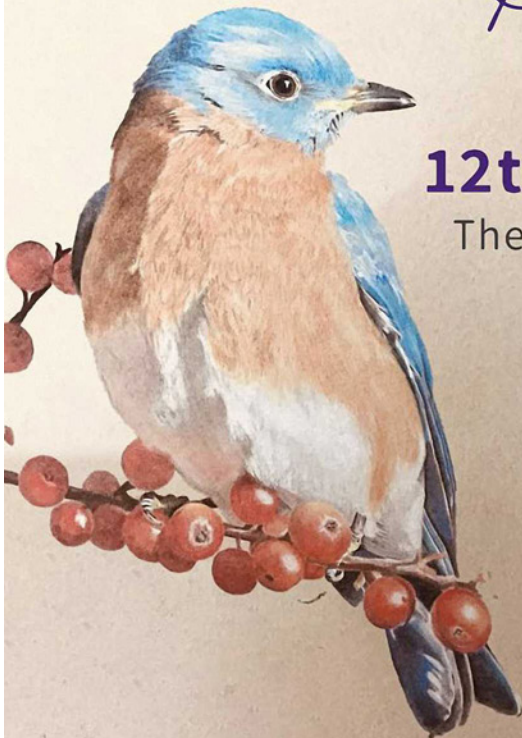




CALL FOR

# Local Artists AND Photographers

Now taking submissions for our  
**12th Annual Birds of the Brush**  
The LARGEST bird art contest in South Texas!



Deadline for artwork submissions:

**Saturday, January 20, 2024 • 5:00 pm (firm deadline)**

Scan the QR code to register your work or visit [bit.ly/BOTB-2024](https://bit.ly/BOTB-2024)

**DROP OFF AT LAREDO CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

For full list of guidelines visit [laredobirdingfestival.org/birdsofthebrush](https://laredobirdingfestival.org/birdsofthebrush)





## Members of the TOS Board of Directors



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



Romey Swansons  
Vice-President and Director at Large  
Email: romeyswanson@gmail.com



Open  
Region 1—Panhandle



Lorrie Mathers  
Treasurer-Director  
Region 2—North Central Texas  
Email:



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



Pamela Pipes  
Region 4—Trans-Pecos  
Email: pspipes@gmail.com



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



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



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



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



Lyn Thompson  
Director at Large  
Email:



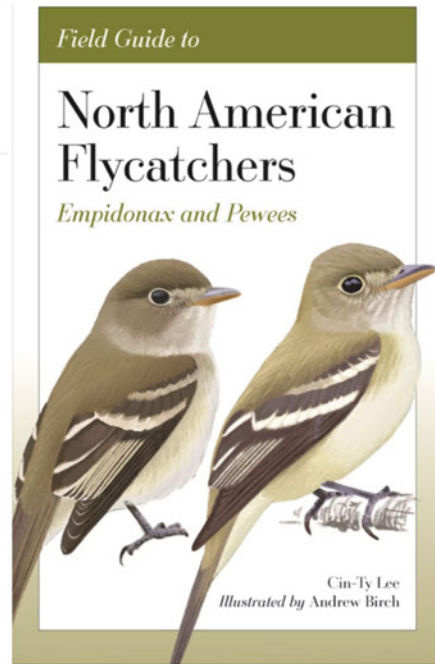
Clay Taylor  
Director at Large  
Email: clay.taylor@swarovskioptik.com

Princeton Nature

# Field Guide to North American Flycatchers: *Empidonax and Pewees*

Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch

A richly illustrated, portable field guide to flycatcher  
identification



The identification of *Empidonax* flycatchers and pewees can be a daunting challenge for even the most seasoned birder. *Field Guide to North American Flycatchers* takes bird identification to an entirely new level by training readers to observe subtle differences in structure, color patterns, and vocalizations before delving into the finer details of a particular species. Because the plumages of flycatchers are so similar, this one-of-a-kind guide uses illustrations that highlight slight variances among species that photos often miss. One of the last frontiers of bird identification is now accessible to everyone—once one knows what to look for.

- Uses a holistic approach that makes flycatcher identification possible even for beginners
- Features a wealth of beautiful illustrations that depict every species in North America
- Shows how to observe subtle differences in structure, plumage contrasts, and vocalizations, which together create a distinctive overall impression of the bird
- Includes detailed audio spectrograms and seasonal distribution maps for each species
- Shares invaluable tips for successful identification in all kinds of field settings
- Its compact size and field-friendly layout make it the ideal travel companion for any birder

## Paperback

Price: \$19.95 / £14.99

ISBN: 9780691240626

Published: Apr 4, 2023

Copyright: 2023

Pages: 168

Size: 5 x 8 in.

55 color + b/w illus. 19 maps. 53



# DONATIONS

Fall 2023 newsletter

## GENERAL FUND

Gay Wehrman  
Mary Hannigan  
Mark Edmund  
William Merritt  
Sandi Wheeler  
*In memory of Steve Gross*  
Thomas Kihn  
Lee & Deb Wallace  
Mary Dodson  
Sharon Gaines  
Johnnie & Sharon Kay  
Paula McKinney & Family  
Alan & Baceliza Monroe  
Mike DeHart & Family  
Mary Dodson  
Nancy Cochran  
Keiko Inagaki  
Mark & Bonnie Edmund  
Alexander Hoxie  
Carol Edwards  
Kathy & Bill Lupardus  
Richard Redmond & Family  
Jean Blalock & Family  
Cindy Lieurance & Family  
Daniel Coleman & Family

## SANCTUARY FUND

Jimma Byrd  
Lorrie Mathers  
Thomas Kihn  
*Sabine Woods*  
Lee & Deb Wallace  
Don Quaintance & Family  
*Sabine Woods*

## NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Madeline Averett  
Cheryl Johnson  
Robert Mitchum  
Kevin & Kristyn Cutrera  
Romey & Erin Swanson  
John McCoppin III  
Louise Ridlon

## NEW MEMBERS

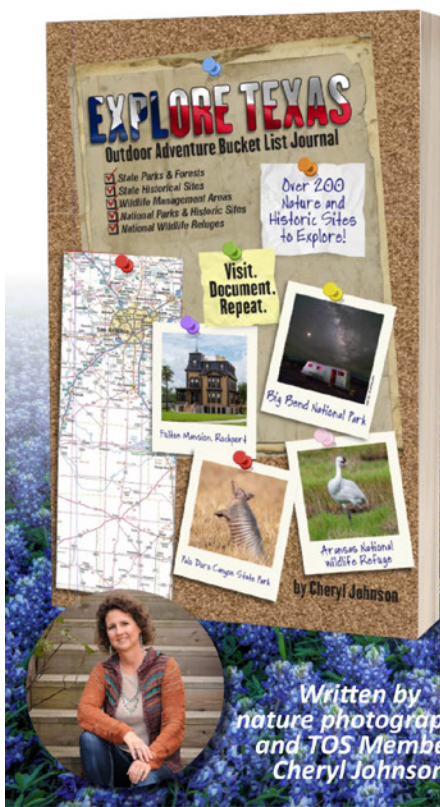
Cindy Millford  
Don Scheifler  
Johnny Johnson  
Matthew Walter  
Keith Armstrong  
Margaret Brant & Family  
Keiko Inagaki  
Rose Cooper  
Gavin Awerbuch  
Ed & Sharon Corley  
Autumn Shields & Family  
Jorgen Bodker  
Jackson Nemeth  
Robert Foehring  
Dimitrios Dimopoulos  
Hannah Muegge  
Stephanie Bones & Family  
Daniel Coleman & Family  
Reid Lewis  
William Merritt  
Georgia Struhsaker & Family  
Julia Delgado  
Karen Carbiener  
Lucy Goodrich  
Jane Garrett & Family  
Kevin & Kristyn Cutrera  
Jane Blalock & Family  
Kevin Hoag & Family  
Brad Fields  
Joseph Hunt & Family  
Dawn & Randy Bissell  
Dania Sanchez  
Susan Kennedy  
Christopher Castoro  
Andy Sprayberry  
Samuel Hunt  
Michael Small  
Ryan Rodriguez  
Zoe Williams  
Sally Mills  
Elexis Anderson  
William Brogan  
Blaine Carter



# Texas Sized Fun at Your Fingertips!

This comprehensive journal is designed to help you discover over 200 different locations and log your adventures in all of Texas's:

- Texas State Parks & Forests
- Texas Wildlife Management Areas
- Texas State Historic Sites
- National Parks, Forests, and Historic Sites
- National Wildlife Refuges



Written by nature photographer and TOS Member, Cheryl Johnson



available at **amazon**

Bring The Beauty of Nature To Your Home

## Watercolor Nature Prints & Home Decor



These beautiful watercolors will add life and character to any room in your house or make the perfect gift for the nature lover in your life! Available as a matted prints, posters, canvases, pillows, totes, and more!

**ORDER ONLINE TODAY**  
**CherylJohnsonAuthor.com**





YOUR NEXT VACATION, SIMPLIFIED.  
STAY. PLAY. BIRD.



*Texas.*  
*Island Style.™*  
**Port Aransas®**  
& MUSTANG ISLAND

WWW.PORTARANSAS.ORG | 800-45-COAST