

President's Message



Romey Swanson TOS President.

Dear TOS Members,

As the seasons change and the year winds down, I'm thrilled to connect with you again. This is a special time for birders as we revel in holiday traditions, reflect on the past year, and prepare for exciting events and initiatives.

This fall, your TOS directors gathered in the Davis

Mountains for a genuinely inspiring Board Retreat.

During our time there, we finalized and adopted a strategic plan that will guide TOS's future, oriented our newest board members, and enjoyed the crisp mountain air and high-elevation birding. Experiences like these remind us of the beauty and biodiversity Texas offers and the importance of our shared mission.

Another cherished tradition is upon us: Christmas Bird Count season! TOS members across the state are stepping up to lead and volunteer in this significant effort. Your contributions to this long-standing citizen science initiative continue to provide invaluable data that aid bird research and conservation on a global scale. Whether organizing a count or simply joining in, thank you for your dedication to this vital project.

Looking ahead, our Winter Meeting in Golden Triangle is shaping up to be unforgettable. Scheduled for January 16–19, this meeting promises incredible field trips showcasing the best of Southeast Texas birding. The region's avian diversity is as dynamic as the landscapes, from coastal marshes, to hardwood bottomlands and pine forests. I hope you'll join us for this event's camaraderie, exploration, and learning.

Further into 2025 (April 24-27), our Spring Meeting will take us north to Cedar Hill, on the outskirts of Dallas. Certified by Audubon Texas and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as a Bird City Texas, Cedar Hill offers unique birding opportunities and a chance to celebrate conservation efforts in the region. More details will be shared soon, but mark your calendars now—we can't wait to see you there!

As we close out another successful year for TOS, I want to thank each of you for your passion and dedication to birding and conservation. Your involvement—whether attending meetings, participating in counts, or simply sharing your love of birds—makes a difference. Let's carry this enthusiasm into the new year and continue building a vibrant future for TOS.

Good birding to you all!

Warmly,

—Romey Swanson

President, Texas Ornithological Society
romeys.TOS@gmail.com

Board Meets in Davis Mountains

Your TOS board of directors met on August 23-25 in the Davis Mountains to hammer out policy and programs not only for the upcoming year but for the future of our organization.

On Friday night President Romey Swanson led a round table discussion on the strategic plan adopted last March. The team put together ad hoc working groups to address issues such as engagement, awarding grants, and governance review. They also decided on recipients of TOS awards of merit and appreciation to be presented in 2025.

Of course there was birding, and herping, and scorpions glowing in the dark - all conducted during an unusually hot spell in the mountains. It'll be in the 60s at night, they said. Bring warm clothing, they said. All that aside, the crew survived the heat, and you will be hearing more about the results of this worthwhile retreat very soon.



Right side, front to back: Samantha Wolfe, Region 7 Director; Kendra Kocab, Region 8 Director; Ron Huebner, Region 2 Director; Lorrie Mathers, TOS Treasurer. Left side, front to back: Romey Swanson, TOS President; Kelly Smith, Region 1 Director; Lynn Thompson, TOS Secretary; Crystal Ledezma, Region 6 Director; Pamela Pipes, Region 4 Director and Vice-president.

KADE JACKSON, TEXAS YOUTH CENTURY CLUB AWARD RECIPIENT



My earliest recollection of birding was when I was but a mere teenager. Of course, I'm still technically a teenager, but that's beside the point! Over just a few years, birding has taken flight in my mind and has quickly become my strongest passion. There is something truly magical in knowing

that there could be a sandpiper in the neighborhood lake, a warbler in the nearby brush, or a hawk soaring far overhead. Birding has allowed me to reshape the way in which I view the world, turning what had once been unremarkable and unnoticeable into blinding bursts of color and life.

My birding journey began with long walks on the defunct Northcliffe golf course trails behind my home, where I have now seen almost 150 species. Indeed, I was so enthralled with birds that I reached my 100th life species within a few months! As I grew as a birder, I began expanding my range of locations, first visiting local areas and then branching out across the city and, ultimately, exploring much of Texas. My proximity to the local Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary has proved especially fruitful in my search for rare migrants, and the Crescent Bend Nature Park was my initial gateway to waterfowl species. (This was also where I spotted my county's first-ever recorded Limpkin—that was truly a crazy day!)

But these blissful months weren't meant to last. My neighborhood received devastating news: developers were slated to begin the construction of apartment complexes on the golf course that had sparked my love of birds. My neighbors acted fast, forming a land conservation team with which I have had the privilege of working. I began speaking at city council meetings and volunteering as a data analyst/graphic designer, allowing me to forge relationships with many community members and advocate for the environment. I worked to present an ornithological survey to the city council, and securing an eBird birding hotspot designation for this beautiful land further strengthened our cause. Every hour spent working in spreadsheets, writing speeches, and developing maps for proposals propelled me into the next as I kept our ultimate goal in mind: yes, to conserve land, but also to conserve our home. My neighbors feel like family, all because of this developer's as-of-yet unsuccessful bid at destroying the nature all around us. In a sense, birds brought all of us together.

Birding has also afforded me the connection and opportunity to meet the owner of Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary, Susan Schaezler. She has become something of a "birding mentor" to me, always sending me on quests to search for rare species around the property. I thoroughly



enjoy having this outlet to talk about birds with a fellow enthusiast! The only thing better than receiving a 9 AM text about rare warblers at the pond is actually *seeing* the warblers. I never would have made this meaningful connection with Ms. Schaezler if it weren't for our mutual love of birds.

In keeping with this spirit of connectivity, I knew I wanted to share this passion with everyone around me. I ultimately founded my high school's first-ever birding society, which boasted a consistent 20 or so members. My school sat right next to a wooded pond, and I organized weekly field trips to explore that parcel of land. We propelled its eBird hotspot to over 100 species! The friendships I made there have been long-lasting, and it is truly amazing to know how much of a difference can be made when we respect the beautiful world around us.

My sincerest thanks go out to the Texas Ornithological Society for the Youth Century Club award and for keeping birding accessible to people from all walks of life. As I near my 300th life list species, I am grateful and humbled at the life experiences birding has offered me. I have taken everything I have learned and am building upon that as an Ecology and Evolutionary Biology student at Princeton University. And while I am enjoying getting to go birding in new locations, I will never forget the connections I made back home in Texas. I am of the firm belief that birding allows us to be at our most vulnerable—our most human—and it is in these moments that life truly takes on its most vibrant colors.

eBird profile link: <https://ebird.org/profile/MzY3ODg3Mw>





Regional Reports

Region 1—Panhandle

australe88@gmail.com

—Kelly Smith

Region 2—North Central Texas

35 North Central Counties/35 top Hotspots/24 Top E-Birders

As the year rolled to an end, it seemed interesting to explore some ebird statistics about “our fair region”. Interestingly, many of the “All-Time” top hotspots were NOT reflected in 2024’s top hotspots. Some slipped way down the 2024 list. Certainly individual birding efforts affect these stats and nobody birds the same places the same amount every year. And each year brings a slightly different distribution of birds within each county. So here are the 2024 ebird stats for Top Hotspots and Top e-birders (by number of species reported) for the year in the North Central TOS Region.

Archer County

Top Hotspot: Lake Wichita
Top ebird: Scotty Lofland

Baylor County

Top Hotspot: Seymor City Park
Top ebird: Scotty Lofland

Callahan County

Top Hotspot: Clyde Lake Park
Top ebird: Anthony Hewetson

Clay County

Top Hotspot: Lake Arrowhead State Park,
Top ebird: Bryan Box

Collin County

Top Hotspot: Heard National Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary

Top ebird: Mike Cameron

Cooke County

Top Hotspot: Ray Roberts State Park
Top ebird: Dave Eslinger

Dallas County

Top Hotspot: White Rock Lake & Old Fish Hatchery
Top ebird: Peter Billingham

Denton County

Top Hotspot: Lewisville Lake Environmental Center
Top ebird: John Kirk

Eastland County

Top Hotspot: Lake Leon
Top ebird: Anthony Hewetson

Ellis County

Top Hotspot: Ellis County Cut-off Road
Top ebird: Ted Drozdowski

Erath County

Top Hotspot: Stephenville-Bosque River Trail NE of Graham Street
Top ebird: Jack Kelly

Fannin County

Top Hotspot: Bonham State Park
Top ebird: Jerri Kerr

Foard County

Top Hotspot: Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus
Top ebird: Sheri Anderson

Grayson County

Top Hotspot: Hagerman National Wildlife Reserve
Top ebird: Jack Chiles

Regional Reports (continued)

Hardeman County

Top Hotspot: Copper Breaks State Park
Top ebird: Steve Welborn

Haskell County

Top Hotspot: Lake Stamford Causeway
Top ebird: Sheri Anderson

Hood County

Top Hotspot: Action Nature Center
Top ebird: Jack Kelly

Hunt County

Top Hotspot: Lake Tawakoni State Park
Top ebird: Richard Kinney

Jack County

Top Hotspot: Fort Richardson State Park
Top ebird: Scotty Lofland

Johnson County

Top Hotspot: Lake Pat Cleburne-Buddy Stewart Park
Top ebird: Ty Allen

Kaufman County

Top Hotspot: John Bunker Sands Wetlands Center
Top ebird: Blaine Carnes

Knox County

Top Hotspot: Truscott Lake
Top ebird: Scotty Lofland

Montague County

Top Hotspot: Lake Amon Carter-Selma Park
Top ebird: Karen Carpenter

Palo Pinto County

Top Hotspot: Possum Kingdom Lake Dam
Top ebird: Seth Long

Parker County

Top Hotspot: Lake Weatherford-Boardwalk South
Top ebird: Bob Allen

Rockwall County

Top Hotspot: Pettinger Nature Preserve
Top ebird: Nicole Pulatig

Shackelford County

Top Hotspot: Fort Griffin State Park
Top ebird: Cinda Crosley

Somervell County

Top Hotspot: Dinosaur Valley State Park
Top ebird: Jack Kelly

Stephens County

Top Hotspot: Lake Daniel
Top ebird: Bob Friedrichs

Tarrant County

Top Hotspot: Village Creek Drying Beds
Top ebird: Todd Fitzgerald

Throckmorton County

Top Hotspot: Millers Creek Reservoir
Top ebird: Sheri Anderson

Wichita County

Top Hotspot: Lake Wichita
Top ebird: Scotty Lofland

Wilbarger County

Top Hotspot: Wilbarger Memorial Park
Top ebird: Sheri Anderson

Wise County

Top Hotspot: Lake Bridgeport-Wise County Park
Top ebird: Michelle Summers

Young County

Top Hotspot: Firement's Park, Graham
Top ebird: Sheri Anderson

It's also interesting to note that of the 24 top ebirders in the North Central Region, only 6 are TOS members... what does this mean? GROW BABY GROW!!!!

—Ron Huebner

Region 3—East Texas Timberlands (Pineywoods)

—Laura Wilson

Region 4—Trans-Pecos

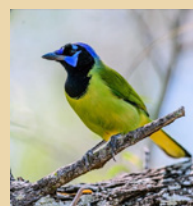
—Pamela Pipes

Region 5—Edwards Plateau Report

Green Jays have been noticed erupting in scattered groups across South Texas, appearing as “new yard bird” for people across several counties. Here in Bexar County on the eastern part of the region, reports started trickling in 6 weeks ago with the most northern report to date being one individual just north of downtown San Antonio at the Brackenridge Park/Ave A hotspot. (Think Flame-colored Tanager location). Living nearby, this may explain why a neighborhood Northern Mockingbird has been mimicking Green Jay calls. Green Jays are not foreign to Bexar County and have been observed historically in the County, with a reported dependable group residing at the Botanical Gardens years ago. I saw my first Green Jays in Bexar County several years ago at a private ranch on the south side of the county.

Drought? Other reasons for eruption?

What counties or yards in the region have you seen Green Jays? Let us know. cbsturnbull@hotmail.com



Dwayne Flores photo

—Christine Turnbull

Regional Reports (continued)

Region 6—Central Prairie

—Crystal Ledezma

Region 7—Rio Grande Brushlands

Hi Everyone! I am honored to be the new Region 7 director and look forward to bringing you seasonal bird reports for the South Texas area. I encourage you to send me any news, events, or interesting bird stories for me to include in the reports! You can reach me at swolfe@manomet.org. First I would like to take a moment to welcome a new member to our region, Lisa Finney! Thanks for joining us and welcome to TOS!

Autumn has been a busy time for Region 7, with the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival taking place November 6-9. The number of bird species observed by festival trips hit a NEW record this year, totaling 296 species! Highlights from the festival included Scaled Quail, Red-billed Pigeon, Anna's Hummingbird, Red-necked Phalarope, Iceland Gull, Hook-billed Kite and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Mottled Owl, Rose-throated Becard, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Brown Jay, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Morelet's Seedeater.

The Rio Grande Valley stayed hot with rare birds in the latter part of the month. Valley hotspots provided Wood Duck, Sabine's Gull, Bullock's Oriole, Wood Thrush, Winter Wren, Purple Gallinule, White-throated Sparrow, Wood Stork, Say's Phoebe, and Blue Grosbeak. Shorebirds like Stilt Sandpiper, Dunlin, Wilson's Phalarope and Semipalmated Sandpiper are also being seen in the valley. As I write this report, a Black Scoter is being seen at the Brownsville landfill.

Santa Margarita Ranch in Starr County (restricted access only) continued to impress birders into late November by hosting rarities like Canada Goose, Muscovy Duck, Limpkin, Red-breasted Merganser, Hook-billed Kite, Mottled Owl, Rose-throated Becard, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Brown Jays, Pine Siskin, Song Sparrow, and Morelet's Seedeater. Potential vocalizations of a Bare-throated Tiger Heron were also heard. The nearby Salineno Wildlife Reserve also hosted great birds during late November including Muscovy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Hook-billed Kite, and Red-billed Pigeon.

Moving north to Jim Wells County, Lake Findley hosted a Roseate Spoonbill, Ringed Kingfisher, and Clay-colored Thrush during November.

Further up the coast in Nueces & Aransas Counties, birders found an Iceland Gull, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Say's Phoebe. The Port Aransas Nature Preserve remains a birding mecca on the mid-coast, with American Flamingo, as well as Eurasian Wigeon, Nelson's Sparrow and Northern Waterthrush. Did you know that this site was recently designated as a regional site of importance by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (www.whsrn.org)? See this post to learn more!

Aransas county was a great place to be this autumn as well, with species like Surf Scoter being found at Aransas NWR. During September, Rockport hosted its

annual Hummerbird Celebration. If you've never been, I highly recommend attending. This is a great festival with presentations by local biologists, birders, and photographers. There is also a large vendor market and field trips for bird enthusiasts of all kinds.

Further west to Kleberg County, Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found in both Robstown and the Kingsville Landfill within a few days of each other. Victoria County hosted both Black-chinned & Broad-billed Hummingbirds.

Warblers were abundant during November across the region, including Tennessee Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Palm Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Hermit Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler.

Did I miss something important? Make sure I include your good bird sighting or event in the next report by emailing me at swolfe@manomet.org.

—Samantha Wolfe

Region 8—Central Prairie

It has been a relatively uneventful fall for Region 8. While there are always birds reported slightly out of place or in the wrong season, true rarities were scarce. Additionally, the warm fall and early winter seems to have delayed some winter migrants. Having said that, 370 species were reported in Region 8 from August through November, 2024. Here are some highlights:

A Townsend's Warbler was reported at LaFitte's Cove in Galveston Co, representing the 12th fall record for this species in our region. The second Harris Co record for Black-whiskered Vireo was seen at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center. The bird remained for 3 days and was reported 55 times in eBird. Sage Thrashers were reported THREE Region 8 counties. The first was on October 23 near Sealy in Austin Co. The second was on November 6 at Anahuac's Skillern Tract in Chambers Co. The third was at John Paul Landing Park in Harris County. That bird remained over three days and was reported 40 times. Unfortunately, it chose to show up just before the park closed over the Thanksgiving holiday, depriving some local birders from checking off a new bird for their Harris County list.

In addition to those highlights, birders have tallied over the last 5 months: 29 species of ducks and geese, 8 species of hummingbirds, 23 species of hawks and owls, 21 species of flycatchers, 22 species of sparrows, and 37 species of warblers. With Christmas Bird Counts coming up, I expect we'll have many interesting sightings to report in the next newsletter. Until then, enjoy the cool weather and don't forget to join us at the 2024 Winter Meeting in the Golden Triangle!

—Kendra Kocab

Request for Assistance: Color-banded Ospreys from Montana

Ospreys banded as part of a long-term study along the Yellowstone River in Montana have been observed wintering in Puerto Rico, on the US/Mexico Gulf Coast, and in Costa Rica. In Texas, birders and photographers have seen these banded Ospreys along the entire coast from Anahuac National Wildlife near Galveston south to Pt. Isabel. A few have also been reported well inland at Amarillo, Elmendorf, and Waco.

The Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society in Montana bands nestling Ospreys to learn about their survival, reproduction, and movements. Each Osprey is banded with a silver USGS band on the left leg and a project green band on the right leg. It is difficult to read the nine digits engraved on

the silver band because they are small. However, the number/letter codes on the green bands are large and can be read at distance with good binoculars, spotting scopes, or cameras. Each green band bears a unique combination of two numbers over a letter, which is associated with the location of the Osprey's natal nest and its age (i.e., year banded).

This autumn observers have already read the band codes of Yellowstone River Ospreys in Elmendorf, N. Padre Island, and Pt. Isabel. Please look for green color-banded Ospreys and report any sightings to the USGS Bird Banding Lab (www.usgs.gov/labs/bird-banding-laboratory) or to Dr. Marco Restani (restani@stcloudstate.edu). Thank you and good birding!



Photo Caption: An Osprey from the Yellowstone River, Montana showing the green color-band code, 89/E.

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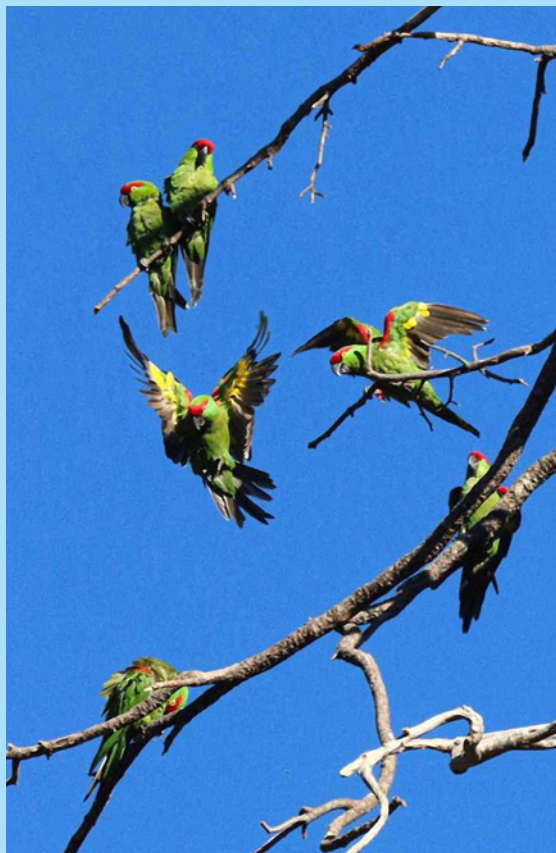
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JOINT CONANP/OVIS PRESS RELEASE

The charismatic Thick-billed Parrot, an endangered species that once roamed the US, on the way to recovery according to recent censuses carried out by CONANP and OVIS.



The Thick-billed Parrot is a characteristic and emblematic species of the temperate forests of the Sierra Madre Occidental and once occurred in Arizona and New Mexico in the US. Their populations reflect the health of these ecosystems that not only provide us with wood, but are known as “water factories” for their role and effect on infiltration, aquifer recharge, and dam supply. Likewise, they contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change and are sources of employment and well-being for the communities that live in these regions.

Since 1995, this species, listed in danger of extinction in the Official Mexican Standard NOM-059-SEMARNAT2010, has been the subject of numerous studies and actions for protection, management and restoration of the forests where it lives. These actions led by the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) and the civil organization Organizacion Vida Silvestre (OVIS) with the participation of local communities and other organizations in the US and Mexico, are yielding encouraging results as demonstrated by the census carried out this season in various reproduction and feeding sites within the protected natural areas and their areas of influence in the state of Chihuahua.

The census, recently carried out jointly in protected areas of Chihuahua by CONANP park rangers and OVIS personnel, assisted by bird watchers, found that the current population, of approximately 2,500 individuals, is at least

10% higher than that recorded 12 years ago years. It is expected that the number of specimens of the Thick-billed Parrot will continue to increase as sustainable forestry management practices are consolidated by the communities of the region.

The head of CONANP Pedro Álvarez-Icaza commented: “This emerging success story reflects the importance of collaboration between society and government and a vision of healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities, which is in line with the policies and practices that CONANP will strengthen in the following years.”

For his part, Sergio Jiménez, executive director of OVIS, thanked the support of the various institutions involved, stating: “this multi-institutional effort led by Ernesto Enkerlin Hoefflich, scientific director of OVIS, is bearing fruit after three decades, which gives us hope. for other species at risk and points to the need of cooperation, persistence and long-term planning to produce results and effective conservation.”

Contactos:

sjimenez@ovis.org.mx, Sergio Jiménez, Director Ejecutivo, OVIS.

enkerlin@ovis.org.mx, Ernesto Enkerlin, Director científico, OVIS.

Ricardo Garza



WINTER BIRDING EVENT

JANUARY | **16-19** | 2025



Meet us in Texas' Golden Triangle – Beaumont (Boomtown), Port Arthur (the Cajun Capital of Texas), and Orange (the Gateway City) – for the 2025 winter meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society on January 16-19, 2025!

Working closely with the wonderful Golden Triangle Audubon Society, the meeting committee has put together an array of field trips that will take you on an evening owl hunt, a private boat tour, the famous rarity round-up, and four Texas Century Club trips. You'll visit some unique locations in the area, and we will also do some birding in the neighboring state of Louisiana.

Presentations on Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoon will impart exciting information about the area's bird life, details about a scientific project partly funded by TOS, and an in-depth study of shorebirds among other topics. Please make plans to attend these talks, which will be preceded by our reports of the day's birding results.

All activities – event check-in, trip departures and our Saturday banquet – will take place at the host hotel, the Holiday Inn & Suites Beaumont Plaza, 3950 IH-10 South & Walden Rd., Beaumont, TX 77705. They offer a special nightly rate of \$109 for a king, and \$119 for a double queen, plus tax and gratuity. Registration information appears below. **DEADLINE TO REGISTER AT THE HOTEL IS DECEMBER 24, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**

Our TOS merchandise will be on sale, Golden Triangle Audubon Society will host an information table, and there will be a prize drawing at each evening's presentation. We will also have a Chance Auction and lots of time to socialize.

Bring the neck wallet you received at the Weslaco meeting and receive a special gift!

We are eager to explore this corner of the Lone Star State and hope you will join the fun!

- Christine Turnbull, TOS Past-President and Planning Committee Chair

EVENT REGISTRATION

Online registration will open on **December 9, 2024, at 6:00 a.m.**, and will close on **Jan. 8, 2025, at 11:55 p.m.** You will receive a confirmation email once your payment is complete. More details in Registration Information below.

The fee for the event remains \$100 per TOS member. It is \$135 for non-members, which includes a one-year membership. Students may attend for free. An administrative fee of \$35 will be deducted from refunds made between January 3 and 10, 2025. **No refunds can be made after January 10, 2025.**

LUNCH SELECTION

Box lunch options, including gluten-free and vegan, will be available on the online registration form at \$12 per meal. Lunches will be distributed each morning at the hotel. Your order must be submitted by **JANUARY 8, 2025**. No refunds after this date. See Lunches section below.

BANQUET SELECTION

The cost remains \$35 per person. Meal choices, including a vegan and a gluten-free option, are offered on the online registration form and must be submitted by **DECEMBER 30, 2024**. No refunds after January 8, 2025.

FIELD TRIP DEPARTURE

Caravans to field trip sites will depart from the parking lot of the Holiday Inn & Suites. Please be prepared to carpool to birding locations.

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 is the Holiday Inn & Suites Beaumont Plaza. Please make your reservations by calling **409-842-7808 BY 5:00 p.m. DECEMBER 24, 2024**. Mention that you are with the TOS group for the special room rate of \$109 for a king and \$119 for a double queen. Tax and gratuity are not included in that price. Cancellations must be received at least 72 hours before check-in date.

Two coupons per room are provided for a free breakfast beginning at 5:00 a.m. daily.

Lunches

Box lunch options may be ordered at the same time that you register for this event. They will be distributed at the hotel each morning. The cost is \$12 per meal and your order must be submitted by **JANUARY 8, 2025**. No refunds will be given after that date.

Saturday Night Banquet

We will offer a plated Saturday banquet, and a gluten-free/vegetarian option will be available. Make your selection when you register for the meeting online. Cost remains \$35 per person. **ORDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DECEMBER 30, 2024**. No refunds will be given after January 8, 2025.

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, January 16, 2025

- 3:00-6:00 PM Event check-in at the Holiday Inn & Suites hotel
- 6:15 PM First-time meeting attendee orientation
- 6:30 PM Welcome/Introductions/Announcements: Christine Turnbull, Planning Committee Chair, and Romey Swanson, TOS President (Lots of useful information is given during this time, so please attend.)
- 7:00 PM Speaker: Dania Sanchez—*Exploring the Golden Triangle of Texas*
- 7:30 PM Meet your leaders for tomorrow's trips

Friday, January 17

- All Day Birding caravans leave between 5:30 and 7:00 a.m.
- 4:00-5:00 PM Late event check-in at the hotel
- 6:00 PM Announcements/Birding Reports/
Century Club Pin Presentations
- 6:30 PM Speaker: Alex Hoxie—*Microplastics: An Emerging Threat to Songbirds*
- 7:15 PM Meet your leaders for tomorrow's trips

Saturday, January 18

- All Day Birding caravans leave between 5:45 and 7:00 a.m.
- 5:00 PM Social half-hour – cash bar
- 5:30 PM Banquet/Announcements/Birding Reports
- 7:00 PM Two speakers: Sam Wolfe—*The Secret Lives of Whimbrels*
Lisa Schibley—*Making Your Shorebirds Count with Manoment's International Shorebird Survey*
- 8:15 PM Meet your leaders for tomorrow's trips

Sunday, January 19

- Half Day Birding caravans leave between 5:45 and 7:00 a.m.
- 12:00-1:00 PM Depart for home.

Registration Information

Event registration begins on **December 9, 2024, at 6:00 a.m.**

A list of field trips appears at the end of this message. Some trips fill quickly, so select a second choice each day just in case. If you would like to be on a waitlist for a trip that is full, contact Judy Kestner at 361-701-1962 by phone or text, or tosmember@yahoo.com. Please include **your name, the trip number and how many spaces you'll need**.

You may register in two ways:

1. Click the link [HERE](#) and register.
2. From the home page of our website, log in to your TOS account, go to View My Event Registrations and register there.

Our meetings are open only to current TOS members. Confirm that your membership payments, as well as your email address and phone number are up to date by visiting www.texasbirds.org and clicking Member Login.

Once your payment for this event is received, a confirmation email will be sent to you showing the trips, box lunches and banquet meal that you have selected. Please look it over for accuracy.

Another email will be sent closer to the meeting date with additional details.

For any questions, or if you do not have access to the internet, you may call or text Judy Kestner at 361-701-1962 for assistance. If you don't get an answer, leave a detailed message and Judy will return your call.

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 \$12.

A \$35 administrative fee will be deducted from any refunds issued between Jan. 3 and 10, 2025. No refunds after January 10, 2025.

Meeting Presentations

Thursday Evening

7:00 PM

Title: *Exploring the Golden Triangle*

Presenter: Dania Sanchez – Vice President, Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Description: Dania will touch on the expected bird species for this event and will introduce you to the areas where we will be birding this weekend.



Dania Sanchez

Bio: Dania Sanchez is a Texas wildlife photographer and birder on a mission to express her appreciation for birds and wildlife through her work. Her educational background from Del Mar College, Lamar State College Port Arthur and Lamar University provided her with skills to capture nature and

understand the impact that technology has on historical and conservancy efforts. She currently serves as the Vice President of Golden Triangle Audubon Society and a volunteer for Texas Ornithological Society's Sabine Woods.

Through observation, visual storytelling and advocacy she hopes to spread awareness of the birds and wildlife of many areas in Texas, specially the Golden Triangle where she resides. Dania believes that with the help of visibility and education our current and future generations can learn a new appreciation for birds and how they can improve quality of life. You can see her work through tourism brochures, social media, publications, travelogues and at her public speaking events.

Friday Evening

6:30 PM

Title: *Microplastics: An Emerging Threat to Songbirds*

Presenter: Alexander Hoxie

Description: Microplastics are an emerging pollutant of growing concern for their effect on human and wildlife health; however, their effects on songbirds remain understudied. As many songbirds are experiencing long-term declines across the U.S., Alex's thesis research centers on the potential for nonlethal sampling of microplastics. His research found significant microplastic contamination in the fecal sacs of house sparrow nestlings. His presentation will serve as an overview of microplastic pollution, how microplastics impact birds, the results of his research, future research directions, and mitigation strategies for microplastic pollution. TOS has awarded a grant to Alex for his research.

Bio: Alexander Hoxie is a master's student at Tarleton State University under Dr. Heather Mathewson.



Alexander Hoxie

He is a member of Team Sparrow, an NSF-funded collaborative research effort studying the effects of climate change on House Sparrow physiology and behavior. Team Sparrow is led by Dr. Britt Heidinger at North Dakota State University, and includes collaborators from Oklahoma State University, University of Kentucky, and Lafayette College, PA.

Alex received his B.S. in Environmental Science at the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2022. While at UTSA, he was a volunteer research assistant in Dr. Jennifer Smith's Lab of Avian Ecology and served as the president of Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society for 2 years.

After completing his master's degree, he plans on pursuing his PhD, continuing to research avian ecology. He hopes to utilize historical bird data to determine changes in the bird community of south Texas over the last century, which will better inform management and restoration actions in the region.

Saturday Evening

7:00 PM

We are pleased to offer two keynote speakers on Saturday evening.

Title 1: *The Secret Lives of Whimbrels*

Presenter: Sam Wolfe

Description: Follow a shorebird as it migrates across the Americas, learning about its life history and understanding the challenges it faces along the way.



Sam Wolfe

Bio: Sam Wolfe joined Manomet Conservation Sciences in 2022 as a shorebird biologist. Her work focuses on studying important stopover ecology, wintering sites and migratory routes of shorebirds, and Whimbrel in particular. She also provides field support for other

shorebird research projects in Texas.

Sam received a B.S. in biological sciences from Northern Illinois University and has a master's degree in range and wildlife management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville where she studied habitat association of migrating songbirds along the Texas coast. She lives in Aransas County, Texas and is the current TOS Region 7 Director.

Title 2: Making Your Shorebirds Count with Manomet's International Shorebird Survey

Presenter: Lisa Schibley

Description: Since 1974, Manomet's International Shorebird Survey (ISS) has been on the frontlines of understanding shorebird populations, with the help of passionate volunteers and shorebird enthusiasts across the Western Hemisphere. For decades, this dedicated network has been collecting invaluable data, fueling groundbreaking research and conservation efforts.

The ISS data has become the backbone of shorebird conservation, playing a pivotal role in tracking population trends and informing critical actions. This data has been used in major scientific publications, including the eye-opening "3 Billion Birds" report (2019), which revealed devastating bird population declines, and more recently "Accelerating declines of North America's shorebirds signal the need for urgent conservation action" by Paul Smith et al, published this year in Ornithological Applications.

Now, the ISS team is turning its attention to Texas—an essential hub for shorebirds within the Midcontinental Flyway. We're actively recruiting shorebird enthusiasts in this vital region to contribute to ongoing monitoring efforts. In our upcoming presentation, we'll dive into why Texas is such a critical area for shorebirds, explore the fascinating history of the ISS, and share how anyone can get involved in this crucial work. Whether you're a seasoned shorebirder or a newcomer to the world of shorebirds, this is a chance to be

part of something that truly makes a difference for the future of these remarkable birds.



Lisa Schibley

Bio: A bird enthusiast and passionate shorebirder, Lisa Schibley has been a part of Manomet's Shorebird Recovery Program since 2008, now serving as the North American Coordinator for the International Shorebird Survey (ISS). Her job consists of recruiting and engaging ISS volunteers,

managing and expanding the ISS database and visualization tools, and developing creative ways to bring shorebird stories to life using ISS data.

Birding has always been in Lisa's blood, as she grew up in a birding family, but her own birding journey took flight in 1993 when she moved to Tucson for graduate school. During her time in Arizona, she coordinated the Tucson Christmas Bird Count and led field trips for the Tucson Audubon Society. Now based in Massachusetts, Lisa leads birding trips for Manomet as well as local bird clubs and other conservation organizations. She is a member of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee and a contributor to Bird Observer, New England's birding journal. Her role with the ISS uniquely blends her passion for shorebirds, data, and citizen science.

TOS Field Trips – Golden Triangle, Winter 2025

Friday – 11 trips Saturday – 10 trips Sunday – 5 trips

Please have a second option in mind for each day, as some trips fill quickly.

NOTE: Participants must meet their field trip group at the Holiday Inn & Suites 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. NOTE: There will be entrance fees at some locations. Please have small bills available as well as bringing your state and national parks passes.

NUMBER	FIELD TRIP AND DESCRIPTION	COUNTY	DIFFICULTY	DEPARTURE & HOTEL RETURN TIMES		
				FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	<p>SHADOW BIRDS OF ANAHUAC NWR: Nighttime audio safari by special use permit. Our targets will be the rails – Clapper, King, and Virginia Rail. We are also likely to hear Great Horned Owls and Barn Owls, and probably Short-eared Owls as well.</p> <p>This is a "hear only" trip. Do not expect to see any birds. No playback or spotlights will be used on this trip. Extreme mosquito conditions are always a possibility here. Long sleeves, long pants, gloves and a head net are recommended. Expect to return to the hotel between midnight and 12:30 am.</p> <p><i>NOTE: As this is a nighttime trip, be sure you are able to drive after dark or carpool with someone who is!</i></p> <p>All stops will be on gravel or paved roads.</p>	CHAMBERS	EASY	6:30 p.m. to 12:00 midnight		

2	<p>BOLIVAR PENINSULA, HIGH ISLAND: We begin the day at the famed Houston Audubon Shorebird Sanctuary off Rettillon Road in Port Bolivar. Species expected include Short-billed Dowitcher, Boat-tailed Grackle and Red Knot, along with a variety of shorebirds. Sparrows along Rettillon Road are also likely, with Nelson’s Sparrow a good bet.</p> <p>On the way back to our hotel we will make quick stops in High Island at the TOS Hooks Woods Sanctuary and possibly one or both Houston Audubon Sanctuaries.</p> <p><i>NOTE: \$8 fee at Hooks Woods for non-TOS members. Parking stickers are REQUIRED for all vehicles to park on Bolivar beaches. They can be purchased locally for \$10 at most stores.</i></p> <p><i>Walking on the beach and close to the car; smooth trails at Hooks Woods.</i></p>	GALVESTON	EASY	6:15 am-3:30 pm	6:15 am-3:30 pm	
3	<p>ANAHUAC NWR: This 37,000-acre refuge contains vast expanses of fresh and brackish marshland, flooded soil units and prairie bordering Galveston Bay - welcoming habitat for migrant and resident coastal specialty birds.</p> <p>Potential sightings include Seaside Sparrow, Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, Osprey, Crested Caracara, large numbers of ducks including Fulvous Whistling Ducks, both cormorants, Boat-tailed Grackles and a variety of rails, herons, egrets. Seaside Sparrow and possibly Burrowing Owls are likely.</p> <p>There is good restroom access and minimal walking.</p> <p><i>Frequent stops along refuge roads, and birding close to the car, with some walking on the boardwalk.</i></p>	CHAMBERS	EASY	6:00 am-3:00 pm	6:00 am-3:00 pm	6:00 am-12:00 pm
4	<p>SEA RIM, MCFADDIN, SABINE PASS: Sea Rim State Park is where the marsh grass and wetlands meet the sea. The park covers 4,000 acres and contains nearly 2 miles of beach.</p> <p>We start out on the Gambusia Nature Trail Boardwalk. Our targets here will be Clapper Rails, Soras, Roseate Spoonbills, and other waders. White-tailed Kites and Northern Harriers are also possible as are Long-billed Curlew, Short-billed Dowitcher and Marbled Godwit.</p> <p>On the beach our targets will be gulls, terns, Least and Western Sandpipers, Dunlins, Willets, Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings and both pelican species. There is also the potential for Red Knots and Stilt Sandpipers.</p> <p>At McFaddin NWR our primary targets will be duck species but Red-breasted Mergansers, Snow Geese, Black-bellied Plovers and Wilson’s Snipe are possibilities as well. The usual gulls, terns, waders and shorebirds will also be present, with Golden-crowned Kinglet highly likely.</p> <p>In Sabine Pass we will primarily be searching for Seaside Sparrows.</p> <p><i>Round trip on the boardwalk is approximately .9 miles; short walk to the beach.</i></p>	JEFFERSON	MODERATE	7:00 am – 3:00 pm	7:00 am – 3:00 pm	
5	<p>W. JEFFERSON CO., CATTAIL MARSH & MORE: We start on the boardwalk at Cattail Marsh hoping for Marsh & Sedge Wrens, Soras, Cinnamon Teal and White-faced Ibis. Possibilities also include Bald Eagles and Osprey.</p> <p>Next, we walk down to Cell #1 looking for more ducks, and Eared Grebe and Long-tailed Duck are not out of the question.</p> <p>Leaving Cattail Marsh, we head to W. Jefferson County for a fun scavenger hunt! Rice fields, pastures and possibly a turf farm are all on the agenda. Possible species include Hudsonian Godwit, Upland Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and Whimbrel to name a few.</p> <p>We’ll be driving back roads in the country so fencerows should yield LeConte’s Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks and wrens.</p> <p>Round trip to Cell #1 is about 1 mile on even surface. At other locations, short walks from the car.</p>	JEFFERSON	EASY	6:45 am-3:00 pm		6:45 am-12:00 pm
6	<p>BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE – one of East Texas’ wildest places: This trip is led by TOS President Romey Swanson and wife Erin. Romey spent four years working with the National Park Service to document the unique bird and wildlife diversity of the rich woodland eco-systems of the Turkey Creek Unit.</p> <p>Expected species will be Brown-headed and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers, Fish Crow to name a few.</p> <p><i>Hike of around 3 miles on flat terrain, with 1-2 other short walks.</i></p>	HARDIN	MODERATE/DIFFICULT	6:30 am-3:00 pm	6:30 am-3:00 pm	
7	<p>EXPLORING ORANGE COUNTY: This trip begins with a visit to Lower Neches WMA, Bailey’s Fish Camp and Tony Houseman WMA. These sites mostly contain coastal marsh so we will make a stop at Claiborne West Park to add some woodland species.</p> <p>The excursion continues at the famed Shangri La Botanical Gardens. This 252-acre site includes upland forests, cypress/tupelo swamps and Adams Bayou, a lush riparian area.</p> <p>We may find a six-pack of woodpeckers, including Red-headed, with Wood Duck and Hooded Mergansers in the mix.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Entrance to the Gardens is free but a donation is suggested.</i></p> <p><i>Walking on smooth or paved trails.</i></p>	ORANGE	EASY	7:00 am-2:30 pm		

8	<p>PLEASURE ISLAND/NE JEFFERSON COUNTY: We start at Pleasure Island South Levee Road looking for American Pipit, Crested Caracara, White-tailed Kite, Osprey, Black-crowned Night Heron, Red-breasted Merganser, Bonaparte’s Gulls, Royal Tern, both pelican species and several species of ducks.</p> <p>Next, we head up to Pleasure Island to walk the short boardwalk and spend some time exploring the Park. Potential species here are Wilson’s Snipe, Belted Kingfisher, Red-Tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, American Bittern, Caspian and Royal Terns and several duck species.</p> <p>If lucky, we’ll get Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and Common Loon on the water, and maybe Winter Wren, Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet in the woods.</p> <p><i>Periodic stops and short walks close to the car, plus a short walk on the boardwalk at Pleasure Island.</i></p>	JEFFERSON	EASY	7:00 am-1:00 pm	
9	<p>COASTAL LOUISIANA: Enjoy a rare chance to bird a neighboring state and add some species to your Louisiana list!</p> <p>This excursion into Cameron Parish environs will kick off with a visit to the historic Sabine Pass Lighthouse. Here we will be able to find salt marsh species and some coastal waders. A small chenier – or wooded hummock – is present and can hold interesting passerines. Look for Bonaparte’s Gull, Boat-tailed Grackle and Clapper Rail.</p> <p>We leave there and travel to other back ridge and freshwater marsh locations and then to the Holly Beach area followed by a visit to the Sabine NWR, walking on the Wetland Walkway 1.5-mile trail over an impounded freshwater marsh, and Blue Goose Trail for a mile or so for more brackish marsh species.</p> <p>At Holly Beach we could see 15 species of shorebirds as well as gulls and terns and a variety of herons and egrets. Target birds include Peregrine Falcon, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon, Surf Scoter.</p> <p>All locations are subject to changes based on bird intel before the event.</p> <p>NOTE: Prior approval of all participants is required for entry into the lighthouse. Bring your driver’s license or other government ID to present upon entry.</p> <p><i>Walkway trip is 1.5 miles; long walks on the beach.</i></p>	CAMERON PARISH, LA.	MODERATE	6:15 am-3:00 pm	
10	<p>INLAND LOUISIANA: Enjoy an unusual chance to explore West Calcasieu Parish in neighboring Louisiana with a local expert. Target birds: Bald Eagle, Hooded Merganser and more.</p> <p>The caravan from the hotel will meet our leader at the Louisiana Tourist Travel Center near Vinton and bird the swamp walkway. We then proceed to the Vinton WWTP for ducks and other waterfowl (hoping for a Common Goldeneye here).</p> <p>Next, we drive north east to a private farm to explore fallow fields, ponds and riverside.</p> <p>We will finally explore the ‘prairie’ lands south of Vinton and if time allows visit Niblett’s Bluff Park for another riverside environment.</p> <p>All locations are subject to changes based on bird intel before the event. Habitat coverage will be pine woods, roadside scrub, weedy fields, small lakes and hopefully some mud flats.</p> <p><i>Quite a bit of walking, some uneven ground.</i></p>	WEST CALCASIEU PARISH, LA.	MODERATE	6:00 am-3:30 pm	
11	<p>HUNTING FOR HENSLOW’S IN HARDIN: The Henslow’s Sparrow has long been a desired bird on the Texas birding list. They are known to visit Hardin County during the winter, preferring boggy pine savanna with scattered patches of dense vegetation and pines growing at variable distances. The grass may be tall and the terrain wet and uneven.</p> <p>This trip will consist of making stops in the Big Thicket National Preserve where there is appropriate Henslow’s habitat. It is recommended that you bring winter clothing in layers, and comfortable waterproof rubber boots are a necessity. Also, bug spray can help with potential mosquitoes, chiggers or ticks.</p> <p>Where we go will depend on where the habitat is in the right successional stage and could involve several miles of hiking. Walking in their habitat can be strenuous, but the reward is well worth it.</p> <p>This trip might include sightings of Inca Dove, Hairy Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Brown-headed and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, and many sparrow species.</p> <p><i>Several miles of strenuous hiking in dense vegetation.</i></p>	HARDIN	DIFFICULT	6:30 am-3:00 pm	
12	<p>SHOREBIRD ID WITH CIN-TY LEE – BOLIVAR FLATS: The Houston Audubon’s Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary located Northeast Galveston County is a hotspot for shorebirds all year long and is a favorite of shorebird fans.</p> <p>Join Cin-Ty Lee to get a crash course in shorebird identification. We could have 20 species of shore birds including potentially Red Knot, Horned Lark, Nelson’s and Seaside Sparrows pop up along the beach too.</p> <p>The trip includes stops along Rettilon Road to check the ponds and dunes for waterfowl, shorebirds and sparrows, then a drive down the beach as far as possible. The flats area is only accessible by foot. The round trip from the barricade to the flats area is approximately one mile. Spotting scopes are recommended. Potential species include 4 gull species, 5 tern species, cormorants, grebes, sandpipers, plovers, herons, egrets, various raptors, wrens, and swallows.</p> <p>NOTE: Parking stickers are REQUIRED for all vehicles to park on Bolivar beaches. They can be purchased locally for \$10 at most stores locally.</p> <p><i>A 1-mile round trip hike on the flats and on the beach can both be strenuous.</i></p>	GALVESTON	MODERATE	6:15 am-2:30 pm	

13	<p>EXPLORING LIBERTY COUNTY/CRAWFISH FARMS: This is a great chance to give a good boost to your Liberty County list!</p> <p>We will visit the private Broussard’s Crawfish Farm, where there are several wooded areas in addition to the wetlands-like crawfish farm itself. Possible species include a variety of ducks, Hooded Merganser, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson’s Snipe, both yellowlegs species, Western and Least Sandpipers, a variety of herons, egrets and ibis, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Kestrels, Peregrine Falcon, Pine Warbler and several species of sparrows to name a few.</p> <p>Before heading back to the hotel, we will make a quick stop at Liberty Municipal Park. Several species of sparrows are possible as well as Osprey, Kestrel, Barred Owl, Northern Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker and many others.</p> <p><i>NOTE: There is a \$15 per person fee at the crawfish farm which will be charged when you register for the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Over two miles of walking over uneven terrain. Mud boots are advisable.</i></p>	LIBERTY	MODERATE/DIFFICULT	5:45 am –3:00 pm		
14	<p>IVORY BILLED BOAT TOUR-NECHES RIVER: For a more relaxing birding experience, cruise aboard the Ivory Bill to learn about the unique ecosystems along the Neches River with its dense bottomland forests of hardwoods and pine trees. The area is home to more than 200 tree species, 47 mammals, 300 birds and many reptiles and amphibians.</p> <p>The two-hour Ivory Billed Tour will start at Collier Ferry Park. Potential species often seen on the edges and near the river are Osprey, Belted Kingfishers, Crested Caracaras, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, American Crows, Fish Crows, cormorants and different species of hawks.</p> <p>Seating is limited to 29 and we will depart the hotel at a time to allow arrival 15 minutes prior to departure.</p> <p><i>NOTE: There is a minimum of 15 and maximum of 25 passengers. A \$30 fee will be charged when you register for this event.</i></p> <p><i>Birding from the boat.</i></p>	JEFFERSON	EASY			7:15 am–12:00 pm
15	<p>TRINITY RIVER WETLANDS AND WOODLANDS: The Trinity River in Liberty County offers a beautiful landscape with an opportunity to see many species of birds such as woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, sparrows, wrens, warblers and a variety of songbirds. We will be visiting Trinity River Island Recreation Area, JJ Mayes Wildlife Trace and White Memorial Park. This moderate walking field trip allows birders to explore the areas close to Champion Lake and adjacent Pickett’s Bayou.</p> <p>There is a good chance to find Hooded Merganser, Wilson’s Snipe, Osprey, Merlin, Winter Wren and Dark-eyed Junco in these environs.</p> <p><i>Quite a bit of walking at every stop.</i></p>	CHAMBERS	MODERATE			6:45 am–12:00 pm
16	<p>RARITY ROUND-UP: Our trip leaders will compile a list of the local vagrants and uncommon species that were seen during the event and put together a morning trip to find as many as possible. This is a great way to get another look at a favorite bird, or to finally check a lifer or county bird off your list.</p> <p><i>There could be long walks, depending on where the rarities have been seen. No maximum capacity.</i></p>	TBA				6:30 am–12:00 pm
<p>TEXAS CENTURY CLUB TRIPS: These trips are fast paced outings with the goal of maximizing the number of species seen/heard within the county. There is very little time for lingering looks so prepare to move briskly from spot to spot. Extensive driving to/from sites and roadside birding are a norm. The tour will feature as wide a variety of habitats as possible.</p>						
17	<p>NEWTON COUNTY CENTURY CLUB: It is very safe to say that Newton County is under-birded. The top eBirder has 115 species in that county, and only seven birders have 100 or more species. eBird has nine hot spots listed.</p> <p>This field trip will definitely add to the understanding of birds in the area and hopefully add to the list of good birding locations. Birds to tick off your list include Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Winter Wren, Brown-headed Nuthatches and warblers (both migrant and breeding birds) are some of the likely species there.</p>	NEWTON	EASY	5:30 am–4:00 pm		
18	<p>TYLER COUNTY CENTURY CLUB: Although not quite as challenging as Newton County, Tyler County could still be considered under-birded. The top eBirder there has 158 species, with 15 birders having 100 or more species and 10 hotspots listed in eBird.</p> <p>We’ll target Canvasback, Snow Goose, Bald Eagle and Cooper’s Hawk. Hairy Woodpecker, Brown-headed and Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Fox Sparrow are woodland birds to search for.</p>	TYLER	EASY	6:00 am–3:30 pm		
19	<p>JASPER COUNTY CENTURY CLUB: Jasper County is birded fairly often, so it is not quite as difficult to add species as it will be in other counties we will be visiting during this meeting. The top birder for the county for 2024 has 127 species and 44 birders have 50 or more. With 15 hotspots in the county, we should be able to rack up decent numbers!</p> <p>Look for Canvasback, Bonaparte’s Gull and Horned Grebe on the water. Red-headed, Red-cockaded and Hairy Woodpeckers can be found here too, and if we are lucky, we’ll spot Bachman’s Sparrow and Eastern Towhee.</p>	JASPER	EASY			

20	<p>ORANGE COUNTY CENTURY CLUB: The tour will feature as wide a variety of habitat as is available. It is safe to say this is an under-birded county. For 2024, 176 species have been seen by 183 birders. The top birder for 2024 has 125 species.</p> <p>Target birds are Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, with Hermit Thrush, Pine Warbler and Boat-tailed Grackles a good bet too. Hooded and Red-breasted Merganser, Bonaparte's and Lesser Black-backed Gull can be found on this trip as well.</p>	ORANGE	EASY			
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Promoting TOS.....

TOS is working to promote our organization and become a household name among birders in Texas. If you know of an event where we could host an information table,

please contact the Engagement Group coordinator, Kendra Kocab, at (713) 484-9204 or kenner7683@gmail.com.



2024 RGVPF booth: left to right - TOS member Cathy Hines, live bird handler Victor Lawrence, TOS Region 3 Director Laura Wilson at the TOS booth, distributing information and answering questions.



Region 6 Director Crystal Ledezma hosts the TOS table at the Magnolia Wildlife Expo in Magnolia, Tex. on Nov. 9.

Join TOS President Romey Swanson on this exciting trip to Oaxaca. Not only are there lots of birds in general, but there are also numerous regional specialties and endemics, many of which are quite beautiful like Slaty Vireo, Orange-breasted Bunting, and Red-breasted Chat. Add to that the striking scenery of the mountains and the Pacific coast, the outstanding cuisine, the rich and varied culture that includes some amazing archeological sites and world-renowned artisans, and this is a place you won't forget!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT OF THE TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Earlier in 2024 the TOS board worked with a consultant and formulated this vision statement for the years 2024 to 2026:

“We envision a future in which:

- *Texas leads the nation in its passion for and love of birds*
- *and its commitment to habitat conservation, education, and protection.*
- *Texas culture promotes the value of, and ease of access to,*
- *the enjoyment of birds for all.*
- *Growth in the number and diversity of Texans committed to birds and the environment ensures a healthy future for Texas’ 660 resident, seasonal, and migrant species of birds.”*

Goals were set in five areas of greatest importance, with membership deemed to be the top priority. A modest target was devised to increase membership by 10%, from 900 to 990, by the end of 2025.

Well let me tell you that your board members have been hard at work to meet and beat that goal!

We had a membership push in February and scored 145 brand new memberships.

TOS has hosted information tables at several festivals, board members have distributed flyers and talked up the benefits of joining wherever they are. Eye-catching graphics (thanks, Kendra!) are now the norm when we share TOS information on social media and in emails, and regional directors are focusing on underrepresented areas and populations to boost numbers.

The pastime (some would say obsession) of birding is gaining traction as a fun, inexpensive, omnipresent opportunity. Birding creates endorphins, stimulates the gray matter, and gives us something to do whenever we have the time. Your TOS board is proselytizing to the masses, and it’s paying off.

On December 7 we had 1,009 total memberships. Take that, strategic plan!

Time to set another goal, folks!



TOS Mourns Loss of Danial Hodges



Our dear friend, Daniel Hodges, passed away on October 3, 2024, after a sudden illness. His wife, Dianna, sent this email and agreed to have it published for all to read.

By this time, you may have heard that Daniel passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack at home where we each had our own projects that we took care of without overlap.

Thank you and TOS for being such an important part of his life. We had a full-fledged bird funeral with songs like “His eye is on the Sparrow,” “Three little birds,” and “Blackbird.” Our pallbearers wore feathers in lieu of flowers and we picked a gravesite overlooking a good birding pond. The highlight was when a red-shouldered hawk called out during graveside service. I dressed him in his favorite birding shirt and buried him with a pair of binoculars (the cheap ones as he would NEVER have let the Swarovskis be wasted).

I will never be as good a birder as Daniel was, but I would like to come to meetings anyway and enjoy the company and companionship. He always was the one who kept up with the bird calendar so please let me know when the next meeting or birdwatching excursion is. I may not be there in person but will be in my heart. I may need a little time to regather my life, but I want to honor his love of birds (I may have to learn the darn names now :-0).

Very sincere thanks for all the happy memories.

Dianna Hodges

diannalhodes@aol.com

**Photos by Dan Coombs, 2024*

Spend 9 nights with Panama Sue (aka Susan Foster) as you explore some of the best birding Panama has to offer! We'll start with 4 nights at the award winning Canopy Lodge, searching for motmots, tanagers, hummingbirds, antpittas and the mythical Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo. Then we'll spend 5 nights at Canopy Tower, where you'll enjoy unlimited access to the fabulous Observation Deck in between excursions to some of Panama's premier birding locations, including the world famous Pipeline Road.




BELIZE BIRDING BONANZA

NOV 2025
(EXACT DATES TBA)

Raptors galore & more!



Join TOS Past President Byron Stone for an exciting trip to Belize during peak raptor migration. This trip provides the opportunity to see over 200 species of birds, including 30 species of diurnal raptors. Participants will visit 4 locations throughout the country and explore the local food, culture, flora, and fauna.



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In October we lost our TOS merchandise coordinator, Daniel Hodges. Daniel was a great “storekeeper” for our organization, and he will be missed not just for that skill but also as a friend and passionate birder.

TOS is looking for someone to take on the responsibilities associated with sales of our merchandise both online and at various TOS events. Job duties include:

- Maintaining a small inventory of T-shirts and water bottles
- Packaging and shipping orders within 3 days of receipt
- Completing orders and managing inventory on our online platform
- Hosting the TOS sales table at winter and spring meetings, and other events as needed.
 - Your TOS event admission cost will be waived.
- Participating in decisions about merchandise ordering and sales

This job requires minimal time outside of the meeting sales. Please let us know if you have any questions or are interested in the position.

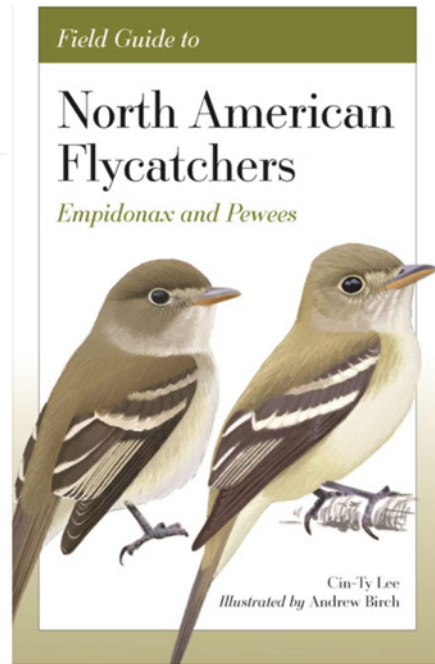
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Field Guide to North American Flycatchers: *Empidonax and Pewees*

Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch

A richly illustrated, portable field guide to flycatcher
identification



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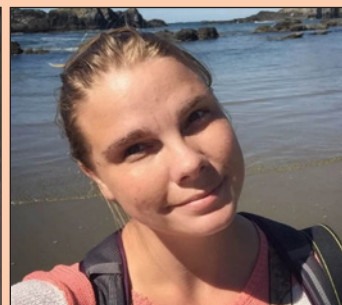
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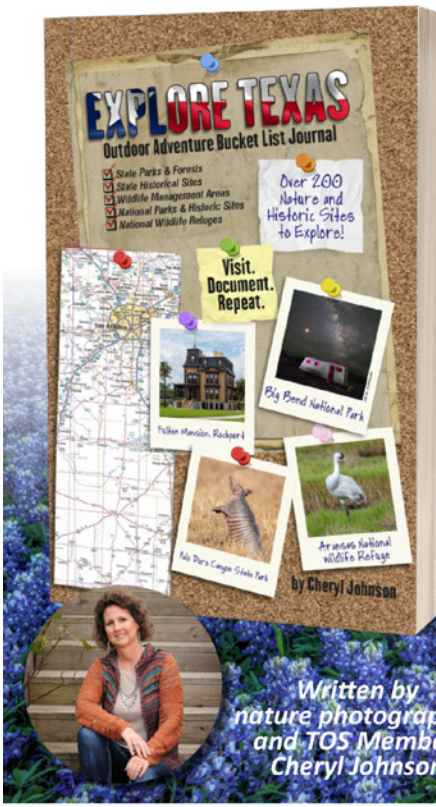
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