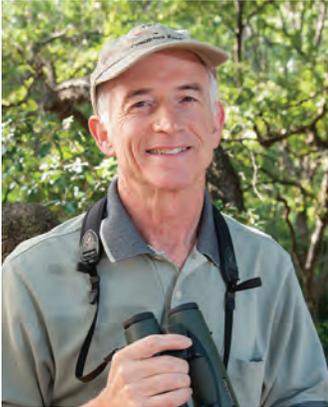




President's Message



Byron Stone TOS President.

Greetings TOS Members,

I hope you had a wonderful summer, with temperate climates and abundant breeding birds. And many wishes for a productive fall migration, filled with migrant birds of your choosing—shorebirds, raptors, warblers or perhaps early sparrows.

On June 2, 2016, many of us were relieved to hear that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rejected a petition from several private interest groups to delist the Golden-cheeked

Warbler as an endangered species. The groups contended that recent research indicates that the population of Golden-cheeked Warblers is 20-fold or more higher than estimates from the early 1990's, when the warbler was first listed as endangered. Those of you fortunate enough to be able to attend the recent TOS meeting in Uvalde and hear our Friday and Saturday night speakers (geneticist Giri Athri and field biologist Bill Reiner, respectively) probably understand why the petition was rejected. Population estimates vary depending on what type of model is used to make the estimates. Survey methods similar to the ones used to estimate populations in the early 1990's do not indicate that the warbler's population has increased. And genetic data indicates that Golden-cheeked Warblers suffered a sudden, significant decline in genetic diversity sometime in the last century; and it is not clear whether that decline is ongoing or not. The Golden-cheeked Warbler is not out of the woods yet. It still needs and deserves protection as an endangered species. And this recent delisting petition won't be the last. Be sure to let all your birding and non-birding friends know how important it is that we continue to provide special protection for Golden-cheeked Warblers. We need to do all we can to insure that this native Texas treasure brightens every hill country spring with its cheerful presence.

TOS has been busy this summer. The newly-established Nominations Committee has begun its work and will soon submit a slate of candidates for the board election to be held early next spring. Several meetings have been held, during which the board discussed sanctuaries, finances and long-range plans. Your Field Trip Chairperson, Jane Tillman, has been busy planning several exciting weekender events for late summer and beyond. And an exciting winter meeting is shaping up for McAllen.

So get out there and enjoy the great out of doors. Just keep in mind that there is still a lot of work to do to preserve birds and birding for future generations.

Good birding ya'll,

—Byron Stone, President TOS

Texas Bird Image Project Update



*White-collared Seedeater in Val Verde, County.
Documented by Martin Reid*

The Texas Bird Image Project, now in its fourth year, continues to collect bird images from around the state. The project has now archived over 10,000 bird images and 800 videos of identifiable bird species all documented by date and county.

While the TBI project is certainly educational as a visual reference guide, its intention is more than just a scrapbook. Each image and video is recorded with date, county, and credited photographer. These photos and videos add weight to the state's accepted species list. The images aid in documenting regional rarities within a state, add information regarding status and distribution, and add clarity to any discussion regarding rare and confusing species. Over 500 Texas photographers have contributed to the archive project.

Some recent important photo-documented additions to the project are the hard-to-see Black Rail by Greg Lavaty, White-collared Seedeaters from a new area in Val Verde County by Martin Reid and Sheridan Coffey, and Flame-colored Tanager and Golden-crowned Warbler from Nueces County by multiple photographers. The tanager and warbler are both pending review by the Texas Bird Records Committee.

—Jim Peterson



Black Rail. Photo Greg Lavaty

TOS Uvalde Meeting a success.....

Uvalde was headquarters for the spring meeting held May 5-8, 2016. The weather couldn't have been more cooperative and the birds were present! We had 112 registrants, 26 field trips, and help from 16 fabulous field trip leaders*. Laurie Foss and Judy Kestner were superb with online registration.

As luck would have it, the event coordinator (me) came down with a terrifically bad cold two days before the start. Thanks to help from a fantastic board and many volunteers, all went well.

Bryan Calk and Byron Stone did an excellent job of arranging field trips to a variety of habitats within an hour or so of Uvalde. Many discovered the beauty of Fort Clark Springs, San Felipe Creek in Del Rio, and Love Creek Ranch. Big Springs Ranch, Tripp Davenport's family properties, and the Bader Ranch were generously shared.

With no organized birding club in Uvalde we depended heavily on area birders. We greatly appreciated their support with scouting, field trips, speakers, and silent auction.

We had fun Thursday evening with Susan Foster and Judy Kestner conducting the Steve Gross Memorial Pub Quiz. Friday afternoon, Zach Pearson, of Caesar Kleburg Wildlife Research Institute and TAMU Kingsville presented recent findings on Montezuma Quail. Friday evening, Dr. Giri Athrey, of TAMU, informed us of the importance of genetic diversity in the declining population of Golden-cheeked Warbler. Bill Reiner, City of Austin Biologist, shared a presentation prepared by Lisa O'Donnell entitled "Learning More about our Native Texan: The Golden-cheeked Warbler." Both evening programs provided data to support continued listing of Golden-cheeked Warbler on the Endangered Species List.

Appropriate to the southern region of Texas, we enjoyed



Winners of the Steve Gross Memorial Pub Quiz

a choice of Fajitas on banquet night. The meal was nicely presented and deliciously prepared by an independent local caterer. The caterer chosen for the box lunches was Uvalde Independent School District. Your lunch money directly benefitted local children!

Thanks to Thomas Moore Feed for their presence and continued support. Also thanks to former TOS president Lytle Blankenship who graciously donated a portion of the proceeds from his book sales to TOS. Georgina Schwartz was there to handle the TOS t-shirt sales table. We never take your work for granted Georgina, thank you. Lastly thanks to the many volunteers and board members that made TOS/Uvalde a success.

—Jimma Byrd

*Field Trip Leaders

Rhandy Helton... Richard Redmond...Rich Kostecke...Tom Collins...Martin Hagne...Anthony Hewetson...Bryan Calk
Karen and Mike Gleason...Tripp Davenport...Louisa Stone...Kathy Bader...Melody Lytle...Bob Rasa...Tony Galucci

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Birding Results from the Spring 2016 Meeting in Uvalde

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

Before I get into our results I want to explain how the checkerboard was built this time around. I used eBird to generate a list of every species that had been seen during the last ten Mays in every county we were to explore (Bandera, Edwards, Kerr, Kinney, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Zavala). This yielded a list of 289 species. From this list I removed species that the ABA does not consider countable (such as Egyptian Goose). I then removed those that had been reported to eBird two times or less from the period surveyed. This left me with a list of 242 species and field trip participants with the task of competing with every eBirder who had spent time in those counties from 2006 through 2015.

How did we do?

We saw, as a group, 190 species of the 242 that seemed reasonable. That works out to about 79% and given that we were, in effect, competing against every hard-core county birder and rarity chaser that had worked those counties over a fifteen year period I think that is pretty respectable. We also had seven write-ins – all species that had not been reported to eBird, from the counties surveyed, more than twice during the last ten Mays: American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Acorn Woodpecker, Vesper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, and American Goldfinch.

Birders are a competitive bunch so a few highlights are in order. By the numbers, the Kickapoo and Kinney County group prevailed on Friday with 103 species, the Zavala County TCC group prevailed on Saturday with 106 species (the Kinney County TCC group did pretty well on Saturday as well, tallying 102 species), and the Big Springs Ranch group prevailed on Sunday with 95 species.

Numerous teams contributed species uniquely to the list. The Kinney County group found the only Canada Goose on Saturday; the Del Rio group found the only Lesser Scaups on Friday; the Maverick County group found the only Snowy Egret on Friday; the Del Rio group found the only Yellow-crowned Night Herons on Friday; the Concan group recorded the only Sharp-shinned Hawk on Friday; the Del Rio group saw the only Gray Hawk on Friday; the Zavala County group found the only Sora on Saturday; the Zavala County group also did well with shorebirds – scoring the only Black-necked Stilts, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers, White-rumped Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitcher on Saturday; the Cook's Slough group found the only Groove-billed Ani on Friday as well as the only Barn Owl on Friday; the Edwards County group stumbled across the only Common Poorwills and Chuck-will's-widows while passing through Real County on Sunday; the Big Springs Ranch group saw the only Acorn Woodpecker on Sunday; the Big Springs Ranch group had the only Peregrine

Falcon – on Friday and Sunday; the Zavala County group recorded the only Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on Saturday, the Big Springs Ranch group found the only Willow Flycatcher – on Friday and Sunday; the Edwards County group located the only Loggerhead Shrike on Sunday; the Kinney County group had the only Gray Vireo – on Friday and Saturday; the Big Springs Ranch group saw the only Blue Jays on Sunday; the Love Creek Ranch group had the only Marsh Wren on Saturday; the Fort Clark Springs group had the only Gray Catbird on Sunday; the Kinney County group saw the only Northern Waterthrush on Saturday; the Big Springs Ranch group had the only Hooded Warbler – on Friday and Sunday; the Uvalde County group had the only American Redstart on Saturday; the Lost Maples SNA group had the only Wilson's Warbler on Saturday; the Big Springs Ranch group reported the only Song Sparrow on Sunday, the Concan group had the only Black-headed Grosbeak on Sunday, the Big Springs Ranch group saw the only Lazuli Bunting on Sunday; the Kinney County group had the only Varied Buntings – on Friday and Saturday; the Cook's Slough group reported the only Western Meadowlarks on Friday, the Zavala County group reported the only Brewer's Blackbirds on Saturday; the Zavala County group reported the only Baltimore Oriole on Saturday; the Big Springs Ranch group reported the only American Goldfinches on Sunday

For what it's worth we, as a birding horde, racked up 158 species on Friday, 168 species on Saturday, and 141 species on Sunday.

Also for what it's worth: the group feeling that migrant songbirds seemed a little scarce is probably borne out by this statistic: we only reported fifteen of the twenty-five species of warbler that were, more or less, expected.

Most of you have seen more than a few lists from me over the years ... so here comes another one. Without further ado, the list from the Spring 2016 TOS meeting in Uvalde, Texas: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Mottled Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Scaled Quail, Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, White-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Gray Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpipers, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared Dove, Inca Dove, Common Ground Dove, White-tipped Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Greater Roadrunner, Groove-billed Ani, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Lesser Nighthawk, Common Nighthawk, Common Poorwill, Chuck-will's-widow, Chimney Swift, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird,

Continued on page 5

Uvalde meeting photo essay



TOS Uvalde Meeting—Big Springs Ranch for Children in Real County



On Saturday, May 7, our field trip group arrived at the parking lot of the Big Springs Ranch for Children, located nine miles North of Leakey. According to its website, “There are few places on earth that can match the breath-taking beauty of Big Springs Ranch. Known as ‘the country of 1100 springs’, the Ranch existed for centuries as home to Native Americans, and eventually to European pioneers. Its most recent purpose is a tribute to the visionary who saw its possibilities for children and dreamed a dream that in the end came true.” We were briefed on the history of the ranch and school by Tony Gallucci, birder and photographer extraordinaire, who works with the children there at the ranch. The weather on Saturday was cool, and the sky threatened rain. Several of us were thinking about warmer jackets. Tony caught our attention when he talked about our having to cross a stream, either by walking through the water or by navigating some slippery, moss-covered rocks. What?!! I didn’t read this in the TOS trip description! The ranch was amazing and oh so tranquil. Then, we made it to the river crossing. It was definitely not as bad as we had all envisioned. I went first and made it without getting wet! One by one we made it across. I turned and saw that Bron Rorex was soaking wet and was trying to dry her iphone. Not a good day to go in the water. She swears that someone pushed her, but I don’t think so. (Just kidding) Anyway, Bron was a very good sport about the whole thing, and I think she dried out eventually.

—Susan Foster

Continued from page 3

Ringed Kingfisher, Belted Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, Acorn Woodpecker, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Crested Caracara, Peregrine Falcon, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Eastern Phoebe, Say’s Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, Couch’s Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, White-eyed Vireo, Bell’s Vireo, Black-capped Vireo, Gray Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Hutton’s Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Green Jay, Blue Jay, Western Scrub Jay, Chihuahuan Raven, Common Raven, Purple Martin, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cave Swallow, Barn Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Black-crested Titmouse, Verdin, Bushtit, Canyon Wren, House Wren, Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren, Bewick’s Wren, Cactus Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Curve-billed Thrasher, Long-billed Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-collared Seedeater, Olive Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Canyon Towhee, Cassin’s Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln’s Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Indigo Bunting, Varied Bunting, Painted Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlarks, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer’s Blackbird, Common Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Bronzed Cowbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Hooded Oriole, Bullock’s Oriole, Audubon’s Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Scott’s Oriole, House Finch, Pine Siskin, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow

—Anthony ‘Fat Tony’ Hewetson

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Great Texas Birding Classic 2016 – TOS Real Macaws Report

On April 17, 2016, Ed Fair, Jane Tillman and I participated in the 2016 Great Texas Birding Classic, GTBC. TOS graciously sponsored our team, so we were called the TOS Real Macaws. This was the 20th anniversary of the GTBC, 20 years of raising significant money for conservation in Texas. We were proud to be a part of this!

There are many ways to participate in the Classic. We participated in the Big Day category in our home region of the Heart of Texas East. This region stretches from Comanche and Brown Counties in the north to Webb and Duval Counties on the south. The goal was to see, hear and ID as many birds as possible between 12:00 am and 11:59 pm, and we could cover as much of that area as we wanted. Needless to say, we didn't cover the entire area.

I have been doing Big Days for many years now, and it is both fun and challenging and sometimes very frustrating. Deciding where to go and when to go where is a hard call. You want to be everywhere first thing in the morning when the birds are most active, but that's not possible. So, you make plans, make contingency plans, and hope the birds and weather cooperate. Sometimes everything falls in place. Sometimes not. But that's the game.

With our very busy spring schedules, we didn't have the flexibility of choosing an alternate date for our Big Day, so when the weather forecast was predicting heavy rains, thunderstorms and possible flooding for April 17, we were in a quandary. Hoping that the forecast was wrong and really not having another option, we decided to go anyway, and amazingly we only encountered rain toward the end of the day and that rain was pretty light. The birding gods smiled on us!

I can't give away our top secret route (we may want to use it again next year!), but suffice it to say that we did an admirable job of covering the various habitats in our region. We had great birds and our species count was looking really good as we entered Travis County around 6:30 pm. We had been listening to the weather throughout the day and knew that Central Texas had received significant rain. When we arrived at Big Webberville Park in eastern Travis County and found the gate locked, we weren't too surprised or upset. We kissed our Bald Eagle on a nest goodbye and continued to Hornsby Bend where we knew, thanks to rare bird alert texts throughout the day, that we were going to add numerous shorebird species to our list. We were looking really good! When we arrived at Hornsby and found the gates closed, we were very surprised and shocked. We just sat there looking at the closed gates for a minute. A birding friend drove out, and we then learned that the guard was inside the guard building. I went to talk to her in hopes of convincing her that this was a life and death situation and that we needed to get to the ponds. Sadly, my powers of persuasion were lagging by that point in the day, and the guard had no sympathy for us and wouldn't let us in. I briefly considered resorting to violence, but thankfully the thought passed quickly. To put it mildly, this felt like a kick in the gut!! I still get a little sick when I think about those few moments. We regrouped enough to head to one other location where we picked up a few more species but nothing like what we would have gotten at Hornsby. We ended our Big Day with a distant

Great Horned Owl which it took me forever to hear!

As an analyst by profession, I can't help but analyze this experience. I'm in the process of reading *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman. One of the theories he explains in the book is about how the timing of things plays a huge part in our experience of an event overall and that we tend to focus on the negative aspects of an event. For instance, if you have an amazing birding experience for the first 14 hours of the day, but the last three hours of the day suck, you are very likely going to experience the whole day as not so great. You don't take the whole day into account. You just remember the last, less than great part of the day even when it is just a small portion of the day. I reminding myself how great the first 14 hours of our 2016 GTBC Big Day were, but to be honest, I'm still struggling with it. But no matter how we remember the day (great, good, bad, horrible) the things that went our way and the things that didn't go our way are all part of this game we call a Big Day. How a team responds to the challenges on the Big Day can make the difference between a winning day and a "well, there's always next year" day. In our case, we ended with 143 species in 16 hours and 55 minutes and after traveling 384 miles. We tied for first place in our region with Laurie Foss's team, Gone Fishing (other team members were Jean Martin, Cinda Crosley and Dennis Palafox). Laurie's response to the results was "How is it even possible that two teams saw the same number of species, a week apart, birding the same region? Birding is strange sometimes." Indeed! GTBC 2016 may not have ended as we would have liked, but hey, we spent nearly 17 hours out birding. Any day spent birding is a good day, and our experiences this year will help us with our planning for 2017. I'm already starting to look forward to it!

To find out more about the Classic, go to <http://tpwd.texas.gov/events/great-texas-birding-classic>. And consider putting together a team for next year's competition. Maybe you're up for a Big Day challenge. If not, there are numerous other less extreme ways to participate. Check it out! However you choose to participate, the money you help raise with your team fee will go to a very good cause. Birds!!

I asked my teammates to write-up the highs and lows of the day. Below are their impressions of the day.

Jane:

I found the little bit of scouting to be a high point. We had time the evening before to visit Airport Road in Cotulla, as well as one of the cemeteries. Good birds were Grasshopper Sparrow and Vermilion Flycatcher. The KOA pond turned up two Mottled Ducks.

The predawn of the big day was eventful with many Common Paurques calling on Airport Road. Then we headed down to Chapparral WMA where the first bird we flushed was an unexpected Barn Owl - very cool. Audubon's Orioles singing their lackadaisical song in the background and the "three for you" of the Brown-crested Flycatchers there as well as the many singing Cassin's Sparrow were also memorable.

Discussing how to remember various bird calls and songs throughout our hours-long trip was quite helpful and fun.

Ponds along the east side of IH 35 south of Cotulla had many shorebirds and ducks. I never get tired of seeing water birds in an arid setting. The single American Golden-Plover at the pond on La Bonita Road was awe-inspiring.

Other high points were the Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Choke Canyon, the many kettles of migrating hawks and Franklin's Gulls, and the fact that we dodged rain for most of the day. Our luck held in the Bastrop area where we had five Red-headed Woodpeckers in short order. But then the lows kicked in. We dashed to Big Webberville Park with our hearts set on the active Bald Eagle nest and maybe an Eastern Kingbird, and found it closed. Undeterred, our indefatigable driver, Ed, drove us to Hornsby and as we approached we were counting shorebirds in our heads, only to find the gate closed, and a gate attendant unwilling to open up, even though it was not yet dusk. With that, a little wind went out of our sails and we high-tailed it to Commons Ford where we had to resort to a stake-out Eastern Phoebe of all things, and a reliable Great Horned Owl. Although we had victory in our grasp, we will have to wait until next year to better our species count. Newbie no more, I am ready to jump in and help plan a fail-safe route to our best list ever and maybe get a few new county birds too.

Ed:

One of the highlights for me was that, after expecting to have to cancel the entire day because of rain, we were able to almost completely avoid it until late in the afternoon and, even then, we only had sprinkles and light rain. The other high point was the fact that we saw literally hundreds of migrants wherever we were all through the day. Every time we looked up, there would be kettles or streams of raptors or gulls. At other times we were catching individual accipiters and falcons.

The lowest of the lowlights was pretty obvious. After having such great luck in avoiding the rain and chalking up some great species, the bird gods viciously turned on us. We were partially shut down at Mitchell Lake, completely shut down at Webberville and rudely shut out at Hornsby. That cost us 30 or so precious minutes and by the time we got to Commons Ford it was too wet and too late.

The other lowlight for me was stumbling on the thrush at Alum Creek Rd. It was tempered a bit by the fact that we had FIVE(!) Red-headed Woodpeckers. Another lowlight was that we once again forgot to get Monk Parakeet. We drove within about 300 yards of nests off of Hwy 71 but were so flustered by the Hornsby debacle that we flew right past.



The rain has finally found us. Shelia and Ed at Commons Ford trying for the last birds of the day. Photo credit: Jane Tillman.



TOS Real Macaws members: Ed Fair, Jane Tillman and Shelia Hargis. (Photo taken after our Big Day, once we are presentable again!). Photo credit: Andy Fitness.



Ed on scouting day. Photo credit: Shelia Hargis.



Ed and Shelia finally adding Eastern Phoebe to the list. Birds on nests are awesome! Photo credit: Jane Tillman.

TOS Regional Reports

Region 5...Edward's Plateau

From late April into the first half of May, Travis Audubon Society's, Birdathon, and its associated field trips were enjoyed by many. The Roberson County trip found 106 species. In one spot near the Brazos River the abundance of calling Dickcissels was simply amazing! The sixth annual Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival held on the last weekend in April in Fredericksburg continues to grow each year. New birding field trips were added this year to Guadalupe River State Park and Kerrville hotspots with good birds seen on all trips. Cecilia Riley, retired executive director of the Gulf Coast Birding Observatory in Lake Jackson, was our honored guest speaker. All TOS members are invited to join us for our seventh Wings festival to celebrate Hill Country nature on the last weekend in April, 2017. San Saba Bird and Nature Club supported the second annual Kids Nature Kamp for 3 days in early June. Birding activities are always part of the fun for these students 8-11 years old. Breeding Bird Surveys have been the recent birding focus on the Edwards Plateau. Many of us have been delayed in running our routes due to heavy rains in late May. Rainouts and impassable rivers and creek have been the norm. Two scouting trips later, I'm still waiting to run my route. Amusing bird activity around the house has been the harassment of parents by calling juvenile Common Ravens. As incessant and anxiety provoking as any human baby cry, I can only imagine how desperate the birds feel to find enough food to keep those babes quiet!

—Jimma Byrd

Region 7...South Texas Brushlands

On the fall birding schedule in south Texas is the HummerBird Celebration in Rockport September 15-18. Following that will be Harlingen's Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival November 2-6.

For birders interested in participating in a pelagic, you may wish to check out the webpage www.texaspelagics.com. The site lists departure schedules, mostly from South Padre Island but occasionally from Port Aransas and has nice lists of previous trips.

What is happening in south Texas in early 2017? Plans are currently underway for our TOS winter meeting January 12-15, 2017 - to be held in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Please note the dates on your calendar. We'll update you as meeting plans are formalized. Check the TOS webpage for updates.

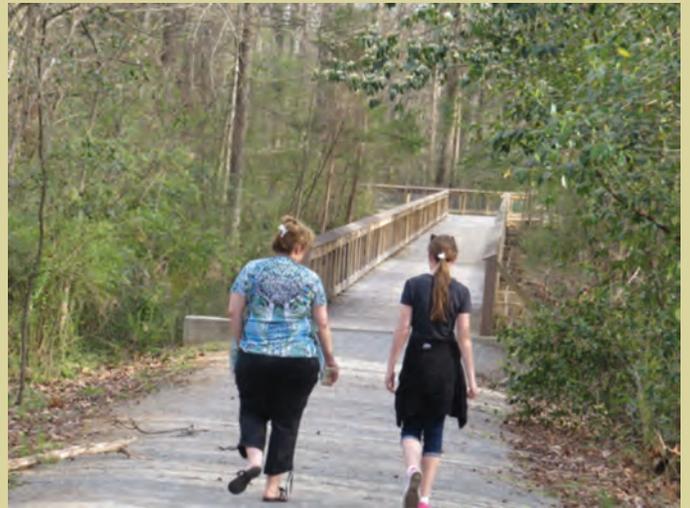
—Bron Rorex

Region 3...Piney Woods

With all the rain and flooding in East Texas this spring, it has made birding difficult. A couple of interesting places to bird in East Texas are around the city of Jefferson, Texas and Mineola, Texas. Jefferson has a great boardwalk though the bayou, right in the heart of the city. Birding was great along this walk. Close to Jefferson you will find Caddo Lake. It has a birding list of 260. The Mineola Nature Preserve on the Sabine River encompasses 2,911 acres located in Wood County.

Owned by the City of Mineola, this is part of a comprehensive development plan to protect our natural wildlife and habitat for future generations. This pristine area is an escape to the quiet of nature and the solitude of yesteryear. It has a Bird list of 193 birds.

—Linda Belssner



Jefferson Boardwalk



Caddo Lake

TOS Supports the TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC



Gliders – Central Texas Coast

- 2nd Place: 33 species
- TOS Austwell-Tivoli WE DON'T KILLDEER, TOS
- 1st Place: 35 species
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Thrashers



Gliders – Heart of Texas East

- 2nd Place: 80 species
- Green Jay-Walkers, Independent
- 1st Place: 81 species
- TOS-SAYBC Senior Chickadees, Texas Ornithological Society



Roughwings – Heart of Texas East

- 2nd Place: 70 species
- TOS TAYBC Heroic Hawks, Texas Ornithological Society
- 1st Place: 71 species
- TOS-SAYBC Junior Chickadees, Texas Ornithological Society



Roughwings – Central Coast

- 3rd Place: 100 species
- Woody's Willets, Woody's Sports Center
- 2nd Place: 101 species – 3-WAY TIE!!!
- ABNC Outstanding Orioles, Aransas Bird and Nature Club
- Port A Pied-bills, Port Aransas Chamber
- TOS Wacky Warblers, Texas Ornithological Society (TOS)
- 1st Place: 103 species
- TOS Birdacious Buntings, TOS



Roughwings – Lower Coast

- 3rd Place: 66 species
- TOS Cheeky Chachalacas, Texas Ornithological Society
- 2nd Place: 69 species
- Nature Loving Travelers, Norma Linda Trevino Elementary and Edinburg CISD
- 1st Place: 142 species
- Eagle Optics & the Chachalittles, Eagle Optics



Roughwings – Prairies and Pineywoods West

- 1st Place: 86 species
- TOS Dallas ZOOM Roughwings, Texas Ornithological Society



Roughwings – Far West Texas

- 1st Place: 20 species
- TOS Mockingbirders, Texas Ornithological Society



Most Valuable Birders 5 Teams!



Martha McLeod



Javier de Leon



Bron Rorex

Steve Reisinger



Vicki Simon



Joel Simon

Most Valuable Birders 4 Teams!

TOS Salutes its Winning Sponsored Teams in the Texas Birding Classic

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2016 Official Artwork, by Craig Farquhar

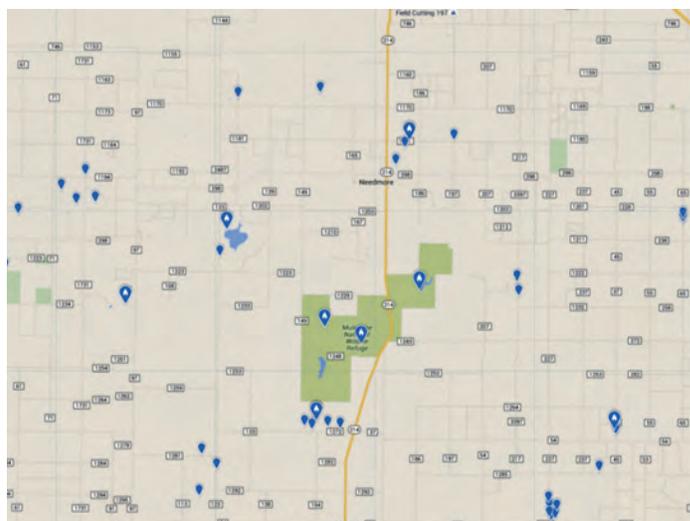
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Common Crane

On the afternoon of 18 November 2014, Justin Bosler, who was working for Texas Tech monitoring Sandhill Crane daily behavior patterns and landscape usage for his Master's research, discovered and photographed a Common Crane (*Grus grus*) amongst the large Sandhill Crane flock at Goose Lake on Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, Bailey County.



Numerous photos were taken of the Common Crane(s) and the identification was not in question when it came before the TBRC as a potential first state record. The voting and decision revolved around the obvious question of provenance.

Common Cranes have been documented in several other US states and Canadian Provinces and have been accepted by the ABA (American Birding Association). Close to Texas, records have come from Nevada, Kansas, and a majority of sightings being from Nebraska. Common Cranes and Lesser Sandhill Cranes have overlapping breeding ranges in parts of Siberia and it is a widely held theory that the Common Cranes seen in the US migrate south with the Lesser Sandhills to their wintering areas in the US (and in Texas). Cranes are long-lived and it is certainly possible that sightings of individuals over the years may pertain to the same group(s) of birds.

With this in mind, the voting members of the TBRC independently & unanimously (9-0) voted to accept the Common Crane and add it to the official Texas state list. Since there was no indication of plumage or behavior to suggest that the Texas bird(s) were not wild, the idea that these birds are traveling and wintering with the Sandhill Cranes seems the most likely scenario. Nobody on the TBRC can claim that this is in fact the true origin of the birds and the members recognize that others may come to different conclusions.

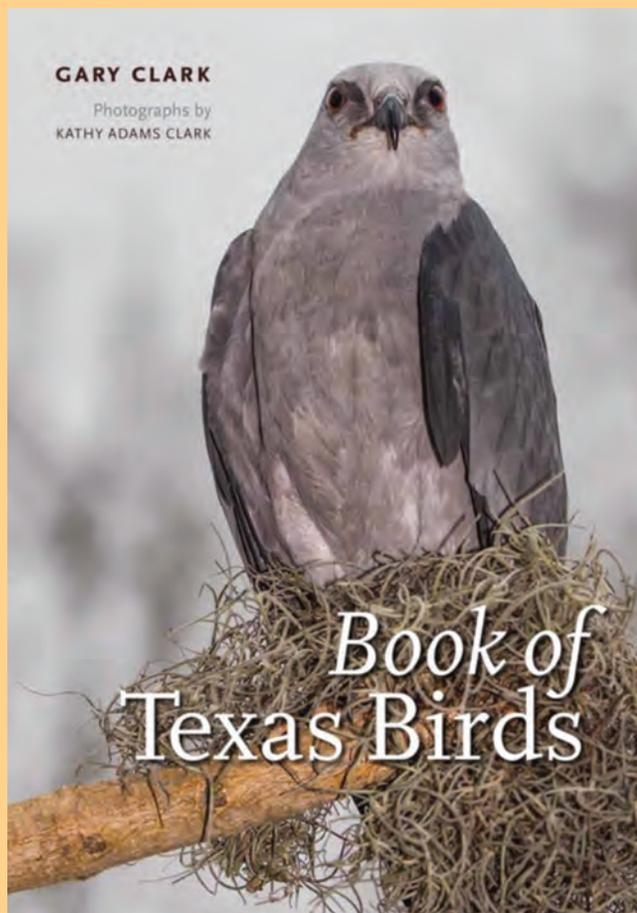
—Eric Carpenter



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Book review.....



Book of Texas Birds

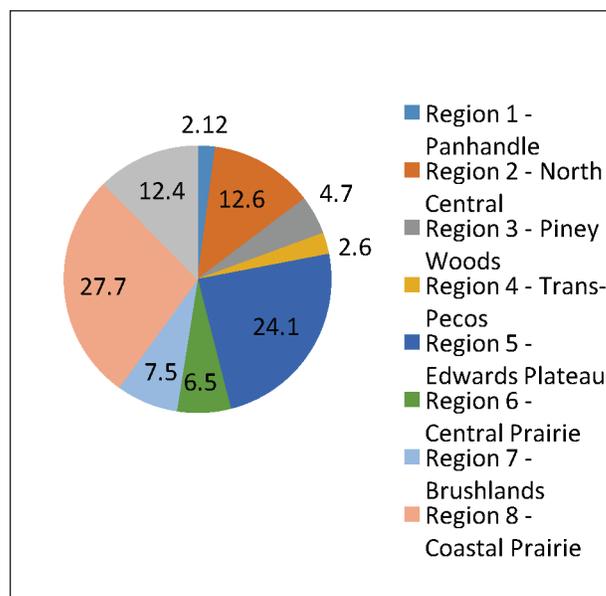
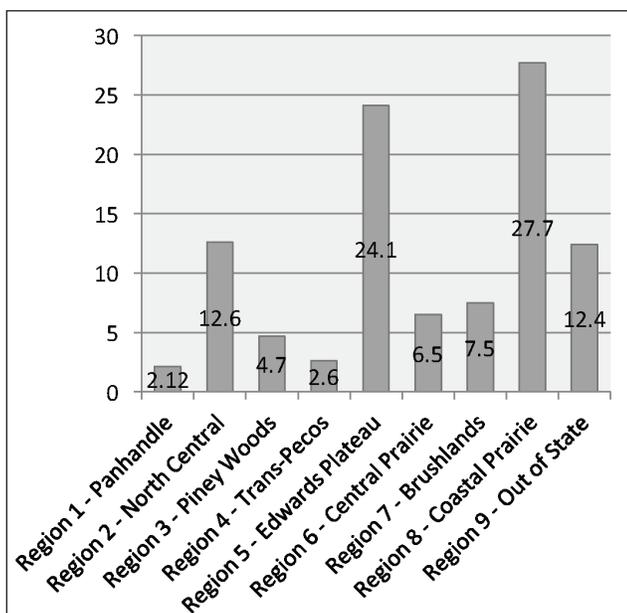
Gary Clark
 Paperback 619 pages
 Publisher Texas A&M University Press (2016)
ISBN-10: 1623494311
 Price \$39.95 Amazon.com

Drawing on the knowledge and insight gained from a lifetime of watching, studying, and enjoying birds, this book is full of information about more than four hundred species of birds in Texas, most all of which author Gary Clark has seen first hand. Organized in the standard taxonomic order familiar to most birders, the book is written in a conversational tone that yields a wide-ranging discussion of each bird's life history as well as an intimate look at some of its special characteristics and habits. Information regarding each species' diet, voice, and nest is included as well as when and where it can be found in Texas. Magnificent photographs by Kathy Adams Clark accompany each bird's entry.

For those just beginning to watch birds to those who can fully relate to the experiences and sentiments communicated here by a veteran birder, this book reveals the kind of personal connection to nature that careful attention to the birds around us can inspire.

Texas Ornithological Society Percent of Membership by Region

- Members of our organization come from 36 states and one foreign country.
- In 2013 TOS had 1,109 members. Today we have 1,086.
- PayPal is used by 38.3% of our members to make dues payments, an increase of about 13%



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