

President's Message



Shelia Hargis TOS President.

Hello TOS friends. We wrapped up another successful spring meeting in San Antonio. If you weren't able to join us, you missed a good time! In this edition of our newsletter, you'll find lots of great photos from the meeting, a very amusing write-up of the meeting, and Anthony's informative analysis of birds we saw during the meeting. In addition to all of that, the 2018-2019 Board wrapped up its work by saying goodbye to Jimma Byrd and Susan Foster. I feel very

fortunate to have worked closely with these amazing women as part of the Executive Committee for two years. I miss them greatly! The 2019-2020 Board began its work by welcoming Christine Turnbull and Randy Pinkston to the Board. Welcome Christine and Randy! The second order of business for the



Susan Foster, Shelia Hargis and Jimma Byrd at the TOS meeting in San Antonio. Photo credit: Keith Godwin

new Board was to elect this year's officers. I am honored to serve another year as your President with Daniel Hodges as Vice President, Catherine Winans as Treasurer and Kendra Kocab as Secretary. Thank you Daniel, Catherine and Kendra for your willingness to step up to officer positions.

One of the fun things for me at this meeting was coming down extra early each morning and getting to visit with members over breakfast. I met members I had not met before and learned new things about some of you. One morning Mike Jones regaled me with his photos of a White-eyed Vireo eating a dragonfly. How is that possible? Thank you Mike for allowing me to share your photos as part of my column!

Patsy Inglet and her team did a superb job of organizing great field trips, timing the rain for minimal detrimental impact, lining up very interesting presenters on a variety of subjects, and raising a lot of money for TOS, Bexar Audubon and San Antonio Audubon through the many raffle prizes and the silent auction items. Thank you to the host team, field trip leaders and assistants, presenters, volunteers and Keith Godwin, our official photographer as well as Ron Huebner for his write-up, all who sent in photos from the field, and Anthony Hewetson, our checklist king. And finally, thanks to the members of the TOS Meeting Committee who pull everything together for all of our meetings.



Mike Jones' photos of a White-eyed Vireo eating a dragonfly.

During our Annual Meeting, I presented on various accomplishments over the last year as well as a few of the things we are planning to focus on in the coming year. For this coming year, we'll:

- Offer two great meetings, locations to be determined. The tentative dates are January 16 – 19 and April 30 – May 3, 2020. Watch our website for updated information.
- Offer more great weekender field trips. We can offer more if we have more members willing to host a weekender in their area. Please consider volunteering for this. You do not have to be an expert birder, just know the good places to go birding!
- Focus on our sanctuaries. We have created two teams, the Magic Ridge Management team and the High Island Management team. These teams will address maintenance issues as well as work to enhance our sanctuaries both for the birds and the birders. Contact me if you are interested in serving on either of these teams.
- Award more Texas Century Club pins and maybe induct more members into the Texas Century Club.

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Whether we do any of this is totally up to you, so get out there and bird those counties!
That's just some of what we will work on. We'd love for

you to get involved to help us accomplish great things. Contact me to discuss your role in TOS.

Enjoy reading the newsletter and have a great summer. Thank you to all who contributed to this newsletter.

—Shelia Hargis, TOS President

Recent Century Club Pin Recipients



L to R: Justin Bosler, Jane Tillman, Tillman Burnett, Laura Wilson, Bonnie McKenzie, Nina Rach, Patsy Inglet, Tom Inglet, Ken Hartman, and Christine Turnbull.

President Introduces New Board Members and Presents Awards

2019-2020 Board

- President – Shelia Hargis
- Vice President & Region 6 Director – Daniel Hodges
- Treasurer – Catherine Winans
- Secretary & Region 8 Director – Kendra Kocab
- Past President – Byron Stone
- Region 1 – vacant
- Region 2 – Gailon Brehm
- Region 3 – Linda Belssner
- Region 4 – Lee Hoy
- Region 5 – Christine Turnbull (new Board member)
- Region 7 – Raul Delgado
- At Large Position – Randy Pinkston (new Board member)

At the TOS Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we acknowledged and thanked Jimma Byrd, Susan Foster and Anthony Hewetson for their service as TOS Board members.



Presented
with Gratitude

to
Susan Foster
For Distinguished Service
on the
Board of Directors
2015 - 2019
Secretary
2015 - 2019




Presented
with Gratitude

to
Jimma Byrd
For Distinguished Service
on the
Board of Directors
2015 - 2019
Vice President
2017 - 2019




Presented
with Gratitude

to
Anthony Hewetson
For Distinguished Service
on the
Board of Directors
2010 - 2018



Photo credit: Keith Godwin

The 2019 Spring TOS Dysfunctional Family Reunion

The 2019 Texas Ornithological Society Spring Meeting, otherwise known as the state's birdiest dysfunctional family reunion has been hatched, fledged, and by now has migrated into the collective memory of those present.

Having been asked by so many non-birding friends and family what the hell it is we do on these weekend gatherings, I have decided that this is the perfect venue to lie on the ornithological couch of psychotherapy and bring up disturbing and fascinating phenomena that collectively define the obsession of Texas Ornithological Society Bi-Annual meetings. The 2019 San Antonio instance of this gathering at the Lone Star's ornithologically obsessed was typical.

Let us begin by dissecting the greater group into its easier digested sub-groups by dysfunctional obsession.

These distinctive dysfunctional groups include the Mother Hens, The Texas Extreme Listing Brigade, the Century Wannabes, The Record Keepers of Truth/The Whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; So Help me Sibley, the Lone Star Sparrow Identification Squad, and The Legion of the Retired Eccentrics. Of course there are fringe groups as well.

One of my favorites of these is the Mother Hens. They are not defined by gender, but rather, by their driving force to organize, counsel, guide, and otherwise make order out of the chaos of the event at hand. Without their eternal patience and optimism, the torrential rains of the San Antonio gathering might have sullied a more reasonable gathering. The Mother Hens' specialty though, is organizing. They will organize anything and everything within their reach, including name tags, meal preferences, radios, auctions, field trips, car pools, formal presentations, speakers, lost and found, radio interviews, newspaper beat reporters, cantankerous audio visual equipment, trip leaders, and the contents of your pockets. You have been warned. Did I mention that the hotel breakfast they arranged was one of the best in recent memory?

During the 2019 Spring meeting many of them kept the home fires burning at ground zero, otherwise known as the Hilton Garden Inn, while others chaperoned otherwise unpredictable groups of "so called" mature birders in the field on 29 field trips so that their natural inclination to drive into oncoming traffic to identify a house sparrow could be moderated.

This might be the time to mention that there was a completely obscene number of interesting field trips, many that appealed to the elitist in every birder. By that I mean destinations that are normally off limits to the general and non-general public...the non-deserving. The Mother Hens, many of them members of the local San Antonio and Bexar County Audubon Societies, unlocked these treasures through unknown means that they may very well take to the grave without divulging. I personally took advantage of the trip to the Honey Creek SNA and the Albert & Bessie Kronkosky SNA: Mind blowing scenery due to the incredible recent rains, thick carpets of wildflowers, and birds singing everywhere. Did I mention the Mother Hens work insane

hours, spend eons of time coordinating with land owners, government agencies, caterers, and city departments? They don't get paid and still can't wipe the smiles off their faces... truly dysfunctional...look it up!

On the other hand, members of The Texas Extreme Listing Brigade exhibit the steely-eyed determination that only county listers exhibit. They are not patient, not seekers of leisure, not prone to linger in an area that is not increasing the count of their list, not satisfied to slow down too often, not normal, and all in all, not too bad to bird with. They can recite ad infinitum the numbers of birds they have seen... or rather identified...in each of the 254 counties in the great state of Texas per year/per month/per week/per leap year/per election cycle/per lunar eclipse, etc.

The Century Wannabes are actually a subgroup of this subgroup. While the taxonomy of dysfunctional birders is beyond the scope of this article, it is well known that this group is split occasionally from the Texas Extreme Listing Brigade by a completely insane challenge thrown down by the Secret Masochist Society of the TOS (you know who you are) to see 100 species in 100 Texas counties for bragging rights and a small piece of painted brass...go figure. Please stop reading this now if this all seems perfectly normal to you. You are incapable of discerning dysfunctionality.

Century Club Wannabes earn other pieces of painted brass as they progress up to and past their final goal of 100 bird species in 100 counties to a virtually identical piece of brass for seeing 100 species in all 254 Texas counties. Rumor has it that this particular 100x254 "CENTURY PIN" may be redesigned in the near future to be either a rodeo or wrestling belt buckle.

San Antonio did NOT disappoint the listers. A total of four Century Club trips (Comal, Wilson, Atascosa, and Kendall counties) designed for fast and furious birding all within a single county were a tremendous hit with this crazed birding subgroup. Their motto: "We came, we saw, we counted" has been passed down from the Latin, "Veni, Vide, Reputati Sumus." Listers have been around a long long time.

Then there's the Lone Star Sparrow Identification Squad, led by Dr. Birdy. They are adept at identifying all Texas birds, but when some little brown bird of questionable taxonomy is taunting you and hurling insults in your general direction, these are the guys you call to the scope. They specialize in the quintessential minute differences in shades of brown, shape of beaks, length of tails, slope of foreheads, and the almost inaudible differences in chips. Did you know that the Pantone color chart for printing had its origins in the nearly impossible task of differentiating colors and shades in birds? HA! Sparrows would have needed their own small chip chart (Sorry, inside joke).

Sparrows, as any birder knows, are an acquired taste. The LSPIS would argue that they are a refined taste as well, where subtly trumps garish spectral displays that signify the lack of inner confidence in more colorful species.

Though the annual winter TOS meeting is the proverbial romp fest of these sparrow masters, the spring meeting had its own satisfying bit of “brown only” nirvana, accentuated, by territorial singing and breeding displays.

The Record Keepers of Truth/The Whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, led by no other than Fat Tony, the Guido Sarducci of Texas ornithological meeting record keeping, are those who record every species and count every bird within said species, and then classify every bird within every species during said event as to breeding and/or migration status and write it down for others to see, contemplate, dream about, and try to remember at any future TOS bi-annual meeting at the same location in the near or distant future. They tend to be statisticians at heart with a birding bent or vice versa. At any rate, they are dead serious about being dead on with the bird list. But they do NOT count dead birds. Do NOT play loose with your species count at these events or you will meet the evil eye and be considered “non-serious”, the worst of all dysfunctional traits in some dysfunctional circles. You may very well see the Master’s Master List in this very newsletter of the 2019 TOS Spring Meeting. I have no doubt it will be uber complete, uber researched, and uber reliable. TOS is a haven for bird counting specialist type people (whispered as “dysfunctional”...shhhh!)

The Legion of the Retired Eccentrics have a lot of time on their hands. A lot of time to bird and to infect children and grandchildren with the birding virus.

Now all these people lead or have lead perfectly normal functional lives with incredibly productive careers that are as varied as the colors on a bunting. Surgeons, teachers,

plumbers, nurses, bartenders ... each with families who find them perfectly dependable and loving mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters.

Every one of them has a unique story that justifies their fall from functional grace into the debauched world of birding bliss. Each one is passionate in making their shared obsession sound “normal” and “rational.” And each one of them fascinates me.

Now don’t for a minute think that these so called “groups” within the TOS gatherings respect territories in any way, shape, or form. Hens may be listers. Listers may love sparrows. The Retirees do whatever they damn well please... we all know that. Record keepers might delve into the Mother Hen category. Basically they are all mixed up all the time. But the amazing thing is that they all seem alike. They almost all dress alike. Their common obsession with birding reveals itself in a delectable variety of habits, schedules, attitudes, optics, and vehicles. Some are nerdy. Ok, they’re ALL nerdy. My own nerd license was issued 5 or 6 years ago, so maybe I don’t have the greatest insight about TOS meetings. But I have been to the Ornithological Society gatherings in many states now and I can tell you from personal experience that TOS gatherings are NOT the norm. They are dysfunctionally efficient, dysfunctionally varied, dysfunctionally organized, dysfunctionally educational, and dysfunctionally fun. The members of TOS are family. Not family by blood, but by compulsion, by obsession, by dysfunctionality. And I, for one, can’t wait till the next TOS family reunion. Bird on Garth!

—Ron Huebner



Birding Results from the Spring 2019 TOS Meeting, San Antonio, Texas.

This is, as promised, the checkerboard report from our spring meeting in San Antonio. The field trip organizers did a fantastic job, especially in dealing with a few closures related to highway-closing accidents and some recent, localized flooding. As many of the trips went to rarely birded areas or counties, we made a solid contribution to eBird despite our proximity to the well-birded hotspots of San Antonio itself..

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 (Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Gonzalez, Guadalupe, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Medina, Wilson). This yielded a list of 334 species. From this list I removed species that the ABA does not consider countable (such as Mute Swan) in the region ... though I did leave Egyptian Goose on the list as the region might have the only countable populations in Texas. I then removed those species that had been reported to eBird only three times or less from the period surveyed. This left me with a list of 282 species and field trip participants with the

prevailed on Saturday with 122 species. No TCC trips were offered on Sunday and the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group prevailed on Sunday with 93 species.

Numerous teams contributed species uniquely to the list: the Atascosa County TCC group found Fulvous Whistling Duck on Saturday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Gadwall on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found Gadwall on Friday and Sunday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Mottled Duck on Saturday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Northern Pintail on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found Redhead on Friday; the Bracken Cave Preserve group found Chuck-will's-widow on Friday and Sunday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Common Gallinule on Saturday; the Atascosa County TCC group found American Avocet on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found Semipalmated Plover on Friday and Sunday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Upland Sandpiper on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found Stilt Sandpiper on Friday and Sunday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center



Keeping track of species observed was no easy task at the San Antonio TOS Meeting.

task of competing with every eBirder who had spent time, during May, in those counties from 2009 through 2018.

How did we do?

We saw, as a group, 225 species of the 282 that seemed reasonable. That works out to about 80% and, given that this region has benefited from an awful lot of rarely-detected vagrants, I think that is respectable. We also had four write-ins – all species that had not been reported to eBird, from the counties surveyed, more than three times during the last ten Mays: Least Tern, Merlin, Sedge Wren, and Palm Warbler. If you add those in, as bonus species, we could call it 81%!

Birders are a competitive bunch so a few highlights are in order and, as would be expected – given the protocol followed - the TCC trips excelled on the days they were offered. The Wilson County TCC group prevailed on Friday with 106 species and the Atascosa County TCC group

group found White-rumped Sandpiper on Friday and Sunday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Long-billed Dowitcher on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found Solitary Sandpiper on Friday; the Crescent Bend Nature Center group found Laughing Gull on Saturday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Least Tern on Saturday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Forster's Tern on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found White-faced Ibis on Sunday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Harris's Hawk on Saturday; the Bracken Cave Preserve group found Great Horned Owl on Sunday; the Wilson County TCC group found Green Kingfisher on Friday; the Brackenridge Park group found Belted Kingfisher on Sunday; the Palmetto State Park group found Red-bellied Woodpecker on Sunday; the Medina River Natural Area group found Northern Flicker on Saturday; the Palmetto

State Park group found Pileated Woodpecker on Sunday; the Atascosa County TCC group found Merlin on Saturday; the Comal County TCC group found Peregrine Falcon on Friday; the Southwest Bexar County group found Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on Sunday; the Acequia Park group found Alder Flycatcher on Friday; the Wilson County TCC group found Black Phoebe on Friday; the Bracken Cave Preserve group found Tree Swallow on Friday; the Bexar County Highlights group found Red-breasted Nuthatch on Saturday; the Wilson County TCC group found House Wren on Friday; the Acequia Park group found Sedge Wren on Friday and Saturday; the Cibolo Nature Center group found Marsh Wren on Friday; the Brackenridge Park group found American Robin on Friday and Sunday; the Roberts Ranch group found Spotted Towhee on Sunday, the Junction Hotspots group found Canyon Towhee on Saturday; the Land Heritage Center group found Vesper Sparrow on Saturday; the Junction Hotspots group found Black-throated Sparrow on Saturday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Group found Hooded Oriole on Sunday, the Junction Hotspots group found Scott's Oriole on Saturday; the Wilson County TCC group found Worm-eating Warbler on Friday; the Bracken Cave Preserve group found Blue-winged Warbler on Friday; the Land Heritage Center group found Prothonotary Warbler on Saturday; the Wilson County TCC group found Mourning Warbler on Friday; the Brackenridge Park group found Hooded Warbler on Friday; the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center group found Bay-breasted Warbler on Sunday; the Crescent Bend Nature Center/Haggard Ranch group found Palm Warbler on Saturday; the Bexar County Highlights group found Canada Warbler on Saturday; the Cibolo Nature Center group found Scarlet Tanager on Friday; the Honey Creek SNA group found Lazuli Bunting on Saturday; the Junction Hotspots group found Varied Bunting on Saturday.

For what it's worth we, as a hard-working and hard-partying group of birders, racked up 180 species on Friday, 194 species on Saturday, and 159 species on Sunday –this is a certainly a fine region for spring birding!

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 TOS meeting in San Antonio, Texas: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Egyptian Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Mottled Duck, Northern Pintail, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey, Least Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared Dove, Inca Dove, Common Ground Dove, White-tipped Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Greater Roadrunner, Common Nighthawk, Chuck-will's-widow, Chimney Swift, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Upland Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Phalarope, Laughing Gull, Franklin's Gull, Least Tern, Forster's Tern, Neotropic

Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, Anhinga, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, White-faced Ibis, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Mississippi Kite, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Green Kingfisher, Belted Kingfisher, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Crested Caracara, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Eastern 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, Black-capped Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Bell's Vireo, Hutton's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cave Swallow, Barn Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Black-crested Titmouse, Verdin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Canyon Wren, House Wren, Marsh Wren, Sedge Wren, Carolina Wren, Bewick's Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Curve-billed Thrasher, Long-billed Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, American Pipit, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, Olive Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, 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, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Hooded Oriole, Bullock's Oriole, Audubon's Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Scott's Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Bronzed Cowbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Indigo Bunting, Varied Bunting, Painted Bunting, and Dickcissel.

—Anthony Hewetson

TOS Spring Meeting 2019 – San Antonio, TX Photos



PAST MEETINGS UPDATES

Bidding for and Birding with Susan Foster

At the February TOS Winter Meeting, Tillman Burnett made the winning bid for birding with TOS secretary Susan Foster. Till asked Orv and me if we would like to join him in Rockport to bird Aransas County, of course we said “Yes!”

We met Susan and Till on Friday March 1 and birded six different locations including Goose Island State Park, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, and several city parks. We had a very successful day of birding with Till reaching the

Century Mark of 100 birds. I finished my 100 on Saturday birding with the bird hosts at Goose Island State Park. Some of the best birds we saw were a Sora, Whooping Cranes, and Scissor Tail just to name a few. After this wonderful experience of “Bidding for and Birding with Susan Foster, I will do my own bidding next time!

—Theresa Wiens

Susan Haney Reports on her Guided Tour

I was so pleased to have won a silent auction bid for the guided tour of the area around Lampasas, hosted by Daniel Hodges, while at the January TOS meeting held in Galveston. What a great auction idea.

My sister Diane accompanied me on the guided trip, and she and I are relatively new to the birding world.

Since I am casually participating in the Century Club event, I made the decision to focus on Lampasas County. Daniel suggested we bird early in the month of April, but because of scheduling conflicts on our part, we were not able to get there until April 15th.

Daniel took us to all the birding hotspots in the area, but as everyone knows birds have wings and they know how to use them. A lot of the winter birds had moved north, and

the migrants from the south had not quite made it to the area yet. Birding was somewhat slow but we did manage to get 57 species for the county.

Diane ended up seeing 10 lifers including Lesser Goldfinch, Swamp and Grasshopper Sparrows, Bell’s Vireo and Ruddy Duck.

One of the highlights of the day was visiting Daniel’s acreage and seeing a Great Blue Heron rookery.

We found Daniel to be very personable and patient with us newbies. We really appreciate Daniel donating his expertise and time in showing us the joy of birding in his county. And a big thanks goes to TOS for making this trip possible.

—Susan Haney

To The Amazon and Back: An Update on the TOS-Purchased Geolocator Data-Loggers

Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC (USDOE/NNSA Pantex Plant)

James.Ray@cns.doe.gov

Thanks to the assistance of the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS), sixteen Purple Martins departed their breeding site in the Panhandle last July carrying light-level geolocator data-loggers. On June 15, TOS member and Canyon resident, Connie Fordham, joined students from West Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University, other volunteers, and myself, for a day of capturing adult Purple Martins and deploying this rather new technology for studying songbirds. The group also attached twenty-four GPS data-loggers to Purple Martins and these are an even newer type of data-logger.

Since 2013, the U. S. Department of Energy-National Nuclear Security Administration, in cooperation with Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC, (Pantex), has been collaborating with five other deployment sites across eastern North America on research on the declining Purple Martin using geolocator and GPS data-loggers.

As has always been the case, deployment day was a huge success. In fact, we had a banner day as far as the total number of data-loggers that were deployed. Each bird was captured upon entering its nesting cavity in birdhouses erected solely for this species.

The birds were weighed, measured (various), banded, feather samples taken, and then equipped with a data-logger.

We placed the units on the birds’ back just behind the wings and secured them with Teflon ribbon that loops around each leg.

Geolocator data-loggers are a break-through technology, based on determining latitude and longitude by light levels, allowing researchers at Canada’s York University and University of Manitoba, as well as other collaborators like myself, to determine migratory pathways, and stopover and wintering areas of these birds. Geolocators don’t have the best accuracy (~30 kilometers), but they collect lots of data that has led to information on how long they spend at roosts, how quick their spring and fall migrations are, and other previously unknown information. GPS data-loggers used on birds became small enough to use on Purple Martins in 2014. These have an accuracy of 10 meters or less! However, they are limited on the number of locations they can store. Thus, geolocators remain a very valuable tool and we continue to deploy some each year in addition to around 20 GPS data-loggers.

Looking down the road, I plan to provide updates to TOS on the retrieval of additional geolocators. Also, expect a presentation from me at one of your meetings in the future, as well as an article or two on results in your Bulletin. If data from any of the retrieved units are included in any other papers written by the larger collaboration, TOS will certainly

be acknowledged. Articles resulting from this work are appearing in various prestigious peer-reviewed journals.

Deployment day always provides valuable experience to wildlife students at programs like that at Texas Tech University and West Texas A&M University and Pantex values the opportunity to provide that experience. The universities also appreciate the invitation. “The opportunity to learn how to successfully capture, handle, band, and attach geolocators to purple martins is a unique opportunity for undergraduates that’s unattainable in the classroom,” said Dr. Blake Grisham, a professor from Texas Tech.

This donation of geolocators by TOS is appreciated and will help the Pantex Plant and collaborators carry on a tradition of quality and recognized work on migratory birds of Texas.

RETRIEVALS

At least four Purple Martins with geolocators have returned and the data loggers removed. Four retrieved geolocators out of sixteen deployed is a very good retrieval rate. This is equivalent to what appears to be a normal rate of return for banded Purple Martins, regardless of whether or not they are carrying data-loggers.

Once I am sure that there are no more geolocators to retrieve, the data-loggers will be downloaded and the data analyzed. I hope to report on their travels in one or more of your publications.

— James D. Ray, Wildlife Biologist

Jim Ray holds state and federal permits for banding, deploying data-loggers on, and collecting feather samples from Purple Martins.

2019 Birding Classic Final Results Congratulations to all TOS Sponsored Teams!!!

All Ages: Human-Powered Tournament

TOS Pedal Pushing Petrels
Martha McLeod
Beau Blankenship
Sam Holden
Talon Kenfield
Date: May 11
Number of species: 96

All Ages: State Park Tournament

Birders at the Bend
Park: Colorado Bend SP
Daniel Hodges
Jim Hoverson
Johana Huff
Richard Redmond
Greg White
Non-competing: Jimma Byrd
Date: May 13
Number of species: 45

All Ages: Sunrise to Noon Tournament

TOS 5 Finchtastic Females
Martha McLeod
Laila Flowers
Kate Hill
Kyleigh Karl
Bron Rorex Carrier
Date: April 26
Number of species: 107

Teen: Gliders Regional Big Day Tournament

TOS Senior Soras
Brandon Cruz
Madeleine Huggins
Michael Jones
Brian Rabroker
Chaperone: Martha McLeod
Date: April 19
Number of species: 106

Teen: Gliders Regional Big Day Tournament

TOS-SAYBC Chickadees
Eric Buhler
Craig Davis
Andres Flores
Jordan Rochlitz
Nicholas Siller
Chaperones: Tom Inglet, Patsy Inglet
Date: April 20
Number of species: 93

T.O.S. AMIGOS

Michael Boswell III
Francisco De Hoyos
Irene Sanchez
Chaperones: Glenda Barrera, Esther Alfaro, Daniel Perales
Date: May 4
Number of species: 81

Youth: Roughwings Regional Tournament

TOS Southern Sandpipers
Ty Blankenship
Lauren Holden
Kathryn Jones
Jake Self
Chaperones: Martha McLeod, Bron Rorex Carrier
Date: April 24
Number of species: 81

TOS Crested Comorants (FBE Bird Club)

Luke Davis
Gloria Harris
Hailey Biggerstaff
Chaperone: Nicole Biggerstaff, Chad Huckaby, Cindy Frank
Date: April 27
Number of species: 80

TOS-preys

Maddox Alexander
Tyler Hoffhies
Colton Taylor
Chaperones: Julie Findley, Joan Holt
Date: May 5
Number of species: 76

Youth: Roughwings Regional Tournament

TOS Dallas ZOOM 1
Leo Constantino
Annalise Manuel
Kingston Ruiz
Chaperones: Courtney Jonescu, Laurie Groen, Susi Rinck, Miranda Rinck
Date: May 4
Number of species: 59

TOS Dallas ZOOM 2

Aurora Bautista
Sophia Constantino
Dawson Quillian
Chaperones: Courtney Jonescu, Laurie Groen, Susi Rinck, Miranda Rinck
Date: May 4
Number of species: 57

TOS and Huth Avian Chatty Chickadees

Sponsor: Texas Ornithological Society and Huth Avian Services
Andrew Brooke
Caitlyn Hughes
Cedric Spikes
Gabrielle Woods
Garrison Woods
Chaperones: Michele Brooke, Tricia Spikes, LaBonna Spikes, Tiffany Spikes
Date: May 4
Number of species: 45

Regional Reports

Region 1—Panhandle

No Report

Region 2—North Central



Spring is an exciting time for birding here; we love to see our favorite birds back for the breeding season. This photo shows a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron sporting long plumes and a crayfish meal. Here in the Blackland Prairie of north Texas we have our own species of crayfish, the Parkhill Prairie Crayfish *Procambarus steigmani*!

Songbird migration in north central Texas picked up nicely this year in early May, with daily reports of 13 or 14 species of warblers at some locations. Notable birds were Black-throated Blue, Cape May, Blackpoll, and Canada Warblers, along with gray checked thrush and Black-billed Cuckoo.

Shorebird migrants, by contrast, were disappointing this spring given high water conditions. Water levels at all major lakes were significantly above normal and most known shorebird stopover areas were flooded. Lots of small ponds or flooded fields did exist, but many of them were inaccessible or rarely birded.

Lazuli Buntings are being reported again this year in our eastern counties; so it would appear that the eastward stretch of that species' range continues. So much for some speculation that past Lazuli sightings were drought related!

— Gailon Brehm

Region 3—Piney Woods

No Report

Region 4—Trans-Pecos

Things are gearing up for the Davis Mountains Hummingbird Celebration in August and many of our regularly occurring summer birds are back and singing and nesting. Migration was rather slow this year, but I did find a first bird for me ever in Big Bend with a Sprague's Pipit down below Sotol Vista Overlook and a Solitary Sandpiper at the flooded Daniel's Ranch. A Tropical Parula was also a nice bird at the Daniel's Ranch area. Looking forward to a great monsoon season later this summer!

For the past several months, I have been working with

cinematographers out of Austin and Ireland on a PBS/BBC special on the wildlife of the Big Bend region. Some of the interesting assignments I have been given are finding a Colima Warbler nest (found, but then predated) so searching for another; catching gravid Greater Earless Lizards to film them laying eggs and young hatching; doing time lapse photography of blooming cacti and the night sky; catching insects for high speed photography at 2000 frames per second; and luring in Javelinas for filming. This special should be airing sometime in summer of 2020. Hopefully the Slate-throated Redstarts will make an appearance in the film.

—Lee Hoy

Region 5—Edwards Plateau

As many of you know the Yellow Grosbeak, "Pedro" departed Concan in early April. The bird was first observed and photographed at Steve and Pam Garner's residence in January and confirmed by Bob Shackelford. Following the initial sighting, Steve, Pam and Bob began organizing visits for birders. Over the course of almost 3 months, Bob organized over 50 visits to the Garner's house, where Steve and Pam graciously welcomed birders from around the US and Canada. Depending on the day, the Garners hosted 8-16 people in their home at times for up to 6 hours at a time. Their graciousness and hospitality was superb and Bob's patience and willingness to take reservations and take birders to the Garner's home each time was amazing. It is a wonderful example of how to organize birders and respect the owners. Many, many people got life looks and photographs of this visitor. Birders were appreciative and respectful and many brought bird seed to the house. I was able to experience their graciousness twice, and be with two friends while they got great views of this bird. Steve, Pam and Bob's graciousness are a shining example within the birding community.

—Christine Turnbull

Region 6—Central Prairie

No Report

Region 7—Brushlands

1. The Muscovy Duck Restoration Project continues mostly in Zapata County. Monte Mucho Audubon Society



(L) Wild Muscovy Ducks (R) Los Corralitos Ranch, Zapata County - Muscovy Duck Project. L-R: Javier Arambula Ranch Manager, Daniel Peral Monte Mucho Audubon President, J. Arambula Jr., Raul Delgado TOS Región 7 Director, Zapata County Commissioner Pct 2 Olga Elizondo

Regional Reports (continued)

has partnerships with local private ranches that will provide over combined 5,000+ acres of potential birding hot spots in this region of Texas.

2. Young Birder Clubs in Laredo, Texas will continue in the Fall 2019 semester. Four middle schools have provided school teacher/sponsors for this project. Long terms plans is to open young birder clubs in many other schools both in Webb and Zapata County.

—Raul Delgado

Region 8—Coastal Prairie

A couple of bird observations caused quite a stir in Region 8 this spring. First, **Whooping Cranes** were reported near Winnie on 3/31. These birds were likely from the Louisiana population, and they delighted many as they continued for a month and half. They were last reported on 5/18. The big news this spring was a **Black Turnstone** (first record for the state!) that was reported at Sea Rim State Park on 5/3. Unfortunately, this bird was not as obliging as the Whooping Cranes, but photos were obtained and will be reviewed by the Texas Bird Records Committee. Many came out to Sea Rim to look for the turnstone. While they were unable to relocate that bird, some were rewarded on 5/5 with a not-too-shabby consolation prize, a **Gray Kingbird**.

February through May is a great and popular time for birding in Region 8, and thus many exciting birds were observed during this time. An **Iceland Gull** was reported in Fort Bend County for most of February. There were multiple reports of **Brown Booby** around Bolivar, Galveston, and Texas City Dike in April and May. A **Harris's Hawk**, a sporadic visitor to Region 8, was seen in northwest Harris County on 2/16. A **Ringed Kingfisher** was photographed at Cullinan Park on 4/28. A **Black Phoebe** was reported at Anahuac on 4/21, and a **Say's Phoebe** stayed at El Franco Lee Park throughout the month of February. A **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** was observed in Brazoria County for 2 weeks in February. Another Fork-tailed Flycatcher was reported at Anahuac on 4/12 and 4/13. Presumably the same bird was then seen at High Island on 4/14 and 4/15. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was a one day wonder at a private residence in Houston on 5/6, and a **Yellow-green Vireo** was reported at the Matagorda County Birding and Nature Center from 5/10 to 5/12. A **Green Jay**, origin unknown, was seen by many in Houston's Midtown area from 3/7 to 3/18. Galveston had two reports of **Bullock's Oriole** on 3/17 and 4/14. **Tropical Parulas** were reported in Victoria on 2/20 and at Armand Bayou Nature Center for one week in March. Lastly, a **Lazuli Bunting** was reported at Quintana on 4/30 and 5/1.

—Kendra Kocob

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