

## President's Message



Byron Stone TOS President.

Dear Friends, Neighbors and TOS Members,

Spring has arrived again in Texas. Here in central Texas, spring actually tried to arrive early this year during our warmest February ever, but it seemed to cool off again in March with more seasonally appropriate temperatures. Spring marks the end of winter, and is a time of renewal and of change. There will be changes within TOS, as several board members come to the end of

their terms, including yours truly. The Nominating Committee has forwarded a slate of dedicated, qualified candidates, so please be sure to mark your ballot, which you should receive in the mail soon, and return it promptly so that all votes can be tallied.

Susan Foster and Randy Pinkston are also both rotating off of the board, and I want to thank each of them for their many years of service. Susan has been a hard-working dependable recorder of meetings as Secretary, and a dedicated supporter of success for the organization. Both Susan (Region 7, Brushlands) and Randy (Region 6, Central Prairies) have been exemplary regional directors, representing their respective regions on the board and with timely and informative reports of regional bird activity for the TOS newsletter.

I am proud of what the organization has accomplished over the past couple of years. We have streamlined our meeting planning process, continued to conduct exciting meetings, diversified our revenue streams, and continued to support conservation and research activities to benefit birds and birders in our great state. We also hired a professional consultant, Steve McKee, of Social Impact Consulting in Austin, to assist the board with a recently-completed weekend Strategic Planning retreat. Steve's thoughtful, expert guidance helped us clarify priorities and goals, and to come up with a vision statement for the organization. TOS is the only statewide organization dedicated exclusively to the observation, study and preservation of birds. We have accomplished a lot during our 70+ years of existence, but there is still more to be done in order to insure that Texas birds and birding locations are preserved for future generations of birders and ornithologists. Steve informed us that it is unusual in his experience (20 years of consulting with non-profits) for a statewide organization the size of ours to not have professional staff, even if only part-time.

During the strategic planning retreat, the board identified membership, governance and sanctuaries as the three highest

priorities for board attention in the near future. We identified specific strategies for making improvements. We have a membership of upwards of 1,000, we own several hundred acres of sanctuary properties in widely separated parts of the state, and we have identified a number of governance-related issues that deserve attention. This is a lot for an all-volunteer organization to manage. We have Judy Kestner helping out part time, and she is a real asset to the organization, but it may be time to hire some additional help, someone with specific training and expertise in non-profit management to help us be all that we aspire to be. If we have the will, I think we have the means, and I believe that hiring a professional could help the board and the organization thrive and move forward successfully into the future.

I hope to see you in Weslaco in May for one more meeting as TOS president.

Good Birding Ya'll,

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

## Annual meeting photos by Janie Henderson



Michael Wolf, Richard May (co-leader) and guest Robert Stone (who drove in from Dallas) at Resaca de la Palma seeking the Gray-collared Becard and Roadside Hawk.

Continued on page 2



Crowd at Resaca de la Palma excited about two special birds - Gray-collared Becard and Roadside Hawk. Leader Bob White on the left; Chuck and Kris Carlson on the right.



Chuck and Kris Carlson (after a long drive from their new home in New Hampshire), Janie Henderson and Elizabeth Jenswold at the final dinner.

## Birding in the Rio Grande Valley

*Megan Ahlgren*

Birding in the Rio Grande Valley is always exciting, and this winter it was THE place to be. We couldn't have asked for a better location for the Winter TOS Meeting. With a palooza of rarities, I was one of many who arrived early to chase lifers on Thursday. That evening the meeting officially kicked off with a presentation by Ryan Rodriguez about the specialties of the RGV. Ryan is an impressive young man and an inspiration to share our passion with younger generations.

The first day of field trips nearly blew everyone away – and it wasn't just the amazing birds! On South Padre winds were around 20 mph all day with gusts up to 50 mph. We still racked up a great species list. We even enjoyed a remarkably pleasant boat ride through the mangroves viewing waterbirds, dolphins, and a Mangrove Warbler. Saturday ushered in calmer weather, allowing us to shed our jackets. At the National Butterfly Center, Altamira, Audubon's, and Altamira x Audubon's Oriole offered great views and we were excited to help members of our group find a bird blind made possible by a family member's donation. On Sunday, we capped off the weekend with a morning at Estero Llano Grande filled with dawn songs, morning flyovers, and picture-perfect pauraques.

In all, the TOS trip list for the weekend totaled 234 species. That list includes Valley favorites like Aplomado Falcon, Red-crowned Parrot, Green Jay, and Morelet's Seedeater. It also features Roadside Hawk, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Gray-collared Becard, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, and 20 species of warbler – to include Lucy's, Hermit, Golden-crowned, and Fan-tailed Warbler!

The Valley birds were certainly rock stars this winter, adding an extra layer of excitement to the weekend's festivities. But equally special was the opportunity to come

together and share our knowledge and passion for birding with each other. Even better that in doing so we supported parks and organizations that help the birds we so love.

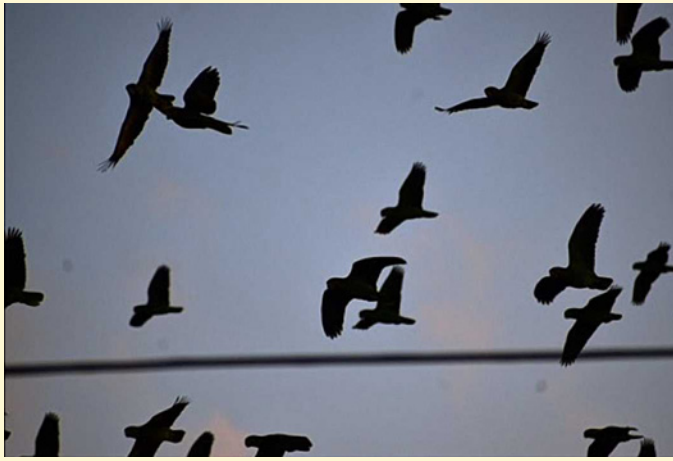


*A Common Pauraque at Estero Llano Grande State Park.*



*Chris Butler hauls the group's pile of shed jackets back to the car!*





Parrots flying in to the McAllen roost.



Louise and Bert Marcom in front of the National Butterfly Center bird blind made possible by their own family members!

## Regional Reports

### Region 1—Panhandle

—John Berner

### Region 2—North Central Texas

—Open

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

—Laura Wilson

### Region 4—Trans-Pecos

It has been extremely dry out here, so news that the Candelaria Wetlands had experienced an influx of water in mid-January was welcome news. Area birders reported that they expected the water to hold out through the remainder of the winter.

As usual (and because it has been so dry), other local bodies of water have provided for some interesting birds. At the pond on Musquiz Creek (on Highway 118 between Fort Davis and Aline) we had an Eared Grebe and a Red-breasted Merganser – both rare here.

Beginning February 10, a White-tailed Kite was located just south of the Jeff Davis County line to the east of Highway 118. Some reported a pair, but I only ever saw the one. It has not been reported lately, so I suspect it has moved on.



On Saturday, March 2 the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society led a bird walk through the Davis Mountains State Park. We started at the Interpretive Center with high hopes of spotting Montezuma Quail there. Since December (specifically, the Christmas Bird Count), park staff have reported that the Montezuma Quail have been frequenting the blind at the Interpretive Center. According to eBird, they are still being seen there but I have yet to lay eyes on them at that location. As always, they are elusive!

Some of our summer residents have begun to arrive and interesting migrants are passing through. Most recent (and interesting) was a Palm Warbler spotted by Cecilia Riley in Jeff Davis county. I chased it, but as you all know, migrating warblers don't stick around long.

The Davis Mountains Preserve open weekend schedule for the remainder of the year is:

- June 14 – 16
- August 16 – 18
- October 11 – 13

No reservations are required!

In addition to open weekends, the Davis Mountains Preserve has begun offering guided day tours. Tours are limited to 12 people and require reservations that you can obtain online one month before the tour. Tours will include a presentation on TNC's work in West Texas, a driving tour of the preserve and an interpretive hike:

- May 6
- June 21
- July 10
- August 9
- Tentative October 21
- Tentative November 1
- Tentative December 6

For more information, contact Kaylee French by email at [kaylee.french@TNC.ORG](mailto:kaylee.french@TNC.ORG), or call 432-426-2390.

—Pamela Pipes



## Regional Reports (continued)

### Region 5—Edwards Plateau Report

—Christine Turnbull

### Region 6—Central Prairie

Fall and winter are often noteworthy for surprise “irruptions” of normally unexpected species. This was the year for irruptive passerellids Lark Bunting, Brewer’s Sparrow, and especially Green-tailed Towhee across the central Texas region. Where I reside in Bell County was representative of the region with regard to these irruptions. Our first Lark Bunting was discovered as they often are in the company of Vesper Sparrows on 24 October. Reports increased and involved greater numbers through year’s end. As winter unfolded flocks of >75 Lark Buntings weren’t surprising in both Bell and McLennan counties.



Lark Bunting near Salado, Bell County. Photo by Randy Pinkston.

Normal winter range for Green-tailed Towhee is the western edge of the Edwards Plateau, so this colorful sparrow is not normally on our radar in Bell County which lies beyond the northeastern boundary of the plateau. This year was certainly different. By Christmas count time no fewer than five Green-tailed Towhees were found at scattered Bell locations with a similar number in McLennan, and many of these individuals showed amazing site fidelity through the close of the winter season, providing successful rarity chases and great fun for local observers.



Bell County Green-tailed Towhee images by Randy James.

January 2024 arrived with hints of yet another western passerellid irrupting eastward—Brewer’s Sparrow. And actually, this irruption was evident by mid-December. Normally found in winter in desert grasslands west of the Pecos River, this year brought numerous Brewer’s Sparrows to the central Texas region. The first I’m aware of was a bird in Coryell County on the Fort Cavazos CBC. Another Brewer’s was discovered on 25 January in grasslands at Union Grove WMA in Bell County, providing only a 2<sup>nd</sup> documented county record. That individual was relocated and enjoyed by multiple observers through mid-February. Yet another Brewer’s was discovered in early February during the annual SparrowFest workshop at Balcones Canyonlands NWR in Williamson County.



Brewer’s Sparrow, Union Grove WMA, Bell County. Photo by Dan Kelch.



Brewer’s Sparrow, Balcones Canyonlands NWR, Williamson County. Photo by Jeff Patterson.

Winter will be gone and the spring season well upon us by the time TOS members are reading this newsletter. One of my greatest joys is something very simple—waiting and watching for spring arrivals in Bell County. Swallows



## Regional Reports (continued)

are always first and many of them are already making preparations for nesting before winter's end. Shorebirds are next, followed by songbirds. And of course, winter visitors such as waterfowl are moving out as many spring migrants arrive. I often marvel at how consistent birds are in their dates of arrival and departure. Indeed, one could create a pretty reliable calendar based solely on the arrival

and departure dates of various bird species—Purple Martin on Valentine's Day, other swallows soon after, then Golden-cheeked Warbler in early March followed by scissor-tails, White-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, gnatcatchers too, then Black-chinned hummer on St Patty's Day, and so on. I hope you take time to enjoy the simple pleasures of spring migration wherever you happen to reside.

—Randy Pinkston

### Region 7—Rio Grande Brushlands

The lid has been blown off the Lower Rio Grande Valley! Rare birds galore have shown up all over the area this winter including Gray-collared Becard, Roadside Hawk, Fan-tailed Warbler, Crane Hawk, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, etc. etc. Judy Kestner and I agreed that our December 31st Falcon Dam CBC was the best we've ever had, finishing with 154 species. Of course our count includes the famous Santa Margarita Ranch where many of these species have occurred as well as our section, Salineno, which has had several other rarities including a Limpkin that flew down river during the count. Morelet's Seedeaters were easy to see this year as well as many Green-tailed towhees, which have been popping up throughout South Texas. The following photo credits go to Ryan Rodriguez.





## Regional Reports (continued)



Falcon Dam CBC participant, Richard Galindo, shared this 2014 photo of Mary Gustafson inspiring his children to love birds and nature. His family helps with the count each year.

In other parts of Region 7, the Laredo Birding Festival is February 7-10. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that the rarities extend west. That festival is always well-organized and great fun.

Looking at the Monte Mucho Audubon Society facebook page, Short-eared Owls have been plentiful this winter. This is a rare occurrence for Webb County.



Rich Ramirez Photographs

12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**LAREDO BIRDING FESTIVAL**  
 FEBRUARY 7-10, 2024

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
 Robert McCRACKEN PECK  
 CURATOR OF ART AND SENIOR FELLOW AT THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA

**TOPIC:**  
 LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES - A CELEBRATION OF BIRDS

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
 Christina BAAL  
 ARTIST OF "DRAWING 10,000 BIRDS"

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
 Cin-Ty LEE  
 HARRY CAROTHERS WESS PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY RICE UNIVERSITY

Register at [bit.ly/RegLBF2024](https://bit.ly/RegLBF2024)  
 For more information visit  
[LAREDOBIRDINGFESTIVAL.ORG](https://LAREDOBIRDINGFESTIVAL.ORG)



## Regional Reports (continued)



*Black-tailed Gnatcatcher Photo credit Alejandro Salazar*

The Coastal Bend has not been left off the rarities train. Found on November 12, the Cattle Tyrant continues in downtown Corpus Christi eating bugs around dumpsters, restaurants, and nightclubs. Also continuing since October is the Bar-tailed Godwit in Portland. A Surf Scoter was found in Rockport Harbor. And the number of Whooping Cranes has been amazing! I counted 27 in the pasture across from the Big Tree near Goose Island on Christmas Day. Other smaller groups have popped up at Holiday Beach, Cavasso Creek and other places. Finally, I'm looking forward to The Birdiest Festival held at the Botanical Gardens in Corpus Christi April 24-28 with both pre- and post-trips.



**THE BIRDIEST FESTIVAL IN AMERICA!**  
APRIL 24-28, 2024

**Register Here!**

**Get Ready for Spring Migration 2024!**

With a whopping 659 species, South Texas is home to many species of birds, some that are found nowhere else in America. This abundance and variety peaks during the Spring Migration. It's that special time of year we all love, when birds are fluffing their feathers and prepping for their long journey. Luckily South Texas is on their flyway, with plenty of food, water, and rest areas to offer. What better place to enjoy this stunning array of beauty than "The Birdiest City in America," Corpus Christi, Texas!

**NEW Post-Trip April 28-May 1 TEXAS HILL COUNTRY**

**Pre-Trip April 20-23 RIO GRANDE VALLEY Post-Trip April 29-May 2**

**2024 Keynote Speaker: Cameron Cox**

We are excited to present an extravaganza of Land and Water Field Trips (Full and Half Day) (AM and PM), Presentations, Workshops, Nature-Related Exhibitors, and as always, the thrilling Raptor Project. Come taste, share, and experience the "locals" and bring some South Texas home from our Artisan Market. We will kick off the Festival with a Southern Welcome of Texas BBQ.

Whether by foot, vehicle, or boat the Birdiest Festival in America is sure to have something for everyone's birding pleasure.

**Previous Years Species Totals:**



## Regional Reports (continued)



Photos by Skip Cantrell



Photos by Pat Wight

—Susan Foster, Director

### Region 8—Central Prairie

Christmas ornaments weren't the only colorful things decorating trees in Region 8 this holiday season. Between November and February, TWENTY FOUR species of warbler were reported. A few of these are expected winter residents, but many others are rare or more associated with spring migration. These included Ovenbird, Louisiana

Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Swainson's Warbler, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Tropical Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Prairie Warbler.

Many one-day wintery wonders gave only a lucky few birders a chance to see them. These included **Eurasian Wigeon** (Chambers Co.), **Western Grebe** (Calhoun Co.), **Lesser Nighthawk** (Galveston Co.), **Vaux's Swift** (Jefferson Co.), **Mountain Plover** (Matagorda Co.). **Pomarine Jaeger** (Matagorda Co.), **Red-footed Booby** (Brazoria Co. pelagic), **Golden Eagle** (Chambers Co.), **Sage Thrasher** (Galveston Co.), and **Lapland Longspur** (Galveston Co.). While **Harris' Hawks** are expected in the southwestern part of our region, two notable one-day sightings occurred in Harris County and Galveston County.

A few birds gave keen observers more time to find them. A **Purple Sandpiper** on the boundary between Harris and Chambers Counties was observed over 3 days and racked up 61 reports on eBird! A **Pacific Loon** spent 3 weeks in Galveston County. The famous **Greater Pewee** at Bear Creek Park (Harris Co.) returned after missing last winter. This species has been seen at the same park off-and-on since 2012. A **Western Flycatcher** was observed for 2 days in Galveston County, a **Rock Wren** put on a show for Harris County listers for nearly a month, and one lucky observer spotted a **Scott's Oriole** on two separate days in Austin Co.

Finally, it has been a great winter for gulls and sparrows. One checklist from Ash Lake (Harris Co.) included FOUR rare gulls (**Great Black-backed**, **Glaucous**, **California**, and **Iceland**). Iceland Gull, in particular, has been easy to find this year. It was reported in multiple locations across four counties (Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, and Harris). Western sparrows were a common occurrence this winter. The most widespread of these was **Green-tailed Towhee**, which was observed in TEN of our 14 counties (Brazoria, Calhoun, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Matagorda, Waller, and Wharton). Other western sparrows included **Brewer's Sparrow** (Colorado, Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller Co.), **Lark Bunting** (Colorado, Fort Bend, Harris and Waller Co.), and **Spotted Towhee** (Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Harris, and Wharton Counties).

—Kendra Kocab

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## Happenings at Hooks Woods

The habitat enhancement plan for Hooks Woods was finalized last year and approved by the TOS Board. The Board budgeted \$20K in the 2024 budget to jump start the work by paying a professional landscaping company to install some of the plants along with drip irrigation to keep them watered as needed until they are established. If you remember from my explanation of the plan, Hooks Woods was divided into numerous zones. We anticipate being able to install the plants for several zones with the amount budgeted. If you would like to help us with this project, please consider making a donation to TOS and earmark it for “Hooks Woods.” The easiest way to do this is to click the Donate button in the top right of the TOS website at [texasbirds.org](https://texasbirds.org) and add “Hooks Woods donation” in the Donor Note field. Thank you!

Members of the High Island Management Team (Chuck Davis, James Giroux, Shelia Hargis, Chris Steinke, and Louise Smyth), spent March 9 completing the last projects to prepare the sanctuary for the birds and the birders who will be coming as the spring migration season fast approaches. We think the sanctuary is in pretty good shape! I hope you will visit, and if you like what you see (birds and sanctuary-wise), please consider making a donation to support our efforts to make Hooks the best bird habitat it can be! Earmark your donation for “Hooks Woods.” We appreciate your support!

While you’re at Hooks Woods this spring, I’m confident you will be documenting your sightings in eBird. That’s wonderful for the long-term record, and it also helps others know what is being seen in nearly real time. Another great way to help us document the diversity of Hooks Woods is to add your observations to iNaturalist. iNaturalist is an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. It’s also a crowdsourced *species identification system* and an *organism occurrence recording tool*. If you are taking photos or recording vocalizations, you can help us build a comprehensive picture



*We continue to battle the bamboo, but we think we are making progress. Remember when this “prairie” was a huge big stand of bamboo?*



*Several of our tree plantings from a couple of years ago are looking good. These are a cedar elm tree and a mulberry tree.*

Overview	350 OBSERVATIONS	160 SPECIES	228 IDENTIFIERS	85 OBSERVERS	Stats
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Recent Observations View All

- Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*) - 3 7d
- Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*) - 3 7d
- Swamp Rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) - 1 3y
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*) - 2 5mo

Most Observations	Most Species	Most Observed Species
sheliahargis (1st) - 52	sheliahargis (1st) - 34	Western Ribbon Snake - 10
lorimalloy - 23	russh - 17	Kentucky Warbler - 10
debbiegiroux - 20	lorimalloy - 15	Hooded Warbler - 10
russh - 20	kaphn8d - 14	Macartney Rose - 9
kaphn8d - 19	d_cubed - 12	Rose-breasted Grosbeak - 8
seastar451 - 15	debaraj - 12	Carolina Laurelcherry - 7

*Landing page for the Hooks Woods project in iNaturalist, available at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/hooks-woods-tos>.*



of the flora and fauna at Hooks by adding your photos and recordings to iNaturalist. All that are located within the boundary of Hooks Woods will be added to the Hooks Woods project within iNaturalist. Currently, we only have 160 species documented across all taxa. There's a lot more to add. To see what has been documented and set your goal for what and how you will contribute, go to <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/hooks-woods-tos>. I would be fine if

someone knocks me off my throne for Most Observations and Most Species. It wouldn't be hard.

Enjoy your time at Hooks this spring! If you want to share a special moment that you had there, I would love to hear from you. Email me at [Shelia.hargis@gmail.com](mailto:Shelia.hargis@gmail.com). Thank you!

—Shelia Hargis

### From Membership Committee:

# Help Us Grow Our Flock

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

CHANCE TO WIN  
UP TO \$125 IN  
TRAVEL VOUCHERS



Spring is a time of rebirth and new growth and TOS is hoping for some new growth as well.

During our 2024 spring membership drive, four lucky TOS members will win a prize of either a free Weekender registration valued at \$100, or \$125 off one of our special travel opportunities - think Panama, Belize, or other such destinations.

All you have to do is to log in to your account on our website and renew your membership in our organization between February 18 and April 12, 2024. A drawing will be conducted and the four winners announced at our spring meeting in Weslaco on May 4, 2024.

If your membership is not due for renewal during that time, simply renew early to be entered into the drawing. Your membership term will be extended accordingly.

Life members may make a \$35 donation to TOS to participate

Membership benefits include our three publications, free access at our sanctuaries, discounts on publications from A&M Press, UT Press and Princeton Publications, and on Birds of the world memberships. On top of that, you'll be part of a friendly flock of like-minded birders.

Our goal is to increase membership numbers by 10%, and we know we can count on you to help us reach it!

—Judy Kestner  
TOS Membership Administrator



## TOS 2024 SPRING MEETING—RETURN TO WESLACO

During the winter meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society in the Rio Grande Valley we were treated to some outstanding rare bird species. What will happen there during spring migration? You won't want to miss it!

Meeting dates are May 2 - 5, 2024, and our partner again will be the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco.

Unique field trips to some of the best birding locales in the nation, plus two private ranches, will offer excellent opportunities to boost your life list, fill in the blanks on your Texas Century Club count, and just have fun looking at some beautiful birds.

You'll find Valley specialties such as Plain Chachalaca, Altamira Oriole, Gray Hawk and Aplomado Falcon, and possibly Botteri's Sparrow. You might also spot a Mangrove Warbler on a special boat trip, or enjoy a catered lunch on a guided tour of the King Ranch.

Our evening speakers will share information on the flora and fauna of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and birding in unusual spots. Century Club pins will be presented, and President Byron Stone will announce election results and give the annual report for our organization, so please make plans to attend these talks.

ALL events will take place at the Valley Nature Center, including event check-in which begins at 3:00 on Thursday, daily field trip departures, evening events, and the Saturday banquet. You will also be able to shop at the TOS store there.

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Holiday Inn Express in Weslaco. We have booked more rooms this time at their special nightly rate of \$98 plus tax. Registration information appears below. **DEADLINE TO REGISTER AT THE HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS IS APRIL 24, 2024.**

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

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

### MEETING INFORMATION

**EVENT REGISTRATION:** Online registration will open on **March 25, 2024 at 6:00 a.m.**, and will close on **April 21, 2024 at 11:55 p.m.** You will receive a confirmation email once your payment is complete. *Details in Registration Information below.*

The fee for the event is \$100 per TOS member. It is \$135 for non-members, which includes a one-year membership. Students may attend for free. An administrative fee of \$35 will be deducted from refunds made between April 19, 2024, and April 26, 2024. **No refunds can be made after April 26, 2024.**

**LUNCH SELECTION:** Attendees may pre-order lunches, which will be distributed each morning at the VNC. We will again offer both gluten-free and vegetarian options. *See Lunches section below.* Must be submitted by **April 24, 2024.** No refunds after this date.

**BANQUET SELECTION:** Meal choices, including a vegetarian, gluten-free option, are offered on the online registration form and must be submitted by **April 24, 2024.** No refunds after this date.

**FIELD TRIP DEPARTURE:** Caravans to field trip sites will leave from the parking lot of the [VNC](#), 301 S. Border Ave., Weslaco 78596. Please be prepared to carpool from there 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

A block of rooms is reserved at the [Holiday Inn Express](#) at 421 S. International Blvd., Weslaco, TX 78596. You must call 956-973-2222 and ask for the front desk to make hotel reservations. Mention the TOS block of rooms to receive the \$98 per night special rate. **Reservations must be made by April 24, 2024.**

Breakfast is included in that price and will be available at 5:00 a.m. daily.

### Lunches

You may pre-order box lunches which will be distributed at the VNC each morning. The cost is \$11.00 per meal and your order must be submitted by **April 24, 2024.** No refunds will be given after that date. (TRIP LEADERS: Look for a separate email to order your lunches.)

Take a look at the [detailed lunch menu](#), and then place your order [HERE](#).

### Saturday Night Banquet

We will offer a South Texas Mexican buffet from Nana's for our Saturday banquet. A gluten-free/vegetarian option will be available. Order the banquet when you register for the meeting online. **ORDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY APRIL 24, 2024.** No refunds will be given after that date.

### Meeting Agenda

**ALL EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT THE VALLEY NATURE CENTER.**

#### Thursday, May 2, 2024

- 3:00-6:00 PM** Event check-in
- 6:15 PM** First-time attendee reception
- 6:30 PM** Introductions & Announcements: Meeting Committee Chair, Christine Turnbull
- 6:45 PM** Welcome: Byron Stone, TOS President
- 7:15 PM** Speaker: Ryan Rodriguez—*Welcome Back to the RGV.*
- 7:45 PM** Meet Your Trip Leader

#### Friday, May 3

- All Day** Birding—caravans leave VNC between 5:00 and 7:00 a.m.
- 4:00-5:00 PM** Event late check-in
- 6:00 PM** Birding Reports, Century Club pins, Membership Report, and Election Results: Byron Stone



7:45 PM Meet Your Trip Leader

### Saturday, May 4

**All Day** Birding—caravans leave VNC between 5:15 and 6:30 a.m.

**5:00 PM** Informal social get-together—cash bar

**5:30 PM** Banquet & Birding Reports

**7:00 PM** Speaker: Jennifer Bristol—*Cemetery Birding*

### Sunday, May 5

**All Day** Birding—caravans leave VNC between 5:45 and 6:30 a.m.

**12:00-1:00 PM** Depart for home

Be sure to visit the TOS store at the VNC!

## Event Registration Information

The registration link will be activated on March 25, 2024, at 6:00 a.m. You may click the link [HERE](#) and register, or log in to your TOS account on [our website](#) and register there.

**Note: Some field trips have additional entry/participation fees which will be charged when you register online.**

Take a look at [our list of field trips](#) and have in mind your first and second choices, as some trips fill fast. If you would like to be on a wait list for a trip, contact Judy Kestner at 361-701-1962 or [tosmember@yahoo.com](mailto:tosmember@yahoo.com). Be sure to mention your name, the [trip number](#) and how many spaces you'll need.

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

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

For any questions, or if you do not have access to the internet, you may call Judy Kestner at 361-701- 1962 or Frances Cerbins at 512-694-7924 for assistance with registration. If you don't get an answer, leave a message and Judy or Frances will call you back when they are available.

## Event Prices

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

\$100 for TOS members

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

FREE for all students

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

A \$35 administrative fee will be deducted from refunds issued between April 19 and April 26, 2024. No refunds after April 26, 2024.

[VIEW TRIP DESCRIPTIONS HERE](#) and also below. Remember to select two options each day, as some trips fill quickly.

## Meeting Presentations

### Thursday Evening

7:15 PM

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

**Presenter:** Ryan Rodriguez

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

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



Ryan Rodriguez

Bentsen Hawk Tower. In the March issue of the American Birding Association Birding Magazine, Ryan's photos of Brown Jays, Mottled Owl, and other rarities found on the Santa Margarita Ranch were featured in an ABA Spotlight article.

### Saturday Evening

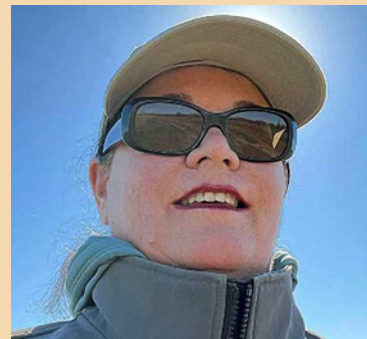
7:00 PM

**Title:** *Cemetery Birding and Beyond*

**Presenter:** Jennifer Bristol

**Description:** While cemeteries offer accessible places to bird watch, Bristol highlights the need to tread carefully and ethically when exploring these sacred spaces. Her treatment of each of the nearly 100 locations provides information about what birds can be observed in various seasons and offers readers a snapshot of the cemetery and community's history. Locations range from the heart of Houston to the wide-open spaces of West Texas and every ecoregion in between.

**Bio:** Jennifer L. Bristol is the author of *Parking Lot Birding: A Fun Guide to Discovering Birds in Texas* and *Cemetery Birding: An Unexpected Guide to Discovering Birds in Texas*. She recently contributed a chapter to her father's book, *Texas State Parks: The First 100 Years 1923-2023*.



Jennifer Bristol

She is the former director of the Texas Children in Nature network at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department where



she developed a grassroots movement around the need to better connect children and families with nature for a healthier and happier future. For her efforts to connect youth with nature she received the Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center, Enduring Dedication Award and the Phil Hardburger Park Conservancy, Nature Hero Award. In 2018 and 2019 she received the Greater Texas Birding Classic, Most Valuable Birder Award.

She has been a park ranger, business owner, marketing executive, and worked in the Texas film industry. Having a deep sense of service, she has served on the Environmental Commission (secretary), Downtown Commission—(vice chair) for the City of Austin, and on numerous national and local boards. Bristol resides in Austin with her husband and four charismatic dogs.

See you in May!

## TOS Field Trips - Weslaco, Spring 2023

Friday – 9 trips; Saturday – 8 trips; Sunday – 5 trips

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

*There is a minimum of two (2) participants per trip.*

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

passes.	FIELD TRIP AND DESCRIPTION	COUNTY	DIFFICULTY	DEPARTURE & HOTEL RETURN TIMES	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	<p><b>BIRDY BROWNSVILLE:</b> Discover the riparian treasures near Brownsville at the <b>Sabal Palm Sanctuary</b>, home to one of the last remaining tracts of Sabal Palm forest in the USA. This unique habitat, with its wetlands, forests, and proximity to the Rio Grande attracts many bird species including exciting rarities.</p> <p>Our journey also takes us to <b>Resaca de la Palma State Park</b> in Brownsville, where eight decks overlook the resaca, and woodland species abound.</p> <p>Depending on recently reported birds, we may visit one or two additional sites.</p> <p><i>Note: Be prepared to pay a \$6 admission fee at Sabal Palm, and bring your state parks pass for Resaca de la Palma.</i></p> <p><i>45-minute drive to Brownsville from the VNC. There will be some walking on paths and trails in both parks.</i></p> <p><i>Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	CAMERON	MODERATE	Depart 6:00 am End 12:30 pm	No Trip	No Trip	Erin & Roney Swanson
2	<p><b>COASTAL EXTRAVAGANZA:</b> We begin with a quest for Aplomado Falcons in the <i>coastal prairie</i>.</p> <p>Then travelers will experience a captivating <b>boat trip</b> from Port Isabel. Accompanied by Captain Henry, we'll explore island bays where the elusive Mangrove Yellow Warbler nests and shore birds gather, all while enjoying the possibility of Bottlenose dolphins in the bow's wake.</p> <p>Our day continues on <b>South Padre Island</b> with the pursuit of spring migrants and coastal specialties at spots up and down the island, including the grounds of the <b>SPI Birding and Nature Center and Alligator Sanctuary</b> and the <b>Valley Land Fund Migratory Bird Lots</b> on Sheepshead St., plus the <b>Convention Center</b> property.</p> <p>Early registration is crucial due to Coast Guard occupancy limits.</p> <p><i>Note: The \$50 fee for the boat trip is paid when you register online for this event. Be prepared to pay a fee of \$8 - \$10 at the SPI Birding Sanctuary.</i></p> <p><i>55-minute drive to falcon viewing area from the VNC. You must be able to navigate steep drop into and out of the boat. Somewhat lengthy walking on the boardwalk at SPI Nature Center. TRIP LEADER WILL ASK THOSE DEEMED UNABLE TO BOARD THE VESSEL TO REMAIN ON SHORE.</i></p> <p><i>Capacity: 10 participants.</i></p>	CAMERON	MODERATE	<u>Friday/Saturday</u> Depart 5:45 am Arrive Back 3:15 pm	Judy Kestner & Christine Turnbull	Susan Foster	No Trip

3	<p><b>SPI SPECIALTY EXPLORATION:</b> This trip is similar to Trip 2 but without the boat trip. The day begins with a quest for Aplomado Falcons in the <b>coastal prairie</b>.</p> <p>We then move to <b>South Padre Island</b> looking for spring migrants and coastal specialties at spots up and down the island, including the grounds of the <b>SPI Birding, Nature Center and Alligator Sanctuary</b> and the <b>Valley Land Fund Migratory Bird Lots</b> on Sheepshead St., plus the <b>Convention Center</b> property.</p> <p>On Friday and Saturday, if time allows, we will finish the day checking the <b>resacas on Hwy 100</b> (think Amazon Kingfisher!).</p> <p><i>Note: Be prepared to pay a fee of \$8 - \$10 at the SPI Birding Sanctuary.</i></p> <p><i>55-minute drive to falcon viewing area from the VNC. Somewhat lengthy walking on the boardwalk at SPI Nature Center; birding from the car and paved walks. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	CAMERON	EASY/MODERATE	<p><b>Friday/Saturday</b> Depart 5:45 am Arrive back 2:45 pm</p> <p><b>Sunday</b> Depart 5:45 am End 12:00 pm</p>	John Berner & Lynn Thompson	Randy Pinkston & Byron Stone	Ken Hartman & Angelina Vasquez
4	<p><b>KING RANCH (KENEDY COUNTY CENTURY CLUB TRIP):</b> Indulge in the exclusivity of the <b>King Ranch</b> (Norias Division) bird tour. This is the southernmost part of King Ranch in Texas and provides a great birding experience, with some of the rarest breeding birds in the U.S. such as the Ferruginous Pygmy Owl and Tropical Parula, and habitat for migrating songbirds. Other species we'll look for include White-tailed Hawk, Northern-beardless Tyrannulet, Vermilion Flycatcher, Botteri's Sparrow, and Audubon's Oriole.</p> <p>Lunch provided, and soft drinks and water are available throughout the trip. Hiking boots with a high ankle support (for support in sandy soil and tucking in pant legs for tick and chigger control) desirable.</p> <p><i>Please note: The \$165 entrance fee for King Ranch covers a local guide, lunch, and van transportation. It is payable when you register for the meeting online.</i></p> <p><i>One-hour drive to ranch gate. Birding from the van; amount of walking depends on the birds. Capacity: 12 participants.</i></p>	KENEDY	EASY	<p>Depart 5:30 am Arrive back 3:30 pm</p>	No Trip	Erin & Roney Swanson	No Trip
5	<p><b>LAGUNA ATASCOSA: Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge</b>, situated along the Laguna Madre's shores, stands as a haven for avian enthusiasts. With the highest bird species count of all national wildlife refuges in the country, it is also home to the largest remaining population of protected ocelots in the USA. Expect encounters with Reddish Egrets, White-tailed Hawks, and much more.</p> <p>On Friday and Saturday we will also check out <b>Hugh Ramsey Park</b> in Harlingen on the way back.</p> <p><i>Note: Bring your national parks pass or \$3.00 for entry at Laguna Atascosa.</i></p> <p><i>One-hour drive to Laguna Atascosa from the VNC. Walking on well-maintained trails. Capacity: 12</i></p>	CAMERON	EASY	<p><b>Saturday</b> Depart 6:15 am Arrive back 3:00 pm</p> <p><b>Sunday</b> Depart 6:15 am Finish 12:00 pm</p>	No Trip	Judy Kestner & Christine Turnbull	Crystal Ledezma & Lynn Thompson
6	<p><b>WETLANDS ADVENTURE:</b> First stop on this trip is the <b>Edinburg Scenic Wetlands</b> with a butterfly garden, canal overlook, and two large ponds. Trails snake through the wooded area, with lots of areas to view migrating warblers as well as Valley natives.</p> <p>The <b>McAllen Nature Center</b>, 33 acres of Tamaulipan thornscrub, is next. With two bird feeding stations, Plain Chachalacas and Tropical Kingbirds are commonly seen.</p> <p><i>Note: There is a \$3-5 admission fee at the Edinburg Wetlands</i></p> <p><i>35-minute drive to Edinburg Wetlands. Walking on level paths. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	HIDALGO	EASY	<p><b>Friday</b> Depart 7:00 am Arrive back 2:30 pm</p>	Crystal Ledezma & Angelina Vasquez	No Trip	No Trip
7	<p><b>MISSION/MCALLEN:</b> Visit the esteemed <b>National Butterfly Center</b> to see many target species, including the distinctive Green Jay, the vibrant Altamira Oriole, the elusive Olive Sparrow, the charming Clay-colored Thrush, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Gray Hawk. Access to the Rio Grande here also provides the opportunity for the coveted kingfisher trifecta.</p> <p>At the renowned <b>Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park</b>, the Hawk Tower overlooking the oxbow offers an exceptional vantage point to witness raptors soaring through the skies.</p> <p>The afternoon will be spent in McAllen at <b>Quinta Mazatlan</b> observing features that may inspire replication in this historic site.</p> <p><i>Note: Be prepared to pay the \$5 entry fee at the butterfly center and \$2-\$3 fee at Quinta Mazatlan.</i></p> <p><i>40-minute drive to butterfly center from the VNC. Walking on smooth or paved trails; climbing to the hawk tower. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	HIDALGO	MODERATE	<p>Depart 6:15 am Arrive Back 2:45 pm</p>	No Trip	Bob White & Janey Woodley	No Trip



8	<p><b>WESLACO:</b> This lush locale boasts three rich nature sites. On Friday and Saturday we will visit <b>Estero Llano Grande State Park</b>, the <b>Valley Nature Center</b>, and <b>Frontera Audubon</b>. Prepare to encounter a diverse array of local specialties and keep an eye out for possible rarities.</p> <p>Sunday's trip will focus on Estero Llano Grande only.</p> <p><i>Note: Be prepared to pay the entry fee of \$3-\$5 at Frontera Audubon. Bring your state parks pass for Estero or pay \$3 entry fee.</i></p> <p><i>15-minute drive to Estero Llano Grande from the VNC. Short to medium distance walking on paved and smooth gravel paths. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	HIDALGO	EASY	<p>Friday &amp; Saturday Depart 6:30 am Arrive back 3:00 pm</p> <p>Sunday Depart 6:30 am Finish 12:00 pm</p>	Randy Pinkston & Byron Stone	Angelina Vasquez	Susan Foster & Janey Woodley
9	<p><b>JIM HOGG COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Join our fearless leaders in this severely under-birded county of south Texas. Targets include Rio Grande Valley Turkey, Empidonax flycatchers, Cassin's Sparrow, and Pyrrhuloxia. Extensive driving to/from sites in Hebbronville and extensive roadside birding with leaders who have birded this tough county before.</p> <p><i>2-hour drive to Randado from the VNC. Birding close to the vehicles. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	JIM HOGG	EASY	<p>Depart 5:00 am Arrive back 5:00 pm</p>	Susan Foster & Bob White	No Trip	No Trip
10	<p><b>BROOKS COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Go on a quest to get your life list to 100 species in the wilds of this county with a population of just 7,223 people. Brooks County includes the famous <b>Falfurrias Rest Stop</b> which has been home to quite a few rarities over the years. The quirky <b>Sacred Heart Cemetery</b> in Falfurrias has an impressive list of species.</p> <p><i>Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding close to the vehicles. Capacity: 12 participants.</i></p>	BROOKS	EASY	<p>Depart 5:15 am Arrive back 4:00 pm</p>	No Trip	Crystal Ledezma & Lynn Thompson	No Trip
11	<p><b>WILLACY COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Located on the eastern side of the Rio Grande Valley, Willacy County boasts a variety of habitats: agricultural fields, mudflats, beaches, resacas, coastal prairies, thornscrub, and wetlands.</p> <p>We will work our way east to west hitting the <b>Teniente</b> and <b>East Lake Tracts of Lower Rio Grande NWR</b> to <b>Raymondville</b> and ultimately <b>Port Mansfield</b>. We will try for rare residents like N. Beardless-Tyrannulet, Clay-Colored Thrush, and Black-throated Sparrow but our focus will be on species diversity and finding water if current drought conditions remain into May.</p> <p><i>45-minute drive to the NWR from the VNC. Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	WILLACY	EASY	<p>Depart 6:00 am Arrive back 4:15 pm</p>	Lisa Edwards & Laura Wilson	No Trip	No Trip
12	<p><b>ZAPATA COUNTY CENTURY CLUB:</b> Try to knock this county off your Century Club list when we visit <b>Falcon Lake State Park</b>, <b>the boat ramp and county park</b>, and <b>Bravo Park</b> in Zapata. Targets include Greater Roadrunner, Morelet's Seedeater, Black-throated Sparrow and other birds of the dry thornscrub.</p> <p><i>Note: Bring your state parks pass or \$3 for the state park.</i></p> <p><i>2 hours and 15 minutes to Bravo Park from the VNC. Extensive driving to/from site; uneven and steep trails at the boat ramp. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	ZAPATA	MODERATELY DIFFICULT	<p>Depart 5:00 am Arrive back 4:30 pm</p>	Ken Hartman & Janey Woodley	No Trip	No Trip
13	<p><b>STARR COUNTY CENTURY CLUB TRIP:</b> Starr County lies in the western part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, along the banks of the Rio Grande. Possible sightings include Red-billed Pigeons, Audubon's Orioles, Morelet's Seedeater, and more. Arid areas reveal avian wonders like the iconic Greater Roadrunner, the captivating Cactus Wren, the elusive Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, and Scaled Quail.</p> <p>Our journey begins at <b>Santa Margarita Ranch</b> with a stunning Rio Grande River overlook and probable Brown Jay sightings, followed by exploration at <b>Salineño</b> and <b>Falcon State Park</b>.</p> <p><i>NOTE: \$50 admission fee payable when you register for this trip.</i></p> <p><i>1 hour and 45-minute drive to ranch from the VNC. Involves a 5-mile round-trip hike up and down steep, rocky hills and through a rough gully in full sun on uneven ground at Santa Margarita; walking stick helpful. Uneven trails at Salineño. TRIP LEADER WILL ASK THOSE DEEMED UNABLE TO TRAVERSE THE TERRAIN TO BIRD NEAR THE VEHICLES ONLY. Capacity: 12 participants</i></p>	STARR	DIFFICULT	<p>Depart 5:15 am. Arrive back 4:45 pm</p>	Ryan Rodriguez and Erin & Romey Swanson	Ryan Rodriguez & Laura Wilson	No Trip
14	<p><b>RARITY ROUND-UP:</b> 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 on trails or in un-shaded areas, depending on where the rarities have been seen. No maximum capacity.</i></p>	TBD	MODERATE	<p>Depart 6:00 am Finish 12:30 pm</p>	No Trip	No Trip	John Berner & Byron Stone
15	<p><b>RAPTOR SEARCH WITH BILL CLARK:</b> World-renowned raptor expert Bill Clark will lead a group through the Valley looking for birds of prey. Bill's knowledge about these birds is amazing, and you will learn a lot about these majestic creatures as you drive the fields and forests.</p>	TBD	EASY	<p>Depart 6:00 am Arrive back 2:30 pm</p>	Bill Clark	No Trip	No Trip



*In Loving Memory*  
**Donald Joseph Schaezler**  
1944 - 2024

Donald “Don” Joseph Schaezler, beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and friend, passed away peacefully on March 16, 2024 at 80 years old, surrounded by loved ones. He brought warmth and brightness to the lives of those he touched, and his loss is deeply felt.

Born on February 11, 1944 in San Antonio, Texas to Harold and Marguerite Schaezler, Don led a life filled with love, kindness, and steadfast dedication to his family, friends, and community. Renowned for his kindness, generosity, knowledge, intelligence, integrity, and caring nature, he left an everlasting impression on the lives of many.

Don had an insatiable thirst for knowledge and pursued his education with passion, first graduating valedictorian from Alamo Heights High School in 1962, in a class that some claim as one of the smartest, then earning from Rice University a Bachelor of Arts Cum Laude in 1966, a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering in 1967, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Science and Engineering in 1971. He was a professional engineer in both Texas and New York, a certified industrial hygienist, and taught at Rice University, the University of Houston, and Texas A&M University. He utilized his skills and expertise to strive for excellence and share his wisdom, leaving an indelible mark on his industry and those with whom he worked.

Outside of his professional pursuits, Don cherished spending time with family and friends. He served many roles in people’s lives, coach, teammate, professor, teacher, and mentor. In college he played varsity baseball and lightweight football and studied hard, often late into the night, taking breaks every hour to do chin-ups. He coached baseball or soccer for each of his four sons. Favorite family events included camping throughout Texas with Big Bend being his favorite, hiking including on the old farm that eventually became Warbler Woods, canoeing Armand Bayou and elsewhere, and collecting fossils and Native American points. Often during camping trips or hikes, He would stop and share insight into the surroundings, whether it was a geological formation, unique plant species or history of the area. He enjoyed identifying and teaching others to identify plants, animals, rocks, and animal tracks. As an ordained minister, he presided over the marriage of his son Robert and his spouse Jennifer. As a grandfather, he taught kindness, shared his love of nature and the outdoors, inspired learning, read fun books, and played, including with the model train set from when he was a kid. He was a member of the Lion’s Club and enjoyed playing bridge with friends. He started a men’s Bible

study, often held in his backyard, that was very important to him. He was a pillar of strength, offering guidance, support, spirituality, and love to all who sought it. His friendly presence brought joy and warmth to every gathering, and his laughter will echo in the hearts of those he leaves behind.

As an avid lover of nature with a passion for birding, Don co-founded, with Susan, Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary in Cibolo, Texas where he shared his love of nature with many. Warbler Woods has grown to be a renowned birding location with close to 300 bird species

sighted and over 13 thousand checklists. He and Susan were awarded the Texas Land Steward award in 2011 for their work at Warbler Woods. He worked hard creating what Warbler Woods is today, and overcame obstacles, including a wild boar attack at the age of 74. He approached each day with optimism and grace, inspiring others to do the same.

Don’s legacy of love, compassion, and integrity will live on in the hearts of his family, friends, and colleagues. He leaves behind his loving spouse of 57 years, Susan Schaezler, four sons and their spouses, David and Esther Schaezler, Michael and Vivian Schaezler, Robert and Jennifer Schaezler, Ryan and Brittany Schaezler, seven grandchildren, Ethan Schaezler, Brendan Schaezler, Allan Schaezler, Austin Schaezler, Michaela Schaezler, Adam Cantrelle, Averi Quintanilla, his sister, Margie Bonnes, and his nephews, Scott Carlin, and Gary Carlin, who will all continue to honor his memory through the values he instilled in them. His beloved dogs, Ninja and Kali, miss him greatly.

Though his physical presence may no longer grace this earth, Don’s spirit will forever remain a guiding light, shining brightly in the memories of all who were blessed to know him.

Forever remembered, forever cherished, Don will live on in the hearts of all who were touched by his boundless love and kindness.

Rest in peace, dear Don. You are deeply missed. Your spirit will continue to inspire us all.

***A brief remembrance for Don  
Schaezler....***

TOS lost a good friend recently. Don Schaezler passed away peacefully at the age of 80 in the presence of family on March 16, 2024. Don was devoted to his wife Susan’s passion for Warbler Woods. I think Don designed and installed the water features at Warbler Woods - he was the brains and the brawn. And he was remarkably generous with his time and attention. I recall one of my first visits to Warbler Woods and Don offered to drive me all over the place in their golf cart. I found myself thinking “he hardly knows me!” But Don was like that. He was also keenly interested in nature, and he often identified plants that I was unfamiliar with. I know that Susan will carry on at Warbler Woods, but I know she will miss Don terribly. We all will. He was a great friend.

Sincerely,

Byron Stone, President TOS



## Searching for color banded Clay-colored Thrushes!

This is a photo John Brush took last year of a Clay-colored Thrush at Quinta Mazatlan, nicely showing the color-bands we have been placing on the birds for a few years now. We would call this one Green/Red left and Green/Silver right ( a few birds have the silver numbered band on the left leg, but in the vast majority it is on the right leg). Our birds have mainly been seen near banding locations in Edinburg and McAllen (especially Quinta), but some thrushes have been resighted miles from where they were banded.

So far it looks like the thrushes are very mobile, while the Green Jays (which we are also color-banding) have more site fidelity. I know there are still quite a few birders in the Valley now, so please let us know if you see one of our color-banded Clay-colored Thrushes or Green Jays. Photos are great, or you may get a good look through your binoculars.



You can send sightings to [colorbandingrgv@gmail.com](mailto:colorbandingrgv@gmail.com). Thanks and your help will be greatly appreciated!

## 10,000 Bird documented by Peter Kaestner

A man in a khaki shirt and cap and sporting binoculars around his neck holds up his camera to display its screen, which shows a green bird. His other hand holds up a white sheet of paper that reads “10,000.”

Peter Kaestner in the Philippines after snapping a photograph of his record-breaking bird. Peter Kaestner

Peter Kaestner now stands alone at the top of birding’s “big listers,” the small group of people who travel the world in an effort to document as many different species as possible. He cemented that position last month when he spotted an orange-tufted spiderhunter, a banana-loving songbird in the Philippines.

The spiderhunter was the 10,000th bird that Kaestner documented—an achievement once considered unreachable.

Have an unrivaled evening.



*Breaking a birding record*

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



New TOS T-Shirt is now available. Log in to your TOS account and select Store from the menu.  
Sizes XXL and XXXL are now available

# DONATIONS

## Spring 2024 newsletter

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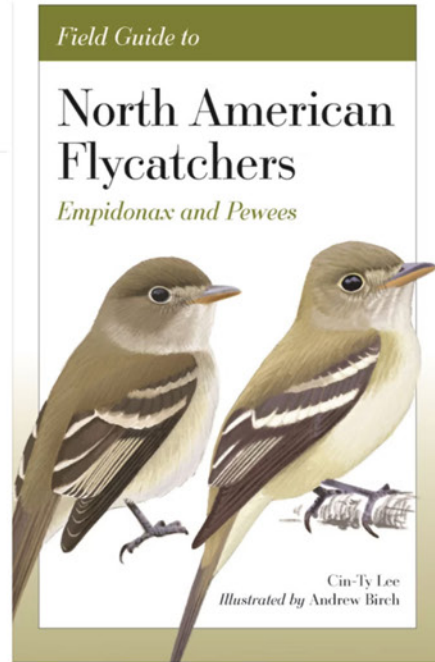


Princeton Nature

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

Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch

A richly illustrated, portable field guide to flycatcher  
identification



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

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

## Paperback

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

## Members of the TOS Board of Directors



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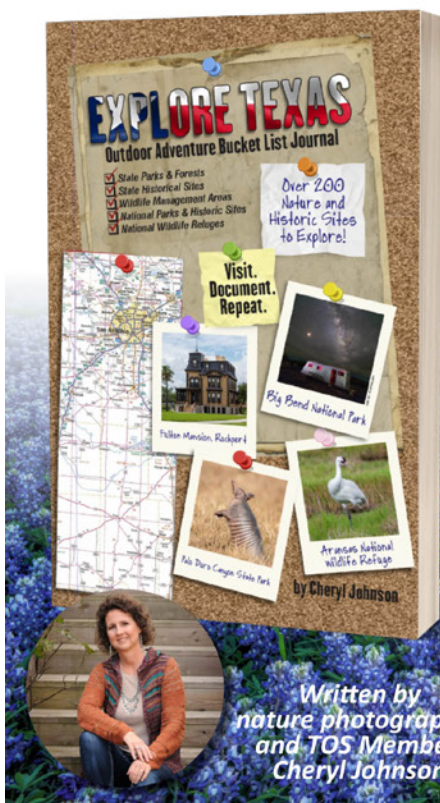




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