



Rustlin's

Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

Volume XXIII

Number 6

August/September 2003

September 23: Heard Museum Naturalist to Speak.

Roger Sanderson, the naturalist for the Heard Museum, will be our speaker. His favorite topic is reptiles but he will also be telling about his work at the museum.

October 28: Batty about Bats.

October wouldn't right without bats so Verajean (Vicki) Hatfield will come and speak about "Bats, A Mammal Like Us!"

November 25: The Deep Freeze - Antarctic.

Alton Biggs, a high school biology teacher in Allen and an author of textbooks, will be sharing his journey to the Antarctic. Come see his fantastic photos.

December 26: Christmas Bird Count.

A full day of combing the Heard Museum and surrounding territory by teams of birders to count all birds in each designated area. More information to follow.

PTAS Meetings are the fourth Tuesday

7:00 p.m. at the Heard Museum

Call 972-562-5566 for directions

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Education. I am proud that our chapter offers the range of educational activities that we do. To allow me to remain personally involved in this activity, I plan to continue as Education Chairman in addition to my role as President.

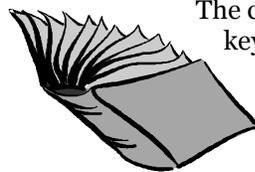
In addition to our monthly programs and our field trips, each of which serves to educate our members and visitors, we now offer two instructional forums targeted at beginning and intermediate birders. The short monthly classes just prior to the regular meeting and the second Saturday bird walks on the grounds of the Heard Museum.

The Second Saturday Bird Walks offer a unique opportunity for beginners to get personal instruction in a very comfortable environment behind to museum store. I plan to team-teach on these walks with experienced members of PTAS. Please invite your friends to get involved in birding and send them to the Heard for these walks. Also, I would love to involve others of you as teachers. The Saturday walks are a great way to teach by example and conversation no public speaking and no teaching experience necessary. Please contact me if you are interested.

Gailon Brehm, President

LEARN THE BIRDS AT THE HEARD

Collin County is rich with opportunities to observe birds. Again this year your Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society is offering an outstanding opportunity to birders of all levels of experience and knowledge. This birding class meets at 7:00 p.m. just prior to the chapter meetings which are at 7:30 p.m. Come in through the back door off the parking lot and you will be directed to the basement amphitheater where the class will be taught. Teachers are experienced members of the local chapter.



The class format is an informal discussion teaching keys to identification of a small number of local birds each month. All you need to bring is your favorite field guide. For more information about these short-course classes, call Gailon Brehm, President, at 972-517-2542.

**CHECK OUT OUR NEW PRAIRIE & TIMBERS
WEBSITE: www.prairieandtimbers.com**

2003 Field Trip Schedule

September 6, River Legacy Park/ Village Creek Drying Beds (Arlington)

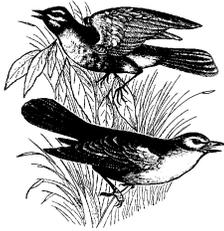
Leader: Charley Amos

Depart: Kelly Moore Paint Store at 6:15 a.m.

(yes, this is correct)

Trip length: 3/4 day.

Meet promptly 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot across (south) from the entrance to Village Creek on Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington. To reach Village Creek, exit from I-30 intersection at Fielder Rd. Proceed north on Fielder Rd. a couple miles to the T-intersection at Green Oaks Blvd. The drying beds are now directly in front of you to the north. Turn right (east) onto Green Oaks Blvd. to the signed entrance road with a gate at the first left. The parking area to meet at is on the right in the Park, south of the entry road. This is a half-day trip, but you'll want to bring plenty to drink. If it has rained recently, be prepared for mud.



Expected Birds: Village Creek Drying Beds has earned a statewide reputation as a top Tarrant County birding hotspot that each year seems to attract some real rarities. During the height of fall migration anything is possible, but we can expect the usual southbound shorebirds and

passerines in addition to the usual summer residents. Village Creek is the perfect place for beginning birders to start their first birding adventure.

October 25, Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Carolyn Oldham

Depart Kelly Moore Paint Store at 7:00 a.m.

Trip length: 3/4 day

We will look for early winter migrants-ducks, geese, shorebirds, sparrows, etc.
Bring lunch and drinks.



Get Meeting & Field Trip Information at the Speed of the Internet.

Did you ever want the news before anyone else? Well, now here is your chance. If you would like to receive an email letting you know when the latest and greatest version of the newsletter is available on the website, just let us know! Contact Membership Chairman Jerri Kerr by email at Jerri.Kerr@mci.com, by phone 972-578-3146 or by snail mail at 1719 Mimosa Avenue, Plano, TX 75074 and she will put your email on the P&TAS distribution list. Once you receive the email you can check the website www.prairieandtimbers.com for all the happenings.

Won't you help us better the habitats for our birds by using the Internet for your newsletter? By doing so, we can work together to fulfill the Audubon mission of conserving native plants and animals and their habitats, using land and water wisely, seeking solutions for global problems involving the interaction of population, resources, and the environment, promoting rational strategies for energy development and use, and stressing conservation and renewable sources.

Are You Ready for Field Trips? RSVPing is most important!

One of the most satisfying experiences of the Audubon member is the successful field trip. As you consider joining a field trip, be sure to keep in mind these following tips:

First rule of field tripping is to RSVP the week of the trip to one of the co-chairmen:

Carolyn Oldham at 972-517-8987 or
email Carolyn.Oldham@verizon.net

OR

Tom Heath, 972-867-8646 or
email heathwtom@netscape.net

Second rule is to be on time. When it says the trip will meet, that means *DEPART!* So be at the location noted. **Don't be late!**

Third Rule is to bring water and snacks for yourself.

Our carpooling site is the parking lot of the Kelly-Moore Paint Store at the northwest corner of Spring Creek Pkwy and Hwy 75 in Plano, referred to as the Paint Store.



HEARD MUSEUM HONORED BY AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Texas Audubon Society honored the Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary by naming it a national Important Bird Area. The Heard received this honor because of the vast diversity of Texas birds recorded on the site and the maintenance of this valuable habitat. The Heard wetlands habitat includes more than 50 acres and is an important habitat for migratory waterfowl. More than 260 species of birds and information have been collected by the Heard over 35 years. The Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1967.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Prairie Creek On May 10 a group of 12 birders saw 10 warbler species practically all in one tree and all in one location. Included were the Yellow, Wilson's, Nashville, Black and White, Magnolia, Chest-sided, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart and Black-throated Green. We also flushed up the Purple Gallinule below the dam. Also seen were Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Warbling Vireo. Prairie Creek continues to shine!
Carolyn Oldham

Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge and Denison Dam - Saturday May 24

13 PTAS members and guests were joined by 2 Fort Worth AS members for a full day of birding at Hagerman NWR and Denison Dam. The cool morning air made for some comfortable birding along the lake. The Snowy Egrets (~20) and Dickcissels (~50) seemed to be everywhere. Possibly the best bird of the day was a Golden Plover. From an oil well pad we had an interesting look at a flock of 18 Black Terns lined up on a sand bar. A flock of about 100 Sandpipers keep us busy for quite awhile trying to identify all of the species - Spotted, Semipalmated, Baird's, Pectoral, Stilt and White-rumped. There was an almost complete lack of ducks - we only saw 4 Mallards, and only 2 hawks, Red-tailed. Due to road and bridge construction we were not able to go to the picnic area and beyond to the best woodland birding areas. The total number of species for Hagerman was 47.

After lunch in Denison we went to the Denison Dam area where we spotted 4 more species - White-eyed Vireo, Eastern Bluebird, Killdeer and Baltimore Oriole. After some diligent searching of the tree limbs in the RV Park we finally spotted a female Oriole fly to a well-camouflaged nest.

After returning to Hagerman to pick up cars we saw 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers working the telephone poles along Refuge Road. The total number of species for the day was 51 with a rough estimate of quantity. They included: 30 American White Pelicans, 2 Double-crested Cormorants, 4 Great Blue Herons, 5 Great Egrets, 20 Snowy Egrets, 4 Little Blue Herons, 30 Cattle Egrets, 15 White-faced Ibis, 4 Mallards, 22 Black Vultures, 20 Turkey Vultures, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Golden Plover, 2 Killdeer, 1 American Avocet, 1 Spotted Sandpiper, 50 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 12 Baird's Sandpipers, 2 Pectoral Sandpipers, 6 Stilt Sandpipers, 50 White-rumped Sandpipers, 2 Franklin's Gulls, 2 Forster's Terns, 18 Black Terns, 2 Morning Doves, 2 Yellow-billed Cuckoos, 1 Greater Roadrunner, 3 Chimney Swifts, 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Western Kingbirds, 4 Eastern Kingbirds, 15 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, 2 Purple Martins, 50 Cliff Swallows, 5 Barn Swallows, 2 American Crows, 2 Eastern Bluebirds, 4 Northern Mockingbirds, 2 European Starlings, 2 White-eyed Vireos, 3 Northern Cardinals, 1 Blue Grosbeak, 50 Dickcissel, 20 House Sparrows, 50 Red-winged Blackbirds, 1 Eastern Meadowlark, 5 Great-tailed Grackles, 2 Common Grackle, 3 Brown-headed Cowbirds, and 5 Baltimore Orioles. **Tom Heath and Sid Dunkle**

Birding at Meridian State Park

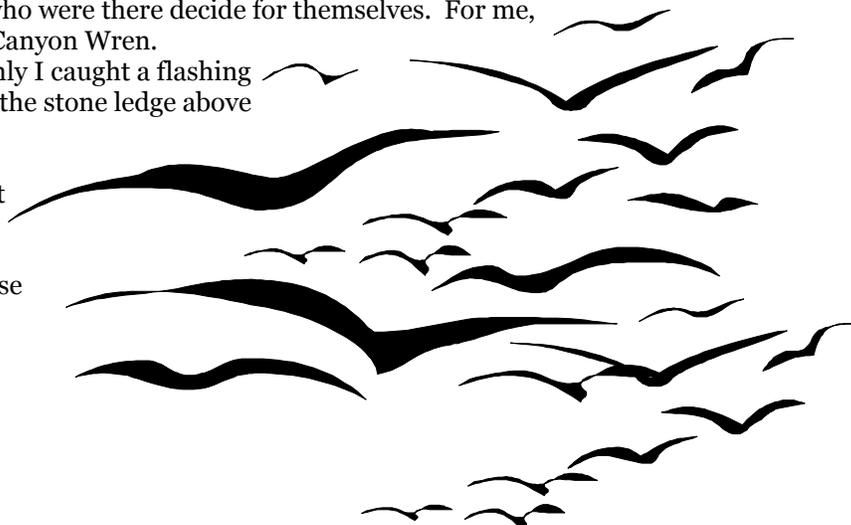
By all accounts, Meridian State Park is well worth the driving distance and quite satisfying in terms of birding. The obvious highlight of the trip was the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler. 53 other species were also observed throughout the trip.

The second highlight bird was in some dispute. Could it have been the three Mississippi Kites soaring aloft with a kettle of Black Vultures? Maybe it was the pair of Black-chinned Hummingbirds dancing in their courting flight. Perhaps it was the Painted Bunting that appeared briefly near the roadside picnic area where we convened. Or perhaps, the nice views of the Bewick Wrens there. I'll let those who were there decide for themselves. For me, it had to be the newest addition to our list, the Canyon Wren.

Unfortunately, everyone heard it singing, but only I caught a flashing glimpse of it as it sought shelter lower down on the stone ledge above the lake.

Meridian State Park provides the perfect habitat of juniper-oak and other mixed hardwoods to support the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler. It is certainly a reliable spot to see these birds in the early spring.

Mike Moore



The Magic of Honey Creek State Natural Area

Some places are not only beautiful in their own right, but are even more special due to their location. One of those amazing places is Honey Creek State Natural Area. This area offers amazing beauty and diversity of flora and fauna. The irony is its location: accessible to the public only through one of Texas most visited state parks.

That's right, thousands of visitors motor past the entrance to Honey Creek SNA every week in their quest for river access in Guadalupe River State Park. Most don't stop though, and they miss the opportunity to experience this precious jewel of a place. Nestled away from the crowds, Honey Creek flows quietly, clearly, beautifully year round thanks to the spring that feeds it with a constant supply of aquifer water. Those that do stop for a guided hike through this limited access property are treated to the sights and sounds of a grassland restoration in progress and a pristine creek enjoying its peace but ready to share it.

Honey Creek SNA's 2200+ acres are located in the Texas Hill Country, a region often noted for its ruggedness, just a short drive from either San Antonio or Austin. Once a ranch, the area was first acquired and opened for limited access by the Texas Nature Conservancy in 1985.

The vegetative diversity of the Honey Creek property is one of its most compelling features. Ashe Juniper, Live Oak, Agarita, and Texas Persimmon



dominate the dry, rocky hills, and a few grasses such as Little Muhly and Curly Mesquite somehow find just enough soil in the cracks to persist. As the Juniper and Baccharis are being removed from the upland flats, the stands of native grasses are increasing; Indian grass, Little Bluestem and Switchgrass are reasserting their dominance. As one moves down into the canyon of the creek itself, one is struck by the increase of Cedar Elm and older Junipers and the rather abrupt appearance of Spanish Oak, Pecan, Walnut and the Mexican Buckeye.

Finally, the terrain levels out again in the narrow flood plain and the creek itself. Here, the dominant species are Sycamore and Bald Cypress, associated with an assortment of flood plain species. Texas Palmetto, Columbine, and Maidenhair Fern occur along the rock banks, spatter dock floats on the surface, and a number of emergent plants are plainly visible in the clear blue-green water.

Overall, the nine soil types, which occur on the property, can easily be distinguished from one another by changes in the dominant vegetation.

The diversity of habitat types, naturally enough, gives rise to varied and abundant fauna. All of the typical hill country species, from wild turkeys to fence lizards, ringtails to leopard frogs, and many types of fish can be found on the property. Several species of endemics with limited ranges also inhabit the preserve. Of particular interest are Cagle's map turtle, Guadalupe bass, four-lined skink, green kingfisher, Texas salamanders, and the Honey Creek Cave salamander. In addition, Honey Creek is one of the nesting sites of the threatened golden-cheeked warbler.

Whether watching deer and jackrabbits feeding in the uplands, gazing at the fish hiding under lily pads in the creek, or listening to the distinctive call of the canyon wren announcing his territory, Honey Creek is a special place for all visitors.

Access is limited to guided walks on Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. offered by the Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek. Special group tours can be arranged in advance. For general information call the Guadalupe River State Park at 830-438-2656. For information on scheduling a hike, call Holly Camero at 210-490-4882.

Directions: The park is located at the north end of Park Road 31, adjacent to Guadalupe River State Park in Spring Branch, TX 78070, and may be reached by traveling west on State Highway 46 and US Highway 281; or by traveling eastward on State Highway 46, 13 miles east of Boerne.

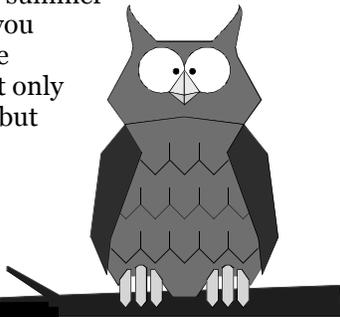
Reprinted with permission from Tom Anderson, President of Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek State Natural Area.

AUDUBON SOCIETY RECOGNIZES OUR OWN JAMIE RUTTER

Jamie Rutter, 13-year old Wilson Middle School student and 3-year PTAS member, was recently recognized by Audubon Texas. Jamie was given this honor for raising \$600 during a birdathon. Jamie spent her entire Easter weekend in South Texas where she identified 110 species of birds. The money will benefit the Texas Audubon Society educational and outreach programs and habitat restoration efforts. Martha Snyderman, regional director of Audubon Texas, presented Jamie a handsome plaque. Jamie got involved in birding when she was 8 years old and said her favorite bird is the owl.

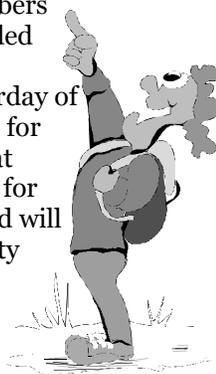
Jamie is also being awarded with three scholarships. A \$500 scholarship is being given to Jamie on behalf of the PTAS chapter and in memory of Al Valentine. In addition, two private scholarships in the amount of \$250 each are being given to her. These scholarships will allow Jamie to attend a summer camp in Maine in 2004. If you have not met Jamie, you are missing out on knowing not only a wonderful young woman but also an experienced birder.

***Congratulations,
Jamie!
Way to go!***



PTAS SPONSORS BIRD WALKS AT THE HEARD MUSEUM

The Heard Museum and Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society are now offering guided bird walks on the Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary on the second Saturday of each month, September - May. Sign-in for these walks will be at the Heard store at 9:00, rain or shine! The bird walks are for beginning and intermediate birders and will last 1.5 hours with plenty of opportunity for questions and tips on birding techniques. Attendees who have binoculars and field guides should bring them.



DID YOU KNOW...

A 10-page publication titled "Deep East Texas Birding Guide" can be downloaded free from www.detda.org. It gives a list of 44 sites for the 12 county area south of Nacogdoches.

GET YOUR PTAS SHIRTS

We have been so lucky to have an artist in our chapter who has designed a wonderful PTAS logo (Karen White) for our chapter shirts. We also have a terrific birding hat which sports the logo, too! Those who have ordered anything --shirts or hats-- please see Sally Gruss at the next meeting for pickup and payment.

***T-shirt are \$20
Sweatshirts are \$25.***

You might be a birder if

- your neck hurts except when you're looking up.
- you want to see just one more warbler before lunch.
- you have a permanent depression above the bridge of your nose from pressure against your eyeglasses.
- you think LBJ doesn't stand for Lyndon Baines Johnson.
- your spouse doesn't understand why you must keep a yard list, a county list, a state list, a U.S. list, a lower-48 list, a Canada list, an ABA list (whatever that is), a world list, and an escrow list.
- you can make three different words by rearranging the letters I-P-H-S.
- there are days when getting up at 4:30 a.m. is something you've looked forward to.
- you can tell a parrot from a macaw.
- you know the difference between ABBA, ABA, IOU, AOU, RTP, ABC, DEF, and XYZ.
- you've ever seen a Butterbutt.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

If you have a computer and e-mail address and wish to automatically receive the various communications coming from Audubon Texas, National Audubon, and from your Prairie & Timbers Audubon Chapter, please let us know your e-mail address and we'll include you in the mailings. We try to screen the material forwarded so that you are not inundated with massive amounts of unessential material. If interested, send your e-mail address to g-brehm@msn.com

**PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUBUBON SOCIETY
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Membership Application 

NOTE: Existing members should respond directly to National Audubon when they receive renewal notice.

___ Please enroll me as a NEW member of National Audubon Society and Prairie & Timbers Chapter at the special introductory price of \$20.00. Enclosed is my check made out to: National Audubon Society

___ I do not wish to be a member of National Audubon Society. However, I would like to receive Prairie & Timbers Rustlin s Newsletter. Enclosed is my check for \$8.00 made out to: P&T Audubon Society

Name: _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 Zip _____ Phone _____
 Email: _____

- How did you hear about Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society?
 ___ From a member of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society.
 ___ From the Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society web site.
 ___ From the National Audubon Society.
 ___ Other

**Mail to P&T Audubon Society
 c/o Mike Mizell 800 Edgewood Denton, TX 76201**

Audubon Code 7XCH PTAS Chapter Code W15

Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society
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