



FROM THE PRESIDENT
Open Membership

The board of PTAS, Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society, decided at our June board meeting to add a **local** category of membership. Now, people who join our chapter only will be added to our membership roster along with those who join National Audubon Society (NAS) in our region. Local membership will require an annual fee of \$12.00 and will include all family members at a single address.

We continue to strongly encourage all members to join NAS and to renew their membership annually. NAS sponsors many important State- and Nation-wide conservation and lobbying activities beyond the scope of our chapter. In addition, NAS provides funding and other important services directly to our chapter; so please continue to support them.

We are accepting chapter-only memberships to promote the largest possible membership. Given this spirit of openness, please encourage your friends to join Audubon and participate in our activities.

Gailon Brehm, President

Rustlin's

Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

Volume XXIII Number 11 September/October 2004

MONTHLY CALENDAR

September 28, 2004

Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Shorebirds
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Flora and Fauna of the Galapagos Islands

Alton Biggs will join us again to show us animals that have gone through great changes in order to adapt to their harsh environment. Be prepared for the colors of black, white and occasional splashes of startling red.

October 26, 2004

Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Owls
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Experiences of a Service Elderhostel

Tom Heath will have a presentation about his experiences at Ramsey Canyon (south of Tucson, AZ) Elderhostel.

November 23, 2004

Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Ducks
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Pelagic Birds

Returning speaker Steve Carlson travels extensively with his work and has seen some wonderful birds. His presentation will be on pelagic birds. He has over 700 life birds and is still looking for more.

December 26, 2004

Christmas Bird Count will be the Bird Count

Watch this newsletter for more information on this annual event

January 25, 2005

Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. - TBA
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Relationships; You and Birds and Native Plants

David Ilfrey, Jr of Native Texas Garden Designs will explain how you, birds and native plants can co-exist in the suburban neighborhood.

PTAS Meetings are the fourth Tuesday

7:00 p.m. at the Heard Museum

Call 972-562-5566 for directions

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. "Learn the birds" is a birding class that meets at 7:00 p.m. just prior to the chapter meetings which are at 7:30 p.m. Gailon Brehm and Sid Dunkle, experienced members of the local chapter, will be offering these identification classes. The class format is an informal discussion tailored mostly for beginning birders but a few rare species will be mixed in to pique the interest of more experienced folks. Featured during each class are bird specimens provided by the Heard Museum and a few recordings of bird sounds. All you need to bring is your favorite field guide.

PTAS WEBSITE

<http://prairieandtimbers.com>

Check It Out!

OTHER GREAT WEB SITES TO CHECK OUT

National Audubon Society - www.audubon.org

Texas Audubon Society - www.tx.audubon.org

Texas Audubon Chapters - www.tx.audubon.org/chapters/chapters.htm

Texas Ornithological Society- www.texasbirds.org

Hot Birding Spots in Our Area www.geocities.com/kinglet32/nctx.htm

Audubon At Home http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html, contains a treasure trove of information that gives users the tools they need to create backyards that will attract birds and safeguard them as well.

Tom Heath, Field Trip Co-Chair

2004-2005 Field Trip Schedule

Saturday, September 24 -

Tawakoni

Richard Kinney - leader

Target birds: fall migrants and shorebirds

Length: all day

Depart the Paint Store at 6:30 a.m.

ARE YOU READY FOR FIELD TRIPS?

RSVPing is most important!

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

First: RSVP the week of the trip to the chairman: Tom Heath, 972-867-8648 or email at: heathwtom@netscape.net

Second: Be on time. So be at the location noted. **Don't be late.** Our carpooling site is the parking lot of the Kelly-Moore Paint Store at the northwest corner of Spring Creek Parkway and Hwy 75 in Plano.

Third: Bring water and snacks for yourself.



Did you know that back issues of the Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society's newsletters for years 2003 and 2004 are now available on the PTAS website, <http://prairieandtimbers.com>

PTAS SPONSORS BIRD WALKS AT THE HEARD MUSEUM

The Heard Museum and Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society is now offering guided bird walks on the Heard Museum and 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.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER REPORTS!!!! Coastal Maine Bird Studies

Last year, I was given scholarships from the Prairie and Timbers Audubon chapter to attend an Audubon camp. The Audubon Camp in Maine was suggested and greatly recommended by members of P&T, but because of my age, I could not attend until this year. I was extremely happy I decided to wait; the coastal bird studies camp was a wonderful and meaningful experience!

Typical days were: optional bird walk at 6 am, wake up at 6:30, breakfast at 7. After breakfast, we would do our morning bird activity, and then eat lunch at noon. We had afternoon birding trips, rest time, then dinner. Each evening there was a program, much like the programs at P&T. These programs included an over-all bird talk with Kenn Kaufman, bird sounds in movies, birds of Ecuador, conservation and more. We had to be in our cabin by 10. Two days were exceptions when we were on off-island trips. We'd have earlier wake up calls, quick breakfasts and then we'd pack our lunches of sandwiches and fruit. We made it back for dinner each day, excited from the variety of birds not found on Hog Island.

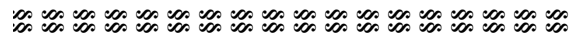
I shared a 4-room (including bathroom) cabin with 12 other students and 2 adult leaders. There were 10 boys and 3 girls, we all got along very well. At the same time, there was also a group of about 30 adults, although the only times we were all together were for meals and the programs.

Now for the good stuff: birds! Monday, half of the group went to Eastern Egg Rock Island - a 30 minute boat ride away. This island was a nesting island for 3 species of terns (roseate, common and artic), gulls, guillemots and, most importantly, puffins. This was the highlight trip of the week. Half of the EER group was escorted over Divebomb Hill (aptly named for the hundreds of terns diving and ramming our heads) along a short rocky shore to individual blinds. From the blinds, we were up-close and almost personal with the guillemots and puffins.

The puffins were slow at coming in at first in my area, but before the end of my one hour stay in the blind, 10 to 16 could be seen at once. The puffins had hidden burrows (well, not quite-so hidden because of the painted numbers above them) that could be 8 feet deep. An adult would fly in with a fish (usually hake or herring), then disappear into the burrow. The adult would go into the burrow, chuck the fish at the baby and then leave. A few puffins hung out near the nest while others flew off for more food. It was fun to watch the guillemots' and puffins' differences, while living so close together. The 'mots had shallower nests and would beak-feed their babies red rock eels. These birds, which were very amusing to watch, clumsily waded their way around the rocks, with their short, bright-red legs.

The first group and the second group of birders switched places so we went to the main camp area to watch the terns. We climbed up onto the roof of a tiny building to record the feeding of the terns, type of fish they ate, size of fish, time of feeding and which chick was fed. It was easy to tell the 2 or 3 chicks apart by their size, the oldest and biggest being Chick A, and the next Chick B and a few times there was a Chick C. There were a few nests just a foot from the building, at random times a certain adult would dive bomb and scream at us.

This trip had great opportunities that few get to experience. Other trips included Acadia NP, Pemaquid Point, a hike around Hog Island, Wreck Island (a GB Heron rookery), Damariscotta River Association and Clairry Hill. In total, our group saw 96 species. My list included 81, including 17 lifers. Key birds were: Wilson's Storm petrel, Atlantic Puffin, Vesper Sparrow, American Bittern, Least tern, Piping plover, Blackburnian Warbler, Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagles. **Jamie Rutter, Scholarship Recipient**



Notes from the Field

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

A group of 20 anxious birders gathered at Prairie Creek Park in Richardson on May 8th anticipating a morning of "warbler watching". Nature didn't see it that way. We did not see any warblers since weather conditions had not cooperated - it was too darn calm that week! However, the highlight was a family of 5



Screech Owls (the parents and 3 babies). One was the more uncommon reddish-brown color (in these parts they are usually gray). We spent a long time watching them watching us. It was quite a treat and pretty much the only treat!

What a difference a week makes! On Saturday, May 15, our timing was exquisite. Storms had been in the area the previous week and night. Ten "faithful" birders witnessed a real treat - warbler fallout frenzy at both Arapaho and Prairie Creek. Sixteen warblers were seen, most species in good numbers. It felt like your head was on a swivel, trying not to miss a single one. Pecan trees and willows seemed to provide the most activity. These two parks are real treasures for spring migration and should be visited often and repeatedly. Birding is like a box of chocolates, you know!

Carolyn Oldham, Field Trip Co-Chair

FORT DAVIS HUMMINGBIRD ROUNDUP

For two years in a row, I have gone to the Fort Davis area for the "Hummingbird Round-up". This event is held in mid-August, over a Thursday afternoon, Friday and Saturday. All activities begin at the historic Prude Ranch, outside of Fort Davis, and I highly recommend that you stay here.

Round-up field trips have taken us to a private residence in the Davis Mountains Resort where one homeowner had over 90 hummingbird feeders! The buzzing drone and whirling motion of hundreds of hummingbirds has to be experienced to be believed. And the best part was that nine species of hummers have been seen at this house two years in a row, including the rare Texas visitor, Allen's Hummingbird.

Another field trip took us to the Davis Mountains Preserve, a beautiful property owned by the Nature Conservancy and infrequently opened to the public. We were allowed to hike one morning to our heart's content, seeing many species of birds, butterflies and dragonflies. An escorted trip later took us to high elevations of the Preserve, where we were fortunate enough to see the only known nesting Buff-breasted Flycatchers in Texas!

Birdwatching is fabulous right on the Prude property, with many feeders and a humming-bird and butterfly garden. And there are many famous birding hotspots nearby that you can visit on your own time: Balmorhea Lake and State Park, Davis Mountains State Park, and E.L. Woods picnic area off Hwy 118. The Hummingbird Round-up is a small festival with a friendly, social feel. With the amazing numbers and species of hummingbirds you can see here, as well as many resident West Texas

birds, this festival deserves a larger participation. Dates for this year are August 19-22; call for more information: The Prude Ranch at 800/458-6232, or Mark Klym, Texas Parks and Wildlife, at 800/792-1112 x4644. I will also be glad to share tips and suggestions; call me at 972-578-3146. **Jerri Kerr, Membership Chair**

SUMMER BIRDING IN MAINE

During the week of June 14, 2004, I visited the Booth Bay area of coastal Maine with a group of birding friends from across the country. We hiked several local wildlife preserves and the Hogg Island Audubon Preserve. During our hikes we saw many varieties of wildflowers, trees and insects that were new to us. We took boat trips to Mohnegan Island, a summer home for artists and tourists and a winter Lobster fishing port, and the Audubon Puffin Project on East Egg Island (no landing permitted). The birding was not spectacular, but we did see a variety of typical birds of the New England coasts and woodlands. Notable were nesting Osprey, flotillas of Common Eiders with babies along the shores, and the Atlantic Puffins off their island sanctuary.

The Puffin Project of Audubon was begun in the early 1980s by capturing chicks from a Canadian island and raising them on East Egg Island in manmade burrows. The birds are not endangered off the Canadian Coast, but egg gathering and gull predation had wiped out the US population by the 1950s. It was three years before any of the hand-raised chicks returned to the island, but slowly the nesting population has grown to 50 pair. Gulls are prohibited from nesting on the island, but Terns are allowed because they do not prey on Puffins. Three volunteer researchers inhabit the island during nesting season, manning a watch platform atop their small living quarters. The island is barren and windswept, with no cover for man or bird other than the burrows dug by the Puffins. A boat trip out to the island and back takes about three hours. The seas are usually rough, and some passengers did get seasick on our trip. The boat circled the island twice, getting as close to the rocky shore as is safe. We saw Puffins swimming and diving in the sea and taking off, which is a difficult process for the little, short-winged birds. There were lots of Terns around and a few Gulls that had made the trip out in search of a meal. Many Eiders swam along the island shore. On our way out and back we saw Harbor Seals and Meinke Whales. **Bonnie Campion, Hospitality Co-Chair**



DFW Wildlife Hotline -- 972-234-WILD

Every year in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, thousands of birds, squirrels, opossums, cottontail rabbits, beavers, raccoons and other native wild animals are unnecessarily orphaned, injured or euthanized. A new hotline launched recently by the DFW Wildlife Coalition aims to reduce that number significantly. The hotline is staffed daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. by trained volunteers from the Texas Master Naturalist program.

For callers who have found a juvenile animal, the volunteers provide information on how to re-unite the baby with its parents if possible. In the case of sick, injured or orphaned animals, hotline volunteers connect callers with licensed wildlife rehabilitators. For callers having problems with wildlife on their property, the volunteers provide information on effective, humane solutions. The hotline is an excellent source of information on how to deter wildlife from destroying your landscaping or how to gently evict them if they've moved into your attic.

Contrary to what many people think, live trapping is neither a humane nor an effective way to solve wildlife conflict situations. Homeowners and pest control companies frequently use live traps to capture squirrels, raccoons and opossums that are living in attics or under decks. These animals often are lactating females. A few days after the adult animal is trapped and relocated, home-owners are surprised and dismayed to hear the cries of starving babies. Even in cases where the animal isn't a lactating female, live trapping still can result in suffering and death. Relocated animals often do not survive in unfamiliar new territories due to difficulty finding den sites and food sources.

In addition to being inhumane, live trapping is ineffective. Urban wildlife is plentiful enough that as one animal is removed, another from the surrounding area will soon take its place. A humane, effective solution is to determine why the animal is attracted to the property and use deterrents that encourage it to find a different den site and other food sources. For example, here are five simple steps to prevent wildlife problems:

1. If you have a chimney, make sure that it has a secure cap. Chimneys without caps are open invitations to pregnant animals desperately looking for nice, dry "hollow trees" in which to have their babies.

2. Carefully inspect your eaves and other areas where the roof and house join. Repair deteriorating boards, warped siding and loose shingles.

3. Trim overhanging branches and cover attic openings with heavy-duty, rust-proof hardware cloth, not chicken wire.

4. Do not leave cat or dog food outdoors overnight. Close pet doors at night by sliding the template in place.

5. Put garbage cans out for pick-up in the morning, instead of at night.

For more information on ways to peacefully co-exist with your wild neighbors, call the hotline at **214-234-WILD**.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR INJURED BIRDS

Rogers Wildlife
1430 E. Cleveland Road
Hutchins, TX 75141
972-225-4000
www.rogerswildlife.org

On the Wing Again
972-842-2805

Birds of Prey only:
Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary
One Nature Place
McKinney, TX
972-562-5560

The drop off/holding facility for Rogers Wildlife and the Heard Museum is the PISD Outdoor Learning Center and Living Materials Center.

**The address is: 3100 Shiloh Road, Plano, TX
The phone number is: 469-752-1190**



PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers, Chairpersons and Board Members

- President:** *Gailon Brehm** 972-517-2542
- Vice President/ Newsletter:**
*Ann Reynolds** 469-8280553
- Secretary:** *Paula Brehm** 972-517-2542
- Treasurer:** *Mike Mizell** 940-382-8551
- Programs:** *Sally Evans** 972-248-6283
- Birdathon:** *Mike Bedford**.....
- Conservation/Armchair Activist:**
*Ken Steigman**.....
- Education:** *Gailon Brehm*..... 972-517-2542
- Field Trips:** *Tom Heath** 972-867-8646
- Hospitality:**
Bonnie Campion 972-754-5375
Willie Meyers..... 972-596-3827
- Mailing:** *Dan Smith* 972-516-2297
- Membership:** *Jerri Kerr* 972-578-3146
- Co-chair** OPEN
- Publicity:** *Bobette Mauck** 972-562-6561
- Regional Delegate:** Reba Collins
- Board Members:** *Carolyn Oldham**

* = Board Members

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

____ Please enroll me as a member of Prairie & Timbers Chapter ONLY. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 made out to P&T Audubon Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

How did you hear about Prairie and Timbers Audubon?

- ____ From a member of Prairie and Timbers Audubon.
- ____ From the Prairie and Timbers Audubon 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 and Timbers Audubon Society
c/o Heard Natural Science Museum
One Nature Place
McKinney, TX 75069

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Note: If you wish to receive this newsletter electronically or there is an error in your mailing information, please contact the Membership Chairman, Jerri Kerr • 1719 Mimosa Ave. • Plano, TX 75074 • 972-578-3146