



Rustlin's

Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

May 2005

**The Early Bird will get a newsletter!!
Sign Up Now.**

FROM THE PRESIDENT Opportunities

Prairie and Timbers needs you! With the recent resignation of board members Ken Steigman and Ann Reynolds, there is now an opportunity for you to become more involved in this local chapter of Audubon. As you know, we are an active, working group and welcome your potential participation.

The way it works is that we have ten board members and each of them participates on one or more committees. In addition, there are committee chairpersons who are not board members. There's plenty of work to do, but no one person has to do too much. I would really encourage you to join a committee. It can be really satisfying to contribute to such a worthwhile organization.

There's another reason why I want to see new individuals involved – new ideas. If you have thoughts about greater conservation outreach or an enlarged education program, for example, we really would like you to help us make that type of thing a success.

Before I close, let me thank our past board members. Ann Reynolds, VP and newsletter editor; Bobette Mauck, publications chair; Ken Steigman, conservation and education co-chair; Carolyn Oldham, past board member, and still field trip co-chair (for now) – you all have done a dynamite job. Thanks!

Gailon Brehm, President

PTAS WEBSITE
<http://prairieandtimbers.org>
Check It Out!

Rustlin's, the PTAS newsletter, will be electronic beginning with the September 2005 issue. There will be no more paper newsletters mailed after this issue.

By signing up now you will not miss a single issue of newsletter and will be the first to know all the latest news, meeting speakers, field trips and BS (bird sightings). As a member of PTAS you will receive advance email notification that the newsletter is ready to be viewed on the PTAS web site (www.prairieandtimbers.org). **To receive this notification, please provide your email address to Tom Heath at his email address: heathwtom@netscape.net.**

Our electronic version will contain much more than its paper version. There will be maps to field trips, pictures of birds and the latest birding gear, speakers' and members' photos, and much more.

MONTHLY CALENDAR

May 24, 2005

Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Outdoor Learning Center

Vicki Hamrick of the Plano Parks Department will host this meeting which includes dessert, tour of the center and a night walk. The center is located at 2100 Shiloh Road Plano, Texas

Sign up for an e-newsletter which will have all the meeting times and locations for our new year beginning in September!

LEARN BIRDS FROM THE EXPERTS

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.



Check out these web sites:

Birds on the Brink
www.alternet.org/story/21776

On The Wing Again
www.onthewingagain.org

2005-2006 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 7, Arapaho Park and Prairie Creek Park

Time: 8:00 meet at Arapaho Park

Length: 3-4 hours

Expect to see spring migrants- warblers, vireos, etc.

Leader: Dave and Carolyn Oldham

Sign up for an e-newsletter which will have all the field trips locations, times and maps for our new year beginning in September!

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.

BOOK REPORT

The Cooper's Hawk, a Cross Timbers Chronicle, by Vic McLeran, 2000, Xlibris Corporation, 463 pages. This is a strange, and probably rare, book. I obtained it through interlibrary loan (from the Grand Isle Regional Library, Nebraska). Of special interest to us is that McLeran's studies of Cooper's were done mostly in southeast Kansas, in the northern end of our local Cross Timbers type habitat. The book is entirely text, no pictures, but is fascinating reading on the life of the elusive and difficult-to-observe Cooper's Hawk, which McLeran calls "the ultimate winged athlete." In a nutshell, male Cooper's are generally faithful to their territory from year to year, and provide food to the female all during incubation and about the first 2-3 weeks after hatching. When the male arrives at one of several "butcher block/trading posts" approximately 50 yards from the nest, he calls "kik" which the female on the nest answers with a lower-pitched "cac" and flies over to pick up the groceries. The male incubates the eggs while the female is

eating, but after hatching, feeding of the young is done by the female. The male is 1/3 smaller than the female, and more agile, so he hunts mostly birds in the forest. The female hunts larger prey such as cottontails more in the open. The male hunts 1/2 mile or more from the nest, evidently to leave prey for the fledglings in the area of the nest. He catches many different kinds of birds, but Blue Jays are a favorite, and I was gratified to read that Starlings are too. McLeran describes numerous thrilling hunts by Cooper's, showing the amazing strategies and planning they use to capture their prey. An experienced Cooper's can size up a situation in a few seconds, then fly a long route low over the ground or through cover to surprise the prey. They also sometimes imitate the flight of other birds, such as Harriers, to catch prey off guard. Between stories about Cooper's, McLeran gives interesting 1 or 2 page vignettes on other animals, plants, and even fungi found in the Cooper's habitat. The main enemies of Cooper's are Great Horned Owls, and at the nest, Raccoons. I liked this book a lot.

Sid Dunkle

Notes from the Field

ARBOR HILLS NATURE PRESERVE - On Saturday, March 12, 2005 just under a dozen birders took a field trip to Arbor Hills in Plano lead by Perry Ping. The 2 1/2 hour walk took us all over the preserve and yielded 45 species of birds. Many individuals including seasoned birders had not seen the prairie section of the preserve. Cooper's Hawks nest in the preserve and are currently showing signs of repeating this year. A nesting Common Crow treated everyone to a hide-and-seek contest. The nest with the crow sitting on it was in plain sight with its tail sticking out. Only after several minutes of hard looking did the obvious finally appear. It's amazing how something in plain sight can be invisible. The following are highlights from the walk. **Water Type:** Double-crested Cormorant - 5, Great Blue Heron - 2, Mallard - 2. **Raptors:** Cooper's Hawk - 2, Red-tailed Hawk - 2, American Kestrel - 1. **Woodpeckers:** Red-bellied - 3, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 2, Ladder-back - 3, Downy - 4, Flicker - 2. **Passerines:** Eastern Phoebe - 2, Blue-headed Vireo - 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet - 3, Eastern Bluebird - 3, Orange-crowned Warbler - 1. **Sparrows:** Field - 15, Vesper - 2, Savannah - 4, Song - 3, White-throated - 1, DE Junco - 20. **Meadowlark & Finch:** Eastern Meadowlark - 3, Western Meadowlark - 1, American Goldfinch - 6. **Perry Ping**

The March 12th Beginning/Intermediate Bird Walk was attended by 10 excited budding birders and led by two members of the Prairie and Timbers Audubon society at the Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary in McKinney, 36 species of birds were seen. Highlights were a Blue-headed Vireo and an abundance of Cedar Waxwings and Eastern Bluebirds. The complete list includes:

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Ring-Billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird and House Sparrow. **Gailon Brehm**

On Thursday, March 31st, the banding team working at the Heard station was surprised to find a Henslow's sparrow in one of the nets. The beautiful little sparrow with an olive green head was banded, measured and released to find its way north to spend the summer. This is the first of this species for the 26 years the station has operated. **Karen White**

Seven enthusiastic birders participated in the Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society Second Saturday Beginning Bird Walk at Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary on April 9. 37 species were seen, many of which were singing on their breeding ground. The following were sighted: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle. Highlights were Prothonotary Warbler, White-eyed Vireo, Red-headed Woodpecker, baby Wood Ducks, and Anhinga. In fields nearby, a flock of 8 – 10 upland sandpipers were seen. **Gailon Brehm**

PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers, Chairpersons and Board Members

- President:** *Gailon Brehm** 972-517-2542
- Vice President/ Newsletter:**
*Ann Reynolds** 903-769-2398
- 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:** *Merrick Darley*..... 972-422-5355
- Membership Recruitment:** *Jerri Kerr* . 972-578-3146
- 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**

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