



# Rustlin's

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*Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society*

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*January / February 2006*

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

### **Christmas Bird Counts - continued**

By early January many of the Christmas Bird Counts have been completed. I, myself, participated in two this year – the Caddo CBC in and near the Caddo National Grasslands in Fannin County and the McKinney CBC in Collin County. As usual we worked long days each time and had a great experience birding with good people. The results were typical of North Texas in that each zone within each count circle tended to see about 60 species plus or minus, and the total species count was near 100. Most people were reporting, however, that even though the species count was not down, the total number of birds was down this year. This could be a result of the drought in this area.

For me personally, the CBC experience is different from a regular birding field trip in that we thoroughly look over a fixed area a few miles on a side and record all birds that we see. This means that we can't stop looking at common birds once when have checked them off. By the end of the day, I tended to be tired of marking down American Robins! It gives a person the sense of doing something scientifically meaningful; plus it helps to better understand what is going on in the bird world that year.

My own experience during this year's counts was not to see any particularly unusual birds, but it's interesting to see which species have the highest counts. At the Caddo CBC in rural Fannin county farmland, we saw 656 European Starlings, followed closely by 535 cedar waxwings. At the McKinney CBC around upper Lake Lavon, by far the most numerous bird was the Double-crested Cormorant with a count of 1402. Another notable sighting was 50 White-winged Doves at a farm near the lake.

Gailon Brehm, President

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

## **January and February Field Trips**

The January field trip to Isle de Bois (Ray Roberts Lake State Park) will be held on January 21, 2006. We will meet at Kohl's at 7:00am and car pool to the park in north Denton County. Target species will be wintering birds such as sparrows, ducks, and loons. Georgette Guernsey will be the leader.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> we will travel to River Legacy Park and Village Creek Drying Beds area. Depending on the weather, our leader D D Currie will decide where we will be birding. She has been shown a new area that has a lot of promise; however, due to mud and other things, high clearance vehicles will be needed. Bring your scopes for easier viewing of the birds on the ponds. We will meet at Kohl's at 6:15am to car pool to Arlington. The meeting place in Arlington will be the parking lot across the street (NW Green Oaks BLVD) from Village Creek Drying Beds at 7:30am. I believe the park's name is JW Dunlop Sports Center.

## **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 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.

### **Bird Identification Class Schedule 2005/2006**

January: Sparrows

February: Woodpeckers and Woodland Birds

March: Hawks

April: Warblers

May: No Class – Outdoor Learning Center

## SEE YOUR ADVERTISEMENT HERE!

Do you know someone that would like to advertise in the PTAS newsletter? Your business card, coupon, or graphic can be seen by fellow birders for a cost much lower than traditional advertising. Please contact Rebecca at [Rebecca.Hughes@eds.com](mailto:Rebecca.Hughes@eds.com) to place your ad in our next newsletter. Prices start at \$65 for one year of advertising.

### PTAS Programs for the 2005-2006 year

#### **January 24, 2006**

##### **Dr. Jeanette Boylan – “Least Terns Colonies”**

The Dallas Zoo and the North Texas Tollway System have sponsored monitoring of the Least Tern colonies in Dallas and Denton Counties. We have no ‘sand bars’ in these areas, so where are they nesting? How does the George Bush “Turnpike” fit into this scenario?

Dr. Jeanette Boylan  
Zoologist from the Dallas Zoo  
650 South R.I. Thornton Freeway  
Dallas, Texas 75203  
214 671 0774  
[jboylan@mail.ci.dallas.tx.us](mailto:jboylan@mail.ci.dallas.tx.us)

#### **February 28, 2006**

##### **Dr. Marcy Brown – Callison Medal Winner**

Dr. Brown Marsden was awarded the Callison Medal in Environmental Policy at the meeting of the national board of the Audubon Society in Park City, Utah, in May of 2004. The Callison Medal is a national-level award given to only two exemplary volunteers every other year. The award is in recognition of her work on endangered species research and restoration at Cedar Ridge Preserve, her committee service to identify and restore areas necessary to preserve bird diversity in both Texas and on a global scale, and her initiation of Conservation-In-Action workdays to involve individuals in conservation projects at the Cedar Ridge Preserve, which is located in the southwest quadrant of Dallas. The Black-capped vireo was one of the beneficiaries of her study.

Dr. Marcy Brown  
University of Dallas  
1845 E. Northgate Drive  
Irving, Texas 75062  
972 721 5245

#### **March 28, 2006**

##### **Bonnie Bradshaw – “Backyard Wildlife: The Dos and Don’ts of Sharing your Habitat”**

Learn what to do if you find an orphaned or injured bird or other wild animal. Find out ways to prevent some of the most common wildlife conflict situations, such as squirrels in attics, ducks in swimming pools, and skunks under decks.

Ms. Bradshaw is a wildlife rehabilitator and member of the DFW Wildlife Coalition, a native Texan, a certified Texas Master Naturalist, and the public relations coordinator at Texas Discovery Gardens in Fair Park.

Bonnie Bradshaw of the Texas Discovery Gardens  
3717 Atrium Dr.  
Plano, Texas 75075  
972 743 7737

#### **April 25, 2006**

##### **Mark Klym - “Chasing Hummingbirds across Texas”**

Another informative presentation of some of the wonderful birds found in our state. The ‘hummers’ have been found to do some unusual antics, have done some habitat adjusting, and have been seen at new sites in the past years.

Mark Klym of Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Information Specialist  
4220 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744-3291  
512 389 4644

#### **May 23, 2006**

##### **“Indoors and Outdoors”**

We have once again been invited to the Plano Independent School District’s Outdoor Learning Center to visit with the many animals housed there for instructional purposes and to walk the woods in the dark listening to sounds and feeling the peaceful quiet of night.



Earth Share of Texas represents the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll deduction plans for charitable giving. For information, E-mail [estx@earthsharetexas.org](mailto:estx@earthsharetexas.org) or call 1-800-GREENTX

### **Ninth Great Backyard Bird Count** **Presidents' Day weekend: 17-20 February 2006**

Join with thousand of others to find out how many birds are being seen in your area and across the continent this winter. By participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count, you help document where birds are, and track changes in their numbers compared to previous years, helping scientists paint a picture of the state of birds this winter. Taking part is easy:

- During the four-day event, birdwatchers count birds for as little as 15 minutes, or for as long as you like, keeping track of the highest number of each bird species you see together at one time. Birdwatchers are encouraged to report birds from public lands and local parks, as well as from their own backyards.
- Participants report what they see online at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) where the Cornell computers convert their sightings to maps, lists, and charts that anyone can explore by continent, region, state, or locality.
- Tally Sheets Available Now: You can download printable tally sheets to familiarize yourself with the birds in your area, then fill them out when the event begins.  
<http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist>  
Send your data online starting February 18.  
[www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)
- Within minutes of filing a checklist, participants see their sightings register on the maps.
- Schoolteachers can create whole curricula around the materials that are available on the BirdSource website.  
<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/CitizenScienceGuide.html>

GBBC Science Stories: Read about past results; learn what we can find out from this year's GBBC data.

[http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/feature\\_ResultsSummary.html](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/feature_ResultsSummary.html)

Top 10 most commonly reported species in GBBC 2005:

1. Northern Cardinal
2. Mourning Dove
3. Dark-eyed Junco
4. American Goldfinch
5. Downy Woodpecker
6. Blue Jay
7. House Finch
8. Tufted Titmouse
9. American Crow
10. Black-capped Chickadee

### **Heard Museum - Mid October through Mid December**

The wintering birds had already started to arrive by Mid- October. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Lincoln's, White-crowned, Swamp, and Clay-colored

Sparrows and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen at that time. There were a few late warblers – Tennessee, Nashville and Common Yellowthroats

still in the area. Later in October Northern Flickers, Winter Wrens, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Song, Field and White-crowned Sparrows arrived. An unusual early Pine Warbler was seen on October 27.

The first of November



*Inca Doves*



*Cooper's Hawk*

brought the Northern Harrier, Towhee and Chipping Sparrows. Though water birds were seen flying overhead, none of them landed due to the absence of water in the impoundments. Bullfrog Pond still retains its water and is a magnet for small and large birds alike. Snow Geese passed overhead during the first half of the month as did large numbers of Franklin's and Ring-billed Gulls. Fox Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, and American Goldfinches were located in the sanctuary on Nov 10<sup>th</sup>. The first Harris's Sparrows and a single LeConte's Sparrow arrived on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Cedar Waxwings were finally found on December 14. They were probably there earlier in the month, but I didn't have time to go out and do a census after Thanksgiving. Despite the drought I am able to see 50 species of birds when I count. The total number seems to be low, but the variety is still there if you look for them.

Georgette Guernsey

### Greenville Field Trip – November 19, 2005

Jennifer Maxwell – Leader

Six people attended the Greenville trip led by Jennifer Maxwell. She graciously let us view birds at her home and then in the field behind the house. We looked for longspurs in the field nearby, but due to the drought there weren't any wet areas so that greatly reduced our chances of seeing these hard-to-find birds. One American Pipit flew overhead and a Red-tailed Hawk hunted the field; otherwise even



*Red-winged Blackbird*



*Lesser Scaup*

the tree lines were silent. The reservoir had a few ducks, but the surrounding trees and bushes were active so we were able to see sparrows and other small birds. The lakes near the power plant never disappoint. They were full of waterfowl. All three species of grebes that commonly inhabit our area in the winter and sixteen species of water birds were present. In total we were able to see sixty-seven species. Thank you, Jennifer, for all your hard work. We enjoyed the birding.

Georgette Guernsey

### Greenville Area Bird List

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Horned Grebe             | Mourning Dove             |
| Eared Grebe              | Belted Kingfisher         |
| Pied-billed Grebe        | Red-bellied Woodpecker    |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Yellow-bellied Woodpecker |
| Great Blue Heron         | Downy Woodpecker          |
| White-faced Ibis         | Northern Flicker          |
| Wood Duck                | Eastern Phoebe            |
| Mallard                  | Loggerhead Shrike         |
| Gadwall                  | Blue Jay                  |
| American Wigeon          | American Crow             |
| Northern Shoveler        | Tufted Titmouse           |
| Blue-winged Teal         | Carolina Chickadee        |
| Green-winged Teal        | White-breasted Nuthatch   |
| Redhead                  | Brown Creeper             |
| Canvasback               | Carolina Wren             |
| Ring-necked Duck         | Ruby-throated Kinglet     |
| Greater Scaup            | Eastern Bluebird          |
| Lesser Scaup             | Northern Mockingbird      |
| Common Goldeneye         | European Starling         |
| Bufflehead               | American Pipit            |
| Hooded Merganser         | Yellow-rumped Warbler     |
| Ruddy Duck               | Northern Cardinal         |
| Turkey Vulture           | Harris's Sparrow          |
| Black Vulture            | White-throated Sparrow    |
| Northern Harrier         | Song Sparrow              |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk       | Dark-eyed Junco           |
| Red-shouldered Hawk      | Eastern Meadowlark        |
| Red-tailed Hawk          | Brown-headed Cowbird      |
| American Kestrel         | Red-winged Blackbird      |
| American Coot            | Rusty Blackbird           |
| Killdeer                 | Common Grackle            |
| Greater Yellowlegs       | American Goldfinch        |
| Wilson's Snipe           | House Sparrow             |
| Ring-billed Gull         |                           |

**Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area  
Field Trip - December 3, 2005  
Ken Steigman and Ron Chenault - Leaders**

This trip began at 5:30 at the gate of LLELA. Seventeen early morning risers met in the dark and then carpooled along the dam to the Short-eared Owl's last known location. Unfortunately, as it often happens in birding, the guest of honor didn't show up. However, because I was persistent I did finally see a Barn Owl while the others were looking at a LeConte's Sparrow. In the marshy area behind aquatic center we were able to locate a Sora which is uncommon for this area during winter. In total we saw 66 species of birds.

The second field trip began at 7:30 with five participants. An American Woodcock was the most unusual bird seen. Lots of sparrows – Fox, White-crowned, Harris's – were present as was a Sedge Wren.

All the areas that we birded are closed to the public so it was a real treat to be able to go into them. Ken Steigman and Ron Chenault provided expert guidance and willingly shared their knowledge of the area and the transformation that has taken place during the last year. We owe them a thank you for taking time to share the wonderful area at LLELA with us.



*Yellow-rumped Warbler*

Georgette Guernsey

LLELA Area Bird List

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Gadwall                  | Carolina Chickadee     |
| American Wigeon          | Brown Creeper          |
| Mallard                  | Carolina Wren          |
| Northern Shoveler        | Sedge Wren             |
| Northern Pintail         | Marsh Wren             |
| Green-winged Teal        | Golden-crowned Kinglet |
| Ring-necked Duck         | Ruby-crowned Kinglet   |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Eastern Bluebird       |
| Great Blue Heron         | Hermit Thrush          |
| Great Egret              | American Robin         |
| Turkey Vulture           | Northern Mockingbird   |
| Osprey                   | Brown Thrasher         |
| Northern Harrier         | European Starling      |
| Red-shouldered Hawk      | Cedar Waxwing          |
| Red-tailed Hawk          | Yellow-rumped Warbler  |
| American Kestrel         | Common Yellowthroat    |
| Sora                     | Spotted Towhee         |
| Killdeer                 | Chipping Sparrow       |
| Least Sandpiper          | LeConte's Sparrow      |
| American Woodcock        | Savannah Sparrow       |
| Wilson's Snipe           | Fox Sparrow            |
| Ring-billed Gull         | Song Sparrow           |
| Mourning Dove            | Lincoln's Sparrow      |
| Barn Owl                 | Swamp Sparrow          |
| Belted Kingfisher        | Harris's Sparrow       |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker   | White-crowned Sparrow  |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | Northern Cardinal      |
| Downy Woodpecker         | Red-winged Blackbird   |
| Northern Flicker         | Eastern Meadowlark     |
| Eastern Phoebe           | Brown-headed Cowbird   |
| Blue-headed Vireo        | Common Grackle         |
| Blue Jay                 | American Goldfinch     |
| American Crow            | House Finch            |

## Storm Watchers – Skywarn Training

On Saturday January 21st at Collin County Community College in Plano, The National Weather Service will be doing its Skywarn training. The National Weather Service conducts this training annually for anyone interested in becoming a trained storm spotter or for people interested in learning more about severe weather and how to protect their families. This year the college is providing a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired. The Conference is free and open to the public.

Saturday January 21, 2006  
8:30 AM to 4:00 PM  
Collin County Community College, Plano Campus  
Conference Center  
Located at the Spring Creek Campus  
2800 E. Spring Creek Parkway  
Plano, TX 75074

Please do not contact the college for information.  
For more information, contact  
[collinskywarn@yahoo.com](mailto:collinskywarn@yahoo.com).

Basic and Advanced Spotter Training  
Weather Safety  
Radar Training: A User's Guide  
Media Severe Weather Ops  
Exhibits  
...And much more!

### Agenda:

8:00-8:30 Sign-in/Exhibits  
8:30-8:45 Welcome Intro  
9:15-10:00 Basic Spotter Part 1  
10:00-10:30 Break/Exhibits  
10:30-11:30 Basic Spotter Part 2  
11:30-12:00 Media Severe Weather Operations  
12:00-1:15 Lunch Break/Exhibits  
1:15-1:30 Collin Co. Spotter Ops  
1:30-2:30 Radar Training: A User's Guide  
2:30-2:50 Break/Exhibits  
2:50-4:30 Advanced Storm Concepts

**Note: If you would like to receive email notifications when the newsletters are available, or to update your email address, please contact Merrick Darley at [hmdarlev@comcast.net](mailto:hmdarlev@comcast.net).**

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## PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

### Officers, Chairpersons and Board Members

**President:** *Gailon Brehm\**..... 972-517-2542

**Vice President:** *Open*

**Secretary:** *Paula Brehm\** ..... 972-517-2542

**Treasurer:** *Mike Mizell\**..... 940-382-8551

**Birdathon:** *Mike Bedford\**.....214-692-7137

### Conservation/Armchair Activist:

*Roger Sanderson*.....469-767-7242

*Georgette Guernsey\**..... 972-542-8089

**Newsletter:** *Rebecca Hughes*..... 972-747-5111

**Field Trips:** *Georgette Guernsey\**..... 972-542-8089

*Tom Heath\**.....972-867-8646

**Education:** *Gailon Brehm\**..... 972-517-2542

*Roger Sanderson*.....469-767-7242

**Hospitality:** *Bonnie Champion*..... 972-754-5375

*Willie Meyers*..... 972-596-3827

**Membership:** *Jerri Kerr* ..... 972-578-3146

*Merrick Darley* ..... 972-422-5355

*Dan Smith*.....972-516-2297

### Website/Electronic Communications:

*Tom Heath\**.....972-867-8646

*Merrick Darley* ..... 972-422-5355

**Programs:** *Sally Evans\** ..... 972-248-6283

*Willie Meyers*..... 972-596-3827

**Publicity:** *David Van Winkle\**.....972-562-7174

*Bobette Mauck\**..... 972-540-5646

**Regional Delegate:** *Reba Collins*

\* *Board Members*

## Membership Application

\_\_\_\_ I would like to be a member of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS), knowing that my annual membership dues will be used to support local bird-related projects and habitats. Enclosed is my check for \$12 (includes all family members at a single address) made out to: **PTAS**. PTAS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; your membership fee and any donations made to PTAS are tax deductible.

\_\_\_\_ I would also like to support the National Audubon Society, where my annual membership dues will be used nationally and globally. Enclosed is my check for the special new-member introductory price of \$20, made out to: **National Audubon Society**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

(E-mail addresses are used to notify members of updated website newsletters, upcoming field trips, and important local bird-related issues. E-mail addresses are NOT shared with, or forwarded to, any other source.)

### How did you hear about Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society?

\_\_\_\_ From a member of PTAS

\_\_\_\_ From the PTAS website

\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society  
c/o Mike Mizell, 800 Edgewood, Denton, TX 76201

Audubon code: 7XCH

PTAS Chapter Code: W15