



# Rustlin's

*Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society*

**March/April 2010**

## *PTAS Election Results*

At the February member meeting of PTAS, elections were held for the offices of President and Treasury and three of the ten board positions.

Stepping down from positions with PTAS were Treasurer Mike Mizell, Board Member and Publicity Chairman, Bobette Mauck, Board Member and Membership Chairmen, Jerri Kerr. These three have given many years of service to PTAS. In fact their service pre-dates our earliest digital records that go back to 2003. Being unwilling to dig through the paper records and being a relative newcomer, I cannot say how long they have actually served. Some of the old timers however recall that Mike Mizell has served as Treasurer for 18 years and has been around for more than 25 years.

The good news is Jerri is continuing to help as she has in the past just not in an official capacity. So you will still see her around welcoming new and old members, contributing to the newsletters, and her many other helpful activities.

The fourth board position up for election was held by Roger Sanderson, who was willing to continue with his service. He was duly reelected by members grateful for his continuing service.

Since the office of President was open from last year when no one was willing to serve, the first election was to fill this position. Merrick Darley was nominated, accepted, and was elected to serve.

For the office of Treasurer Georgette Guernsey, well known and dedicated birder, was nominated, accepted and was elected to serve.

Elected to the board for the first time was Sara Shaffer and Bill Woodfin.

Since Merrick Darley was serving as Vice-President this left the remaining year of his term open. Carolyn Oldham was nominated to fill the position, accepted and was elected.

Congratulations and thanks for serving to the elected officials.

Merrick Darley

## *March Board Meeting*

PTAS operates on a fiscal year that starts July 1 and runs through June 30. The March meeting is the only Board prior to the new fiscal year. At this meeting potential changes to PTAS activities for new year our discussed. Changes can be adopted at this meeting but more likely is the assigning to various board members to evaluate and report at the Aug meetings for potential action by the board.

Two topics were heavily debated. The first was to whether and how include e-bird logging activities in nearby counties with low number of checklist on e-bird. Some ideas discussed was during additional field trips targeting these counties and/or having weekly logging activity targeting these counties. Rodney, Georgette, Karen were asked to evaluate options. If you can contribute input please contact them.

The second topic was to evaluate changing room location, time slot, and content of the bird identification class. Rodney and Gailon were asked to evaluate options, so please provide input to them.

It was decided to keep chapter meetings on the 4th Tuesday of Sept, Nov, Oct, Jan, Feb, March, April, and May.

Next year's Board meetings will be 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of

## March Board Meeting (continued)

Aug, Sept, Nov, Jan, and April (note change from March) and will start at 7:00 pm except for the Aug meeting that will start at 6:00 pm. Aug board meeting will be at Merrick's house, the rest of the meetings will be in Dr. Woodfin's office. Board meetings are open to any PTAS member wanting to actively contribute to PTAS activities.

Responsibilities for next year including, planning for Aug meeting, were assigned as:

Membership – Merrick Darley

Hospitality – Paula Brehm

Programs – Carolyn Oldham

Conservation – Roger Sanderson, Bill Woodfin

Advocacy – Bill Woodfin

Fundraising – Merrick Darley

Field Trips – Karen Carbiener, Tom Heath

Newsletter – Merrick Darley, David Griffith

Website – Tom Heath

Publicity – open

Education – Rodney Thomas, Gailon Brehm

Audubon Adventures – Kathryn McCoy (volunteered at chapter meeting)

CBC – Roger Sanderson

If you have inputs now is time to get them to the responsible person as we are now in the planning stage. We are looking for fresh ideas and how to make are programs more appealing to those who are passionate about birds. Open items will not be done unless someone steps up.

## Chapter Meeting Schedule

### Tuesday April 27 - 7:00pm

**Bird Identification class:** Swallows and Flycatchers  
**Main Program:** "Bluebirds in North Texas" by Susan Yost of Wild Birds Unlimited.

The April program is all about bluebirds! Sue Yost of Wild Birds Unlimited will teach us about "Bluebirds in North Texas"- how to attract them and keep them happy with the right food and proper housing. Sue is an avid birder and nature lover just like the rest of us in PTAS!

### Tuesday May 25 - 7:00pm

**Bird Identification class:** -- TBD

**Main Program:** "Creating Caterpillar Gardens with Native Plants" by Kathi Saucier an avid native plant society member.

May focuses on the garden for a change. Kathy Saucier, a Master Naturalist and Native Plant Society member, will speak on "Caterpillar Gardening with Native Plants". Gotta love those caterpillars and take care of them so you can have beautiful butterflies landing on your shoulder!

Next year's chapter meetings will start Tuesday Sept 28 and will continue to be on the 4th Tuesday of each month Sept thru May except December due to the Christmas Bird Count. If there are topics or speakers you want to hear, please forward your suggestions to Carolyn Oldham (972-517-8987 or carolyn.oldham@verizon.net)

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## *Field Trip Schedule*

**Sat, May 1** - Plano Outdoor Learning Center

**Time:** TBD

**Leader:** Peter Assman

**Length:** 2 Hours

**Meeting Place:** Plano Outdoor Learning Center

**Sat, May 8** - 2nd Sat. at the Heard Museum

**Time:** 9:00 am

**Leader:** Gailon Brehm

**Length:** 1.5-2 Hours

**Meeting Place:** Heard Museum

Next year field trips will be starting in September and are typically scheduled on Saturday. If there are places you want to visit or leaders you want as guides send suggestions to Karen Carbeiner (972-824-2878, karen.carbiener@prairieandtimbers.org) or Tom Heath (972-867-8646, heathwtom@netscape.net).

## *March Field Trip Report*

On Saturday, March 27, twelve PTAS members and guests birded the new park in East Plano - our chapter's first field trip here. Oak Point Park, which opened to the public in July 2009, is 800 acres, with a 17-acre lake, a few small ponds, 3.5 miles of concrete trails, and five miles of dirt trails that meander thru the woods along Rowlett Creek.

The park has huge sections of blackland tallgrass prairie that will be interesting to watch in the upcoming seasons. Will Dickcissels and Savannah Sparrows nest here? Will the Meadowlarks we saw stay and nest in the grasses? Will we see Painted and Indigo Buntings along the wood's edges?

Our group saw only 37 species, but we felt the numbers were affected by several factors on Saturday: a time of year when some winter birds have left the area already, the expected breeding migrants have not yet returned, there was a cross-country race that brought many runners to the paved trails, and we had strong winds that kept birds low and out of sight.

We were lucky to see American Wigeon and Northern Shovelers when we first arrived, but with many runners circling the lake, the ducks did not stay long! We saw Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and Cooper's hawks, and a Kestrel, and all of us felt this prairie will be a great place for viewing raptors in the future. We also

had very cooperative Vesper and Field sparrows, which gave us a good sparrow identification opportunity!

PTAS plans to return to the park over the seasons, to document what birds will breed and migrate through here, and which ones are year-long residents. Plan to join us, or visit on your own! Oak Point Park is at the northeastern corner of the Spring Creek and Jupiter intersection in Plano. More information on this great park can be found at: <http://www.plano.gov/Departments/parksandrecreation/Parks>

-Jerri Kerr

## *April Field Trip Report*

A group of 10 birders visited 2 sites in Arlington today. We started with a very cool morning (almost cold!) at River Legacy Park looking for early migrants and coming up with a White-eyed Vireo and Yellow Warbler. These were only heard but now we know they are here so we'll get them next visit.

Next we drove over to Village Creek Drying Beds and found the Dark Ruddy Duck that has been seen lately and an Eared Grebe molting into his beautiful breeding plumage. The Swamp Sparrows were also a treat for everyone.

We came out with a combined trip total of 62 species. Many thanks to Charley Amos for leading the trip!

-Karen Carbiener



Eared Grebe in Breeding Plumage

## Lake Tawakoni Field Trip

Lake Tawakoni State Park is comprised of over 375 acres of post oak woodlands, creek- bottom, upland re-growth and tall grass prairie. In 1960 a reservoir was built to supply the surrounding area as well as the City of Dallas with a municipal and industrial water supply. Its shoreline stretches approximately 200 miles and winds through 3 counties.

The original concept plan was to satisfy recreational demands as well as preserve the areas' natural resources which greatly helps sustain the wildlife we all love. Which brings me to our field trip on Saturday, January 23.

It was a cool, misty morning with our field trip leader, Ron Baltzegar waving his magic wand and keeping the rain at bay for us. The seven participants enjoyed seeing 60+ species with Ron managing a Spotted Towhee right out of the starting gate which was a lifer for some. We knew it was going to be a great day after that! A Red-shouldered Hawk landed and posed for us only about 25' away. (see picture) Other notables were Golden-crowned Kinglets, approximately 30 Common Loons, and a sweet little Hermit Thrush.



Posing Red-shouldered Hawk Checking Out the Birders  
(photo by Tom Heath)

## *Education Mews at Blackland Prairie Raptor Center*

Remember last summer when PTAS supplied materials and labor to help build the education mews at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center. Well the building is nearly complete just lacking a little plumbing and installation of the security system. This facility will provide the housing for their permanent non-releasable education birds used in their education programs throughout North Texas. With this in place, BPRC will increase the capabilities to educate the public about the importance of raptors in our North Texas environment. Want to learn more attend one of their first Saturday events. See <http://www.bpraptorcenter.org/events.html> for details.



Education Mews at Blackland Prairie Raptor Center

## February's 2nd-Saturday Walk

Five master naturalists and birders explored a snowy Heard preserve and observed lots of mammal tracks along with a good cross section of birds. Cloudy conditions in the lower thirties produced reduced bird activity.

Observation date 2/13/2010

Number of species: 41

Wood Duck - <i>Aix sponsa</i>	2
Gadwall - <i>Anas strepera</i>	2
American Wigeon - <i>Anas americana</i>	3
Mallard - <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	10
Green-winged Teal - <i>Anas crecca</i>	5
Ring-necked Duck - <i>Aythya collaris</i>	10
Double-crested Cormorant - <i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	25
Great Blue Heron - <i>Ardea herodias</i>	7
Turkey Vulture - <i>Cathartes aura</i>	2
Red-shouldered Hawk - <i>Buteo lineatus</i>	2
Red-tailed Hawk - <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	2
Mourning Dove - <i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	5
Red-headed Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	3
Downy Woodpecker - <i>Picoides pubescens</i>	1
Northern Flicker - <i>Colaptes auratus</i>	2
Blue Jay - <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	2
American Crow - <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	5
Carolina Chickadee - <i>Poecile carolinensis</i>	5
Tufted Titmouse - <i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>	3
Carolina Wren - <i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	2
Eastern Bluebird - <i>Sialia sialis</i>	5
Hermit Thrush - <i>Catharus guttatus</i>	1
American Robin - <i>Turdus migratorius</i>	400
Northern Mockingbird - <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	5
Brown Thrasher - <i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	1
Cedar Waxwing - <i>Bombocilla cedrorum</i>	10
Yellow-rumped Warbler - <i>Dendroica coronata</i>	10
Chipping Sparrow - <i>Spizella passerina</i>	1
Field Sparrow - <i>Spizella pusilla</i>	5
Fox Sparrow - <i>Passerella iliaca</i>	2
Song Sparrow - <i>Melospiza melodia</i>	3
Swamp Sparrow - <i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	3
White-throated Sparrow - <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	10
Harris's Sparrow - <i>Zonotrichia querula</i>	1
Dark-eyed Junco - <i>Junco hyemalis</i>	5
Northern Cardinal - <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	10
Red-winged Blackbird - <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	50
Brown-headed Cowbird - <i>Molothrus ater</i>	1
House Finch - <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	20
American Goldfinch - <i>Carduelis tristis</i>	1

## March's 2nd-Saturday Walk

We had a sunny day, 40 - 60 degrees, a little windy at times. We had great attendance, about 26 total including 5 or 6 children; the adults were a mix of experienced birders and new people. 45 species were seen; highlights were several Vees of Cormorants flying NW and many Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets on the nest. Many of them were seen sitting low in the nests; so there must be eggs. Lots of turtles were sunning on logs, Red-eared Sliders and another species, maybe Mud Turtles. -- Gailon Brehm and Rodney Thomas

Observation date: 3/13/10

Number of species: 45

Canada Goose - <i>Branta canadensis</i>	3
Gadwall - <i>Anas strepera</i>	25
American Wigeon - <i>Anas americana</i>	2
Mallard - <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2
Ring-necked Duck - <i>Aythya collaris</i>	10
Pied-billed Grebe - <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	1
Double-crested Cormorant - <i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	500
Great Blue Heron - <i>Ardea herodias</i>	6
Great Egret - <i>Ardea alba</i>	10
Black Vulture - <i>Coragyps atratus</i>	3
Turkey Vulture - <i>Cathartes aura</i>	3
Northern Harrier - <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	2
Cooper's Hawk - <i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	1
Red-shouldered Hawk - <i>Buteo lineatus</i>	1
Red-tailed Hawk - <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	2
American Coot - <i>Fulica americana</i>	10
Ring-billed Gull - <i>Larus delawarensis</i>	2
Mourning Dove - <i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	2
Downy Woodpecker - <i>Picoides pubescens</i>	2
Eastern Phoebe - <i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	2
Blue Jay - <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	1
American Crow - <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	5
Cliff Swallow - <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	1
Barn Swallow - <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1
Carolina Chickadee - <i>Poecile carolinensis</i>	3
Tufted Titmouse - <i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>	1
Brown Creeper - <i>Certhia americana</i>	1
Carolina Wren - <i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet - <i>Regulus calendula</i>	2
Eastern Bluebird - <i>Sialia sialis</i>	5
Northern Mockingbird - <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	3
Cedar Waxwing - <i>Bombocilla cedrorum</i>	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler - <i>Dendroica coronata</i>	20

## March's walk(continued)

Chipping Sparrow - <i>Spizella passerina</i>	1
Field Sparrow - <i>Spizella pusilla</i>	5
Song Sparrow - <i>Melospiza melodia</i>	4
White-throated Sparrow - <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	5
Harris's Sparrow - <i>Zonotrichia querula</i>	5
White-crowned Sparrow - <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	2
Dark-eyed Junco - <i>Junco hyemalis</i>	5
Northern Cardinal - <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	15
Red-winged Blackbird - <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	2
Brown-headed Cowbird - <i>Molothrus ater</i>	2
House Finch - <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	5

## *Birds and School*

Like helping birds in your backyard, but want to expand your activities to other areas and people, then consider helping PTAS implement an Audubon Adventures program. The PTAS board is willing to fund the cost of the program if any members want to work with 3rd to 5th grade teachers in local schools. PTAS member, Kathryn McCoy, has volunteered to plan the activity.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES is an environmental education program for children in grades 3 to 5. Developed by professional environmental educators, AUDUBON ADVENTURES presents basic, scientifically accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes to the teacher packaged as a Classroom Kit (serving 32 students) or Individual Kit (serving 1 student). National Audubon develops the materials and Audubon local chapters fund and work with the local teachers so they can use the materials and activities to introduce their students to the fundamental principles by which the natural world functions.

Each *Audubon Adventures* kit comes with a Classroom Resource Manual and different editions of Audubon's student newspaper. The teacher's manual has four main sections with classroom tips, hands-on activities, and background material for teachers. Finally, a glossary, a list of resources, correlations to science, language arts, and social studies standards, and an Audubon directory can be found in the back of the manual. To find additional information on the program go to <http://www.audubon.org/educate/aa/index.html>

If you know or want to find a 3rd to 5th grade teacher or classroom, that would benefit from the instructional materials at no cost to them or want to work with teachers to implement the program, please contact Merrick Darley ([hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org](mailto:hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org)).

## *Board awards Scholarship for Bird Banding Training*

The PTAS board is happy to award a scholarship to Denise Dengler to attend the Advanced Bird Banding Workshop May 18-23 at Powdermill Avian Research Center. The focus of this workshop will be on the ageing and sexing of passerines (using molt limits, plumage). Denise is a member of the Heard Bird Banders.

Early ornithologists studied birds by "collecting" them. In other words, they shot or snared the birds and studied their dead bodies. (This includes John James Audubon, by the way. It was not uncommon for him to dine on songbirds after he finished drawing them.) Modern bird study no longer requires sacrificing the bird. Now birds are captured in mist nets, banded, weighed, measured, studied for various research projects and then released.



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@earthshare-texas.org](mailto:estx@earthshare-texas.org) or call 1-800-GREENTX

**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 [hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org](mailto:hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org).**

**PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**Officers, Chairpersons and Board Members**

- President:** *Merrick Darley\**.....972-422-5355  
**Vice President:** *Carolyn Oldham\**. 972-517-8987  
**Secretary:** *David Griffith\** .....972-423-4344  
**Treasurer:** *Georgette Guernsey* .....940-382-8551  
**Conservation/Armchair Activist:**  
*Roger Sanderson\** ..... 972-562-5566  
*Bill Woodfin*.....972-838-9290  
**Newsletter:** *Merrick Darley\** ..... 972-422-5355  
**Field Trips:** *Karen Carbiener\**..... 972-824-2878  
*Tom Heath\**..... 972-867-8646  
**Education**  
*Rodney Thomas\**.....214-533-8756  
*Gailon Brehm*..... 972-517-2542  
**Hospitality:** *Paula Brehm*. .....972-517-2542  
**Membership:** *Merrick Darley\** .....972-422-5355  
**CBC:** *Roger Sanderson\** ..... 972-516-2297  
**Website/Electronic Communications:**  
*Tom Heath\**..... 972-867-8646  
**Programs:** *Carolyn Oldham\**..... 972-517-8987  
**Publicity:** *open* .....  
**Board Member:** *Sara Shaffer*.....972-881-0645

**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

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***SEND US YOUR UPDATED E-MAIL ADDRESS***

Email is the most efficient way for us to let you know about events, meetings and last minute changes. We send only 1 or 2 emails per month, and we do not share our mailing list with anyone. If you are not on our email distribution list, or if your email address has changed recently, please contact Merrick Darley at [hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org](mailto:hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org)