



Rustlin's

Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

October/November 2012

Support the Avian Community

Once a year, PTAS has a fundraising drive to fund our conservation activities. This is not a fun time for me because I have never liked to ask for support. However I like to get support and work with many people to improve the North Texas ecology, especially the avian community. The funds raised directly benefit many avian oriented non-profits by improving the ecology and educating the public about our ecology. Moreover, by making it a PTAS activity to support the avian community, the fundraising directly benefits our members.

By supporting charities collectively instead of individually, we get much closer to their staff and activities. It is no longer send a letter, get a thank you, and a dozen more requests for even more money. Instead, our members get to hear directly back about the activities they are supporting. For instance we heard about Hagerman Wildlife Refuge when the manager Kathy Whalen gave her presentation last April. We learned about the Tree Swallow and Prothonotary warbler nesting habits from the SOSU students of Dr Woods. Our funds paid for their travel expenses. Our activities take us to many of these organizations where we are welcomed. For instance our 2nd Saturday Walks at the Heard, our picnic/raptor talk at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center last May and the field trips to Hagerman Wildlife Refuge and Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area. The field trip with the Bird Banders even let us participate in their banding activity. In addition you get to read about them in our newsletter and what activities the funds are actually supporting. Check out the article about the quail restoration project at LLELA in this newsletter. By working closely and

transparently with avian oriented organizations, we complement our efforts to monitor the North Texas biodiversity, provide avian and wildlife education, and grass roots conservation efforts. It is not “give and forget” but “give and enjoy”.

Our local dues and our share of the National Audubon dues fund PTAS program and field trip activities for our members. Also a portion of your dues supports our conservation work along with all contributions. Our conservation work supports local area projects that impact our natural environment with a focus on our local ecosystem, the Blackland Prairie. This currently includes the following:

- Prairie restoration at the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge
- Native garden signage at the Heard
- Supplies and training for bird banding at the Heard
- Grants to cover expenses of field research for students at Southeastern Oklahoma State University
- Support for the educational birds program and native habitat gardens at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center
- Quail Restoration at the Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Center
- Irrigation support for student prairie plots at Connemara Meadow
- Scholarships for Environmental/Bird education

If you can join me and many of your fellow members with contributions, please send checks to our treasurer and make them to Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society.

Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society
c/o Georgette Guernsey
6405 Oak Hollow Lane
McKinney, TX 75070

Field Trip Schedule

For field trips RSVP to Linda Ergonis at lindaergonis@yahoo.com or Tom Heath at 972-867-8646 or heathwtom@netscape.net For 2nd Saturday Walks just show up.

The trip schedule is:

Sat, Nov 10 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, Nov 17 — Lake Louisville Environmental Learning Center (LLELA)

Leader: Ken Steigman

Time: 6:30 Length 4 hours

Meeting Place: Gate to LLELA (Be prompt — There will be no one to let stragglers in)

Target: Bobwhite Quail restoration project and general birding

Sat, Dec 8 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, Dec 15 — Lake Ray Roberts, Isle du Bois Unit

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Kelly Lauderdale

Time: TBD am Length TBD

Meeting Place: TBD

Target: Deep water ducks, winter woodland birds.

Sat, Jan 12 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Jan 19 – Feb 7 — Costa Rica

Our international trip to Costa Rica has some openings in the first and third weeks. Contact Linda Ergonis at lindaergonis@yahoo.com for details and reservations.

Sat, Jan TBD — TBD

Leader: Gailon Brehm

Time: TBD

Meeting Place: TBD

Target: Smith's Longspurs

Sat, Feb 11 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, Feb 16 — Jennifer Maxwell's Property and Greenville Lakes

Leader: Jennifer Maxwell, Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: TBD

Meeting Place: TBD

Target: American Woodcock, Henslow's Sparrow and ducks

Sat, Mar 9 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, Mar 9 — Heard Museum Bird Banding Station

Leader: Banding Station Members

Time: 7:30 am

Meeting Place: Gate to Heard Museum

Target: We will do a prairie survey and banding of birds by setting up nets in the field and bird dogging the field, pushing the birds towards the nets. This will be group participation.

Sat, April 13 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

April 22-28 — High Island, Texas

Leader: Linda Ergonis

Time: All week

Meeting Place: Rental House Crystal Beach

Target: Meet the Migrants

A beach house is rented for the week. See article for details.

Sat, May 11 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard

Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas

Time: 7:30 am preliminary, 8:00 am main, 2 hours

Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area

Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sun, May 12 — Red Slough, Oklahoma

Leader: David Arbour

Time: 6:30 am

Meeting Place: Red Slough parking lot

Target: Passerine migrants

Note this is on a Sunday!

Spring Programs

After a great fall selection of programs, Carolyn Oldham our program chair, has put together another great selection of informative programs for this Spring. The presenter in January is John Snowden and his talk is titled "Native Grasses for North Texas". John is owner of Bluestem Nursery and is known through out North Texas for his expertise on native grasses. The emphasis of the talk will be on how the grasses function for wildlife needs-cover, seeds, nesting material- and provide beauty in the garden. John has a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A & M and a MS in Horticulture from there as well. He was involved in planting the green roof on the new BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas) building in Ft. Worth, grass plantings in Pioneer Park near the Dallas Convention Center, plantings at Arlington's Veterans Park and at the TRAC (Trinity River Audubon Center). John is passionate about educating us on the valuable use of native grasses and other native plants in our landscapes.

For February Bob Mione will give a presentation titled "The Connemara Meadow- Habitat Improvements and What's To Come". Bob is the Preserve Manager at Connemara Conservancy, one of the first Texas land trusts. The preserve meadow is located on the border between the cities of Allen and Plano. Bob will focus on how the Audubon Foundation of Texas grant obtained through PTAS has had significant impact on habitat at the Meadow and what the future plans are. Bob is a life-long conservationist who has been involved in the various states in which he has lived. He's been a birdwatcher for 11 years and has been an active volunteer at the Meadow since 2008.

In March the presentation is by one of our own, Mike Cameron. If you attend our field trips you will recognize him as the man with the camera and awesomely big lens. His presentation will be "The Birds of Collin County Through the Photographer's Lens". Mike is an active member of PTAS with a special talent and skill as a photographer. He will share with us his catalogue of wonderful photos of our local birds.

Program Schedule

Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society meets the fourth Tuesday of the month, September through November, and January through May at the Heard Natural Science Museum Science Resource Center building in McKinney. Meetings start at 7:00pm, there is a bird identification class for those who wish from 7:15 to 7:40. A short general business session is held from 7:45 to 8:00. The main programs starts at 8:00.

Programs scheduled are:

Tuesday, November 27 - 7:00 pm

Bird ID class: Winter Sparrows

Main Program: "Ethiopia: Birds and Beasts" Dr. Doug Wood of Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Tuesday, January 22 - 7:00 pm

Bird ID class: Woodland Birds – Vireos, Wrens, Nuthatches, Creepers, Chickadees, and Kinglets

Main Program: "Native Grasses for North Texas" by John Snowden

Tuesday, February 26 - 7:00 pm

Bird ID class: Doves, Quail, Dickcissels, ground nesters

Main Program: "The Connemara Meadow- Habitat Improvements and What's To Come" by Bob Mione

Tuesday, March 26 - 7:00 pm

Bird ID class: Warblers

Main Program: "The Birds of Collin County Through the Photographer's Lens" by Mike Cameron

Tuesday, April 27 - 7:00 pm

Bird ID class: local breeders – Cardinals, Indigo Buntings, Painted Buntings, Blue Jays, Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Main Program: "TBD" by Sam Crowe, "All About Birds" Editor

Tuesday, May 28 - 6:00 pm/ 7:00 pm

Bird ID class: None

Main Program: "Blackland Prairie Raptor Center and its Birds" Erich Neupert, Executive Director

Notes: LOCATION IS BROCKDALE PARK.

Come at 6:00 and joined us for a picnic in the park. Bring your own food and drink or co-ordinate your food with a group of your fellow members. Meeting starts at 7:00 pm. There are tables with covers, city water, and restroom facilities.

DIRECTIONS: Take U.S. 75 to Allen, exit Bethany Road. Go east 6.1 miles (Bethany becomes Lucas Road). At light go east on FM 3286 approximately 0.6miles. Turn on to Brockdale Park Road and go approximately 1 mile. BPRC is on the left



Earth Share
OF TEXAS

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 or call 1-800-GREENTX

Field Trip To High Island

April is a slow time for birding in our area, the winter residents left and the migrants have not come through. So, I plan to take you where the birds are! High Island, located on the coast, just east of Houston, is the premiere location to find the birds and is world renowned for it. Birders come from all over the world to look for the birds arriving crossing the gulf of Mexico from the Yucatan Peninsula. The last week of April is the peak time for neotropical migrants returning.

We will search for target birds such as Yellow Rail, Swallow-tail Kite, Red Cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tail and Seaside Sparrows, and King and Virginia Rails. We will always be searching and chasing for arriving migrants from Galveston to Sabine Woods.

I have two beach houses reserved on Crystal Beach with a total of seven bedrooms. You can sublease a bedroom for the week for \$365.00 (includes linens). You will need to arrange your roommate or mates to share the room cost. If you want to go and need a room mate, please let me know and I will try to pair you with one.

We have to put the money up in Jan. to secure the houses we want. Therefore, I need money by Jan 1.

Dates are April 22-28. You may check out the houses and select your room at Crystal Beach house Rentals, Cobb Realty, click on beach house rentals. The houses on hold are the Abalone and the Hanna Cabana. They are centrally located on Crystal Beach at the Sandpiper subdivision.

RSVP Linda Ergonis at lindaergonis@yahoo.com. Please make checks payable to Linda Ergonis



Donated carved male and female Wood Ducks

Silent Auction During November's Meeting

For the past two years PTAS has held a book sale in November to help raise additional funds for the grants we give to local organizations. This year we will have a silent auction of items donated to PTAS by local individuals. The November 27th meeting falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas, so this will be a perfect time to buy a holiday gift and help give grants to local worthy causes at the same time.

Mrs. Eleanor Eakin was kind enough to donate her husband's collection of nine carved ducks. They were created and signed by the artist Jim Harkness of Stayner, Ontario, and each measures approximately nine inches in length.

"Since Jim Harkness began carving in 1975, his artwork has been characterized by strong graphic simplicity. Jim's white pine or basswood carvings are rough cut on a band saw then shaped by hand with files. The wood, the choicest of its kind, provides a pale canvas to which mostly transparent stains and oil enamels are applied, before it is washed and varnished – all by hand. Jim's signature style – composite of abstract line, lack of carving or painting detail, and vivid colors – has been inspired by the finest of late 19th and early 20th century decoy design."

His workshop has produced about 200,000 woodcarvings of nearly 800 species. His first pieces were of loons. In 1977 he began dating his work; work prior to that was undated.

The donated carved ducks are male and female Wood Ducks (sold separately), Green-winged Teal, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Northern Shoveler and Ruddy Duck. All are signed by the carver and dated.

In addition, some of our members are also donating items they have created. Tom Heath is donating a photograph; Carolyn Oldham, a landscape architect, will provide a consultation; Karen White is donating a print; and Georgette Guernsey has made a lap quilt using the fabric of nature artist Michele Mara.

Mark your calendars for this upcoming event.

To Hold an Owl

My husband and I recently returned in September from what has become our annual trip to Estes Park, Colorado with two other couples, Betty and Ray Parker, Etta Mae and P K Martin also PTAS members. This year Jerri Kerr and Carolyn Oldham joined us. On our trip last year we met Scott Rashid, a bird artist, bird rehabber and bird bander, who is doing research on the four species of small owls of the High Rockies.

One of the species he focuses his study on is the Northern Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius acadicus*. These precious little owls live throughout the Boreal Forest of Canada and southern Alaska and the dense forested areas of the northeast and western US states. They nest in old woodpecker holes, preferably Northern Flickers, and will use manmade boxes. A small Deer Mouse, their favored food, will make two meals for these Robin size owls that weigh 2 ½ -4 ounces. They stash the leftovers on a branch like a Shrike does. Females are larger than the males. Their name is suggestive of their call that Early Americans likened to the sound a saw makes when being sharpened on a whetstone.

Scott bands birds at the Y-Camp to educate visitors. Betty, Etta Mae and I are sub-permitted banders and we assisted him in banding last year in the late summer. We, also, went with him for three nights to band owls. We started before dark and set up the mist nets, then checked the nets after thirty minutes....no owls. We kept checking the nets every 20 to 30 minutes until after midnight, but no owls. For three nights we set up the nets, but...no owls. The next night we were not able to go and he caught five Northern Saw-whet owls!!

After such disappointment last year, we returned with big hopes this year to catch and band an owl. Warmer weather this year had Scott doubting that the owls had begun to disperse, but we urged him to give it a try. Reluctantly he met us at the banding site and we helped him set the nets up. After sunset he began to play the Saw-whet owls call. After thirty minutes we checked the nets.... again no birds. The next check I sat out, assuming the nets were empty, but I was the lucky charm. They returned with two beautiful Northern Saw-whet Owls. The next check we found another owl caught.

I weighed, measured, aged, and banded one of the small Northern Saw-whet Owls. All the data of banded



Northern Saw-whet Owl — Photo by Linda Ergonis

birds is sent to the Bird Banding Laboratory, a department of the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service. Each bird is given a specific number and if recaptured it will reveal age and movement or migration of the species. They have been collecting data for over eighty years. All the data compiled over the years shows declines or increases in species population, bird longevity, movements in migration and nesting range. Little is known on the movement or migration of the small owls of the High Rockies, which makes Scott's research important to preserve habitat for their survival.

Patience and persistence paid off!! It was a joy to finally get to hold one of these elusive little owls, hidden in the dense forest of the High Rockies.

Linda Ergonis



Linda Ergonis and Her Owl

Photo's From Our Benbrook Field Trip



Spotted Towhee — Photo by Mike Cameron



LeConte's Sparrow — Photo by Mike Cameron



Spotted Sandpiper — Photo by Tom Heath



Eastern Phoebe — Photo by Tom Heath

October Second Saturday Bird Walk

28 people attended our Second Saturday bird walk despite the strong south wind. The skies were cloudy and the temperature was 75F. 34 species (+1 other taxa) were observed.

Double-crested Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)	1
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	8
Cooper's Hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>)	1
Sharp-shinned/Cooper's Hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus/cooperii</i>)	1
Red-shouldered Hawk (<i>Buteo lineatus</i>)	2
Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)	1
Killdeer (<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>)	2
Wilson's Snipe (<i>Gallinago delicata</i>)	1
White-winged Dove (<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>)	4
Mourning Dove (<i>Zenaida macroura</i>)	8
Chimney Swift (<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)	3
Belted Kingfisher (<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>)	1

Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	1
Northern Flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	4
American Kestrel (<i>Falco sparverius</i>)	1
Eastern Phoebe (<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)	4
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (<i>Tyrannus forficatus</i>)	12
Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	8
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	12
Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	8
Carolina Chickadee (<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>)	3
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	2
Carolina Wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	1
Eastern Bluebird (<i>Sialia sialis</i>)	11
American Robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	25
Northern Mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	12
European Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	8
Nashville Warbler (<i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>)	1
Swamp Sparrow (<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>)	1
Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	5
Indigo Bunting (<i>Passerina cyanea</i>)	2
Red-winged Blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)	45
Common Grackle (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	5

PTAS Supporting Quail at LLELA

At the August board meeting, the PTAS board voted to help fund a quail restoration project at the Lake Louisville Environmental Learning Area (LLELA). As local birders well know the Northern Bobwhite was very common in North Texas, but its population has been in severe decline since the 1960's making recent sightings in the area rare. As a common destination for our field trips, LLELA is of particular importance to PTAS and the presence of the Northern Bobwhite would be a welcome addition to the grasslands.

At the board meeting Linda Ergonis reported on Dr. Ken Steigman's, director of LLELA, project to reintroduce the Bobwhite quail. He is working with Dr. Kelly Reyna and students from UNT. \$1000 in grant money was requested for camera monitoring of the birds. For members wanting first hand knowledge of this project, Linda has arranged our November field trip to go to LLELA where Ken will tell us all about the new project. He will inform us about the plight of Northern Bobwhite in our area and the methods they are using to try and reintroduce them. After seeing and learning about the project we will bird the trails.

LLELA is situated beneath the Lewisville Dam and occupies a unique ecological position in the landscape of North Texas. It has a diverse habitat including bottomland forests, tall grass blackland prairie and the sandy uplands of the Cross Timbers. Portions of LLELA are prairie restoration sites where intensive prairie restoration occurs with 19 bison. Dr. Ken Steigman and Dr. Jeff Johnson, are working with UNT-Quail to restore Northern Bobwhite populations as prairie habitat is restored. They will be trying methods to transplant wild birds and make pen-raised birds

wild. This is a great area to fine-tune methods of bobwhite restoration since no coveys currently exist on the property, although they were heard as recently as 3-years ago.

This effort at LLELA is part of a much bigger effort by UNT-Quail to increase the abundance of quail. The ultimate goal is to create wildlife corridors with sustainable populations of quail and other wildlife, for generations to come. The program was started by Dr. Kelly Reyna.

Noticing the decline in Texas' valuable quail population, Dr. Reyna created a program intended to help combat the limiting factors that have caused population decline in the Northern Bobwhite quail. The program provides ranchers with an analysis of their property and regional trend information, a habitat plan and checkups that ensure proper habitat growth. These ranches create "Quail Co-ops," or groups of ranches that are committed to doing what is necessary to keep their valuable quail population thriving. Creating larger habitats that become wild-life corridors give quail a greater chance of survival.

Since it is unlikely that the decline is caused by one factor alone, Dr. Reyna is conducting research in several areas to understand it. This includes *Trichomonas gallinae*, a parasite found in the white-winged dove which rapidly kills the Bobwhite. Another area of interest is the factor played by heat and lack of precipitation in drought years on the reproductive success of the quail population. The experimentation being conducted at LLELA is an attempt to prevent heat stress in quail during extreme summer temperatures and drought, which undoubtedly reduces survival rates in reintroduced quail. This experiment seeks to develop a module that provides a small oasis with water and temperatures below 92 degrees F, that quail will utilize during periods of extreme heat.



Quail Release at LLELA



Quail Cooling Module at LLELA

Irrigation at Connemara Meadow with Help of AFT and PTAS

Using funds granted by the Audubon Foundation of Texas, members of PTAS worked with Connemara Meadow Manager Bob Mione to provide an irrigation system for the prairie and native plants in the restoration areas. The restoration is used as an education tool for local school students and youth organizations members as well providing habitat for native species.

With great appreciation for the \$750 grant, we started by spending \$550 for an irrigation pump and a starter hose kit. The Red Lion pump was purchased from Tractor Supply after a great deal of searching for the best possible deal. It has a 6.5 HP engine and can pump over 5000 gals an hour. The hose kit has a 20' suction hose and 140' of discharge hose. We spent another \$160 for 300' of additional discharge hose and the remaining \$40 on various fittings and connections to put all of the hoses together and to better control the water being discharged.



Pump Purchased with Grant

We obtained the pump and equipment in August and immediately began irrigating what we call the Front Plot, where we started a variety of wild flowers and native grass the year before. The water had an immediate positive impact on the Front Plot, with many of the grasses expanding in size dramatically with only a few sessions of irrigation. The Maximillian sunflowers, which normally only grow to about 4 ft in height, reached almost 10' in height and were totally covered in blooms.



Prairie Restoration Plot

Knowing we can now reach almost 450' into the Meadow, we increased our plot sizes with help from a Boy Scout and others. The largest plot is almost 1/8 acre in size.



Ereckson Middle School students recently planting native seeds and irrigating the plot.

To provide an improved water source to pump from, we are having Boy Scouts create a series of check dams on the West Side Ditch, allowing us to irrigate for longer than an hour before we pump the holding pool too low. Prior to these check dams being built, we could only pump for about 25 minutes.

The combination of the pump, the hoses and the expanded water source should allow us to successfully irrigate our expanded restoration plots and, in doing so, greatly increase the square footage of restored areas in the Meadow.

Bob Mione, Meadow Manager, Connemara Conservancy Foundation

Corpus Christi Hawk Watch Field Trip

A group of six ventured down to the Hazel Bazemore Hawk Watch at Corpus Christi, Sept. 28-30. It was an enlightening experience. We learned, from the trained counters, about why there are more raptors migrating through their site than any other hawk site in North America. They told how they count the large kettles of hundreds and sometimes thousands of birds. They explained how they identify the species, so high up in the sky that they are mere specks. Bill Clark, author of Peterson's "Hawks of North America," gave talks on research he is doing on various raptor species.

Not only was it peak time for raptors, it was a good time for shore birds and a few passerines. We tallied 100 species for the trip which included thirteen species of raptors. High lights at the Hawk Watch platform were the resident White-tailed Hawk and Zone-tailed Hawk that occasionally soared back and forth close to the platform for good looks and, also, a distant Swallow-tailed Kite moving south. At the shore we spotted three Red Knots on their way to Tierra Del Fuego, Chile. At the Botanical Gardens a couple of us found a Blue-winged Warbler. It was a weekend of good birds, good friends and good seafood.

If you have never been to the Hazel Bazemore Hawk Watch, I highly recommend going the last weekend of September for peak numbers of birds. It is quite a spectacle and the counters are very informative.

Species observed on the field trip:

Gadwall Anas - atrepera
Mottled Duck - Anas fulvigula
Blue-winged Teal - Anas discors
Northern Shoveler - Anas clypeata
Pied-billed Grebe - Podilymbus podiceps
Wood Stork - Mycteria americana
Neotropic Cormorant - Phalacrocorax brasilianus
Double-crested - Cormorant Phalacrocorax auritus
Anhinga - Anhinga anhinga American
White Pelican - Pelecanus erythrorhynchos
Brown Pelican - Pelecanus occidentalis
Great Blue Heron - Ardea Herodias
Great Egret - Ardea alba
Snowy Egret - Egretta thula
Tricolored Heron - Egretta tricolor
Reddish Egret - Egretta rufescens
Cattle Egret - Bubulcus ibis



American Kestrel—Photo by Linda Ergonis

White Ibis - *Eudocimus albus*
White-faced Ibis - *Plegadis chihi*
Roseate Spoonbill - *Platalea ajaja*
Black Vulture - *Coragyps atratus*
Turkey Vulture - *Cathartes aura*
Osprey - *Pandion haliaetus*
Swallow-tailed Kite - *Elanoides forficatus*
Mississippi Kite - *Ictinia mississippiensis*
Northern Harrier - *Circus cyaneus*
Sharp-shinned Hawk - *Accipiter striatus*
Cooper's Hawk - *Accipiter cooperii*
White-tailed Hawk - *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*
Broad-winged Hawk - *Buteo platypterus*
Swainson's Hawk - *Buteo swainsoni*
Zone-tailed Hawk - *Buteo albonotatus*
Red-tailed Hawk - *Buteo jamaicensis*
Common Gallinule - *Gallinula galeata*
American Coot - *Fulica americana*
Black-bellied Plover - *Pluvialis squatarola*
Piping Plover - *Charadrius melodus*
Killdeer - *Charadrius vociferus* –
American Oystercatcher - *Haematopus palliatus*



Zone-tailed Hawk — Photo by Linda Ergonis



Broad-winged Hawk Kettle — Photo by Linda Ergonis

Hawk Watch species list continued:

Black-necked Stilt - *Himantopus mexicanus*
 American Avocet - *Recurvirostra americana*
 Greater Yellowlegs - *Tringa melanoleuca*
 Willet - *Tringa semipalmata*
 Long-billed Curlew - *Numenius americanus*
 Marbled Godwit - *Limosa fedoa*
 Ruddy Turnstone - *Arenaria interpres*
 Red Knot - *Calidris canutus*
 Sanderling - *Calidris alba*
 Western Sandpiper - *Calidris mauri*
 Least Sandpiper - *Calidris minutilla*
 Pectoral Sandpiper - *Calidris melanotos*
 Stilt Sandpiper - *Calidris himantopus*
 Laughing Gull - *Leucophaeus atricilla*
 Caspian Tern - *Hydroprogne caspia*
 Common Tern - *Sterna hirundo*
 Forster's Tern - *Sterna forsteri*
 Royal Tern - *Thalasseus maximus*
 Sandwich Tern - *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
 Black Skimmer - *Rynchops niger*
 Rock Pigeon - *Columba livia*
 Eurasian Collared-Dove - *Streptopelia decaocto*
 White-winged Dove - *Zenaida asiatica*
 Mourning Dove - *Zenaida macroura*
 Inca Dove - *Columbina inca*
 Common Ground-Dove - *Columbina passerina*
 Chimney Swift - *Chaetura pelagica*
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird - *Archilochus colubris*
 Black-chinned Hummingbird - *Archilochus alexandri*
 Rufous Hummingbird - *Selasphorus sasin*

Calliope Hummingbird - *Selasphorus calliope*
 Belted Kingfisher - *Megaceryle alcyon*
 Green Kingfisher - *Chloroceryle americana*
 Golden-fronted Woodpecker - *Melanerpes aurifrons*
 Crested Caracara - *Caracara cheriway*
 American Kestrel - *Falco sparverius*
 Peregrine Falcon - *Falco peregrinus*
 Great Kiskadee - *Pitangus sulphuratus*
 Couch's Kingbird - *Tyrannus couchii*
 Eastern Kingbird - *Tyrannus tyrannus*
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher - *Tyrannus forficatus*
 Loggerhead Shrike - *Lanius ludovicianus*
 Blue-headed Vireo - *Vireo solitarius*
 Green Jay - *Cyanocorax yncas*
 Purple Martin - *Progne subis*
 Barn Swallow - *Hirundo rustica*
 Black-crested Titmouse - *Baeolophus atricristatus*
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - *Poliophtila caerulea*
 Northern Mockingbird - *Mimus polyglottos*
 Long-billed Thrasher - *Toxostoma longirostre*
 Blue-winged Warbler - *Vermivora pinus*
 Black-and-white Warbler - *Mniotilta varia*
 Nashville Warbler - *Oreothlypis ruficapilla*
 Wilson's Warbler - *Cardellina pusilla*
 Northern Cardinal - *Cardinalis cardinalis*
 Red-winged Blackbird - *Agelaius phoeniceus*
 Great-tailed Grackle - *Quiscalus mexicanus*
 Bronzed Cowbird - *Molothrus aeneus*
 Brown-headed Cowbird - *Molothrus ater*
 Baltimore Oriole - *Icterus galbula*
 House Sparrow - *Passer domesticus*

Audubon Christmas Bird count

Now it is Free

Well, it's about that time again! We NEED your help in our annual Christmas Bird Count, which we always do the day after Christmas. So, please put it on your calendar! This year it falls on a Wednesday. The more participants, the more eyes looking, and the more accurate the count.

We will meet at the Heard Natural Science Museum, McKinney, TX at 7:00am on Dec 26. The McKinney area is divided up into 9 zones including the Heard Sanctuary. If you would like to lead one of these zones, please let Roger know.

And don't worry if you're not an expert birder, this is a FUN activity where you can learn identification skills!

After nearly two years of internal discussions, budget modeling, head-scratching, and intense decision-making, National Audubon has made two major changes to the Christmas Bird Count program effective with the upcoming 113th Count in December, 2012.

First, the CBC is now a free program. Audubon will no longer charge the \$5.00 fee of field participants.

Second, to minimize the effects of the loss of fee income, American Birds will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants, and Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the CBC.

To help Audubon make these important decisions regarding the Christmas Bird Count program, National

Audubon invited people involved with the count to participate in an online survey earlier this year. The results of the online survey last spring were very enlightening, and are summarized in the upcoming 112th CBC summary issue of American Birds—the last one to appear in print. The 130 pages of written comments were the most telling aspects of the survey feedback. Some people understand the fee and don't mind paying it, but the main thrust of written comments was that the fee is a major obstacle to the program, and the strong message was that more people would be involved, more counts would be included in the CBC database, and more accurate effort data would be collected if the fee was dropped.

Also highly informative were peoples' comments regarding American Birds. While a few folks commented that they enjoyed the information it contains and enjoy reading at least parts of it each year, the primary sentiment expressed was that recipients do not value American Birds in its current format, that they do not read most of it. Many survey respondents felt that an interactive, online version of the magazine would better suit their needs—especially if the participation fee was dropped.

In order to continue to fund the Christmas Bird Count program in the long term, Audubon will be moving to a voluntary donation model for the CBC.

With the online delivery of American Birds via a new interactive web presence including photos, summaries, and features, content can now be presented online as they are completed. Most critically, a new Citizen Science gateway will enable Audubon to be in touch directly with people.

Roger Sanderson
Count Coordinator

Birdzilla.com

Over 4000 pages of information.

10,000 images of wild birds

Fun and Games

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.

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* Board Member

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 like to support the National Audubon Society. The special new member introductory price is \$20. To use your credit card, go to prairieandtimbers.org, select the Join Audubon tab at the top of the page, and follow the directions. Or make out a check to **National Audubon Society** and with the information below send it to the treasurer below.

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 Georgette Guernsey, 6405 Oak Hollow Lane
McKinney, TX 75070

Audubon code: 7XCH PTAS Chapter Code: W15

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