



Rustlin's

Newsletter of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

February/March 2013

PTAS Contributes

This time of year, the fruit of our efforts becomes evident. Our love of the avian world, and the environment that supports it creates PTAS. As a community group we get to enjoy learning and exploring what nature has provided for us. This joy sustains our effort to complete the circle and give back as a community. Now as the new calendar year starts we support the wildlife efforts that provide the infrastructure and relationships that fuel our society for another year.

We have completed last year's grant process, and thanks to the generosity of our members, we are able to fund many efforts to improve the north Texas ecosystem through education, conservation, habitat restoration and preservation. First thanks to all that have supported us. Since we sent out our annual appeal letter over \$3000 has been contributed.

In addition we made \$907 at the Silent Auction during our Nov. meeting, 3x our expectations. Thanks to the members for participating but especially to Georgette Guernsey for her tremendous effort in putting it all together.

To each of you who donated through the silent auction and/or direct contribution, the board wishes to heartily thank you for supporting the area's wildlife. You are an important part in funding the continuing conservation of precious habitat and wildlife for future generations, which has been an Audubon tradition since the founding of the first chapters in the 1890's. Personally I find it so much more satisfying to work with charities through PTAS rather than just write a check. I get to know the non-profits so much better by the interaction of speakers, fields trips, and news articles

that goes on throughout our year.

Here are the results. At the January meeting, the board approved multiple grants. First \$150 dollars was granted to purchase replacement supplies for the Heard Bird Banders. Our March field trip will be with the banders.

A grant of \$250 dollars was given to Philip Leonard of Southeastern Oklahoma State University to fund travel for field research. He is doing a study on the abundance, diversity and nest success of birds within managed prairie and agricultural fields at the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge. We will get to learn all about this at a meeting next fall.

A \$1000 grant was given to the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge near Lake Texoma. This supports the continuation of the native habitat restoration in the refuge. This grant was for fuel and supplies to provide for the mechanical restoration of the prairies. Hagerman is one of our favorite places to bird and has excellent "car birding".

A grant of \$500 was given to the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center to continue the sponsorship of Miki, a Mississippi Kite, and Hunter, a Great Horned Owl. The purpose of these educational birds is to inspire local audiences to think about and actively participate in helping preserve raptors and their environment for generations to come. In addition, BPRC has begun construction of rehabilitation mews and needs funding for additional materials. A grant of \$500 was provided for funding the construction of an airlock to the mews. During our May meeting we will see the progress.

A grant of \$1000 was given to the Heard Museum to improve and maintain their native plant garden. Of particular interest is getting signage to label the plants.

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PTAS will be working with the Collin County Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas to provide expertise and labor for the project. The grant will be used to fund supplies. We visit the Heard every second Saturday, not to mention, it is where we meet.

A grant of \$1000 was made to Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area to help them with their Quail Restoration Research. The funds will be used for additional cameras, solar chargers, dataloggers and other supplies for the cooling stations. To learn more see the report in this issue. LLELA is another great birding spot.

A grant of \$750 was made to the Connemara Meadow Preserve to provide switch grass seed, nutrients and miscellaneous supplies to help restore 5 acres of the lower meadow. They propose planting the grass in a maze to be used as a fundraiser and let children explore a prairie environment. To learn more come to our February meeting and hear Bob Mione, Meadow Preserve Manager, tell us all about it.

\$500 of the grant budget was withheld in case we get a request for a scholarship for avian education/training. PTAS traditionally awards up to one scholarship a year to a North Texan wishing to increase their avian knowledge. Last year it was awarded to Caleb Frome to help fund attendance at the ABA Camp in Colorado.

By Merrick Darley

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, Feb 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, 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

Three beach houses are rented for the week. Currently full but you can join the wait list.

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!

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, 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. Bob will focus on how the grant from the Audubon Foundation of Texas obtained through PTAS has had a 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.

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. Mike is an active member of PTAS with a special talent and skill as a photographer. He will share with us the catalogue of wonderful photos of our local birds.

Tuesday, April 23 - 7:00 pm

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

Main Program: "Island Birds" by Sam Crowe. The presentation will include short birding tours of several different islands from around the globe as well as a couple of short video clips presented by researchers and a few comments on just what an island bird is. Sam has been involved with the Heard for many years, doing everything from sweeping floors to serving on the board of directors. He recently left the Cornell Lab of Ornithology after 6 years, serving first as the editor of the All About birds Web site and then in the marketing department. He has his own web site, Birdzilla.com and seven bird-related apps in the Apple

app store.

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



Chestnut-mandibled Toucan

To Learn more come to our April meeting

Photo by Sam Crowe

The Long Search For Smith's Longspur

There is only one place to reliably find the rarest of the longspurs in our area, the Smith's Longspurs (*Calcarius pictus*), and that is Lake Tawakoni on the "old airstrip".

Last year we had a field trip there with the intent to see this elusive bird but, Richard Kinney, our guide, was unable to attain access to the "old airstrip" which is in the dam area. Access to the dam area has been closed since 9-11 with only one exception, the Christmas Bird Count. Gailon Brehm began to search far and wide in December in hopes of finding another place for our Jan field trip. He found one on private ranches near Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. Therefore, we planned the Jan field trip there for a chance to find them, however; that would not count as a tic of a Texas bird. PK Martin persisted in trying to get access to the Tawakoni dam and succeeded five days before the field trip! With the guidance of Gailon Brehm and Richard Kinney, nine hardy birders followed them into the field on the right side of the dam at Tawakoni, weathering 31 degrees, 15 mph winds and spits of ice, to scare up 7 lonely little Smith's Longspurs. Near the end of the first field, we flushed them, one or two at a time, as they flew up into the air and over the dam road to the "old airstrip" along the other side. We crossed over the dam road to walk that field and found them together at mid-field. They flew high in the air and lingered for all to get good looks before crossing the dam back to the other side, where we originally found them.

Smith's Longspurs are named for Gideon B. Smith of Baltimore, Maryland. Ironically, Mr. Smith was not an Ornithologist or even a birder but made his fortune from importing and raising silk worms. So, how did this simple bird come to have his name? Mr. Smith was a good friend of John James Audubon and one of the benefactors to support Audubon's ambition to paint all the birds of North America. Smith's only reward for his financial support was to have a bird named after him.

The Smith's Longspur nests in far North America on the Arctic Circle, just north of the Boreal Forest, before the barren flat Tundra, in the marginal scrub area. They nest on the ground in colonies and are po-

lygynandrous, that is, both males and females mate with two to four partners. These males then help to raise the young of all the females they mated with.

For the winter, they migrate south in flocks of up to 100 to the prairies of the Midwest. They move south along the western edge of their range, east of the Rockies through the Dakotas, Nebraska, to Kansas and Oklahoma for the winter. Then in spring, they move north through the eastern part of their range of Missouri and Illinois. Lake Tawakoni is on the southwestern edge of their wintering range. They favor scrubby fields with Aristida Grass, or commonly known as Three Awn grass, that is ankle high.

As they flushed to escape us, they made their distinctive rattle call for a positive ID. After two years of planning and searching, at long last we found them and Mike Cameron got pictures to top it off. It was a life bird for many in the group, and a rare sight for the rest, which made enduring the weather well worth it.

By Linda Ergonis



Smith's Longspur — Photo by Mike Cameron



Smith's Longspurs — Photo by Mike Cameron



Looking for Smith's Longspurs — Photo by Tom Heath

Lake Tawakoni Checklist

Below is Gailon Brehm's trip list of sightings on the Tawakoni field trip. Thanks so much to Richard Kinney and Ron Baltzegar in helping lead us and to the water district employees who hosted us.

The cold wind was reason to complain and keep the bird count down but the birds spotted particularly the Smith's Longspurs made it a glorious day.

Number of Species: 41

20 Gadwall
 10 Mallard
 40 Northern Shoveler
 20 Northern Pintail
 13 Neotropic Cormorant
 300 Double-crested Cormorant
 1 American White Pelican

1 Great Blue Heron
 3 Black Vulture
 2 Turkey Vulture
 2 Northern Harrier
 2 Bald Eagle
 1 Red-shouldered Hawk
 1 Red-tailed Hawk
 80 American Coot
 3 Killdeer
 3 Greater Yellowlegs
 55 Least Sandpiper
 2 Wilson's Snipe
 5 Bonaparte's Gull
 1 Franklin's Gull
 50 Ring-billed Gull
 1 Herring Gull
 3 Forster's Tern
 2 American Kestrel
 3 Blue Jay
 11 American Crow
 3 Eastern Bluebird
 5 American Robin
 2 Northern Mockingbird
 100 European Starling
 3 American Pipit
 7 Smith's Longspur
 1 Field Sparrow
 1 Vesper Sparrow
 15 Savannah Sparrow
 75 Red-winged Blackbird
 5 Eastern Meadowlark
 1 Western Meadowlark
 50 Eastern/Western Meadowlark
 5 Brown-headed Cowbird

Birdzilla.com

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 Fun and Games

November Second Saturday

Bird Walk

30 people attended our Second Saturday bird walk on a windy, warm day keeping some species, particularly sparrows, in hiding. Some nice finds back in the trees were both Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Warblers, and Hairy Woodpecker. A total of 44 species were observed.

Double-crested Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax auratus</i>)	14
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)	1
Black Vulture (<i>Coragyps atratus</i>)	3
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	4
Cooper's Hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>)	1
Red-shouldered Hawk (<i>Buteo lineatus</i>)	1
Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)	1
Killdeer (<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>)	1
Ring-billed Gull (<i>Larus delawarensis</i>)	1
White-winged Dove (<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>)	5
Mourning Dove (<i>Zenaida macroura</i>)	3
Belted Kingfisher (<i>Megasceryle alcyon</i>)	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	2
Downy Woodpecker (<i>Picoides pubescens</i>)	2
Hairy Woodpecker (<i>Picoides villosus</i>)	1
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted) (<i>Colaptes auratus</i> [auratus Group])	1
Eastern Phoebe (<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)	1
Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	3
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	3
Carolina Chickadee (<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>)	4
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta canadensis</i>)	1
White-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>)	2
Carolina Wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus calendula</i>)	1
Eastern Bluebird (<i>Sialia sialis</i>)	10
American Robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	3
Northern Mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	3
Pine Warbler (<i>Setophaga pinus</i>)	2
Yellow-rumped Warbler (<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)	19
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (<i>Setophaga coronata coronata</i>)	1
Spotted Towhee (<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>)	1
Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	1
Lincoln's Sparrow (<i>Melospiza lincolnii</i>)	2
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	4
Dark-eyed Junco (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)	7
Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	7

Red-winged Blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)	50
Common Grackle (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	5
Great-tailed Grackle (<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>)	2
House Finch (<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>)	13
Pine Siskin (<i>Spinus pinus</i>)	25
American Goldfinch (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)	3



Red-breasted Nuthatch—Photo by Mike Cameron



White-breasted Nuthatch - Photo by Mike Cameron



Pine Warbler - Photo by Mike Cameron

Lake Ray Roberts Field Trip

PTAS's December field trip to the Isle du Boise unit of Ray Roberts Lake State Park had a great sighting. We initially thought that multiple Red-breasted Nuthatches were pretty special until we spotted a flock of Red Crossbills! They were in the trees right by the entrance gate. Their crossed bills, red and yellow colors, and also immature birds were clearly seen. They posed long enough for some terrific photographs. We were fortunate to see them. In all we saw 40 species on a beautiful day.

Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)	10
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	6
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	1
Pied-billed Grebe (<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>)	1
Double-crested Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)	1
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)	3
Black Vulture (<i>Coragyps atratus</i>)	10
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	40
Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)	1
American Coot (<i>Fulica americana</i>)	90
Killdeer (<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>)	1
Bonaparte's Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>)	4
Ring-billed Gull (<i>Larus delawarensis</i>)	1
Forster's Tern (<i>Sterna forsteri</i>)	8
Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	1
Northern Flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	2
American Kestrel (<i>Falco sparverius</i>)	1
Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	2
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	6
Carolina Chickadee (<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>)	6
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta canadensis</i>)	7
Brown Creeper (<i>Certhia americana</i>)	1
Carolina Wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus calendula</i>)	3
Northern Mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	1
American Pipit (<i>Anthus rubescens</i>)	1
Orange-crowned Warbler (<i>Oreothlypis celata</i>)	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler (<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)	3
Field Sparrow (<i>Spizella pusilla</i>)	2
Savannah Sparrow (<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>)	1
Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	2
Lincoln's Sparrow (<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>)	1
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	1
Dark-eyed Junco (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)	3
Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	5

Red Crossbill (<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>)	25
American Goldfinch (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)	10



Red Crossbill Males



Red Crossbill Female

Development of Quail Cooling Stations to Alleviate Heat Stress

Editors Note: This is a copy of a First Year Report by Ken Steigman, Director of LLELA. PTAS partially funds the quail research and restoration effort at LLELA through our grants

Sustainable quail populations have been declining and disappearing across their historic range. Many environmental factors have been implicated and are being studied by scientists. Among these are habitat fragmentation and destruction, disease and predation. To date it is not clear which of these or combinations of these are responsible for the decline. What is known is that for quail populations to rebound, all of these factors must be addressed as well as any additional factors that may be acting on quail populations to reverse this trend.

It has been documented that bobwhite quail begin to exhibit physiological heat stress when ambient temperatures rise above 92 degrees Fahrenheit. With the recent periods of extreme summer temperatures and drought observed throughout much of this species range, heat stress is an additional factor resulting in failed reproductive success and quail mortality.

The current project seeks to develop a relatively inexpensive module to be placed in good quail habitat that will function as a “cooling station” or oasis during extreme summer heat. The modules will consist of a 305 gallon water tank, which will supply water to 15 gravity fed drippers located under a shade platform



Shade Platform Under Construction

In addition to supplying water under the platforms, the tank will supply water to a drip system that will nourish key plants nearby that will in turn attract a ready supply of insects necessary for young quail nutrition. To test the effectiveness of the module, the units will be fitted with temperature and humidity dataloggers to monitor and document environmental conditions under the shade platforms. Dataloggers will also be placed in shade provided by natural vegetation in the immediate area that quail might normally seek to provide a valid comparison to ambient conditions.



Cooling Station on Site

It is hypothesized that these stations will be useful in situations where conditioned birds are being reintroduced into good quail habitat to eliminate, or at least limit, the issue of heat stress as one more negative impact on quail survival.

A game camera will be placed in the vicinity of each module to allow quail behavior and potential predator activities to be documented. If images from the game cameras detect predators being attracted to the stations, a solar powered fence charger will be put in place to activate an electrified perimeter fence to exclude mammalian predators. Water tanks will also be fitted with a timer to control drippers to function only during daylight hours to save water and minimize the frequency of nocturnal animals attracted to the water.

In the first season of research and development of the cooling stations, six platforms were constructed each with a water tank to test functional design. Each module was built within a separate 50 acre habitat unit. Dataloggers were installed to conduct initial experiments measuring temperature and humidity under

the platforms and in adjacent habitat during last summer's extreme heat. Several alternate designs are being developed to be tested when warm weather returns this spring. Among these is the use of white and reflective aluminum paint on water tanks to reduce heat buildup in the tanks.

A third design houses the water tank remotely from the platform to eliminate this issue. Since delivery of several key components did not occur until late in the summer, further testing of systems has been discontinued until this spring.

Rain collection systems ("guzzlers") are being designed and added to each module to refill tanks throughout the season with ambient rainfall. This feature will be essential in making the modules functional for ranches to use in quail reintroductions where transport of water to fill tanks is not possible.

Habitat improvements continue with the clearing of trees in upland habitat where encroachment by early succession woody species is being eliminated by cutting and burning the slash. Prairie starter plots have been installed in many of these areas by transplanting plants



Planting Prairie Starter Plot

grown in the LLELA nursery and sowing native hand-collected seed, to establish plants important to quail.

Current plans consist of two quail releases, one in early spring 2013 and another early in June, each of approximately 125 birds. A percentage of the hens released will be equipped with radio telemetry transmitters and monitored by a UNT graduate student.

Plans are to extend the length of the project throughout the summer of 2013 to adequately monitor released quail through the breeding season.

By: Ken Steigman,
Research Scientist - University of North Texas
Director - Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area

January Second Saturday Bird Walk

We had great attendance, 21 people, yesterday despite the forecast for rain. Rain did hold off until we had finished. There is some water in the wetlands now; so we added a few waterfowl to the list compared to recent months. 34 species were observed.

Wood Duck (<i>Aix sponsa</i>)	1
Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)	4
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	22
Ring-necked Duck (<i>Aythya collaris</i>)	15
Lesser Scaup (<i>Aythya affinis</i>)	3
Double-crested Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)	3
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)	1
Red-shouldered Hawk (<i>Buteo lineatus</i>)	2
Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	2
Downy Woodpecker (<i>Picoides pubescens</i>)	3
Eastern Phoebe (<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)	2
Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	3
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	7
Carolina Chickadee (<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>)	7
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta canadensis</i>)	1
Brown Creeper (<i>Certhia americana</i>)	4
Carolina Wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	6
Golden-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus calendula</i>)	2
Eastern Bluebird (<i>Sialia sialis</i>)	2
Northern Mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	2
Brown Thrasher (<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>)	1
Cedar Waxwing (<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>)	4
Yellow-rumped Warbler (<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)	18
Fox Sparrow (<i>Passerella iliaca</i>)	9
Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	2
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	7
Dark-eyed Junco (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)	1
Red-winged Blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)	40
House Finch (<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>)	4
American Goldfinch (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)	2

Count for Conservation The Great Backyard Bird Count

Join tens of thousands of participants from around the world, Friday, February 15, through Monday, February 18.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

Beginning in 2013, GBBC checklists will be accepted from anywhere in the world!

Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website, <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html> or by e-bird.

Beginning in 2013, each participant must set up a free GBBC account to submit their checklists. You'll only need to do this once to participate in all future GBBC events. (<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html>)

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or from anywhere in the world.

Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see for the GBBC photo contest. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.

Why count birds?

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic, as they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

Scientists use the GBBC information, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to get the “big picture” about what is happening to bird populations. The longer these data are collected, the more meaningful they become in helping scientists investigate far-reaching questions, like these:

- How will the weather influence bird populations?
- Where are winter finches and other “irruptive” species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds’ migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?
- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?

For highlights of past results, visit the Summaries website, <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/science-stories>.

Submitted by Tom Heath



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

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.

PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Newsletter: *Merrick Darley** 972-422-5355
Field Trips: *Linda Ergonis**..... 972-596-6109
*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: *Mercy Moffet*.....
Board Member: *Glen Shaffer**.....972-881-0645
** 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

When shopping at our advertiser's stores please let them know you saw their ad in the PTAS newsletter.

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