



TWIN LAKES AUDUBON SOCIETY

<http://www.twinlakesaudubon.org>

April 2006



President's Letter

Dear Friends,

April is an exciting month in central Texas. There is a lot bird activity to observe. Our winter birds are beginning to head north and some migrants have already arrived. The northward migration will continue to build throughout the month with greater diversity and number of birds being seen. The migration will peak sometime during the last week of April or first week of May. During that two-week period, it is quite possible to see over 100 species in a single day if you visit a variety of habitats. Hopefully, TLAS will have the good fortune to compile a list of over 100 species for our bird-a-thon, which is scheduled at the end of the month. I urge all you to participate in or help sponsor participants in that event.

You do not have to go far from home to experience the pageant of spring. You can witness it you own backyard or in many of the public parks that we have access to. However, as a group, we have also been fortunate enough to have been invited into the backyards of friends and fellow members of TLAS to enjoy this pageant. All of our March and April field trips have been or will be hosted by friends or members of TLAS that have invited us into their own backyards. I would like to publicly thank all of our hosts for these field trip opportunities. We greatly appreciate their hospitality!

However, for those of you with the urge to wander further a field, you might be surprised at what you will find within an easy driving distance. For example, most weekends so far this year, I have been exploring the counties to the west of my Copperas Cove, Coryell County home. I have discovered numerous city parks, creek crossings, and the like in Lampasas and San Saba counties that have great birding potential. I have been pleasantly surprised by some of the birds I have found (for example, a Snowy Plover enjoying a puddle in the parking lot of a sports complex in San Saba). However, if you are not prone to wandering semi-randomly, as I am, you might check out Texas' wildlife trails for some guidance. You may be familiar with the coastal wildlife trails, but the state now has trails in central Texas and the Panhandle as well. Clickable versions of several of these wildlife trails are now available on-line (www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wildlifetrails), though we will have to wait a bit longer for the trail map for the Heart of Texas – East, the region we are located within, to come on-line.

I hope to see you at the meeting on Tuesday 11 April and I hope you can participate in the field trip on Saturday 15 April!

Sincerely,

Rich Kostecke

PRESENTATIONS AND FIELD TRIPS

Unless otherwise noted, the contact for programs is Scott Summers and the contact for field trips is Rich Kostecke Phone: (254) 547-2047; Cell: (314) 346-0658; E-mail: rkostecke@tnc.org or rkost73@yahoo.com.

Talks and Events

11 April – Tim Marston (Natural Resource Management Branch, Fort Hood) on Red-cockaded Woodpeckers

9 May – Annual membership slideshow, show-and-tell, plant swap, etc.

Field Trips

15 April – Field trip to Lana Shields' property on Lake Belton. We will meet at the QUIX convenience store at FM2305 and Hwy 317. Lana will provide lunch, dessert, and drinks! If anyone wants to bring a kayak or canoe for exploring the nearby coves after the fieldtrip, they should feel free. There is no ramp, but launching from the bank is not difficult.

15 May – Field trip TBA

July – Fort Hood and Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir 4th of July Butterfly Counts; dates TBA

Snack and Drink Sign-up

	Snacks	Drinks & Ice
Apr.11	Marilyn Miller	Mary Voss
May 9	?????????	??????????

March 18 Field trip report

Our field trip to the Messer Ranch was a huge success. We gambled on weather, and won! Besides seeing 39 species, Bill and Ann Messer treated the 10 of us to a great lunch, topped off with hot peach cobbler! Birds seen and heard: Gadwall 4, American White Pelican 250+ (overhead), Great Blue Heron 1, Great Egret 4, Black Vulture 5, Turkey Vulture 24, Red-shouldered Hawk 1 (heard only), Red-tailed Hawk 2, Mourning Dove 11, Black-chinned Hummingbird 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 2, Ladder-backed Woodpecker 1, Northern Flicker 2, Eastern Phoebe 4, White-eyed Vireo 12, Blue Jay 3, American Crow 5, Northern Rough-winged Swallow 1, Carolina Chickadee 13, Black-crested Titmouse 4, Brown Creeper 1, Carolina Wren 8, Bewick's Wren 2, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 10, Golden-crowned Kinglet 1, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2, Hermit Thrush 1, Cedar Waxwing 35+, Orange-crowned Warbler 5, Yellow-rumped Warbler 7+, Golden-cheeked Warbler 3 or 4 Black-and-white Warbler 4, Canyon Towhee 2 (heard only), Field Sparrow 5, Vesper Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 28, meadowlark (probably Eastern) 2, Great-tailed Grackle 1 (overhead), Brown-headed Cowbird 10-20.

BIRDS SEEN/BIRDS HEARD

For up-to-date reports of bird sightings, go to the TLAS website!

<http://twinlakesaudubon.org/>

On 21 March, Rich Kostecke spent about 4 hrs in the morning out on Fort Hood, primarily around the Cowhouse Creek Arm of Belton Reservoir. The rains of last weekend seemingly did little to refill the reservoir; there was still ample exposed shoreline (actually, the greatest extent of exposed shoreline he has seen during his 4 seasons on Fort Hood). Not surprisingly, because of this habitat, he has been seeing much higher diversity and numbers of shorebirds on Fort Hood this year (ok maybe a 100+ individuals is not really a lot for many areas, but it is a lot for Fort Hood, and expects numbers to build as the spring progresses). Highlights (observed in Bell County, unless otherwise noted): Snowy Egret - 1 FOS, Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1, Cooper's Hawk - 1, American Golden Plover - 1, Killdeer - 56 (high count), Greater Yellowlegs - 5, Lesser Yellowlegs - 9, Least Sandpiper - 15, Pectoral Sandpiper - 12, dowitcher sp. - 25, Wilson's Snipe - 11, Franklin's Gull - 6, Forster's Tern - 39, White-eyed Vireo - 21, Tree Swallow - 2 at traditional breeding snag, Northern Rough-winged Swallow - 3 (Coryell Co.), Cliff Swallow - 233+ (Bell), 35+ (Coryell), Cave Swallow - 6 (Coryell), Barn Swallow - 32+, Canyon Wren - 1, Marsh Wren - 1 (Lake Henry, Coryell), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - 3, Golden-cheeked Warbler - 2, Nashville Warbler - 1 FOSPLEASE report your sightings for inclusion!

Rich also received a report from David Sperry of a Common Poorwill on Manning Mtn. on Fort Hood's West Range on 21 March. He found the poorwill because it was on the ground and being mobbed by vultures and crows. It was missing some tail feathers, but otherwise intact. He moved it to a safer position where it was not refound later (apparently, it eventually vacated that position on its own volition).

Both Rich and Gil spotted their respective FOS male black-chinned hummingbirds in their yards.

Lana Shields reports on 21 Mar, " Even though we had gale force winds the past two days, the woods were somewhat calm and very birdy. Yesterday, I had an adult female Yellow-Rumped Warbler...the previous sightings have been first winter females, an Orange Crowned Warbler, a Black and White Warbler and a pair of House Finches...the male was very vocal. In addition, the usuals continue to visit...Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadees, Chipping Sparrows, American Crows, Ruby Crowned Kinglets, an occasional Blue Jay and Black and Turkey Vultures. We have Ringed Bill Gulls and two Franklin Gulls (I think) over the lake.

The big news is that the Eastern Screech Owls have claimed her owl box. The male is usually 15-20 feet away but I've not found his roost. He's not where he was last year, but then we trimmed nearby trees.

PLEASE report your sightings for inclusion!



Twin Lakes Audubon
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Meetings
7:00 p.m., second Tuesday of the month in Room 117, York Science Center, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton (No meetings June, July or August).

