Greetings everyone!

As promised, the November Field Trip to Lake Rogers and eastern Bell County was, once again, a success. While looking a mystery raptor, which turned out to be a Northern Harrier, birders saw a Crested Caracara flying by. This was joined by another, then another, then another – five caracara were seen in that one group. Another highlight was the Peregrine Falcon that Randy Pinkston spotted along the road. To the oohs and aahs of the viewers, the falcon lifted off and proceeded to engage with a dark ibis, before thinking the better of it and flying away.

On 19 December TLAS will host the annual Christmas Bird Count, map is in this newsletter. During our meeting on 8 December, Tom will coordinate starting time, location, and other details for the circle, and for each quadrant. Birders are needed! You do not need to be an “expert” birder, more eyes and ears help. In recent years we have consistently broken the 100 species threshold and this year looks promising.

At our November meeting Mike Hankins presented the Yahoo group twinlakesaudubon in which members can receive emails on TLAS events, and perhaps best of all, current sightings of interesting birds in our area. To join, log onto Yahoo groups, or simply send an email to twinlakesaudubon@yahoogroups.com. You do need to have a current Yahoo, ATT, or SBCGLOBAL account.
For years we were told to take down hummingbird feeders “to encourage” migration. In recent years that has changed and hummingbird lovers should keep some feeder(s) active in the winter. This spectacular adult male Rufous Hummingbird was photographed in Sabrina Nicholson’s backyard, in the middle of Killeen!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted, the contact for programs and field trips is Gil Eckrich; Cell: 254-534-0061, Email is: gil.eckrich@att.net

08 Dec – Preparation for Christmas Bird Count (CBC), including identification tips for difficult species.

12 Jan – Our own Sandy Lowry will dazzle us with just a few of the many great stories and photos of the Lowry’s trip to Alaska

09 Feb – Dr. Rich Kostecke will talk on the mission of The Nature Conservancy in Texas and the places it protects. Rich had served as TLAS chapter president from 2005 to 2007, and we look forward to hearing from him!
10 Mar – NO Meeting

07 Apr – Erin Wehland, TPWD Biologist, will give a presentation on "Survival and Post-breeding habitat of Mottled Ducks"

12 May - Picture Show and Tell, Everyone bring pictures to share!

FIELD TRIPS

19 Dec – Christmas Bird Count!!!! Details to be discussed at 8 Dec TLAS monthly meeting

16 Jan – Inks Lake Fish Hatchery, Inks Lake State Park, Lake Buchanan parks

13 Feb – West Range of Fort Hood, joint field trip with Central Texas Audubon (Waco). Previous field trips in winter to this area have yielded Mountain Bluebirds, flocks of longspurs, and many other species.

Mar – Potential field trip to Port Aransas to see Whooping Cranes. Would be a two night trip, including half day on boat. Will also be looking for early spring migrants, especially warblers.

16 Apr – TBD. Trip to see Upper Texas Coast spring migration is one possibility. Trip to Big Bend. Local ranch on Clear Creek is also available.

14 May – Bald Eagle Nest, or local ranch on Clear Creek if chapter travels to UTC in April.

Snack and Drink Sign-up

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ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

All members will receive THE CHIRP electronically instead of in printed form. If a member does not have access to a computer, please contact Cathy Cantu @254-541-3689 and we will gladly send you a printed copy.

As each issue goes to press, you will receive an email with a PDF of the new issue attached. The PDF is also available at our website: www.twinlakesaudubon.org
Meetings
7:00 p.m., second Tuesday of the month in Room 117, York Science Center, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton (No meetings March, June, July or August).