



THE CHIRP

NEWSLETTER OF THE TWIN LAKES AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOL 5 ISSUE 1

twinlakesaudubon.org

JANUARY 2013



Greetings everyone from your President!

First of all, I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas and I would like to take this time to wish everyone a Happy New Year and I look forward to another great year of birding. We have some great field trips and guest speakers planned for the second half and I hope to see everyone at our next meeting and field trip.

Last month at our meeting we had a very informative presentation given by Lianne Koczur on the American Oystercatcher Research on the Texas Coast. She talked about the different species of the American Oystercatcher to include the physical traits, prey, breeding season, nesting, fledglings, and threats. Lianne then went on to explain her research on the Texas Coast and the methods she uses, she shared her results from 2011 and 2012, causes of failure and the explanatory variables. We also prepared for our annual Christmas Bird count, Tom Robbins discussed the quadrants and the key leaders for each quadrant were identified. As for the results, it was a HUGE success; we had a total of 126 different species and we had some unusual ones to include: Swainson's hawk, Gull-billed Tern, Vermilion Flycatcher, White eyed vireo, and a Gray Catbird. Area 1:91, Area 2:80, Area 3:55 and Area 4:88 ([see attached complete results](#)). I would like to personally thank everyone who participated that day, thank you for all your effort and dedication in making this a very successful bird count.

This month for our guest speaker, we look forward to hearing from Jim Hailey "Birding in Alaska". Our Field trip will be Saturday January 12th to West Range Rd. Ft. Hood and we will be having a joint field trip with the CTAS chapter from Waco. In the past participants got to see Burrowing Owl, Chestnut-collared Longspurs, Mountain Bluebirds, and Say's Phoebe; however, this year is quite different and those species have not been spotted as of this newsletter. That having been said, there are good numbers of sparrows in terms of both species and numbers, and waterfowl are plentiful and diverse. For the hardy folks who stay until dark, there is the possibility of seeing a Short-eared Owl.

Crystal R. Hammond

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



PRESENTATIONS

8 January - Jim Hailey "Birding in Alaska"

12 February - TBD

16 March - Officer / Board Member Meeting "Time and Place TBD"

9 April - TBD

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



FIELD TRIPS

12 January - West Range Rd. Ft. Hood (joint trip with CTAS). : Afternoon/evening trip to Fort Hood's west range to observe waterfowl, raptors, and sparrows, and maybe a couple of owl species. We'll meet at 3 pm at the junction of Elijah and Georgetown roads on Fort Hood. Basically, take Highway 190 into Copperas Cove. In Copperas Cove, take Highway 116 north 5.5 miles towards Gatesville. Within the 1st mile, you will go through 2 stop signs and 2 traffic lights and the road will zig-zag a bit as you drive through downtown Copperas Cove. After 5.5 miles, you will turn right (east) onto Elijah Road. You will cross a cattle guard and enter Fort Hood at that point. Speed limit is 50 mph along Elijah Road. Then take Elijah Road east 3.1 miles to the junction of Elijah and Georgetown Roads. Those of you who in past years took Main Str through Cove, then entered Fort Hood on Georgetown Road, be advised that Georgetown Rd is closed due to bypass construction.

23 February - Llano Eagles Nest and Inks Lake Fish Hatchery

March - Possibly a trip to Sam Houston National Forest to see the Red-cockaded Woodpecker

13 April - Bill Messer Ranch

4 May - Warbler Woods

August - Summer trip to Davis Mountains

BIRDS SEEN / BIRDS HEARD

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

<http://twinlakesaudubon.org/>

Tom Robbins visited Slough Pond and vicinity on Friday from 9-11:30 a.m. with the following observations:

Slough Pond: Gadwall (42), N. Shoveler (1), Lesser Scaup (25), Hooded Merganser (30), Pied-billed Grebe (7), Double-cr. Cormorant (58), Great Blue Heron (5), Great Egret (19), Black Vulture (2), Turkey Vulture (3), Osprey (1), N. Harrier (1, male), Crested Caracara (1), Am. Coot (2), Greater Yellowlegs (3), Ring-billed Gull (30), Forster's tern (25), Mourning Dove (80, flyover), Belted Kingfisher (1), Am. Crow (3), Carolina Wren (1), Ruby-cr. Kinglet (2), N. Mockingbird (1), Am. Pipit (2), Song Sparrow (1). N. Cardinal (3).

Shallow Ford "T" and vicinity: Gadwall (18), Merlin (1), Least Sandpiper (8), Mourning Dove (10), E. Phoebe (1), Am. Crow (2), Car. Chickadee (1), Bl.-crested Titmouse (2), Am. Pipit (3), Yel.-rmpd. (Myrtle) Warbler (10), Caspian Tern (4, flyover). The Caspian Terns were headed north in the general direction of Belton Lake.

Eric Carpenter reported the following results from the Granger CBC, which 3 TLAS members participated in: The 8th Granger CBC was held today (29 December) and it was, as always, a great time with some cool birds. Rather cold temperatures started us off this morning with a low reading of 24 degrees that would rise only to just above 50 on a day when there was a near constant overcast and light (at least for the Granger area) north winds. Water levels on Granger Lake were higher (no significant shoreline exposed) than the past couple of years and the drought was still in evidence in the woods and fields around the lake with normal volumes of regular species hard to find. The time spent scouting this year was also, overall, less than in the past few years.

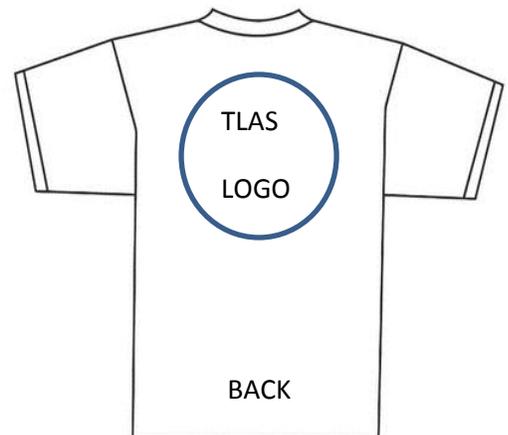
Still, as seems to happen in some drought years, the number of species was up, with a new preliminary count-day record of 130 (plus 3 count-week birds) raising the bar for future counts. The Whooping Cranes that showed up the previous fall/winter returned earlier this fall and were still present with 5 birds counted. Mountain Plovers were found in a couple areas though some of the other prairie specialties proved elusive with no count day Burrowing Owl (count-week - yes) or Sprague's Pipit (missed for the count for the first time). Four Eastern Screech-Owls in addition to the regular (and usually the only one detected on the count) stake-out on the south side of the lake were either previously over-looked/over-listened or perhaps signs of a local movement. Good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen by most/all groups (only seen in one prior year) reflecting this year's impressive irruption. Other highlights of less-than-annual count birds included American Woodcock, Green Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, and Pine Siskin (also reflective of strong irruption). Completely brand new to the count were a Nashville Warbler and an adequately described Dickcissel. Access to two new areas on opposite sides of the count circle also proved worthwhile and something that we hope to repeat in the coming years.

Snack and Drink Sign-up

DATE	SNACK	SNACK	DRINKS & ICE	PAPER GOODS(CUPS, NAPKINS,PLATES)
8-Jan	Bert Pope	Lowry's	Margaret Donohoe	
12-Feb	Liz Cowan	Ronnie Collins	Marilyn Miller	Elaine Horton
12-Mar	NO MEETING DUE TO SPRING BREAK			
9-Apr	Mary Voss	Cathy Shoop	Marilyn Miller	Tom Robbins
14-May	EVERYONE BRING SOMETHING			

[Link to Ilse Meier's Potato Casserole Recipe](#)

TLAS T-SHIRTS FOR SALE



Cost: \$10

Color: Sand

Sizes: Medium to X-Large

Proceeds go to the TLAS fund

YOU CAN PICK UP YOUR TLAS T-SHIRT AT OUR NEXT MEETING; THEY WILL BE ON SALE UNTIL ALL ARE SOLD.

Minutes of the Twin Lakes Audubon Society (TLAS) Meeting



TLAS December Monthly Meeting
UMHB Campus
York Science building
19 members present

Crystal Hammond (President) opened the meeting at 7pm and invited everyone to share the all-host refreshments and visit.

Bird sightings were shared.

Treasurer's report was given by Marilyn. As of Nov. 30th we had \$5,325.41.

The account was changed to a money market account, with no service fees as long as we write no more than 6 checks a month.

Gil proposed we help fund an Eagle Scout with their leadership project of a swift chimney column tower to be installed at the Belton Lake Headquarters of the Corp of Engineers. After discussion the motion was made and seconded, with a unanimous vote to cover the cost of supplies at \$674. A plaque will give credit to the scout and TLAS.

Crystal informed us that the website will open in January 2013 with information about the **National Audubon Convention** being held this coming summer, July 12 – 15, in Stevenson, Washington called "Taking Flight Together". With more details next month, we will consider sending a representative. Sabrina suggested we consider sending Gil.

Cathy explained the **lending library**. New books were added: "The Big Year", "Wesley the Owl", and "Red-tails in Love". Plus Eric donated some bird books for the group to enjoy.

CBC- Christmas Bird Count

Tom Robbins helped the CBC process, and the zones in our circle.

Leaders, meet times and places:

Group 1: Gil by boat and hiking with others

Group 2: Dave Cimprich 8am McDonald's at I-35 and 6th street in Belton and others

Group 3: Tom Robbins and Don 7:30am Park and Ride Belton and others

Group 4: Gather at Salado's Brookshire store at 7:30am with Dr. Randy and others dividing the zone

No fees this year, the info will be posted electronically only.

Scott introduced the Presentor-Lianne Koczur

Lianne shared information and her research on the American Oyster catchers on the Texas coast.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm with more refreshments and visiting.



Twin Lakes Audubon Society

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Return Service Requested

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 Carol Ann Wadley @254-771-5346 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).

