Hi, everyone!

Hurricane Ike came to Texas with a fury and wreaked havoc upon Galveston and many other counties along its path of destruction. We all feel great compassion and sympathy for those who lost so much. Ike did spare Central Texas and all we felt were some gusty wind and very little precipitation. Not knowing what Ike would bring we did postpone the Waco Wetlands field trip to the following weekend. Several dedicated birders in our area were out on both Saturday and Sunday of Ike’s landfall, patrolling local lakes with visions of Magnificent Frigatebirds dancing in their heads. Well, along with little wind and rain, Ike also brought very few coastal birds to our area. While we did not get to see some unusual bird species, we were spared Ike’s fury and no one complained about that tradeoff. Fall migration is definitely underway, and as you can see in the Birds seen/Birds heard section of this newsletter, some interesting birds have been recorded in our area, including very early Merlin and Burrowing Owl.

The presentation for the 14 October TLAS meeting will be different in that attendees will be challenged by a bird identification quiz of locally observed birds. Mind you, it will be a little more difficult than identifying a male Northern Cardinal! Be sure to bring a good field guide to consult. A drawing will be held for some lucky quiz participant to win a new Peterson Field Guide, hailed for its large illustrations.

That guide may come in very handy for upcoming Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which will be held from December 14, 2008 through January 5, 2009. In recent years we have held our CBC on the Saturday after our December meeting; however, this year National Audubon’s official dates begin on that Sunday. At this month’s meeting, please provide your comments as to your preferred date. As usual, not all wishes can be accommodated, but we will strive to set a date that will enable maximum participation by our members and guests. If you are a novice birder, please do NOT allow that to deter your participation. We would like as many of you as possible to take part in this, the 109th CBC. In the words of Geoff LeBaron, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count Director “Each of the citizen scientists who brave snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count make an enormous contribution to conservation”.

See you at the meeting!
PRESENTATIONS AND FIELD TRIPS

Unless otherwise noted, the contact for programs is Gil Eckrich; Cell: 254-0534-0061, Email gil.eckrich@att.net and the contact for field trips is Rich Kostecke, Cell: 254-258-0936; Email rkostecke@tnc.org or rkost73@yahoo.com.

14 Oct 2008: Name that Bird! ID quiz of locally seen birds, ranging from easy, to subtle, to… Be sure to bring your field guide(s). Participants will be eligible to participate in drawing for the brand new Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America.

11 Nov 2008: Creatures (mainly birds) of Central America. Laura and George Murphy spent 10 days in Costa Rica and 3 in Panama in April and May of 2008. Besides the many exotic birds, they saw and took snap shots of reptiles, insects and mammals of the region. They'll share their trip and offer tips on traveling there.

09 Dec 2008: Christmas Bird Count planning and Christmas party

13 Jan 2009: Our own Dr David Cimprich, a nationally recognized bird banding expert, will talk on some of his banding research done here in Central Texas.

10 Feb 2009: TBA. Nominate new slate of officers and one board member.

March 2009: NO MEETING

Apr 2009: TBA

May 2009: Membership slide show and annual business meeting, including election of officers and board member.

Field Trips

18 October 2008: Lake Granger – a veritable mecca for shorebirds and waders. Meet at Belton Park & Ride at 08:00. Rich Kostecke will be the trip leader.

15 November 2008: TBA

14 December 2008: Christmas Bird Count – EVERYONE welcome, and needed. NOTE: Official CBC dates have not yet been announced.

17 January 2009: TBA

13 – 16 Feb 2009: The 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this free event is an opportunity for anyone to make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

14 February 2009: Afternoon/evening trip to Fort Hood’s west range to observe burrowing owl(s), other raptors, and sparrows.

14 or 21 March 2009: TBA

18 April 2009: Fort Hood with emphasis on Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo

16 May 2009: TBA
Snack and Drink Sign-up

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<tr>
<td>14 Oct</td>
<td>Wayne &amp; Beth Fonville</td>
<td>Marilyn Miller</td>
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<td>11 Nov</td>
<td>Carol Ann Wadley</td>
<td>Lorraine Millian</td>
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<td>Karen and OK Smith</td>
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<td>09 Dec</td>
<td>Teresa and Phil Erven</td>
<td>Sabrina Nicholson</td>
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<td>13 Jan</td>
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<td>10 Feb</td>
<td>Joyce Johnson</td>
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<td>14 Apr</td>
<td>Louise Reid</td>
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BIRDS SEEN/BIRDS HEARD

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

http://twinlakesaudubon.org/

Rich Kostecke reports that on 27 September, he bided Chalk Ridge Falls Park (the spillway area for Stillhouse Hollow Lake, Bell Co.) for nearly 3 hrs, observing the species listed below. There was a report of a Rock Wren in the spillway riprap earlier in the month, but he did not detect this bird.

Double-crested Cormorant 2, Great Blue Heron 2, Black Vulture 7, Turkey Vulture 76, Red-shouldered Hawk 1, Broad-winged Hawk 2, American Kestrel 1, White-winged Dove 2, Eastern Screech-Owl 4, Chimney Swift 2, Red-bellied Woodpecker 4, Downy Woodpecker 3, Eastern Phoebe 2, White-eyed Vireo 3, Blue Jay 5, American Crow 1, Carolina Chickadee 19, Black-crested Titmouse 5, Canyon Wren 1, Carolina Wren 13, House Wren 8, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1, Wilson's Warbler 1, Northern Cardinal 24.

Some recent notables from Fort Hood have been:

Burrowing Owl - 1 along Shell Mountain Road (Coryell Co.) first observed by Charles Pekins on 23 Sept and observed again by Gil Eckrich on 26 Sept. This is the earliest record we have for this species by 3-4 weeks.

Merlin - 1 along the south shore of the Cowhouse Creek arm of Belton Lake (Bell Co.) first observed by Gil Eckrich on 18 Sept and observed again on the 21st by myself and on the 26th by Gil. Again, this is our earliest record by approximately 3 weeks.

Rock Wren - 1 observed in a large rock pile near the northwest edge of the Fort Hood landfill (Coryell) by myself on 26 Sept. This is likely the same bird that Rich had observed during the spring. It does not appear that he found a mate.

Gil also reports large flocks of American White Pelicans, up to 300 in a flock, on 15 Sep at Lake Belton, and 20 Sep on Stillhouse. Additionally, he recorded his FOS Wilson's Snipe at Engineer Lake, Fort Hood, on 16 Sep.

PLEASE report your sightings for inclusion!
Twin Lakes Audubon
3415 Whispering Oaks
Temple TX 76504

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).

OFFICERS/CHAIRS
President: Tom Robbins
Tel: 254-770-0875
Vice President: Gil Eckrich
Secretary: Teresa Erven
Treasurer: Sabrina Nicholson
Membership: Carol Ann Wadley
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Hospitality: Shirley Beyer
Finance: Jack Williams
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Chapter Reps: Joye & Corky Johnson