



TWIN LAKES AUDUBON SOCIETY

<http://www.twinlakesaudubon.org>

September 2006



President's Letter

Dear friends,

I hope you have been keeping cool! It has been a brutally dry and hot summer. For those of you who maintain backyard bird habitat, remember the 3 essentials for attracting birds: cover, food, and water. Of the 3, we often have a tendency to skimp on the water. However, water may be the best attractant with our current conditions. So, fill that bird bath, run that drip or mister, or create a small pond in your yard. You might be surprised at the diversity and number of birds that you attract.

Because of the heat, we often do not spend much time out in the field in late summer. However, the birding can be quite interesting. In mid-July, southbound shorebirds begin to pass through the region and waders begin northward post-breeding dispersal movements. Our September field trip will attempt to capitalize on our current drought conditions, which have resulted in falling water levels at our local ponds and reservoirs. Falling water levels expose mudflats rich in aquatic invertebrates and concentrate fish in small, shallow pools, which can attract impressive concentrations of shorebirds and waders. Our field trip will be to Fort Hood, where we continue to observe diverse concentrations of shorebirds and waders at several small lakes and the mudflats along Belton Lake, including coastal species such as Roseate Spoonbill, Tricolored Heron, and White Ibis that have wandered inland.

Other late summer birds to be on the watch for are hummingbirds and the first southbound, migrant raptors and songbirds. The first Rufous Hummingbirds of the fall arrive at central Texas feeders by the end of July (I currently have an immature Rufous frequenting my feeders). Southbound Empidonax flycatchers also arrive by the end of July. The first kestrels and Yellow Warblers arrive in August. So, remember that even though the weather may be depressing, the birding can still be quite exciting.

We have another year of fun and exciting TLAS activities ahead of us. It starts on Tuesday 12 September, when Cristina Summers will lecture us on "Just how much nature note-taking/watching can nature take, before watching/note-taking becomes detrimental to nature?". I am sure it will be an interesting and educational presentation. The field trip to Fort Hood to view shorebirds and waders is scheduled for Saturday 16 September. Finally, please remember to pay your local membership dues for 2006-2007. These dues help to fund TLAS activities. For example, our recent purchase of an LCD projector was possible not only because of a grant from Earthshare of Texas, which paid for part of it, but also because we had extra money in our budget as the result of local membership dues. Right now TLAS has a healthy budget. The TLAS Officers and Board are always open to suggestions on how (or whether) we should spend TLAS funds. So, if you have any suggestions, please speak up!

See you in September!
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

12 September 2006: "Just how much nature note-taking/watching can nature take, before watching/note-taking becomes detrimental to nature?" by Crissy Summers (Central Texas College)

10 October 2006: Wildlife Rehabilitation by DJ Ortmann (Moody, TX)

14 November 2006: Bird collisions with cellular phone towers by Erin Tighe Macchia (Arkansas State University)

12 December 2006: CBC planning and Christmas Party

13 February 2007: TBD

13 March 2007: TBD

9 April 2007: TBD

8 May 2007: Membership slide show and annual business meeting

Field Trips

16 September 2006: Fort Hood (East Range ponds and Belton Lake) From Belton, take Hwy. 190 west for 1 mile. Exit (turn right) onto Loop 121. Go north on Loop 121 for 2.4 miles. Turn left (west) at the FIRST traffic light (NOT flashing light), right before Belton HS, onto Sparta Rd. Go west on Sparta for 11.6 miles. Look for sign on left, "Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB)." Turn left at this sign into an unpaved parking area. **Please be there at 07:45.**

7 October: Tour of Balcones Canyonlands NWR [tentative]

14 October 2006: TBD

18 November 2006: TBD

16 December 2006: Bell County CBC

13 January 2007: TBD

17 February 2007: TBD

17 March 2007: TBD

14 April 2007: TBD

Late April or Early May: Spring bird count, date TBD

12 May 2007: TBD

30 June 2007: Fort Hood 4th of July Butterfly Count

7 July 2007: Stillhouse Hollow 4th of July Butterfly Count

Snack and Drink Sign-up

12 Sep Snacks
Everyone – bring a snack!

Drinks & Ice
Gil Eckrich & Rich Kostecke

BIRDS SEEN/BIRDS HEARD

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

<http://twinlakesaudubon.org/>

Gil Eckrich and Rich Kostecke stopped by Lometa Reservoir (Lampasas Co.) on the morning of 19 August. Water levels have dropped, exposing substantial mud flats, but the reservoir is still holding a fair bit of water. Waterbirds observed, as well as some non-waterbird highlights were:

Blue-winged Teal 45, Pied-billed Grebe 3, Double-crested Cormorant 1, Great Blue Heron 2, Green Heron 1, Black-crowned Night-heron 1, Killdeer 44, Greater Yellowlegs 12, Lesser Yellowlegs 12, Spotted Sandpiper 3, Upland Sandpiper 1, Western Sandpiper 2, Semipalmated Sandpiper 6, Least Sandpiper 5, Baird's Sandpiper 4, Pectoral Sandpiper 5, sandpiper sp. 11, dowitcher sp. 1, Black Tern 5, Belted Kingfisher 1, Bell's Vireo 1, Cave Swallow 2, Dickcissel 1, Yellow Warbler 5

Most of the waders and shorebirds that I have been reporting from Fort Hood continue, including the Tricolored Herons and Roseate Spoonbills. Other sightings of interest: American Kestrel: 1 in the Cantonment (Coryell Co.) through 17 Aug, 1 on the West Range (Coryell Co.) on 13 Aug.

Peregrine Falcon: 1 reported by Gil Eckrich from the south shore of Belton Lake on 15 August; 2 reported by Gil from Williamson Mtn (Coryell Co.) on 17 August.

Chuck-will's-widow: while out netting bats along Owl Creek (Bell/Coryell cos.), Charles Pekins observed 4 flying above a pool of water on 16 August.

Rich reports that at his SW Copperas Cove residence he has mostly had female/immature Archilochus hummingbirds and a few male Black-chinned Hummingbirds at his feeders, but did notice a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird on 17 August and last saw an immature Rufous Hummingbird on 19 August.

Black-capped Vireo: Between 7-18 August Rich had had up to 5 vocalizing per day on the West Range.

PLEASE report your sightings for inclusion!

Website

Our TLAS website, <http://www.twinlakesaudubon.org>, has been up for some time now and I continue to seek any comments/suggestions on how to improve the site. I encourage more submissions of pictures to add to the gallery. Those of you who enjoy watching birds at your various feeders, how about picking up a camera and recording some of your feathered friends? I have been asked about the *Earthshare* logo on the home page (and on newsletter). Earth Share of Texas is an umbrella organization of 70 local, state, national and international nonprofit environmental groups. Employees all across Texas can support Earth Share of Texas and its participating organizations through their payroll contribution plans. Contributions can also be made directly to Earth Share of Texas. So, how does that affect TLAS? As Rich mentioned in his monthly letter, Earthshare contributed a substantial amount toward the purchase of our LCD projector, and provides funding for other worthwhile environment-friendly organizations. Please visit their website <http://www.earthshare-texas.org/> and take a look at what they do.



Twin Lakes Audubon

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geckrich@hotmail.com

Hospitality: Shirley Beyer

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Chapter Reps: Joye &

Corky Johnson

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).

