

  
**SIGNAL SMOKE**  
*The Newsletter of Travis Audubon Society*

VOLUME 56, NO. 2

February 2007

**INSIDE**

**THIS ISSUE ...**

From the TAS President .....2  
 Naturalist's Calendar.....4  
 BCP Hike & Lecture series.....6  
 Travis Audubon Salutes.....7  
 Monthly Meeting Information.....8  
 Baker Sanctuary News.....9  
 Planned Giving.....10  
 Dastardly Duos.....11  
 TAS Events.....12-13  
 TAS Classes.....14  
 Get Involved in 2007.....15  
 Travis Audubon Society  
 Membership Form .....Back page

**TAS**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**  
 Thursday, Feb 15, 7:00 pm  
 Doors open at 6:30 pm for social time

**Paddling the Wild Neches**  
 Speaker: Richard Donovan

LCRA Board Room  
 in the Hancock Building  
 at 3700 Lake Austin Blvd. Austin TX



see page 8 for additional details

**Chaetura Canyon –**

**A Travis Audubon Society Nature Preserve**

On December 28, 2006, after several years of working out the details, Paul and Georgean Kyle donated their land, known as Chaetura Canyon, to Travis Audubon Society. On that day, Paul and Georgean and TAS President Shelia Hargis signed an agreement that makes Chaetura Canyon a bird sanctuary to be owned and protected by the Travis Audubon Society. The Kyles will retain a Life Estate on the property and continue to live on and care for Chaetura Canyon for the remainder of their lives.

***Paul and Georgean Kyle***

In 1972, the Kyles bought the first part of what they would later call Chaetura Canyon. After building their own home and moving in, they discovered that they shared their new home with a very curious and territorial Canyon Wren, an occasional woodpecker and a plethora of smaller “wildlife” including daddy long legs, cave crickets and scorpions. Over time, Paul and Georgean purchased more of the canyon, learned what it took to live in harmony with nature in the Texas Hill Country, learned and catalogued the native plants in the canyon, and volunteered as wildlife rehabilitators.



Paul & Georgean Kyle  
 Photo Credit: Nancy Whitworth

Their love affair with Chimney Swifts began in 1983, shortly after they began taking in displaced baby birds for rehabilitation, and rapidly escalated into a full-scale obsession. Wanting to learn more about these amazing creatures and hoping to provide additional habitat, Paul and Georgean built their first “Chimney Swift Towers” in 1989. Based on their initial efforts, the North American Chimney Swift Nest Site Research Project was launched six years later, and has grown from a strictly local concern to a continent-wide conservation effort. Eventually the Kyles built 15 towers of several different designs for Chaetura Canyon. Chimney Swifts – never sighted flying over the property prior to 1983 – became ubiquitous from Spring through early Fall. The property then became “Chaetura Canyon.” Over the past 20+ years, the Kyles have conducted the most extensive and long-term study of Chimney Swifts ever undertaken. In 2005, their research was documented in two books.

***What is Chaetura Canyon*** (Pronounced “Kay-too-rah”)

Chaetura Canyon is approximately eight acres of carefully restored Canyonland, now owned by the Travis Audubon Society and designed to preserve, in perpetuity, a small piece of natural habitat within a rapidly urbanizing area of Central Texas while providing a safe place for native species of birds to forage, raise their young and rest during migration.

*continued on page 3*

## Travis Audubon Society

### General Address

P.O. Box 40787, Austin TX 78704

### Address for Donations

P.O. Box 40787, Austin TX 78704

Phone numbers listed below without an area code are local numbers in the 512 area.

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2006-07

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Tess Sherman 300-BIRD

### TAS TELEPHONE

The office number is 512-300-BIRD (2473). To leave a message for Board President Shelia Hargis, press 1. To leave a message for Executive Director Valerie Staats, press 2. To report sightings of rare or unusual birds in Central Texas, press 3. To ask a bird-related question, press 4.

### TAS WEB SITE

www.travisaudubon.org

### TAS EMAIL

info@travisaudubon.org

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## Mission Statement

The Travis Audubon Society promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and preservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats in Central Texas.

## LETTER FROM THE TAS PRESIDENT

One of the perks of being President is that I get to share some of my cool birding stories with a large audience! So, here's my latest. This CBC season I participated in the Nacogdoches CBC for the first time. I grew up in Nacogdoches but left before I became a birder. Getting to see the area now through birder's eyes and ears is great. The highlights of the CBC included two very brief looks at Henslow's Sparrows and good looks at ten Brown Creepers. The birding day ended with us watching/hearing 180+ Wood Ducks come in to roost while two species of bats flew around, frogs vocalized, and coyotes howled in the distance. What a great way to spend a day.

Some very cool things have been happening at Travis Audubon also. Paul and Georgan Kyle donated Chaetura Canyon to Travis Audubon Society. See our cover story for all the exciting details. Thank you, Paul and Georgan for your commitment to Chimney Swifts and Travis Audubon. Penny Potter is our new Latin America Committee chairperson. She has a strong commitment to conservation, and I look forward to the great projects the committee will accomplish under her leadership. Thanks to Bob Warneke who chaired the committee since its inception

continued on page 10



Shelia Hargis,  
photo by Robert Baumgardner

## COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>TAS Rare Bird Alert</b>	Eric Carpenter	300-2473 select option #3
<b>Advocacy</b>	Jeff Mundy	334-4300
<b>Bird Records</b>	Lawrence Buford	452-6344
	Ethel Kutac	346-7659
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<b>Education</b>	Byron Stone	451-3380
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<b>Publications</b>	Tess Sherman	300-2473
<b>Sanctuary Chair</b>	Terri Siegenthaler	263-2237
<b>Society Historian</b>	John Kelly	331-8693
<b>Urban Habitat</b>	Jane Tillman	794-0058

## ABOUT SIGNAL SMOKE

### Subscription Information

Signal Smoke (ISSN 1931-9282), published 11 months of the year by Travis Audubon Society, is a TAS membership benefit. To subscribe, use the form on the back page of this issue or go to www.travisaudubon.org for an on-line form. For address or subscription changes, please call 512.300.BIRD (2473) or e-mail info@travisaudubon.org. The USPS does not forward Signal Smoke. Copyright © 2007. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission in writing from Travis Audubon Society.

### Newsletter Deadline

The submissions deadline is the first day of the preceding month (for example, September 1<sup>st</sup> for the October issue). Submit uncopyrighted articles, announcements, and art to Tess Sherman, tsherman1@austin.rr.com; or mail to 210 E. Walnut Dr., Austin, TX 78753. Submissions by email or on a floppy are preferred but not required. Call Tess at 300-BIRD if you have questions.



*Chaetura Canyon, continued from page 1*

The entire canyon is an approximately 15 acres and is jointly managed by the Travis Audubon Society, the Driftwood Wildlife Association and local property owners. It is situated on the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau, 1.25 miles southwest of Mansfield Dam, in Travis County, approximately 12 miles northwest of central Austin.

More than 150 species of birds have been documented by the Kyles at Chaetura since 1987. These include Hill Country specialties such as Red-shouldered Hawk, Chuck-will's Widow, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Western Scrub-Jay, Canyon Wren, Black-and-white Warbler, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Painted Bunting. In all, more than 30 species nest on or near the sanctuary, including the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler.

The center piece of the property is a 5.519 acre section of a relatively deep canyon. Existing deer trails have been widened and stabilized to offer about a mile of narrow trails for walks through mixed juniper and hardwood habitat, with minimal impact on the native flora and fauna. Several hand-built water features provide a constant water source for migrating birds and breeding amphibians even during drought conditions.

Perhaps the most remarkable and unique aspect of Chaetura Canyon is the presence of its namesake from late March until mid October: Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*). In fact, Chaetura Canyon is the only Chimney Swift Observatory in the world. There are currently 15 nesting / roosting towers of several different experimental designs. Migratory roosts frequently exceed 300 individuals in the Fall.



Top photo: Pool Tower Trail  
Lower photo: Pool at Chaetura Canyon  
Photos courtesy of Paul & Georgan Kyle

## **The Goals of Chaetura Canyon**

The foremost goal of Chaetura Canyon is conservation of Texas Hill Country and the wildlife that depend on that habitat. Under the partnership between the Kyles and Travis Audubon, restoration and maintenance of the land, Chimney Swift research, and education of TAS members and non-members will continue. Owning a nature

preserve in this locale will give Travis Audubon Society a venue to expose more people to the wonder of birds and nature and involve more people in conservation. And, Chaetura Canyon is a living example of what can be created for all the residents of a piece of land, whether they be human, animal, or plant.

Specific activities at Chaetura Canyon will include workshops and special events. Habitat restoration and trail building opportunities will allow

participants to contribute to the future of Chaetura Canyon in a tactile way *and* take home the concepts and skills learned to use on their property. Educational activities such as Chimney Swift Tower construction and nestbox building classes will continue. Chimney Swift-watching parties will showcase the awe-inspiring spectacle of hundreds of swifts coming in to roost at night. Travis Audubon donors will be invited to visit to see first-hand what their financial support allows Travis Audubon Society to accomplish.

## **Thanks to These VIPs**

This project could not have happened without Paul and Georgan's strong desire to create something bigger than themselves. Their generosity is a wonderful example of what's possible when private landowners work with conservation organizations such as Travis Audubon. Thank you, Paul and Georgan for your commitment to Chimney Swifts, conservation, and Travis Audubon. Others who made this happen include Ann Connell, Don Connell, Pat Dillon, Anne Donovan, Burgess Jackson, John Kelly, Clifton Ladd of Loomis Austin, Dan Laney, Jeff Mundy, and Bob Warneke. Thank you all!

Birds love us.  
So will you.



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*continued on page 5*



# NATURALIST'S CALENDAR

by Bill Reiner

photo by Robert Baumgardner

The first birdsong of spring is a revelation. It comes, oftentimes, on a sunny February morning after several days of murky weather. It may be the irrepressible caroling of a Northern Cardinal, the shimmering trill of a Field Sparrow, the rollicking chant of a Carolina Wren, the warble of a House Finch, or the yodeling of an Eastern Meadowlark. It shakes you awake, as if you've been sleeping. Only then do you recognize the silence that came before.

Of course, you can hear some bird or other sing at virtually any time of year. White-crowned Sparrows, for instance, commonly break into song on mid-winter days. (Then again, to a bird that breeds in the boreal forest, a winter day in Austin may *feel* like a spring day in Canada.) Still, birdsong is notably scarce on cloudy, cold January days.

That's not to say that birds are completely silent in winter. Birds call year-round. "Birdsong" and "birdcall" are sometimes used interchangeably, especially by non-birders. However, songs and calls are quite distinct for many species, and birds employ them for different purposes.

Calls are generally short single or double notes. They are often ventriloquistic, so that the source of the sound is hard to pinpoint. Think of the "chip" of an Eastern Phoebe, the "churr" of a Carolina Wren, or the "shree" of a Spotted Towhee. Juveniles and adults, males and females, all give call notes. They serve a variety of functions – such as keeping birds of a pair or a flock together, or communicating alarm or agitation. Most birds have a repertoire of calls to communicate different messages.

Songs are usually much more complex. Birds proclaim them loudly, often from exposed perches. The primary purposes of songs have to do with breeding – defending territory and attracting a mate – so males do most or all of the singing, during the breeding seasons of spring and summer.

Many birds, such as herons and ducks, do not sing at all. For others, "songs" are simply modified calls. Songs are most highly developed in a large group of species called the oscines. These true songbirds include all of the birds mentioned in the first part of this column, as well as thrushes, larks, starlings, thrashers, vireos, warblers, and tanagers. It also includes birds not known for their singing such as swallows, crows, waxwings, and titmice.

One characteristic the oscines share is a well-developed syrinx. This anatomical structure, unique to birds, is a box-like chamber surrounded by membranes that (like human vocal chords) can be vibrated by air from the lungs to produce sound. The syrinx is situated at the bottom of the bird's trachea (or "windpipe") where the trachea splits into the bronchial tubes that lead to the lungs. This position is closer to the bird's center of gravity than

the larynx – which, in humans, houses the vocal chords, and sits at the top of the trachea. Birds are, therefore, less top-heavy, and better able to fly.

A bird can vary its vocal pitch by contracting the muscles around the syrinx. In general, a bird with more syringeal muscles can potentially produce a wider array of vocalizations. The more accomplished vocalists, such as starlings, crows, and catbirds (all oscines) have seven to nine pairs of these muscles. Pigeons and doves have just one pair. Turkey Vultures have no syrinx at all, so are limited to hisses, grunts, and other non-vocal sounds.

Another common trait of the true songbirds is that they all must learn their songs. Calls are, by and large, instinctive. The knowhow to make these sounds is apparently encoded in the bird's genes. A fledgling Bewick's Wren, fresh out of the nest, will give calls much like his parents, but he will need several weeks of listening and practice before he can begin to produce a song like that of his father.

A songbird that has not heard the songs of his kind during a critical song-learning period will be unable to sing a "proper" song – recognizable to others of his species – for the rest of his life. There are even instances in which a bird has learned the "wrong" song. Western Meadowlarks, for instance, have been known to sing typical Eastern Meadowlark songs, though their calls were the distinctive – and instinctual – notes of their own species.

Aside from the oscines, the vast majority of birds are born knowing both calls and songs. The flycatchers are good examples. Eastern Phoebes that were raised in isolation in laboratories sang songs virtually identical to wild birds. Recently-fledged Alder Flycatchers (both male and female) sang songs softer than, but otherwise very similar to, those of their father.

Ornithologist Donald Kroodsma was the first to prove that these flycatchers have innate knowledge of their songs. You can read the narrative of this discovery, as well as many other fascinating stories about birds and their songs, in his book *The Singing Life of Birds*. Though very readable, this book is quite detailed. For a more general narrative, you might try Don Stap's book, *Birdsong: A Natural History*, in which he relates his experiences travelling with Professor Kroodsma and others researching birdsong.

Other sources for this article included *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, by John K. Terres, and *The Birder's Handbook*, by Paul R. Ehrlich et al.

Chaetura Canyon, continued from page 3

## ***Qs & As for the Kyles...***

### ***How did you get involved with Chimney Swifts?***

We were introduced to our first Chimney Swift in 1983 at the Travis County Humane Society while volunteering with Wildlife Rescue. Someone had found a small, sleek, black bird on the ground. It had apparently collided with a window. The volunteer handed us a shoebox, and [inside it], we were confronted with the most remarkable eyes we had ever seen. When we carefully reached inside the box, the bird did not struggle. Instead, it willingly climbed on, clung tightly, gazed directly into our eyes for a few moments, then wearily closed its lids. We were unsure of the species, but it was certainly different than anything for which we had ever cared. When we arrived home with the bird, we went straight to *Peterson's Field Guide* and confirmed that it was indeed an adult Chimney Swift.

### ***How did you care for that first Chimney Swift?***

Our rehabilitation reference materials indicated that because of the unique physiology of the species and the fact that they ate small flying insects caught in flight, this bird would require hand-feeding. After 17 days of being force-fed a mealworm-based diet, it regained its health and was released. Since then, we have not been able to walk outside without looking up at the sky.

### ***What made you decide to donate Chaetura Canyon to Travis Audubon?***

When we looked around at the natural beauty and bounty of native wildlife in the canyon, we began to contemplate the

long term future of the property. Several organizations were actively preserving habitat in the Central Texas area, but only Travis Audubon had a primary focus on birds – it was a natural decision.

### ***What do you hope to accomplish by donating the canyon to TAS?***

We expect that by donating the property to TAS, Chaetura Canyon will be preserved, in perpetuity, as natural habitat within a rapidly urbanizing area of Central Texas while providing a safe place for native species of birds to forage, raise their young and rest during migration.

By Paul and Georgean Kyle,  
from Texas A&M University Press ...

*Chimney Swift Towers: New Habitat For America's Mysterious Birds: A Construction Guide* (Louise Lindsey Merrick Natural Environment Series, 2005)

*Chimney Swifts: America's Mysterious Birds Above The Fireplace* (Louise Lindsey Merrick Natural Environment Series, 2005)

## **Chimney Swift Tower Workshop at Chaetura Canyon**

Georgean and Paul Kyle will conduct a workshop on building and maintaining habitat for Chimney Swifts on Sunday, March 4th, from 1-4 p.m.

The workshop will begin with an introduction to Chimney Swifts that includes a slide presentation and video highlights from a typical nesting season.

Participants will then construct and install an 8' tall tower on site at Chaetura Canyon. After the project is completed, Georgean and Paul will lead the class on a one-mile walking tour of the Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary. There are currently fifteen Chimney Swift towers on the property that demonstrate a variety of designs and materials. Refreshments will be served follow the tour.

Master Naturalists and property owners with wildlife exemptions may find this workshop useful in their conservation efforts. Chimney Swift Towers also make great Eagle Scout projects, so Scout Masters, Eagle candidates and their parents should consider taking advantage of this unique opportunity.

Registration is limited to 12 builders (16 years of age and older). The cost of this workshop is \$25 for TAS members and \$35 for non-members. The fee includes a copy of the Kyles book, "*Chimney Swift Towers: New Habitat for America's Mysterious Birds.*"

For more information or to sign up for the workshop, please contact Anne Donovan at 472-3030 or email her at [ajdonovan@austin.rr.com](mailto:ajdonovan@austin.rr.com)

For a preview of the walking tour, visit [www.chimneyswifts.org](http://www.chimneyswifts.org) and click on the "Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary" link.



# Balcones Canyonlands Preserve



## 2007 Hike & Lecture Series

[www.balconescanyonlands.org](http://www.balconescanyonlands.org)

Introducing an exciting opportunity to learn about one of the most unique urban preserve systems in the country and visit numerous sites in Travis County around Austin.



Photo: John Ingram



Photo: Carlo Abbruzzese

The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve was created in 1996 for the conservation of habitat for eight endangered species and as a means for economic development to continue west of Austin, Texas. Several entities manage land dedicated to the preserve system that will ultimately set aside 30,428 acres.

### ••••• *Travis Audubon is the March host!* •••••

Saturday, March 10, 8-10 a.m.  
Baker Sanctuary (NW Austin)

“Golden-cheeked Warblers - Are They Here Yet?”  
(As of press time, this event was full, but please check back for a waiting list.)

## Monthly programs provide access into unique environment of Balcones Canyonlands

The public will have the opportunity to learn about the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve through a new Hike & Lecture Series in 2007 offering either a hike or lecture on the second Saturday of every month. Public and private groups that manage land dedicated to the preserve system have partnered to arrange nine guided hikes and three lectures providing access and insight into management of these lands for endangered species. All the events are free and celebrate the stewardship efforts of our community.

Experts in birding, restoration, endangered species conservation, and land management will guide participants on nine hikes into spectacular and protected habitat. These outings range from a three-hour rugged and strenuous hike for adults to an hour and a half tour on a paved path for all ages. Three lectures are presented by individuals that call the Austin area home, though their expertise and work place them among the best environmental scientists in the country.

The free events are being held throughout western Travis County reflecting the geographic range of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve system. The hikes require advance registration and some have age restrictions. For information about the entire series of events, how to register and to download a brochure visit [www.balconescanyonlands.org](http://www.balconescanyonlands.org) or call 512-263-6437.

Series partners include the City of Austin, Travis County, Lower Colorado River Authority, the Nature Conservancy, Travis Audubon Society, Westcave Preserve and Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve.

# Travis Audubon Salutes...

At our holiday party in December, Travis Audubon recognized two very important members – birders who have taught others about birding and conservation, and made major impacts on the birding community in Central Texas and beyond. We presented each honoree with a Certificate of Appreciation, and someone who knew them well spoke about each one, as follows:



“I first became aware of Red and Marjorie Adams when I stopped in the Visitors Center at McKinney Falls State Park in the late 1970s, and watched their award-winning film, ‘What Good Is A Warbler?’, which documented the plight of a beautiful but declining songbird, the Golden-cheeked Warbler. I was enrolled at the University of Texas in graduate school, but was struggling to find a suitable dissertation topic. Having come from Southern California where the loss of native habitats was so apparent, it was only natural for my research to focus on the effects of urbanization and the conservation of rare species. Thus I chose to pursue a dissertation on urban and native bird populations in central Texas. To make a long story short, that graduate research eventually lead to gainful employment with the City of Austin’s Environmental Department just at a time when land development issues were become a very hot topic.”

“Through the efforts of a lot of people, solutions to some very tough conservation problems took the form of such tangible results as the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves and a National Wildlife Refuge of the same name—both dedicated to the conservation of several endangered species, including the Golden-cheeked Warbler, and all of them owing their existence in large measure to a seed of inspiration from that little film of Red and Marjorie Adams, ‘What Good Is A Warbler?’”

*Chuck Sexton, PhD, Wildlife Biologist  
Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge*

*Read some of these birders’ incredible work:*

- *Bird-Witched! How Birds Can Change a Life* by Marjorie Valentine Adams (University of Texas Press, 2005)
- *Two Texas Birders: Cameos and Capers* by Fred Webster and Marie Webster (Word Wright International, 2002)
- *The Road to El Cielo: Mexico's Forest in the Clouds* by Fred Webster and Marie Webster (University of Texas Press, 2002)

“In 1996 I was not a birder. I had discovered goldfinches, American I think, and I knew I wanted to know more about this thing called birding. I discovered that UT Informal Classes offered an Intro to Birding class taught by a character named Fred Webster, so I signed up. When I arrived for the class, I learned a couple of things quickly. First, this Fred Webster character really was a character! Second, Fred had a great assistant instructor, Marie Webster. They were an awesome team, and the class was remarkable. I remember the exact spot during a class field trip where I saw my first male Painted Bunting. As I look back over my life as a birder, that’s the moment that I was hooked. Part of it had to do with the male Painted Bunting – they still take my breath away. But a bigger part had to do with the enthusiasm and generosity of Fred and Marie as they shared their love for birds with the class. Fred and Marie’s passion played a large part in me being the birder and the conservationist that I am today.”

“I recently attended a workshop about living an extraordinary life. Fred and Marie – you are living extraordinary lives. And I and thousands of other people have reaped major benefits from the lives you have lived. On a personal level, thank you for sharing your love of birds with me. My life has been much more rewarding since you turned me on to birds. As President of Travis Audubon Society, thank you for all you have done for our birds, and for all the birders and conservationists you created, and for all you have done for Travis Audubon Society. The world is a much better place due to your willingness to live your passion.”

*Shelia Hargis, President  
Travis Audubon Society*



# Monthly Meeting Information

Thursday, February 15, 2006, 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm for social time)

## TAS Regular Monthly Meeting Program: Paddling the Wild Neches

Presenter: Richard Donovan

February's presentation chronicles a 235-mile solo canoe trip made down the Neches River from U. S. highway 175 just northwest of Jacksonville downriver to B. A. Steinhagan Lake. The purpose of the twenty-four day camping trip was to call attention to the natural beauty of the area that threads the very heart of the Central Flyway and to create an awareness of the great variety of birds and animals that inhabit the water and the hardwood bottomland forest along the river's trace. Somehow the Neches has been spared the machines of man and in many places looks much like it did when Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and others waded and swam it almost 200 years ago. The Neches is a treasure too valuable to be lost. Hopefully we can successfully resist all attempts to dam, dredge, clear-cut or otherwise alter the integrity of this wild beautiful stream.

A large part of Richard Donovan's time is devoted to Texas environmental issues. He is a member of the Texas Committee on Natural Resources (TCONR) and serves as Chair of TCONR's Forest Task Force, where he focuses his efforts primarily on issues that affect the forests, wildlife habitat, and water resources of the state. He is active in several environmental organizations: National Wildlife Federation, East Texas Forest and Wildlife Coalition, and Pineywoods Sierra Group. His book, *Paddling the Wild Neches*, was published in May 2006 by Texas A&M University Press and is now in its second printing. The Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club awarded Mr. Donovan the Evelyn R. Edens Award and the National Wildlife Federation named him Conservation Hero for efforts to protect the Neches and the 200 species of trees, 300 species of birds, 50 species of animals and countless species of fish, amphibians, and reptiles that live in the river and its bottomland hardwood habitat.

Program begins at 7:00 pm. **Location:** LCRA Board Room, 3700 Lake Austin Blvd. The board room is in the Hancock Building, the middle building in the courtyard. We'll be in the room on the left upon entering. Parking available in garage. **Bus Routes** available at [www.capmetro.austin.tx.us](http://www.capmetro.austin.tx.us). **Bicycle routes** at [www.ci.austin.x.us/bicycle/bikemap.htm](http://www.ci.austin.x.us/bicycle/bikemap.htm); 974-7240. Refreshments provided.

### More information on February's topic



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### From the Travis Audubon office on the Neches River

#### Web sites:

- [www.southwestpaddler.com/docs/neches.html](http://www.southwestpaddler.com/docs/neches.html)  
The Neches River page from this site about recreation on the rivers, creeks and streams of Texas and elsewhere.
- [www.tconr.org](http://www.tconr.org)  
Based in Austin, the Texas Committee on Natural Resources sponsors the Neches River Protection Initiative and is working to designate the Neches as a National Scenic River.
- [www.btatx.org](http://www.btatx.org)  
The Big Thicket Association, based in Saratoga, Texas, protects the wildlife diversity of the Big Thicket, mainly through acquisition of land and conservation easements.

#### Parks on or near the Neches River:

- Davy Crockett National Forest
- Angelina National Forest
- Big Thicket National Preserve
- Martin Dies State Park

#### Recommended reading:

- *Paddling the Wild Neches (Texas A&M Nature Guides)* by Richard M. Donovan (Texas A&M University Press, 2006)
- *Reflections on the Neches: A Naturalist's Odyssey Along the Big Thicket's Snow River* by Geraldine Ellis Watson (University of North Texas Press, 2003)
- *Rivers and Rapids: Canoeing, Rafting and Fishing Guide; Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma* by Ben Nolen and Bob Narramore (Rivers & Rapids, 2000)

#### Did you know ...

- The Neches River area is significant breeding habitat of the Wood Duck and a very important wintering area for the Mallard in the central flyway.
- Other animals of note in the area are the bobcat, river otter, and the threatened American alligator.



# Baker Sanctuary News

As of this writing, the fabrication and hot dip galvanizing of the structural steel for the Jackie Arnold Education Center is nearly complete. In December, the contractor trenched and installed the underground conduit for the new electrical service from the Pedernales Electric Coop pole to the Baker Cabin and from this same pole to the east side of the JAEC. Also, IDM Builders trenched and installed the drain field for the rainwater collection cistern overflow and back filled the electrical conduit trenches.



Photo courtesy of Marcie Wilcox

The Sanctuary received over four inches of rain in December. This amount brought the total annual rainfall amount to just over thirty-three inches, which was six inches more rainfall than the Sanctuary received in 2005.

In the July 2006 *Signal Smoke*, I reported on the progress of the Regional Water Supply Project (RWSP) partnership involving the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), the City of Cedar Park, Leander and Round Rock and the six preliminary water distribution proposals. In mid-December, I received word that the LCRA, after thoroughly evaluating the options, determined that it was in the best interest of all parties for them to withdraw from the project and let the cities develop the project on their own. The LCRA will continue to

supply raw water to Round Rock and Cedar Park under existing contracts. LCRA will also continue to supply treated water to Leander from their Sandy Creek Water Treatment Plant. On one hand, rapid residential and business development in Northwest Travis County is driving the increased demand for water. On the other hand, we are still in the grip of an extended drought with the current level of Lake Travis at around 50 percent of capacity, while water conservation measures remain voluntary. I doubt that the withdrawal of the LCRA from the project will stop water development efforts, but it will require the remaining RWSP partners to design other options to provide water to their constituents. Any plan that proposes drafting water from Lake Travis will involve the LCRA and designs for water distribution pipelines must consider the extent

of environmental impacts to affected Balcones Canyonlands Preserve partners.

## **Sanctuary Closed**

The Baker Sanctuary will remain closed until February 3, 2007.

## **Baker Sanctuary Annual Open House Date Set**

Mark your calendars for the Annual TAS Baker Sanctuary Open House scheduled for Saturday, March 17, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. until noon. This year, we will need at least ten guides to show our visitors our Golden-cheeked Warblers, plus other volunteers to greet our visitors, help sign them in and show them where to park. Please contact us here at the Sanctuary at 219-8425 if you would like to volunteer to help with the Open House.

*John Wilcox, TAS-Baker Sanctuary Steward*

## **Bet you didn't know....**

A frequent question from members: why is *Signal Smoke* called *Signal Smoke*? The answer goes back a long time, almost to the beginning of Travis Audubon Society. Our first president, Bradley Davis, was looking for a catchy name. He worked during summers as a counselor at a boy's camp, which had a newsletter. And the newsletter's name was – you guessed it – *Signal Smoke*. Bradley took a fancy to it, recommended it to the Society, and it's been the name of our newsletter ever since its second issue.

*John Kelly*

## **Austin-Area Birding Guide**

We still need folks to help with the update of the Austin-Area Birding Guide. This is a booklet describing about three dozen good birding sites within 30 or so miles of Austin. If you'd like to volunteer or would like more information, contact John Kelly at [jfkellyaustin53@hotmail.com](mailto:jfkellyaustin53@hotmail.com).

## **Business Members**

Travis Audubon is delighted to recognize its Business Members:

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To learn about the benefits of supporting Travis Audubon as a Business Member, please go to [www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org) and click on Business Members, or contact Valerie Staats at 512.300.BIRD (2473).

# PLANNED GIVING TO TRAVIS AUDUBON

IN THIS AND OTHER ISSUES of *Signal Smoke*, you've read about bequests to Travis Audubon. Those bequests have made all the difference to our capacity to do our birding and conservation work. The Jackie Arnold Education Center that we're now building was made possible by a bequest. Nearly 600 acres of the 680-acre Baker Sanctuary, where the Education Center is being built, were donated to us. Blair Woods, where we host Austin Wildlife Rescue, was a bequest to Travis Audubon. Sara Jean Oatman was recognized in a recent *Signal Smoke* for the generous cash gift that we received from her estate. And as our President notes in this issue, the lovely wildlife preserve Chaetura Canyon was just gifted to Travis Audubon through a Life Estate.

Naming Travis Audubon Society in your will is a wonderful way to help ensure not just the organization's future, but our future capacity to keep protecting birds and their habitat here in Central Texas. Bequests to Travis Audubon may take the form of cash, property, stocks, life insurance, and so on, and you should carefully plan your estate with your attorney. Your attorney may find the following language helpful in preparing your will:

"I bequeath to the Travis Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit organization with its principal offices located at 3710 Cedar Street, Austin, Texas 78705, \_\_\_\_\_ % of my residual estate (or the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_) for its ongoing programs."

Some Travis Audubon members have contacted us about setting aside a percentage of their retirement accounts or life insurance

policy as a legacy to Travis Audubon. It's easy to designate us as a beneficiary (usually a simple form), and for that you'll need our federal tax ID number.

Please contact me in the Travis Audubon office to get the ID number, by calling 512-300-BIRD (2473) or e-mailing [valerie@travisaudubon.org](mailto:valerie@travisaudubon.org). If you do name Travis Audubon Society in your will, please let us know, so that we may keep you informed of our good works.

*Valerie Staats*

## *Happy Trails to Richard Kaskan*

If you've gone birding at Hornsby Bend, chances are you've walked with Richard Kaskan, a long-time Travis Audubon member and birder who has led some forty TAS field trips at Hornsby since January 2003. Tall, lean, and pony-tailed, with a super knowledge of birds, Richard has also led informal or special-purpose walks at Hornsby Bend, for the Cub Scouts, the Wimberley Birding Club, TOS, and other groups. Alas, it's Texas' loss and the Empire State's gain that Richard and his partner are moving to New York due to a job offer they "can't refuse." We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to Richard for the time, effort, and care he has put into leading the monthly walks at Hornsby Bend, and for his unfailing interest in Travis Audubon projects and events. Thank you, Richard – you will be missed!

## *President's column, continued from page 2*

several years ago. Bob has many contacts in Latin America and will still be involved, just in a less time-consuming role.

In early December I attended the Landmark Forum, a workshop during which we explored the possibility of living an effective and extraordinary life. Living an extraordinary life involves living your passion, and a person living such a life touches others in his/her community, the nation, the world. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. were two examples we discussed in the workshop. As I contemplated these concepts, I realized that I have been fortunate enough to have known numerous people who are living extraordinary lives. The ones that stand out the most are the conservationists. A few examples include Fred and Marie Webster (they introduced me and hundreds of others to birds through their Introduction to Birding classes), Marjorie Adams (she and her husband, Red, educated many about the Golden-cheeked Warbler through their documentary *What Good is a Warbler*), Paul and Georgan Kyle (they are the world's leading experts on Chimney Swifts and Chimney Swift conservation), and Craig

Damuth (he founded the Malcolm C. Damuth Foundation which helps fund land conservation projects world-wide.) These people have touched my life in a profound way. They are also having profound impacts on our natural world, and their contributions show a wide range of ways to make our world a better place.

As we finished the Forum, we were challenged to create a possibility for our lives. One of the possibilities I created for myself is to inspire others to love and respect our natural world. I have had and continue to have wonderful mentors to help me be an effective conservationist, and I'm excited about passing that gift on to others. So, if you are already living your passion, thank you and keep up the great work! If not, I challenge you to make 2007 the year you start living your passion. If that passion involves conservation, Travis Audubon Society and I stand ready to help you. "Be the change you wish to see in the world." - Gandhi.

*Shelia Hargis*

# DASTARDLY DUOS

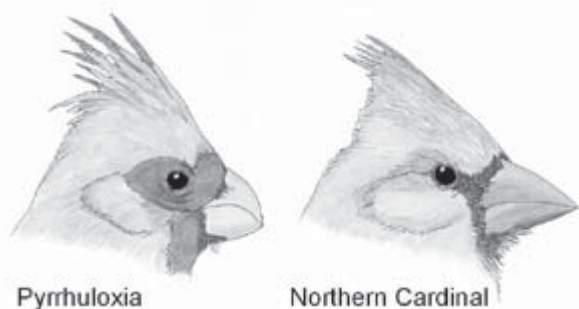
Reprinted with permission from the March 2002 *Vermilion Flycatcher* newsletter of the Tucson Audubon Society ([www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org)).

## Northern Cardinal and Pyrrhuloxia

by Larry Liese

Illustrations by George C. West

There comes a time in every budding birder's career where he or she has to bite the bullet and start learning to distinguish between similar *female and immature* birds as well as the adult males. A good pair of species to cut your teeth on (ouch!) is the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and the Pyrrhuloxia (*Cardinalis sinuatus*). Both are resident in southeastern Arizona, and many of us have both right in our backyards!



One thing I like about this duo is that they help break beginning birders out of the “single-field-mark” syndrome. When they are told to look at the color of the bill (red/orange for cardinal – yellow for Pyrrhuloxia), sooner or later along comes a juvenile with a dark bill! What gives? Now, curious, they will *want to know* what's going on, and with the many quality field guides available, will look it up and *learn*. This is a point I try to make on Audubon field trips. When an interesting field mark is observed by the group, checking out how this mark appears in the different field guides at hand will cause the information to stick in one's memory and come readily to mind when next observing this species. I've found that I retain details obtained in this manner better than from casual perusal of those same guides.

Now, back to this issue's duo. The adult male cardinal doesn't need an introduction. He is probably the most recognizable bird in America after the adult Bald Eagle. My two favorite field marks to look for next are the shape of the bill and color of the facial feathers at the base of the bill.

Pyrrhuloxias have a shorter, parrot-like bill with a noticeable upward curve between bill halves, with a rounder blunt end. Cardinal bills are much longer, and have an almost straight line between bill halves. This distinguishing characteristic works well for identifying juveniles. Both adult cardinals have black facial feathers at the bill's base. Adult male Pyrrhuloxias have red facial feathering surrounding the bill's base, while the Pyrrhuloxia female and juveniles of both species lack color there.

Adult female and juvenile cardinals are a warm *brown* overall, while the adult male Pyrrhuloxia is distinctly gray, and the adult female and juveniles are grayish brown. For many birders, this is all they need to observe to tell them apart. Also, notice how pointed the Pyrrhuloxia's crest is the next time you see one. Cardinal crests form a much squatter triangle.

If any of these details are hard to keep straight, simply go outside, fill up the bird feeder, relax quietly in a chair, and look closely when one of this duo comes to visit. Good luck!

*The Travis Audubon Society's checklist, “Birds of the Austin, Texas Region”, indicates that Northern Cardinals are quite common all year long. To observe a rather uncommon Pyrrhuloxia, however, one should look west of Austin (e.g., Pace Bend Park and the Lake Buchanan area) from November through mid-April.*

A black and white advertisement for Earth Share of Texas. The background is a photograph of a forest stream with a waterfall. Text is overlaid on the image. At the top left, it says "One Environment. One Simple Way To Care For It.®". In the middle left, it says "Earth Share of Texas" followed by "represents leading environmental and conservation organizations in payroll deduction plans across the state." At the bottom right, there is a small logo for Earth Share of Texas and the text "Earth Share OF TEXAS".

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# TAS Events - Feb 2007

**Saturday, February 10**    **Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend**  
7 am & 4 pm    Contact Kevin Anderson at 972-1960 for more information. Sponsored monthly by the Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory.

**Saturday, February 17**    **Monthly Bird Walk at Hornsby Bend**  
7:30 am to noon    After leading more than forty field trips at Hornsby Bend since January of 2003, Richard Kaskan is moving back to New York! We will sorely miss him but promise to have a qualified leader for this walk every third Saturday, as always. Contact Stan Van Sandt (empidider@yahoo.com, 707-7438) for more information or to volunteer to lead!

**Saturday, February 17**    **5th Annual Canyon of the Eagles/Vanishing Texas Field Trip**  
half-day (exact time TBA)    We're going ahead with this popular Travis Audubon field trip, though low water conditions at Lake Buchanan have changed the routine some. The cruise we took last year, up the river and past two sets of waterfalls, is not possible at this time. (See [www.vtrc.com/low\\_river\\_warning.html](http://www.vtrc.com/low_river_warning.html) for details.) I have been told that the low river levels upriver are pushing fish and birds down into the main lake, so there should be plenty to see. At this time, the tour is stopping on an island that is a nature preserve for a short hike before resuming the boating trip. We may add a bird walk if people are interested. Cost is \$15 pp. If you are interested, please e-mail me a.s.a.p. at [mebentley@austin.rr.com](mailto:mebentley@austin.rr.com) - Mark Bentley.

**Wednesday, February 21**    **Lunchtime at Central Park Pond**  
12 noon to 1 pm     Excellent for absolute first-timers, kids, and beginning birders. Lunchtime birding at Central Park, led by Travis Audubon's Executive Director. Bring your binoculars and we'll see what turns up at the Park's pond and grounds. We've seen a Green Heron, a Yellow-crowned Night Heron, and a large family of Wood Ducks. If you live or work in the neighborhood, walk over to meet us at the NW corner of 38th and Guadalupe. If driving, you could park at Central Market and walk to that corner. Please dress for the weather! We'll walk the flat, crushed gravel trail at a leisurely pace. Please e-mail [valerie@travisaudubon.org](mailto:valerie@travisaudubon.org) to sign up. Wheelchair accessible.

**Saturday, February 24**    **Bird Walk at McKinney Falls State Park**  
7:30 am to 10:30 am    Meet at the entrance at 7:30 – bring four dollar bills for day use fee since park personnel won't be there to make change. Breakfast tacos afterwards at Curra's. Contact Stan VanSandt (empidider@yahoo.com, 707-7438) for more information. *Co-leader needed.*

**Tuesday, February 27**    **Field Trip to Bastrop and Buescher State Parks**  
9 am to 12 noon    Second of a projected series of monthly, mid-week bird walks in Austin-area State Parks. Contact Terry Banks at 451-6302 or [tessiembanks@msn.com](mailto:tessiembanks@msn.com) for more information.

**Tuesday, February 27**    **Field trip to Oklahoma, led by Gary Waggerman**  
through Monday, March 5    Lesser Prairie Chickens, Smith's Longspurs, American Tree Sparrows, Snow Buntings – who knows what northern birds we might see just a six or eight hour drive due north of here? The dates include two driving days and five birding days. Contact Gary Waggerman to register, [waggerman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:waggerman@sbcglobal.net). Interested in flying up for a long weekend and meeting Gary's group in the field? Contact Stan Van Sandt (empidider@yahoo.com, 707-7438).

# TAS Events - Mar 2007

Saturday, March 10  
7 am & 4 pm

**Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend**  
Contact Kevin Anderson at 972-1960 for more information. Sponsored monthly by the Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory.

Saturday, March 17  
7:30 am to noon

**Monthly Bird Walk at Hornsby Bend**  
After leading more than forty field trips at Hornsby Bend since January of 2003, Richard Kaskan is moving back to New York! We will sorely miss him but promise to have a qualified leader for this walk every third Saturday, as always. Contact Stan Van Sandt (empidider@yahoo.com, 707-7438) for more information or to volunteer to lead!


Tuesday, March 20  
7 am to noon

**Field Trip to Reimers Ranch Park**  
This newly acquired Travis County Park has not been thoroughly explored in spring migration yet - be among the pioneers! Meet at the "park-and-ride" in Oak Hill to carpool and help defray the \$8 per vehicle cost. Contact Terry Banks at 451-6302 or tessiebanks@msn.com for more information.

Saturday, March 24  
7:30 am to early afternoon

**Field Trip to Guadalupe River State Park**  
Plan on leaving Austin before dawn (be sure to pack a picnic lunch, at least) or camping Friday night at the park. Campers might hear migrating or nesting Common Poorwill. Golden-cheeked Warblers and other hill country birds nest in the area. Limited to 10 participants, please contact Stan Van Sandt (empidider@yahoo.com, 707-7438) to register. *Co-leaders needed.*

Wednesday, March 28  
12 noon to 1 pm

 **Lunchtime at Central Park Pond**  
Excellent for absolute first-timers, kids, and beginning birders. Lunchtime birding at Central Park, led by Travis Audubon's Executive Director. Bring your binoculars and we'll see what turns up at the Park's pond and grounds. We've seen a Green Heron, a Yellow-crowned Night Heron, and a large family of Wood Ducks. If you live or work in the neighborhood, walk over to meet us at the NW corner of 38th and Guadalupe. If driving, you could park at Central Market and walk to that corner. Please dress for the weather! We'll walk the flat, crushed gravel trail at a leisurely pace. Please e-mail valerie@travisaudubon.org to sign up. Wheelchair accessible.

Saturday, March 31  
7:30 am to early afternoon

**Field Trip to Palmetto State Park**  
Plan on leaving Austin before dawn (be sure to pack a picnic lunch, at least) or camping Friday night at the park. Campers might hear migrating Whip-poor-will. Singing Northern Parulas should be on territory. Limited to 10 participants, please contact Stan Van Sandt (empidider@yahoo.com, 707-7438) to register. *Co-leaders needed.*

**About TAS Field Trips** All TAS field trips are open to members and nonmembers and to experienced and inexperienced birders. Wear appropriate clothing and walking shoes, and bring binoculars and water. Unless otherwise noted, field trips are free. Carpoolers should expect to pay a share of the gasoline expense. For complete, up-to-date information on field trips, including cancellations due to weather or other circumstances, please check the TAS website at [www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org). Because of the publication schedule of the newsletter, things can change. If you do not have Internet access, please contact the person(s) listed with the event description.

**About Hornsby Bend** Maps and other information about the Hornsby Bend facility may be found on the Hornsby Bend website at [www.hornsbybend.org](http://www.hornsbybend.org)

## Beginning Birding Classes

If you enjoy seeing birds in your yard and want to learn to identify them, or if you've been looking for a new nature-oriented hobby, perhaps a birding class is just what you need to begin the new year right. Once again TAS will sponsor both a daytime and an evening series of classes for beginning birders. Participants may register for either series, and each will include four lecture/slide sessions and four field trips. Because field trips provide the opportunity to put into practice the skills taught in the classroom, we strongly encourage registrants to make a commitment to attend the field trips as well as the lectures.

Jean Martin is beginning her 8<sup>th</sup> year teaching the classes, which are designed to provide new birders with the techniques and skills to help them identify unfamiliar birds. Participants will receive a beginning birding booklet, plus many other handouts. Among the topics to be discussed are choosing binoculars and field guides, identification tips, and bird migration.

The lecture/slide presentations will be held at a location in northwest Austin. Field trips will be taken to various locations in Travis and nearby counties later in the same week as the classes. Trips begin early in the morning and end between noon and 2 p.m.

### ***Schedule for the Wednesday Afternoon Class***

Lecture/slide presentations will be held from 1-3:30 p.m. on Feb. 21, Feb. 28, Mar. 14, and Mar. 28. Field trips will be on Thursdays beginning about 7 a.m. The first two field trips will end about noon and the last two will end about 2 p.m.; the dates are Feb. 22, Mar. 1, 15, and 29.

### ***Schedule for the Thursday Evening Class***

Lecture/slide presentations will be held from 7-9:30 p.m. on Feb. 22, Mar. 8, Mar. 15, and Mar. 29. Field trips will be on Saturdays beginning about 7 a.m. The first two field trips will end about noon and the last two will end about 2 p.m.; the dates are Feb. 24, Mar. 10, 17, and 31.

The class fee is \$45, and class size is limited, so register early, especially for the evening class, which always fills quickly. To register, send e-mail to Jean Martin at [begbird\(at\)austin.rr.com](mailto:begbird(at)austin.rr.com) or phone her at 343-7053. Be sure to specify whether you want to attend the class with the Wednesday afternoon lectures and Thursday field trips or the class with the Thursday evening lectures and Saturday field trips.



## Warbler Identification Class

Spring warbler migration will soon be underway, and so will Travis Audubon Society's Warbler Identification Class. The instructor will again be Cliff Shackelford, ornithologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., who has taught the class every spring for the past 9 years. This popular class will focus on the warbler species likely to be seen in Texas, but other species will be included as time allows.

Lectures will take place Tuesday, April 17 and 24, and Thursday, April 26, from 7-9 p.m. The field trip will be to the Winnie-High Island area on the Upper Texas coast from April 28-29. Tuition is \$60 for TAS members and \$70 for non-members. Class members who participate in the field trip to the Upper Texas Coast will pay an additional \$15 to cover the expenses of the instructor. The field trip will be limited to 14 participants. Meeting location details and registrar contact information will appear in the next issue of *Signal Smoke*.

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# Get Involved in 2007!

## Latin America Committee News

The new year is a time for change, and this new year brings changes to the Latin America committee. Because of his extensive commitments to other birding projects, Bob Warneke is stepping down as chair; however, he has graciously agreed to make himself available for consultation. Thanks, Bob, for all your efforts on the Latin America committee.

Penny Potter is taking over as the new chair. The committee's first steps will be to decide on a meeting time, establish committee goals, and then get moving! If you're already on the LA committee or are interested in joining, contact Penny at [pfpotter@austin.rr.com](mailto:pfpotter@austin.rr.com) or 462-3805.

## Habitat Conservation Committee

The mission of the Habitat Conservation Committee is to provide the Travis Audubon chapter with opportunities to preserve bird habitats in the chapter's service area. The committee will gather and compile information on bird habitats in prairies, riparian forests, hill country areas, and any other important bird areas. The Committee will look for partnerships to support protecting important habitats identified by the Committee and make recommendations to the chapter for action.

Any member interested in serving on this Committee contact Valarie Bristol at [vbristol@tnc.org](mailto:vbristol@tnc.org).

## Notice to TAS members

Our March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting is the annual general meeting, when current TAS members will vote on a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors. The new term will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The entire slate, along with brief biographical information, will be published in the March 2007 *Signal Smoke*, on the TAS website, and will be available at the March meeting. Please be sure your membership is current so you can vote in both these important elections and have a voice in Travis Audubon's governance.

## TRAVIS AUDUBON SOCIETY NATURE BOOK CLUB

We invite you to join the Travis Audubon Society Nature Book Club, which is usually held the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm at BookPeople (6<sup>th</sup> and Lamar, thank you BookPeople!). The group is informal and fun, and you can choose to go to all the meetings and discuss all the books, or you can pick and choose the meetings featuring books you would like to discuss. You do not have to have read the book to attend. In the coming months we're reading:

Thursday, February 22 - *Paddling the Wild Neches* by Richard M. Donavan

Thursday, March 22 - *A Year in the Maine Woods* by Bernd Heinrich

**This selection is tentative!** Before you commit to reading a book for a particular month, you may want to call Terry Banks at 451-6302 or e-mail [tessiembanks@msn.com](mailto:tessiembanks@msn.com) to find out if the book is still current.

## Ongoing TAS Meetings

Program Committee: meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, contact Marsha May, 965-6714

TAS Board of Directors: meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month (except for December), contact: Shelia Hargis, 300-BIRD

Urban Habitat Development Group: meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month, contact: Jane Tillman, 794-0058

Education Committee: meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month, contact: Byron Stone, 451-3380

Latin America Committee Meeting: meets most 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, contact Penny Potter, [pfpotter@austin.rr.com](mailto:pfpotter@austin.rr.com)

TAS Regular Monthly Meeting: meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month except for June, July & August

Bird Records Committee: meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, contact: Ethel Kutac, 346-7659

TAS Nature Book Club Meeting: the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at BookPeople, contact: [tessiembanks@msn.com](mailto:tessiembanks@msn.com)

Travis Audubon Society  
Membership Secretary  
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Join your local Audubon chapter, Travis Audubon Society, by using the form at the right. Your dues will be put to use supporting local conservation, education, research projects, field trips, and other Travis Audubon activities right here in Central Texas. We seek your support through your membership in our local chapter. (To become a member of the national Audubon, please go to their Web site at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).)

**Join Travis Audubon now and support local birds, wildlife, and their habitats.**

Travis Audubon Society chapter members receive eleven issues of this *Signal Smoke* newsletter, priority sign-ups on local field trips, discounts on our educational classes, the opportunity to participate in our e-mail group and attend our wonderful monthly lectures, and more!

**To join Travis Audubon Society:**

Make your check payable to Travis Audubon Society and send it with this form to TAS Membership Secretary, P. O. Box 40787, Austin, TX 78704, or join on-line using any major credit card by going to [www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org) and clicking on Membership.

**Travis Audubon Society**

YES! I want to enjoy the benefits of Travis Audubon Society chapter membership. Enroll me as a member of Travis Audubon Society. Enclosed is my check for:

- \$12 **Youth Membership** (up to age 18)
- \$25 **Individual Membership**
- \$35 **Family Membership**
- \$75 **Painted Bunting Membership** (bonus Travis Audubon T-shirt)
- \$100 **Vireo Membership** (bonus T-shirt and book)
- \$250 **Warbler Membership** (bonus T-shirt, book, and free workshop)
- \$1,000 **Lifetime Membership** (bonus T-shirt, book, free workshop, and listing in annual report)

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