



SIGNAL SMOKE

The Newsletter of Travis Audubon Society

VOLUME 55, NO. 5

May 2006

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International Migratory Bird Day 2006 Theme:
The Boreal Forest: Bird Nursery of the Americas

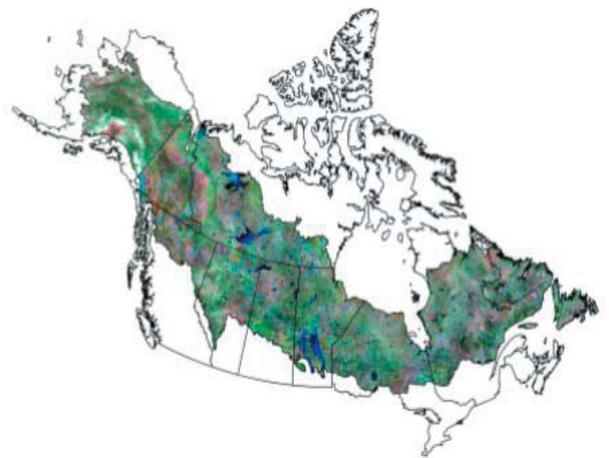
Note from the Executive Director: By design, Travis Audubon's Birdathon 2006 coincides with International Migratory Bird Day and is officially registered as an IMBD event (go to www.birdiq.com and click on the Explorer's Map). We hope you'll observe IMBD by supporting our Birdathon and by learning about this year's theme, the boreal forest. The following information was adapted from International Migratory Bird Day 2006 resources.

What is International Migratory Bird Day?

Created in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and now under the direction of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, IMBD brings attention to one of the most spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird – the journey between its summer and winter homes. Each year, a team of International Migratory Bird Day coordinators and sponsors selects a theme that is conservation-based, current, positive, tangible, educational, and engaging. Once chosen, the theme becomes the focus of the year's education materials and featured artwork.

What is the Boreal Forest?

The Boreal Forest is immense, spanning the globe 6.5 million square miles across northern regions of Russia, Scandinavia, Canada and Alaska. In North America, the Boreal stretches 1.5 billion acres from interior Alaska across Canada to the Atlantic Ocean. It is large enough to hold 14 Californias, and it accounts for 25% of the world's remaining intact forests. In fact, there is more intact forest in the Canadian Boreal than in the Brazilian Amazon.



Map Credit: Environment Canada

Ecological Values

The Boreal Forest ecosystem is an extraordinary mosaic of interrelated habitats made up of forests, lakes, wetlands, rivers and tundra at its northern edge. The Boreal Forest region is dominated by spruce, aspen, birch, poplar and larch or tamaracks. Thirty percent of North America's Boreal is covered by wetlands, consisting of bogs, fens, marshes, an estimated 1.5 million lakes, and some of the country's largest river systems. The Boreal floor is covered by a dense layer of organic matter made up of peat and moss that is more than 10 feet thick in some areas. This cover is created when fallen trees, pine needles, leaves, and other plant remains fall to the ground and are prevented from decomposing by the cold boreal temperatures. This groundcover is particularly effective in storing carbon, and the boreal forests of Canada and Russia together store more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem on the planet. Because the icy temperatures of the boreal act as a global refrigerator, they

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TAS Regular Monthly Meeting
Thursday, May 18, 7:00 p.m.
 Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for social time

**Bird of the Big Woods –
 An Ivory-bill in the 21st Century**

Speaker: David Luneau

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

see page 9 for additional details



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.

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SIGNAL SMOKE EDITOR

Tess Sherman 974-8582

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

Happy spring migration everyone! Our annual business meeting in March went well. Valerie and I co-presented our 2005 accomplishments, unveiled our vision statement, and talked about what's on the horizon for 2006. We also held the Board of Directors election. The slate of candidates was elected. Welcome to our new Board members Valarie Bristol, Gray Jolink, Jeff Mundy, and Terri Siegenthaler. They have a wealth of knowledge that will complement the experience and knowledge of our returning Board members. Thank you to our retiring Board members Barbara Anderson, Theresa Bayoud, Pat Dillon, and Jane Wilson. Your commitment and hard work for Travis Audubon are greatly appreciated.

Julia Balinsky has been the driving force behind TAS's youth education efforts. It is time for her to pass this responsibility on to someone else. Thank you Julia for all the future conservationists you helped create!

Our Birdathon, a major fundraiser for Travis Audubon, is happening on May 13. Given Valerie's hard work and experience with similar events and your Board's commitment, we're hoping this year will be the biggest TAS Birdathon yet! Unlike the past two years, we are running this one on our own, no Audubon Texas to help.

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Shelia Hargis, photo by Robert Baumgardner

COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS

TAS Rare Bird Alert	Eric Carpenter	300-2473 select option #3
Bird Records	Lawrence Buford	452-6344
	Ethel Kutac	346-7659
Conservation Education—Adult	John Kelly	331-8693
Education—Youth	Bill Reiner	445-0565
	Vacant	
Field Trips	Stan Van Sandt	707-7438
Hospitality	Susan Moak	512-925-4590
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Publications	Tess Sherman	974-8582
Sanctuary Chair	John Wilcox	219-8425
Society Historian	John Kelly	331-8693
Urban Habitat	Jane Tillman	794-0058

ABOUT SIGNAL SMOKE

Subscription Information

Signal Smoke, 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 © 2006. 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 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 974-8582 if you have questions.

Birdathon 2006



Travis Audubon's Birdathon 2006 Saturday, May 13th

www.travisaudubon.org/birdathon06.html

More FAQs (You asked)!

What is it again? Birdathon is the biggest birding event in the country, according to Audubon, and it's Travis Audubon's annual fundraiser that makes our programs possible all year. Like a walkathon, Birdathon is a day when our friends go out birding and collect pledges for each species they count. A quarter, a dollar, ten dollars a species – it's up to you and your sponsors.

Do I have to be a member of Travis Audubon to participate?

No, although we welcome your chapter membership at any time.

How many make a Birdathon team? Two or more people are a team, and the more the merrier. But if you're a loner, you can do Birdathon by yourself – just register with TAS and start collecting pledges! Don't forget to name your team – no name too silly!

I'm already doing a birding project that day. Perfect! Whether it be surveying a particular property, a bird fest, or a species count, that can be your Birdathon day, too! As long as you are birding anywhere in Central Texas and collect pledges, that's Birdathon!

Can children participate? Absolutely! This is a family friendly activity and a great way to have fun with your kids outdoors and learn a thing or two as well! (*Shhh*, don't tell the kids they'll be learning.)

Can a school group be a team? Yes! We've had interest from schools throughout the region. Scout troops, church groups, and neighborhood blocks make good teams, too.

What if I've never been birding before? No better time to give it a go than Birdathon 2006! If you are brand-new to birding, we will provide you with instructions to get you started. And please don't blame us if you get hooked on birding - America's fastest-growing hobby!

What is it rains on May 13th? Die-hard birders will go out anyway; for others, the rain date will be Sunday, May 14th. Take Mom! PS: You can do Birdathon indoors, too, counting species from your armchair.

How do I know what to do? Register using the form on p.15 or the printable form on our Web site. Once we've received your registration, we will contact you to confirm and provide you all the information you need to have a wonderful Birdathon day.

If you are a team leader: We will arrange to get to you the Birdathon ballcaps and other materials for all your sponsors of \$20 or more, during the week before Birdathon. You'll need to collect the pledges and turn the funds into Travis Audubon by Friday, May 19th.

Can't do Birdathon 2006 but still want to support our event?

We welcome your tax-deductible contribution in any amount to our Birdathon. We can connect you to a team that is looking for sponsors, if you like – just let us know. Just mail us a check (payable to Travis Audubon Society with "Birdathon 06" in the memo. line) or go to our Birdathon Web page (see above) for an instant on-line donation button. Thank you for supporting TAS' Birdathon 2006!



Birdathon 2006 Awards

Most Dollars Raised
Most Species Seen
Largest Number of Team Sponsors
Rarest Bird Seen
Most Unusual Birding Location
Biggest Team

Please contact the Travis Audubon office at **512.300.BIRD (2473)** or info@travisaudubon.org with any questions you have about participating in or supporting Birdathon 2006!



NATURALIST'S CALENDAR

by Bill Reiner

photo by Robert Baumgardner

High at the top of a dead tree, at the very tip of the highest limb, the bird perches, motionless but for its head swiveling to follow passing insects. You might have missed it altogether, your eye assuming it to be an extension of the limb. But its swift flight after one of those insects, then back to its perch, like a boomerang, caught your attention.

“So it’s a flycatcher,” you reason, and rightly so, judging from its feeding behavior. “But which one?” There are probably more flycatchers possible in central Texas in May than in any other month. Silhouetted as it is against the bright sky, you have trouble seeing any field marks. It looks bigger than the little *Empidonax* flycatchers, but smaller than a kingbird.

Is it a wood-pewee? You might be tempted to think so if you can make out the dusky brownish wash on the sides of the breast. Yet these marks seem too sharply defined against the white areas – as if the bird is wearing an unbuttoned vest. The proportions aren’t quite right for a wood-pewee either. The head seems disproportionately large, and the tail decidedly too short. When the bird faces you, the outline is almost swallow-like: broad across the shoulders, tapering smoothly down long wings to that short tail.

Open your field guide to the Olive-sided Flycatcher, and congratulate yourself for catching sight of this uncommon migrant on its limited run through Texas. Don’t worry if you didn’t see the whitish patch that your book shows on either side of the rump just above the folded wing. Though diagnostic, this mark is not always visible.

If you have seen this species very many times, you probably recognized it from the first sentence of this column, for Olive-sided Flycatchers almost always choose to perch at the very tip of a high dead limb – usually the highest point of a dead tree. This vantage provides an unobstructed view of the surrounding airspace, allowing this most aerial of our flycatchers to spot its prey.

An Olive-sided Flycatcher’s aerial forays are usually brief, less than 10 seconds long. However, a bird may chase a particularly elusive insect for up to 20 seconds. One observer in the early part of last century described one of these chases: “As it whirled and tumbled in the air in frantic pursuit of a moth, it almost seemed to be coming to pieces, so loosely was it jointed, till a loud click of the beak announced success, and in an instant it was back on its perch, looking as if it had always sat there.”

Virtually all of an Olive-sided Flycatcher’s food consists of flying insects. Unlike Least Flycatchers and other small flycatchers, Olive-sideds almost never glean insects from foliage. They rarely drop to the ground to snatch up an insect the way kingbirds and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers do.

These birds are almost as particular about what they eat as they are about how they get it. The bulk of their diet consists of bees, wasps, and flying ants – all insects in the order Hymenoptera. A 1912 report of stomach samples from various breeding locations found that over 80% contained hymenopterans, and 41% held nothing else. The author of this report noted that “of all the birds examined by the Biological Survey, not one subsists so nearly exclusively upon one order of insects.”

Ornithologists at the time were concerned that Olive-sided Flycatchers could become a pest to beekeepers. However, these birds prefer to breed far from human cities and farms, in the coniferous forests and bogs across Canada, Alaska, and the northeastern edge of the United States. They also range widely through the mountain forests of the western part of the continent – including a few in the Guadalupe Mountains of west Texas. There they may be a valuable asset in the control of epidemics that can plague the lumber industry. A survey in Oregon found that Olive-sided flycatchers in that area primarily ate bark beetles.

Unfortunately, as is the case with other forest birds, the population of Olive-sided Flycatchers is declining. Ornithologists do not know quite why. Careful, selective lumbering activities – including small clearcuts – will actually increase the amount of appropriate habitat, although there is some question whether this habitat is as suitable as clearings created by fire. That the declines have occurred across the breeding range, irrespective of land management, suggests that the major cause is loss of habitat on the wintering range in the montane forests of South America. One report predicted that deforestation there from 1980 to 2000 would deprive this species of 39% of its habitat.

Though they are quite vocal on their breeding range, Olive-sided Flycatchers are usually silent in migration. An alarmed bird might voice a series of quick, staccato *pip* calls, but even that is uncommon. However, if you’re lucky enough to find a male in a loquacious mood, you might hear his distinctive song. Not especially musical, this sounds more like the shrill cry of a party-goer who has had a few drinks too many: “Hick! THREE BEERS!”

May is the best time to see an Olive-sided Flycatcher in spring. On International Migratory Bird Day, May 13, as you comb the parks for the Birdathon, take a second look at those high, exposed branches. You may be lucky enough to spot this tipsy, wasp-loving, dead-branch-impersonating, swallow-flycatcher.

Sources for this column included *Life Histories of North American Flycatchers, Larks, Swallows, and Their Allies*, by Arthur Cleveland Bent, and the Olive-sided Flycatcher account compiled by Bob Altman and Rex Sallabanks in *The Birds of North America* series.



Dan Callaway,
photo by Robert Baumgardner

THE DAN CALLAWAY REPORT

Birding to Lake Somerville - 3/29/06

Participants: Ethel Kutac, Ingrid Huskey, Homer Cunningham, Homer Rushing, Dave Seals, Catfish Kelly and Dan Callaway

Target bird: Swamp Sparrow (none found)

From Austin we headed East on 290. About a mile past the Lee County line, we turned right on CR 203 and kept making right turns until we re-entered 290. Dave located a Cooper's Hawk perched in a tree about a quarter mile from the road. Other good birds along these roads included male Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Eastern Bluebirds. In Giddings we saw several Eurasian Collared-Doves. Continuing East for about eight miles, we turned left at the Nails Creek SP sign and drove to the park. Most of the park was closed but we did bird the area around the boat ramp and horse pens.

Most water birds were seen toward the West, up the Nails Creek/Yegua Creek inlet, which included Gadwall, American Wigeon, Blue and Green-winged Teal, N. Shoveler, White Pelican (100+), Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, American Golden Plover (non-breeding plumage), Greater Yellowlegs, and Least Sandpiper. Woodland birds included Red-bellied and Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwings, Orange-crowned Warbler, singing male Northern Parulas criss-crossing their territories, Yellow-rumped Warblers including at least 2 Audubon's, Chipping, Song and Lincoln's Sparrows, cardinals, Red-wings and Chimney Swifts.

After leaving the park, we turned right on 125 and stopped at Nails Creek. Here we heard a Yellow-throated Vireo but could

never find him. Homer R. saw a Black-throated Green Warbler. We also heard a Pileated Woodpecker call one time. We turned right on 1697 and right again on 124 to Yegua Creek where we called up an Eastern Phoebe and a White-eyed Vireo. We crossed the creek into Burleson County and followed CRs 132, 133, and 134 back across the Yegua and down Red Hill Rd (Lee Co Rd 430). This road is red mud and not recommended in rainy weather. At WMA #5, we birded the swampy area known for Swamp Sparrows, however, most of the swamp was dry due to a lack of rain in the fall and winter. The artesian well was spurting only a straw-sized trickle which did wet a small area where we coaxed a Common Yellowthroat to pop up briefly. We followed CR 430 to 141 where we turned left and back to Giddings. Then we returned to Austin on 290.

Total species: Sixty-seven (twenty-nine at 9 am and thirty-nine by 10 am)

Best birds: American Golden Plover and Northern Parula



President's column, *continued from page 2*

That means we get to keep 100% of the money for the programs and activities you like, too.

If spending an early May day birding and raising money for your favorite conservation organization is not enough to motivate you, participants will be eligible for various awards. You can win an award by raising the most money, having the most sponsors, having the biggest team, seeing the most species, spotting the rarest bird, or birding the most unusual location. Everyone who raises/donates to TAS at least \$20 gets a TAS Birdathon ball cap with our spiffy Birdathon logo.

My team is already preparing our strategy. We plan to follow a "big day" format and will attempt to see as many species as

possible by birding from one side of Travis County to the other. I'd love to have other teams competing with us, so if that's your thing, go for it! If that's not your thing, you can still participate. Sitting on your back porch drinking a cool one, watching the birds at your feeders is also perfectly acceptable. Birding your favorite park or birding a new location that you have always wanted to check out is also great. So, however you want to do it, gather those pledges and then go birding! Maybe we'll see you in the field. Good luck!

For our May 18th membership meeting, we're bringing David Luneau to Austin from Arkansas to talk with us about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Please join us for what promises to be an exciting presentation!

Shelia Hargis

IMBD 2006

IMBD, continued from page 1

are able to keep plant remains from decomposing, thus preventing the release of carbon into the air. The sheer size of the forests may help to regulate the earth's temperature, as it represents an area large enough to help buffer the dangerous effects of climate change.

Conservation Opportunity

The Boreal offers us a chance to conserve one of the Earth's most important wilderness treasures. Although only 8 percent of the boreal is protected, it is still largely intact, with 80% of its land still undeveloped. Unfortunately, one third of the remaining land has already been allocated for industrial use, and the decisions we make in the next few years will play a large part in determining the fate of this vast, biologically rich and largely unspoiled ecosystem.

A coalition of industry, environmental, and First Nation groups has been formed in an effort to combine conservation with sustainable economic development and protect at least half of the boreal from future development. The Boreal Forest Region Conservation Framework is a bold vision to protect 50 percent in a network of large interconnected areas and encourage sustainable, world leading development standards on the remaining landscape.

People

Despite its remote location and natural ruggedness, the North American boreal is home to fourteen percent of Canada's population, or roughly four million people. One third of these inhabitants are aboriginal. There are over 600 indigenous groups living in the area, generally formed into tribal groups known as First Nations. Indigenous Peoples of the Boreal Forest have linked their existence to the forest for hundreds of years, using the trees for heat, the plants for healing, and the animals for both food and clothing.

Wildlife and Birds

The variety of animals that coexist with humans is impressive, with mammals as enormous as a moose and as tiny as a pygmy shrew! The forest is home to the continent's largest population of wolves, lynx, black and grizzly bears, and even the threatened woodland caribou. Over 80 species of butterfly and 40 species of dragonfly live in the Boreal, which also provides over half of the remaining habitat for Mink and Wood Frogs as well as Canada Toads. The lakes of the boreal are teeming with some of the world's largest trout, bass, perch and whitefish.

The best known of the boreal's creatures, however, are the birds. According to Bird Studies Canada, billions of birds breed in the Boreal Forest each spring. Over 300 species regularly occur in the boreal forest, most of them nesting and breeding in the vast forest and its wetlands. The boreal is so important to birds that for at least 96 species, half of their entire breeding populations occur within the region. The diversity of birds using the boreal is impressive. The list includes loons and grebes, swans, ducks and geese, hawks and owls, sandpipers, vireos and flycatchers, and warblers and sparrows.

Importance to Breeding Birds

The Boreal Forest Region of North America, which stretches across 3,500 miles from Alaska to the Atlantic Ocean, is the birthplace of billions of birds each year. It is critical to the survival of nearly half of all North American species, which return each year to the forest to breed. Most boreal nesting birds spend at least some of the year in the United States, and at least 20 percent of birds at North American birdfeeders in winter have returned after a summer in the boreal.

Different Birds, Different Uses

Many birds visit the boreal region at some point during the year, but they use it in a variety of ways. Most birds nest and breed there, returning to the States or different countries throughout the western hemisphere to spend the winter. A few species spend the entire winter in the Boreal. Some rely more on Boreal wetlands for feeding and resting during migration than for breeding. Overall, at least 47 families of birds regularly use the Boreal Forest, accounting for 67 percent of all bird families that regularly occur in the U.S. and Canada.

The Nursery

What the boreal primarily provides is a place for billions of birds to nest and breed. Of the 400 species that occur within the boreal, 303 are there to breed in its forests, thickets and wetlands. The numbers of birds breeding there can be broken down by bird group:

<i>Bird Group</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Breeding Birds</i>	<i>Percent of Total Birds in US and Canada</i>
Landbirds	1,600,000,000	30
Waterfowl	26,000,0000	38
Waterbirds	14,000,000	totals unknown
Shorebirds	7,000,000	30

IMBD 2006

Species Specifics

Nearly 400 species are known to occur within some portion of the Boreal Forest, including loons, grebes, swans, ducks, hawks, sandpipers, gulls, owls, warblers, and sparrows. Perhaps the best known residents of the area are the tiny songbirds so popular with backyard birders. According to the National Wildlife Foundation, up to a billion sparrows and two billion warblers hatch in the trees of the Boreal Forest each year. Several birds commonly associated with the Boreal include the Whooping Crane, perhaps the most carefully monitored of all boreal birds, the Rusty Blackbird, and the American Black Duck.

Well-known backyard birds that regularly occur in the Boreal are the American Goldfinch, Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Bluebird, Mourning Dove, and the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird. Sentimental favorites that frequent the Boreal include the Mallard and the Bald Eagle. Even birds with such American sounding names as the Tennessee Warbler and the Philadelphia Vireo are born and bred in the Canadian Boreal Forest! Different species have varying levels of reliance on the Boreal. Some species, such as the Palm Warbler and the Northern Shrike, have as much as 98 percent of their breeding adults using the Boreal Forest as a nursery.

<i>Number of Species</i>	<i>Percent of Population that Breeds in the Boreal</i>	<i>Sample Species</i>
55 species	25-49% breeding in Boreal	Northern Pintail Osprey Sandhill Crane Belted Kingfisher Black-capped Chickadee American Robin American Redstart
96 species	50-79% breeding in Boreal	Trumpeter Swan American Black Duck Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Lesser Scaup Hooded Merganser Common Loon Magnolia Warbler
35 species	80% or more breeding in Boreal	Whooping Crane Solitary Sandpiper Great Grey Owl Blackpoll Warbler Dark-eyed Junco Philadelphia Vireo White-throated Sparrow Black-backed Woodpecker

Did you know that:

74% of Common Terns,
44% of Belted Kingfishers,
and 97% of Short-billed
Dowitchers use the Boreal
Forest to breed and raise
their young.



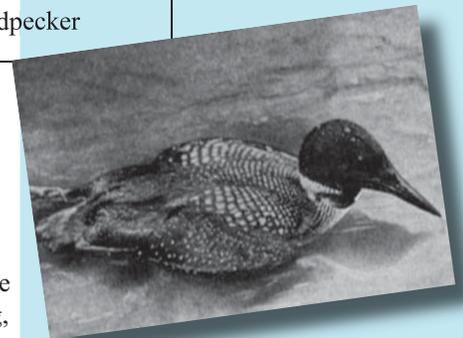
The North American Boreal
Forest covers 2.3 million
square miles – 75% of the
entire size of the contiguous
United States.

Breeding Grounds Under Siege

At least 150 species have a quarter or more of their estimated breeding population within the Boreal Forest Region (data provided by Bird Studies Canada and the Boreal Songbird Initiative). Billions of birds rely on the North American Boreal, the largest unspoiled forest remaining in the world. At this point, much of the boreal is untouched by development, but one-third of the region has already been set aside for industrial use. The decisions made in the next few years will largely determine the fate of this unspoiled wilderness. Many of the birds we see in our yards and enjoy in our parks and refuges use the boreal to hatch and raise their young, and they depend on our conservation efforts today to protect their nursery for tomorrow.

Resources

International Migratory Bird Day: www.birdday.org
Canada Boreal Initiative: www.borealcanada.ca
Boreal Songbird Initiative: www.borealbirds.org
Boreal Forest Network www.borealnet.org



The Common Loon is one of the most familiar and cherished birds of the region, and up to 70% of its population relies on the Boreal Forest to nest and breed each year. The Boreal provides over 50% of the remaining habitat for moose, as well as safe haven for grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and more than a million caribou.

Education Committee News - Classes

New Class Registration Policies

The Education Committee has adopted the following new policies, which will take effect this month:

If a registrant withdraws from a class at least 48 hours before the first class session, Travis Audubon Society will offer a full refund, less a \$5 administrative fee. This fee will help defray the costs to TAS of processing the registration and refund. If TAS cancels the class, TAS will fully refund tuition.

Travis Audubon Society must receive payment for a class by 14 days before the first class session. If, at that time, the class is full, and there is a waiting list, the registrar may remove an unpaid registrant from the roster, and offer the place to the next person on the waiting list.

Bird-Drawing Class

Have you ever wanted to sketch an unfamiliar bird in the field, so you can identify it later, but you don't even try because you "couldn't draw a stick"? Despair not! Travis Audubon Society is now offering a Bird-Drawing Class, whose instructor will show you just how much latent talent you really have!

Linda Anderson taught a brief drawing session at last fall's Youth Birding Camp – to rave reviews. Now she will be presenting an expanded workshop for adults on the same topic. Classroom sessions, at a central Austin location, will be Thursday evenings, June 15th and 22nd, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (Watch the TAS website or contact the registrar for the location of the class.) There will also be a half-day field trip to Hornsby Bend on the morning of June 24. Tuition is \$30 for TAS members and \$40 for non-members. Students will also be responsible for bringing their own sketch book, pencils, eraser, sharpener, and (if desired) watercolors; a class package containing all of these may be purchased from Jerry's Art-o-Rama (sale price through May 15). For details, and to register, contact Roxie Roachat, 345-6935, or birddrawing@austin.rr.com.

Hummingbird Identification

Central Texas has a wealth of hummingbird diversity visiting it each year. From our nesting Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbirds to the elusive visitors like Broad-billed Hummingbirds and Green Violet-ears, central Texas hummingbirds can be a challenge to identify. Mark Klym,

Coordinator of the Texas Hummingbird Roundup and Texas Wildscapes programs for Texas Parks and Wildlife, will present another of his very highly-rated Hummingbird Identification classes. The class will introduce the 15 hummingbird species that have been seen in central Texas. Mark will discuss their ranges, habitat, and frequency of occurrence, and will emphasize those characteristics that can be used for effective identification. Each species will be examined in detail, looking at key diagnostic features, and compared to similar, often confusing species.

Mark is also co-author of *Hummingbirds of Texas* (Texas A&M Press, 2005). Signed copies of this book will be available for purchase (\$25) at class meetings.

No prior birding experience is necessary. The two-session class will be held the evenings of July 6th and 13th (6:30 to 9:00 p.m.). The class location will be announced on the Travis Audubon Society website. The fee will be \$15 for TAS members and \$20 for non-members. Participants will receive a Hummingbird Roundup kit from TPWD as well as other handouts. To register or receive further information, contact Trent Miller at trent9719@aol.com or 327-6454.

Hummingbird Gardening

Learn how to make your own garden a haven for hummingbirds by registering for this workshop to be taught by Mark Klym, Coordinator of the Texas Hummingbird Roundup and Texas Wildscapes programs for Texas Parks and Wildlife. Participants from the past two years gave this workshop high marks. This class will explore native plants that are hummingbird friendly - their characteristics, needs and culture (maybe even some sources!); garden designs and maintenance tips; as well as feeders and their proper use. (The instructor will simply introduce the pros and cons - the decision is yours.)

This two-session workshop will be held the evenings of August 24th and 31st (6:30 - 9:00 p.m.) with an optional field trip on the morning of August 26th to a local garden which is noted for its attractive nature-friendly landscaping. The class location will be announced on the Travis Audubon Society web site. The fee will be \$20 for TAS members and \$25 for non-members. Participants will receive a Hummingbird Roundup kit from TPWD as well as other handouts. To register or receive further information, contact Trent Miller at trent9719@aol.com or 327-6454.

Bird Records Committee

In 2005, the Bird Records Committee launched Travis Audubon's on-line bird data entry form. We wanted to collect more data on bird sightings in the Austin area and to have the data available electronically. At our last monthly meeting, members of the Bird Records Committee discussed how we can get more folks to use our on-line Bird Data form. (By the way, just go to our home page and click on the Bird Data link on the right. Anyone can use the form – you don't have to be a TAS member.) We decided to pose a few questions about the form to you: What problems, if any, have you been having with the on-line form? How can it be improved? If you haven't used the form, why not? We would appreciate your feedback. Please e-mail Committee Co-chair Lawrence Buford at landybuford@grandecom.net or call Committee Co-chair Ethel Kutac at 512.346.7659.

TAS Monthly Meeting - May 2006

Resources for you compiled by the Travis Audubon office:



About the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (IBWO):

Latin name: *Campephilus principalis*

Status: Rediscovered or extinct?

Threats: Loss of habitat
Habitat: Mature forests, esp. cypress swamps, large hardwoods

Where: Formerly in Eastern Texas and Southeast U.S.; Cuba

Did you know that IBWOs ...

- Are 18-20 inches in size (wingspan about 30 inches)
- Eat insects, fruit, and nuts
- May mate for life
- Have a bill (in adults) more than 7 cms. long

Recommended reading:

The Grail Bird: Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, by Tim Gallagher (Houghton Mifflin, 2005)
The Race to Save the Lord God Bird, by Phillip Hoose (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004)
In Search of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, by Jerome A. Jackson (Smithsonian Books, 2004)
Big Woods Bird: An Ivory-bill Story, by Terri Roberts Luneau (Kury Lane, 2005) [for children]

Web sites:

www.ibwo.org David Luneau's site
www.ivorybill.org The Big Woods Conservation Partnership
www.birds.cornell.edu/ivory/rediscovery/ Rediscovering the Ivory-billed Woodpecker
www.livescience.com/animalworld/060316_woodpecker_debate.html Current state of the debate

Joining the search ...

The Arkansas Field Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has issued a set of guidelines for those considering a visit to look for the IBWO. Seasonal and other restrictions apply. The Web site includes links to Cache River and White River National Wildlife Refuges with maps, suggested viewing areas, and more: www.fws.gov/arkansas%2Des/BigWoodsBirding.

Thursday, May 18, 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm for social time)

TAS Regular Monthly Meeting

Program: *Bird of the Big Woods – An Ivory-bill in the 21st Century*

Presenter: David Luneau

Travis Audubon is delighted to bring to Austin, for our last membership meeting until Fall, a key member of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker research team, who will speak about the search. David Luneau was a member of the core team on the recent year-long search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in eastern Arkansas and is a veteran of previous ivory-bill searches. He confirmed the rediscovery of the ivory-billed woodpecker in the Big Woods of eastern Arkansas in 2004 with the only video ever taken of the bird. Previously, he was a member of the six-person international team that searched the Pearl River area of Louisiana in 2002, and he organized and led a search for the woodpecker in the White River National Wildlife Refuge in 2003. He continues to search for the bird, and he serves on the species recovery team for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

David is a native of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and he has degrees in electrical engineering from Rice University and Georgia Tech. In addition to being an avid ivory-bill searcher, he is a professor of electronics and computer engineering technology and information technology at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. His wife, Terri, is a Certified Public Accountant and recently wrote the first children's book on the woodpecker, *Big Woods Bird: An Ivory-bill Story*.

Program begins at 7:00 p.m. **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. **Bicycle routes** at www.ci.austin.x.us/bicycle/bikemap.htm; 974-7240. Refreshments provided.

Baker Sanctuary News

The primary mission of the Travis Audubon Society Baker Sanctuary, as part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) system, is to provide nesting habitat for the Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) and habitat for other species of concern found here such as the Jollyville Plateau Salamander. To further this mission, Marcie (as time is available to her) and I implement the Land Management Plan and other supporting activities that range, for example, from managing the annual cull of White-tailed Deer, to maintaining a presence on the Sanctuary and, most recently, continuing the coordination of the Jackie Arnold Education Center project scheduled to be built here.

At this writing, we have already received approved land use permits from the City of Austin, Travis County and an approval letter from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the JAEC project. In addition, PageSoutherlandPage has completed a set of plans and specifications for the JAEC for preliminary pricing by the general contractors on our selected bidders list. The JAEC at the Baker Sanctuary will address the secondary mission of the Sanctuary, which is the human component, by providing facilities and restricted access for classes and field trips. In this way, a balance can be struck between the requirements of species entrusted to our care and the desire of interested individuals who want to learn more about the Sanctuary.

Hullabaloo about the Hawks



Many TAS members contacted us to comment about the great exposure Travis Audubon received as a result of local excitement about a pair of Red-tailed Hawks who may be taking up residence at our

beautiful state Capitol building downtown. It all started with a story in the *San Antonio Express-News*, followed by television news interviews on Austin's KXAN, Fox, and KVUE, and two items in the *Austin American-Statesman*. Our red-tailed love-birds captured Austin's attention, and to build on that – and draw attention to the inherent conservation issue of diminishing habitat – Travis Audubon launched a contest to name those Red-tailed Hawks. (Go to our Web site for the contest details and winner – at press time, the contest was in progress and a winner not yet chosen.) We received many serious and funny entries touching on politics, history, and local culture. Stay tuned for the Austin version of Pale Male and Lola!

Valerie Staats

You're Invited!

Baker Sanctuary Open House Saturday, May 6, 2006 9am to noon

Mark your calendars for the Annual TAS Baker Sanctuary Open House scheduled for Saturday, May, 6th, 2006 from 9:00 am until noon. Last year, we had a great group of guides, interpreters, support staff and traffic controllers. This year, we will need at least ten bird guides, four individuals to greet visitors and sign them in and four people to show our visitors where to park. If you would like to help with our Open House, please contact us at 219-8425 or email me at jmwoso@earthlink.net.

During the month of March, the Sanctuary received 2.7 inches of rain. We were anticipating more rain on March 18th and again on March 29th as storms moved through our area however, the heavier rains went north or south of us. Since the first of the year, we have received slightly more than 4.75 inches of rain compared to 10.1 inches during the same period last year and 12.8 inches in 2004.

In the Sanctuary's previous budget, I allocated money to demolish and remove the dilapidated sheds and outbuildings around the Baker Cabin. I contracted with SBCI, Incorporated to demolish the old structures and on February 2nd, their crew showed up

and began work. In just several hours, they collapsed the sheds and loaded them onto their 16-yard dump truck with a front-end loader. They topped off the load of trash with the rusty scrap metal that I had been accumulating since last summer.

Also in last year's budget, I set aside money to begin making improvements to the Sanctuary's trails and access roads. Late last year, I had the same contractor who did our demolition, SBCI, deliver road base to the Sanctuary. I had 8 yards dumped on the north side of Lime Creek Road near the Baker Cabin and another 8 yards dumped on the south side of Lime Creek Road near the Parking Lot. In February, I completed hauling the road base and spreading it on some of the worst eroded areas on the Orange/Blue, Blue and Green Trails as well as on access roads.

John Wilcox, TAS-Baker Sanctuary Chair and Steward

**One Environment.
One Simple Way To Care For It.®**



From the TAS Office

Alternative uses for binox

Birding with one of our expert members last month, I laughed when he asked me to look up a bird in my guidebook, I dutifully walked over to show him, and he then said, “You didn’t have to walk over here, I was going to use my binoculars to read the page.” He went on to name other ways he and his partner use binoculars, beyond birding, especially while traveling. I surveyed a few other folks when we regrouped for lunch and got more tips on alternative uses for binox. Can you add any to our list?: Checking out ceilings and other artwork in cathedrals; scoping out items of interest, undisturbed by salespeople, in the *mercados* of other countries; reading road signs from afar; at a play, opera, or other show in the theater; when approaching your destination by car, checking to see if anyone is home before you commit to making the turn-off; and, turning them upside down to read road maps!

Back yard habitats

The letter *R*, a toy soldier, cellophane cigarette wrappers, pottery shards, and some very old scraps of cloth came up, as I turned over soil to prepare my first Austin garden in my first Austin Spring. The soil hadn’t been worked in a while, probably years. It has been fun visiting Austin’s local nurseries that specialize in native and organically raised plants to select soil amendments, herbs and tomatoes (four varieties, my weakness) for the kitchen garden, and the flowers that I hope will bring hummers and butterflies. Drought- and heat-tolerant zinnias and salvia topped my list, and with pleasure I also planted the turk’s cap, trumpet creeper vines, and snapdragon vines that a kind soul donated to my yard. How did I know what to plant? Travis Audubon, of course! Our Urban Habitat committee has many resources to educate and guide you. For starters, check out the great list of plants that attract hummingbirds posted on our home page.

My tiny backyard is my definition of paradise – overlooking a bit of West Bouldin Creek, shaded beautifully by tall hardwood trees, and full of birdlife from cedar waxwings to their overhead nemesis, sharp-shinned hawks. It’s here that I spied what I thought was a corpse – a red squirrel utterly flattened out, spread-eagle, in the *V* of a tree branch – till a local resident informed me that the squirrel was simply chilling out in the heat of the day, Texas style. (I don’t think I’ve ever seen a squirrel being still where I come from.) Sure enough, the little guy’s bright black eyes looked back at me as I ogled him with my bins. I’m not feeling especially charitable toward him and his *compadres*, however – we have joined the battle over the extra-special shelled nuts and hulled seeds I put out to attract some of my favorite feathered friends (yes, I use baffles).

Just do it – get certified

Here’s where I plug the National Wildlife Federation’s backyard habitat certification program. They offer the gold standard in backyard habitat certification and in this, their 70th anniversary year, the National Wildlife Federation has set a goal of certifying 70,000 backyards across America. This is the year to just do it. If you are a renter, educate your landlord! The easy

process can be done on-line, with just a \$15 fee, at www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat. (That very cool sign that we all lust after is only \$25 – well worth it to advertise the program to your friends and neighbors.) If you didn’t make our March meeting program on backyard habitats, take a few minutes to browse the resources about this on the Meetings page of Travis Audubon’s Web site. As we build more houses, roads, and big-box stores, we must also provide as much wildlife-friendly habitat as we can. It’s easy and fun, too, with nearly immediate rewards.

Do the Birdathon

As Shelia wrote in her President’s piece, May 13th is the big day! Travis Audubon needs you to step up to the plate and collect pledges for a day of birding, at any place you like, for our Birdathon. This annual day benefits all of Travis Audubon’s activities and programs, from our field trips and education classes to Baker Sanctuary, the hawkwatch, meeting programs, Web site, events sponsorships, and all the behind-the-scenes work and expenses of making these things happen. Whether you go it alone or with a team, bird from your *chaise longue*, car window, or the nearest canyon, make it a day dedicated to supporting Travis Audubon. Use the form on p.15 or go to our Web site to register. Thank you!

Valerie Staats

Thank you to Julia Balinsky

Travis Audubon extends our deep appreciation to long-time member Julia Balinsky, who leaves her volunteer role as Youth Education Chair due to other commitments. Julia has given countless hours and energy to all her work with Travis Audubon, on the Education Committee since 2003 and in other ways as well. Most recently, she organized and led the 2005 Youth Birding Camp and expanded it to include such topics as butterflies and bugs, snakes, and drawing birds. She has also, behind the scenes, managed the distribution of an increased number of Audubon Adventures kits and arranged elementary school concerts by “Mr. Habitat” (aka Bill Oliver). The list of her accomplishments and achievements for Travis Audubon is long and her shoes will be difficult to fill. All who know Julia (and husband Andy Balinsky) admire their passion for birds and nature, work on behalf of Purple Martins, devotion to the Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory, and creative approach to life. On behalf of all of us at Travis Audubon, Julia, we doff our hats to you and thank you. We look forward to seeing you and Andy in the field.



Julia and Rufus birding at Riata Pond
Photo Credit: Andy Balinsky

TAS Events - May 2006

- Wednesday, May 3** **Brown Bag and Birds**
12 noon – 1 pm Lunchtime birding at Central Park, led by Travis Audubon Executive Director Valerie Staats. Bring your lunch and binoculars and we'll see what turns up at the Park's pond and grounds – could be waterfowl, warblers, wrens, or others. If you live or work in the neighborhood, walk over to meet us at the NW corner of 38th and Guadalupe. If driving, park at Central Market and walk to that corner. To sign up contact Valerie at valerie@travisaudubon.org or 512.300.BIRD (2473). We'll pilot this in May and then pick it back up again in September.
- Saturday, May 6** **Bird Walk at Laguna Gloria**
7:30 am to 10 am Led by Sam Fason (the younger). Contact Charles Stephens (charles_stephens@yahoo.com, (w) 328-9453) for more information.
- Saturday, May 6** **Bird, Dragonfly, and Damselfly Walk, UT Brackenridge Field Laboratory**
7:30 am to 11:30 am Dr. John Abbott gave us a wonderful presentation on dragonflies and damselflies during the February TAS meeting. Join him on a walk looking for late spring migrant birds early in the morning, and then as it warms up, looking for local dragonflies and damselflies later in the morning. Meet in the UT Brackenridge Field Laboratory (2907 Lake Austin Blvd) parking lot. Bring water! Contact Kathy McCormack (vefl21@yahoo.com, (c) 698-9880) for more information.

Saturday, May 13

Make a Day of It Travis Audubon Birdathon

It's easy, it's fun and it's a great contribution to TAS.
Please see page 3 and page 15 for all the details.

and

International Migratory Bird Day

- Saturday, May 20** **Hornsby Bend Birding Field Trip**
7:30 am to noon All levels of birder welcomed, an easy morning of walking and learning the birds of Hornsby Bend. Bring binoculars and some water if the weather is warm. Meet at the CER at 7:30 am. Led by Richard Kaskan, (kaskan@ieee.org, (c) 748-8660) for more information.
- Saturday, May 27** **Memorial Day Weekend**
Sunrise: 6:31 am
Sunset: 8:25 pm Lots of daylight on this holiday weekend – check out the nesting birds in your backyard or the local park.

TRAVIS AUDUBON SOCIETY NATURE BOOK CLUB

We invite you to join the Travis Audubon Society Nature Book Club, which is usually held the 4th Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm at BookPeople (6th 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. Below is a list of books we will read for the next two months:

May 25, 2006 – *The Grail Bird, Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker* by Tim Gallagher

June 22, 2006 – *Wild America – The Legendary Story of Two Great Naturalists on the Road* by Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher

Please note that 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 to find out if the book is still current.

TAS Events - June 2006

- Saturday, June 3** **Birds and Butterflies at Zilker Park**
8 to 9:30 am & 10 to 12 am Come explore the birdlife on the wild edges of the city center for an hour or two (6 species of raptor guaranteed), then search for flying jewels in the botanical gardens until noon. Meet under the Mopac Bridge at 8 am for birding or be there at 10 for the butterfly stage only. Led by Charles Stephens and Roxie Rochat. Contact Charles Stephens for more information at charles_stephens@yahoo.com or 328-9453 (w).
- Saturday, June 10** **Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend**
7 am and 4 pm Contact Kevin Anderson (972-1960) for more information. Sponsored by the Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory.
- Saturday, June 17** **Hornsby Bend Birding Field Trip**
7:30 am to noon All levels of birder welcomed, an easy morning of walking and learning the birds of Hornsby Bend. Bring binoculars and some water if the weather is warm. Meet at the CER at 7:30 am. Led by Richard Kaskan, (kaskan@ieee.org, (c) 748-8660) for more information.
- Saturday, June 24** **Avenue A and the San Antonio Zoo**
7 am to noon+ Carpool will leave from the Academy parking lot, I35 and William Cannon, at 7 am sharp, or you can meet the group at avenue A at 7:45. Bring \$7 for the entrance fee and plan on having lunch at the zoo. Contact Gary Waggerman, waggerman@sbcglobal.net or 301-2615 (home), for more information. One co-leader needed.

- July 18 – 29, 2006** **Field Trip to West Texas and Southeast Arizona**
Come join us on a desert trek (but it will be the rainy season!) for rare birds and butterflies. The first four nights will be spent in the Chisos and Davis mountains of the Trans-Pecos, looking for Colima Warbler, Lucifer Hummingbird, and Buff-breasted Flycatcher, among others. On Saturday we will head over to the Chiricahuas in Arizona and search for the many rarities of that area, then head further west to Madera Canyon and Patagonia for more special birds. The trip can be divided if you don't have time for all of it: join us for the Texas leg only, or fly out to Tucson and meet us in Arizona at Portal on Sunday or Patagonia on Monday or Tuesday. Lots of driving (unfortunately), some rugged hikes, possible gully washers, rattlesnakes, militiamen, who knows what – but you ain't gonna get these birds at Hornsby! Contact Stan Van Sandt at 707-7438 for more information.

And coming in July...

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. 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.com.

Bird Jeopardy - test your knowledge! Category: Animated Birds created by John Kelly

1. This cartoon canary first saw a pudgy tad (though it wasn't Sylvester) in the 1942 short *A Tale of Two Kitties*.
2. Wile E. Coyote's eternal object of desire, this speedster can always be detected by his distinctive call: "Beep! Beep!"
3. They're Donald Duck's three nephews, the offspring of his sister Dumbella.
4. First appearing in the 1940 cartoon *Knock Knock*, this red-headed bird became so popular that his theme song topped the singles charts – for over a month! – back in 1948.
5. He's the bombastic Southern rooster, I say he's the bombastic Southern rooster frequently, though ineffectually, pestered by Henery Hawk.

1. Who's Twenty Pie (a/k/a Twenty Bird)? 2. Who's the Road Runner? 3. Who are Huey, Dewey, and Louie? 4. Who's Woody Woodpecker? 5. Who's Foghorn Leghorn?

We thank these persons who generously made contributions to Travis Audubon Society during the past three months:



Terry Banks	Steve Richardson	<i>Painted Bunting Membership</i>	<i>In Memory of Mrs. Elizabeth West</i>
Christi Carletti	Raymond Risk	Jacque Austin	Mr. and Mrs. William Sutherland
Marjorie Dearth	Tess Sherman	Maggie Burnett	
Kristin Fason	M. Ann Syptak	Robert M. Johnson	<i>In Memory of John W. White</i>
Bruce and Peggy Johnston	Janelle Thompson	Charles Smith	Ethel Kutac
Richard Kallerman	Ray Toburen		B. C. Lyon
Michael McClendon	Mrs. Charles W. Tolbert	<i>Employer Matching Gifts</i>	Gloria Mirick
Mary and Lynn Moak	Timothy Warfield	Jean Martin	Shirley Towry
Beatrice Neuhold-Orth	Daesene Willmann	Charles Michalik	
Fred Nutt		Robert Sechler	

Conservation Notes...how you can help

We can always use help in negotiating with various locations about installing **Chimney Swift towers**. Some spots where we're hoping to place towers include McKinney Falls State Park, McKinney Roughs, and the Zilker Botanical Gardens. If you'd like to work with any of these places, contact John Kelly at 331-8693 or jfkellyaustin53@hotmail.com.



The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department and Keep Austin Beautiful are hosting two sessions of **Clean Creek Camps** this summer for kids 9 to 12 and their parents. These are hands-on science camps focusing on Austin watersheds and the Edwards Aquifer. Activities include a scavenger hunt along a creek, water testing, learning how to canoe, caving, a creek cleanup, and more. Dates are June 9 - 22 for the watershed camp (which runs 9 a.m. to noon) and July 10 - 13 for the aquifer camp (which also runs 9 a.m. to noon). The cost is only \$15 per child. Parents are free! For more information, call 974-6571.



Interested in learning how to attract **butterflies**? Then you'll want to attend the Austin Butterfly Forum's workshop on designing and creating a butterfly garden. It'll be held in the Zilker Botanical Garden Center on Saturday, May 6, from 1 - 5 p.m. The cost is \$30 per person. For more information, call Jeff Taylor at 255-0368.

Travis Audubon is preparing a new edition of our **Austin-Area Birding Sites** map (last produced in 2000), and we're seeking volunteers who can update site information. We hope to have the new leaflet ready for printing by year's end. The areas in need of update are many, ranging from sites in Central Austin to those as far out as Granger Lake.

The list is too long to include here but examples of specific sites to be updated are Eastwoods Park, the Capitol grounds, Blunn Creek Nature Preserve, McKinney Roughs, Lake Bastrop, Hamilton Pool, Westcave Preserve, Reimer's Ranch, Cow Creek Road and nearby areas, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and numerous others.

We also welcome suggestions for additional areas to include. New areas would need to be accessible to the general public and located within about 30 miles of Austin. Right now, for example, we have nothing in the leaflet from northern Hays County. To volunteer for a site, or for more information, please contact John Kelly at 331-8693 or jfkellyaustin53@hotmail.com.

News from Hornsby Bend



WEDNESDAY, May 17, 12 noon - 1 p.m.
URBAN ECOLOGY LUNCHTIME LECTURE
Room 104 of the Waller Center, 625 East 10th Street.
Kevin Anderson will speak on "The Changing Landscape of the Austin - Bastrop River Corridor in 2006."

WEDNESDAY, May 24, 10 a.m. - 12 noon.
AUSTIN - BASTROP RIVER CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP
Meeting in the Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend. Everyone interested in the corridor is invited to attend.

SATURDAY, May 29, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. ECOLOGICAL LITERACY VOLUNTEER DAY AT HORNSBY BEND.
Meet at the Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend. There'll be three hours of work around the trails and lagoons and an hour of learning about the environment of the Colorado River and Hornsby Bend. It's an opportunity for birders to give something back and to impress the Hornsby Bend staff with their willingness to put in sweat equity to maintain the area. Wear work shoes and clothing and bring water and binoculars.

For more information on Hornsby Bend activities, call Kevin Anderson at 972-1960 (Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays), or e-mail him at Kevin.Anderson@ci.austin.tx.us.

Birdathon 2006

Registration Form

Yes, count me in! I will support Travis Audubon by counting bird species on Saturday, May 13, 2006 and collecting pledges from sponsors!

My Name: _____ Team Goal: \$ _____
Address: _____ Target # of Species): _____
City, State, Zip: _____ Amt. enclosed: \$ _____
Preferred tel. _____ (E-mail) _____
Team Name: _____ Expected # of teammates: _____

- I would like Travis Audubon to place me on a team.
- We are more or less beginning birders and need suggestions and guidance.
- We are intermediate or advanced birders and we will fly on our own.
- I will be doing Birdathon 2006 solo instead of as part of a team.
- I understand that sponsors who donate \$20+ will receive the 2006 Birdathon Ballcap.
- I understand that sponsors' pledges are tax-deductible contributions to Travis Audubon.
- I can't do Birdathon this year but want to make a tax-deductible contribution instead.
(Please make checks payable to Travis Audubon Society and note Birdathon 2006 in the memo. line.)

Please return to:

Birdathon 2006
Travis Audubon Society
Post Office Box 40787
Austin, Texas 78704



For more information go to www.travisaudubon.org/birdathon06.html

Ongoing TAS Meetings

Program Committee: meets on the 2nd Monday of each month, contact Marsha Reimer, 965-6714

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

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

Education Committee: meets on the 3rd Monday of each month, contact: Bill Reiner, 445-0565

Latin America Committee Meeting: meets most 3rd Wednesdays, contact Bob Warneke at warneke@austin.rr.com for details

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

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

TAS Nature Book Club Meeting: the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at BookPeople, contact: tessiebanks@msn.com

Travis Audubon Society
Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 40787
Austin TX 78704

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Visit the TAS Web site:
www.travisaudubon.org



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.)

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

Travis Audubon Society 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 and clicking on Membership.

Travis Audubon Society

YES! I want to enjoy the benefits of Travis Audubon Society 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)

T-shirt size (for premium memberships) _____

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