



Signal Smoke

The Newsletter of Travis Audubon * VOL. 66, NO. 3 May/June 2017



Bird of the Week: Purple Martin

MARCH 1, 2017

These beautiful birds (more blue-black than really purple) have enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with humans for centuries. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, American Indians would hang gourds near their homes to attract the birds. Their motives weren't purely altruistic—Purple Martins are prodigious insectivores, which was a great benefit! While traveling the country compiling his *Birds of America*, John James Audubon would sometimes choose lodgings based on the quality of the Purple Martin house outside, remarking that “the handsomer the box, the better does the inn generally tend to be.” The birds became so accustomed to their new accommodations that today, many Purple Martins will no longer nest in the woodpecker holes they once preferred. (In the western part of their range, where houses were not traditionally provided, martins will still nest in natural locations.) Purple martins often roost in enormous flocks in cities, and their morning departure and evening return can be a spectacular sight, much larger than the evening emergence of bats. Join Travis Audubon this summer at our Purple Martin Parties to see this spectacle for yourself!

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

Letter to the Editor: Don't Poison Native Wildlife

MARCH 2, 2017

The Texas Agriculture Department's plan to poison wild roaming hogs needs to be stopped in its tracks before native wildlife falls victim to this lethal solution. Travis Audubon acknowledges the expanding feral hog population has caused major headaches for farmers and homeowners alike. But using poison to eradicate this invasive species will start a deadly chain reaction. First, other mammals such as bears and raccoons will be attracted to the food cages erected to lure the hogs. Second, pieces of the poison pellets will be dispersed outside of food cages, thereby allowing other smaller mammals to scoop up the crumbs. Then consider the likelihood that carnivorous birds will dine on those smaller mammals and hogs. Do we really want to subject bald eagles and other raptors to such a horrible fate?

The commercial application of this poison is likely to be widespread, and the unintended impact extensive. The manufacturer needs to pull this plan until they can verify that large numbers of other animals will not be primary and secondary victims.

Travis Audubon opposes use of warfarin-laced Kaput as bait food for wild hogs and instead urges expanded opportunities for trapping and shooting.

Joan Marshall
Executive Director

Texas Heritage: Rooted in Our Wildlands

MARCH 2, 2017

Today Texas celebrates its Independence Day! A significant part of Texas history is the story of our wildlife.

Amplify Austin, a 24 hour period of online giving starts tonight, March 2, at 6:00 pm. We hope you will take part in this movement and give a gift that will conserve our wildlife, our natural resources, and our heritage for generations to come.

At Travis Audubon, we are making sure native habitats, the truly foundational elements of Central Texas history, are not forgotten and continue to be part of the story of our region. With the support of the community, these places can continue to provide us clean air and water and a connection to our environment and our history.

Travis Audubon Welcomes Graduate Intern from St. Edwards University!

MARCH 3, 2017

Travis Audubon welcomed its second intern of the year last week. Executive Director Joan Marshall said, "We're committed to helping train the next generation of environmental leaders by providing practical experience in the field. It's really a win-win situation for everyone. While we're mentoring students, we're also learning from them — I like to call it reverse mentoring."

"My name is Savannah and I am a graduate student at St. Edward's University studying environmental management and sustainability. Currently, I am helping to create new trail signage at a couple of Travis Audubon's nature sanctuaries. These new signs will educate guests on the history and natural habitat of the sanctuaries. My future career interests include joining an environmental consulting firm and possibly going back to school to get a Ph.D."

Rare Bird Alert

MARCH 4, 2017

This is the Austin Area Rare Bird Alert and has been updated through 3/3/2017. To report rare or unusual bird sightings in the Austin area, provide recent sighting updates, or inquire about location details on birds listed below, please send an email to armanmorenobirds@gmail.com. If submitting a bird sighting, please include species name, location details, and contact information.

Rarities Found This Week

A LONG-BILLED THRASHER was photographed at Pedernales State Park, Blanco County, on 3/3. The bird was observed and heard vocalizing through thick brush bordering Duck Pond. The location was at the far end of the pond on the main dirt path leading to the boundary fence. Also present at the park was a Zone-Tailed Hawk in among Turkey

Vultures and a singing male Golden-cheeked Warbler along the bluff near the Falls.

A ZONE-TAILED HAWK was observed flying over Jones Brothers Park in Jonestown, Travis County, on 2/28.

A SAY'S PHOEBE was found at Lakeway City Park in Western Travis County on 2/27 and continues through 3/1.

A RUSTY BLACKBIRD was located around Pond 3 at Hornsby Bend, Travis County, on 2/27. This species has been present in small numbers at Hornsby the past few years but this is the first report this winter.

Dead trees are 'home sweet home' to woodpeckers

MARCH 6, 2017

Trees come and go. When one dies, the property owner's first inclination is to cut it down—all the way down to the ground. But chances are a woodpecker in your neighborhood is looking for a dead tree to create a nest to raise its young. Woodpeckers prefer a near-dead or already dead tree because the excavating is easier than on live trees. They and many other bird species rely on dead trees for nesting, storing food, roosting and resting. For a nest, the woodpecker creates an upside down L-shaped chamber with entrance

Sometimes a dead tree near a house might cause a problem or trigger worries about toppling over. Consider removing just part of the tree—for example, lop off the top portion to reduce wind resistance. If all of part a tree has to be cut, place the dead portion at another location where wildlife can take advantage of it. Once the woodpecker has raised its young and left the cavity, songbirds will be more than happy to move in. So leaving dead trees on your property is helpful to all types of birds.

By the way, how can woodpeckers pound away at trees and other hard surfaces without getting a concussion? Their thickened skulls and powerful neck muscles allow them to deliver sharp blows without damaging their organs. Also their bills are sharp as a chisel. Just show them a dead tree and they'll take care of the rest.

For more information on woodpeckers see Steven Shunks 2016 Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America.

Bird of the Week: Lesser Scaup

MARCH 8, 2017

This striking black-and-white duck is a common winter visitor to large bodies of water, often feeding in large groups. The male is easily identified by his bold monochrome plumage and bright yellow eye, while the female's coloring is more muted.

Distinguishing Lesser Scaups from closely related Greater Scaups can be exceedingly

difficult; fortunately for us, the Greater Scaup is not found in Texas. These ducks are born divers: ducklings are already able to dive for food on their hatching day! Most are too buoyant, however, to get very far. Within a few weeks, they will be able to swim up to 60 feet underwater, and stay submerged for 25 seconds at a time. Lesser Scaups can be found across the southern United States in winter, often traveling as far afield as Hawaii.

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

March Bird Forecast: The Changing of the Guard

MARCH 9, 2017

As winter turns to spring the numbers of wintering ducks like Bufflehead and Northern Pintail taper off, Sandhill Cranes call as they fly high overhead towards their staging grounds on the Platte River in Nebraska and you might get a glimpse of geese, gulls and pelicans on the move north. Short distance migrants like some populations of the songbirds mentioned below will be arriving from wintering sites in coastal and south Texas or Central America to get an early start as breeders here, while the temperatures are mild.

The beautiful, endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler males will be showing up any day now, from Mexico and northern Central America. The males usually arrive about a week before the females. They will be setting up and defending their territories in the old growth, oak-juniper woodlands of western Travis County. Golden-cheeks as they are affectionately called, have an interesting relationship with the bark of old-growth Ashe Juniper (known colloquially as cedar or mountain cedar.) The females always use this bark to make their cup-shaped nests. Much of west Austin is built on former prime Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat, but fortunately there is land set aside in our Balcones Canyonlands Preserve system and at the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge where the birds can successfully raise their young. The male has two main song types. One is used to attract the female, and has the rhythm of “la cucaracha” and the other is used to defend its territory. Even though the name “warbler” connotes a really musical, rich song, the Golden-cheek’s song is buzzy. Listen to a recording at allaboutbirds.org before venturing out on your next Hill Country hike and you may be able to spot this small warbler singing from the top of an oak or juniper.

Another warbler that arrives just about the same time as the Golden-cheeks is the striking Black-and-white Warbler. Some are just passing through on their way to eastern and northern forests, but a few will stay and nest here. Interestingly they nest on the ground, usually close to the base of a tree or tree stump, or under a log or shrub. This makes their young very vulnerable to predation by all sorts of mammals and snakes. The Black-and-white does not have a musical song. Instead it sounds like a high-pitched creaky wagon wheel.

The Yellow-throated Warbler is a stunning bird that begins to migrate through central Texas in late February, with breeding birds arriving in mid-March to early April. Those that are migrating further northeast continue to pass through Texas into early May. This aptly-named bird with its yellow throat and chest forages high in the canopy. At first glance you might mistake it for a Black-and-white Warbler since they both creep along tree branches investigating nooks and crannies for insects, and both sport some black and white plumage. In Travis County the Yellow-throated Warbler is a rare and local breeder, with a seeming preference for cypress trees along Lake Austin.

COMPILED BY JANE TILLMAN, TRAVIS AUDUBON VOLUNTEER
REPOSTED WITH PERMISSION FROM KXAN'S WEATHER BLOG

Texas Public Policy Foundation to de-list the Golden-cheeked Warbler

MARCH 9, 2017

Travis Audubon strongly opposes the recent effort by the Texas Public Policy Foundation to de-list the Golden-cheeked Warbler. Please contact your elected officials to share your views.

Nothing Ruins the Great Outdoors Like Lead Poisoning

MARCH 14, 2017

WASHINGTON (March 2, 2017)—In response to Secretary Ryan Zinke's move to overturn a ban on lead ammunition and fishing tackle in wildlife refuges, the National Audubon Society issued the following statement:

"Lead ammo kills birds long after being fired from a gun," said Sarah Greenberger, Audubon's VP of conservation. "Banning toxic ammunition and fishing tackle in wildlife refuges is necessary for their long term survival as well as our own safety.

"If Secretary Zinke has concerns with the process through which the lead ban was implemented, Audubon will work with him on any new effort to protect birds and the places they need, using the best available science."

Discarded lead ammunition and fishing tackle stay in the environment long after use and pose a deadly threat to birds, wildlife and people. Scavengers like condors and vultures may ingest carrion contaminated by lead shot, which often results in lead poisoning and a painful death.

Bird of the Week: Cedar Waxwing

MARCH 15, 2017

The Cedar Waxwing is an exceptionally handsome bird. Its black mask, subtle coloring, yellow tail, and bright red "waxy" wingtips make it easy to spot. Cedar Waxwings are unusual among North American birds for their frugivorous diet, often subsisting for months on nothing but berries. This dietary preference may in fact be the cause of their

distinctive waxy wingtips: some scientists believe they are the result of a buildup of carotenoids, the organic pigments that give red fruits their color. The beautiful lemon-yellow tip on the Waxwing tail may also be related to its diet; in recent years, an orange-tailed variant has been attributed to a diet high in the bright red berries of Morrow's honeysuckle. An interesting consequence of the Waxwing diet is the occasional tendency to overindulge: Waxwings will often eat more than they can digest, storing the surplus in the esophagus. If left there for too long, the fruit can ferment, intoxicating the birds to the point of visible drunkenness and even alcohol poisoning!

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

Rare Bird Alert

MARCH 18, 2017

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Rarities Found This Week

HUTTON'S VIREO was found at Pedernales Falls State Park in Blanco County on 3/13. The bird was near the Duck Pond area and was vocalizing so best bet may be to listen for it.

A SCOTT'S ORIOLE was photographed on private property just east of Buescher State Park, Bastrop County, on 3/5. The bird appears to be a female. Earlier this year, an adult male was photographed not far from this location.

Bird of the Week: Carolina Wren

MARCH 22, 2017

Although a comparatively diminutive bird, the Carolina Wren has an outsized voice and personality that are instantly recognizable. Carolina Wrens sing year-round, at any time of day, and their songs serve a wide range of purposes: at different times of year, wrens will sing to attract mates, to maintain the marital bond (Carolina Wrens mate for life), and to defend their territory from invaders. They are born musicians, with a repertoire of up to thirty distinct songs, most variations on an insistent "teakettle-teakettle-teakettle". Combined with their fearlessness in singing from exposed perches, their loud song makes them easy to spot and identify. Carolina Wrens are food and habitat generalists, and are equally at home nesting in a potted plant or mailbox as they are in dense woodland. These handsome and honey-voiced birds are easily attracted to backyard bird feeders and nest boxes, particularly in the winter, ensuring a house full of music all year long.

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

Science Matters—Keep Protecting the Golden-cheeked Warbler

MARCH 24, 2017

If attempts to gut protections for the Texas songbird succeed, it could face extinction.

AUSTIN, Texas (March 24, 2017)—Earlier this month, the Texas General Land Office announced its intent to sue the US Fish and Wildlife Service to strip federal protections for the Golden-cheeked Warbler. This beautiful bird breeds exclusively in Texas Hill Country, the 25 counties between Austin and San Antonio, and a one-two punch of disappearing habitat and climate change could doom it to extinction if delisting efforts succeed.

“Decisions to list or delist species must be based on the best-available science, period,” said Sarah Greenberger, Audubon’s VP for conservation. “The science tells us that the Golden-cheeked Warbler faces extinction as its habitat continues to rapidly disappear due to development and the impacts of a changing climate. For that reason, Audubon opposes delisting and supports the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determination to keep it listed and protected.”

As recently as June 2016, the US Fish and Wildlife Service decided to reject petitions by Texas officials to delist the bird, which first joined the endangered species list in 1990 after decades of habitat loss and fragmentation. Bexar Audubon and Travis Audubon, chapters from San Antonio and Austin, respectively, opposed last year’s delisting effort as well as this latest attempt by Land Commissioner George P. Bush.

“The lawsuit, brought by a private organization with the support of Commissioner George P. Bush of the Texas General Land Office, is citing a 2012 Texas A&M study that has already been proven flawed,” said Greg Pasztor, president of the Bexar Audubon Society. “The 2016 attempt to delist the Golden-cheeked Warbler using the same study was already rejected by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This petition could accelerate not only the death of a species, but the decline of one of the most beautiful places on earth. The Golden-cheeked Warbler is for Texans the proverbial ‘canary in the coal mine.’”

Joan Marshall, executive director of the Travis Audubon Society in Austin agrees. “We feel it’s premature to delist the Golden-cheeked Warbler. Development continues to threaten the bird’s habitat and you can’t sustain the population without maintaining the habitat. This tiny Texas native and the many other plants and animals that live together in the Hill Country are part of our natural heritage. Their survival reflects the overall health and well-being of our environment”

Greenberger added, “Instead of fighting necessary protections, we invite the State of Texas to work with Audubon and other stakeholders to address threats to the Golden-

cheeked Warbler and the places it needs, today and tomorrow.”

In response to this and other threats to the Endangered Species Act, Audubon is asking members and supporters to contact their members of Congress and urge them to oppose efforts to weaken this landmark conservation law.

Bird of the Week: Turkey Vulture

MARCH 29, 2017

The author John Graves remarked that “a sky without two or three vultures wheeling and riding the thermals always looks empty to me”, and indeed the Turkey Vulture is so ubiquitous in our state as to be practically a part of the landscape. Soaring effortlessly for hours at a time, they seek out carrion from many miles away with a powerful sense of smell, unique among birds. Despite their size and appearance, Turkey Vultures are actually quite peaceful, and are frequently driven from kills by smaller scavengers like Black Vultures and Caracaras. While their feeding habits have garnered them a reputation as “dirty” animals, vultures are actually fastidiously clean—no doubt due to the risks presented by a diet high in rotting meat. Their bald heads allow them to feed without getting bacteria on them, and their digestive system is so effective at killing bacteria that their feces can actually kill grass! (No need to worry about your lawn, though: turkey vultures are quite secretive, and roost far away from human habitation.)

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

Rare Bird Alert

APRIL 1, 2017

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Rarities Found This Week

A WHITE-TAILED KITE was photographed at Commons Ford Park in SW Austin, Travis County, on 3/29. The bird was perched in the middle of the prairie but has not been reported since the initial sighting.

At least two COMMON PAURAUQUES were recorded calling at Colovista along the Colorado River in Bastrop County on 3/25. The birds were observed around 8pm.

A HUTTON’S VIREO was found at Barton Creek Wilderness Park in SW Austin, Travis County, on 3/23 and continues through 3/27.

Counting for Science: A Recap of Great Backyard Bird Count

APRIL 2, 2017

On February 18, Baker Sanctuary held its fourth annual Great Backyard Bird Count. This year we had 32 participants ranging in age from four to retired. Folks were split into four groups based on their age and hiking ability and counted birds for a solid two hours on four different trails. In total 21 species and 68 individuals were duly noted with the highlights being a very vocal Hutton's Vireo, a raucous pair of Common Ravens, and a Red-shouldered Hawk observed ripping into some unfortunate prey item. I led the pre-K to first grader group and, while they were not the best at finding birds, they did excel at chasing butterflies. More importantly, they had a blast.

Launched in 1998 by a joint partnership between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was the first of its kind. Over a four day period in February citizen-scientists from around the globe collected data on wild birds and submitted thousands of lists for analysis. While citizen-science projects certainly existed prior to 1998, the GBBC was unique in that the results from the data were displayed in a near real-time fashion, allowing participants to quickly see the fruits of their labor.

Nineteen years later the GBBC is going strong and gaining momentum. In addition to generating interest in citizen-scientists, the GBBC also provides valuable data for scientists, data which simply could not be collected on a similar scale and thoroughness without the participation of the public. Scientists analyze the data from the GBBC to help answer questions regarding the effects of climate change on bird populations, timing of migration, how bird diversity differs by region and more. Each year, as more checklists are submitted, the data set becomes more robust and informative.

The rules of the GBBC are simple: count birds for at least 15 minutes anywhere you like and submit a list via eBird. A wealth of good information can be found at the GBBC website: www.birdcount.org. It does not require expert birding skills, just the willingness to brave a potentially chilly February morning. Participants in the GBBC have increased annually with 2017 being a banner year. An estimated 214,000 people participated globally and submitted 173,826 lists representing 5,940 species! In North America, not surprisingly, the three most reported species were the Northern Cardinal, American Crow, and Mourning Dove. Texas represented on the national level, coming in fifth for most checklists submitted.

When February 2018 rolls around, consider participating in the GBBC by joining us at Baker, counting in your backyard, or organizing a count at your local school. Each checklist submitted gives scientists more data to inform their research and, perhaps more importantly, helps Texas show up California in checklist submissions (they got third this year). Many thanks to the exceptional volunteers Beth Samuelson, Shana King, and Skip Mencio who helped lead the GBBC at Baker Sanctuary!

Chris Murray is Travis Audubon's Land Manager and Educator at Baker Sanctuary. You can learn more about the sanctuary [here](#).

Bird Building Collision Study Underway

APRIL 3, 2017

Travis Audubon has kicked off its Bird Building Collision Study for the migratory season! We are raising awareness about the dangers that building glass and lighting pose to the health of migratory birds in the Austin area. Our Research Team will be out on patrol through May capturing data about birds that have been killed or injured by collisions. We'd like to extend a huge thanks to all of our amazing volunteers! This project wouldn't be possible without their hard work and dedication to our cause.

If you witness or see evidence of a bird building collision at your home, office, or around town, we invite you to contribute to our study by reporting your sighting on our iNaturalist project: [Austin Bird Building Collisions](#).

Spotlight on Hornsby Bend

APRIL 7, 2017

Hornsby Bend is gaining some spotlight in the latest April issue of Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine. The sewage ponds of Hornsby Bend may seem like an unlikely ecotourism destination for some, but those in-the-know flock to this premier birding site in East Austin. It has been known to host over 350 species of birds on its nutrient-rich ponds and bottomland forests. [Click here](#) to read the full article covering the history of Hornsby Bend and what famous birders have to say about it!

Austin to DC! Our Members Advocate for the Environment.

APRIL 9, 2017

Activism works and the small actions of many people combined makes a huge difference on policy issues in Washington, DC. That's one of the lessons I learned at the National Audubon Society Office in chilly DC on Monday, March 20th. Along with Sharon Flournoy, also a Travis Audubon member, as well as twelve other people from Audubon chapters from Idaho to Florida, I spent the day in back-to-back workshops, and a "bootcamp" to get us up to speed with the critical situation of the Mississippi River Delta.

The Mississippi River Delta was created over a period of 7000 years through a process in which the river, in the manner of a hose spraying back and forth, deposited sediment along the delta, over thousands of miles, creating extensive marshlands and protective barrier islands.

In the 1930s, we humans stepped in and built levees and dams, forcing the river to hold to a single course so we could navigate the waters predictably and control flooding.

Natural erosion destroyed barrier islands and suddenly the river could no longer re-build them. The same happened when hurricanes, notably Katrina and Rita, hit the coast. And then there was the BP oil spill. Is it any wonder that 1.2 million acres of coast line have been lost in the last eighty years? That's the size of the state of Delaware.

But there is hope. National Audubon Society and other like minded organizations have created a master plan that will use a multi-pronged approach, based on science, to restore the delta. If you'd like to learn more about it, I encourage you to check out the Restore The Mississippi River Delta website.

Our politicians wanted to hear what the Texas hook was. Well, the oil and gas industries have a lot of infrastructure in that area in terms of oil rigs and platforms, and without adequate marshland to protect them, the storm surge from hurricanes or tropical storms does a lot of damage. But, for every 3 miles of marshland, storm surge flooding is reduced by a foot. Finally, a solution that environmentalists and big industry agree on!

After the intense training, the fourteen of us went to the Hill to speak with our respective Congress people. I found them (and their staff) pleasantly receptive to supporting the Mississippi River Delta restoration plan. I am not naïve enough to believe that my one conversation will lead to their unconditional support for including the Mississippi River Delta in the next Infrastructure Bill, but if YOU will add your voice to mine, that will make a difference.

Christy Esmahan is a Travis Audubon Member and award-winning environmental author.

Notes from the Canyon

APRIL 10, 2017

The winter months at Chaetura Canyon are when we concentrate on habitat restoration and trail work. This is the fallow time of year for avian productivity. A time when we can safely trim trees, haul brush, chip slash into mulch and perform necessary trail maintenance without interfering with nesting activity.

This year we concentrated on the three most recent property acquisitions to the Sanctuary where no work had yet been done. Fence work on Little Beaver Hill continued, and a couple of maintenance trails were opened up. Much of the interior fence along the old property line was removed and used to fence the new extended property lines. Several large Red Oaks that succumbed to the droughts of previous years were cut into manageable pieces to be dealt with by volunteers from the Capital Area Master Naturalists (CAMN) in February.

The "Champaign Notch" (named for the libation that celebrated the acquisition of land surrounded on three sides by Chaetura Canyon property) was the target of the most effort. Hard work resulted in a new trail and the beginnings of Juniper steps that lead into the Canyon at the headwaters of the western drainage that feeds into the main

creek. The area was littered with fallen brush from the monumental ice storm in 2001 and over-grown with Ligustrum, non-native Lantana and Chinaberry. The new trail provided access to begin work on removing the brush and invasive non-native plants. In addition to the undesirable plants, this area contains a healthy stand of Possum Hawk dotted with Escarpment Cherry and a very large Cedar Elm. The bottom of the Canyon also hosts Peonia, Cedar Sage, Boneset (White Mistflower) and Red Buckeye that will all thrive as a result of this year's work.

Two Stewardship Days and a CAMN Advanced Training Day yielded 35 volunteers who moved more than 400 cubic yards of brush out of the Canyon and off of the Hill. The brush will be chipped into mulch at a later date for use on the trails. We truly appreciate the help of the many great supporters who come out each year to help us with these tasks!

Rains were good this winter. We recorded 7.29" from December through February. Lake Travis remained full at 681' or slightly above. Consequently the springs in the bottom of the Canyon continued to seep and actually flow with even modest additional rainfall. We had a good freeze in January that lasted several days (we had no freeze at the Canyon in 2016). Freezes are beneficial in helping restore some balance in the growth of perennials – many of which never froze back in 2016. However, February was the warmest in recorded history. Many plants were breaking dormancy by March 1st, so spring came early this year.

Events at Chaetura Canyon begin in April with the Birdathon Brunch and continue through October. Events include Chalupas and Chimney Swifts in May, Second Saturday Swift Watches May thru July, the Mediterranean Feast and Master Birding in September and a new event: Second Saturday Canyon Crawl. This will be a guided interpretive walking tour of the Chimney Swift Meadow and upper and lower Canyon trails the morning of each second Saturday of the month from May thru July. Check the TAS calendar for specifics on all of these events.

We hope to see you in the Canyon soon!

Georgean and Paul Kyle are the Land Stewards at Chaetura Canyon. You can read more about Travis Audubon's Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary [here](#).

April Bird Forecast: Migrating Birds and Birders

APRIL 11, 2017

In April, it is not unusual for enthusiastic birders to develop birding fever that affects their professional and personal lives. You might find your binocular-toting friends breaking long-standing plans at the last minute, citing some excuse like a Prairie Warbler at McKinney Falls State Park, or a Worm-eating Warbler at Laguna Gloria. Just let them go, and realize they should be back to normal about mid-May when migration slows to a trickle. You too might catch the disease, if you ever lay eyes on one of the striking warblers that comes through Austin during migration.

Eye-candy birds like Blackburnian, Magnolia, Yellow, and Hooded Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats, are or will soon be heading north, resplendent in their breeding plumage. In a world dominated by grackles, starlings, and pigeons it is hard to imagine that these birds exist outside field guides. There are certainly fewer warblers and fewer of most other migrating species than in past decades, documented by annual breeding bird surveys. Habitat loss, cat predation, and collisions with windows are just a few of the hazards they face on their arduous journeys.

If you want to catch a glimpse of some of these special birds, here are a few tips on places to go and when to look:

- Parks and greenbelts surrounded by development often serve as “migrant traps.” Many songbirds migrate at night and stop to forage in the day. They are on the lookout for open space which might provide more feeding opportunities. Warblers are not going to visit your bird feeders, opting for caterpillars and other insects. Look up into oak trees and check out willows next to streams and retention ponds. Some warblers prefer to forage low in the understory and in the shadows.
- Places that are especially known as migrant traps include the Capitol Grounds and Contemporary Austin’s Laguna Gloria in central Austin, Mills Pond at Wells Branch in north Austin at 15108 Wells Port Drive, and Nicholas Dawson Park in south Austin, 614 Gibson Street.
- When to look? Any day in April brings the possibility of a new bird for your life list, but stormy weather often stops birds in their tracks. Strong southerly winds help birds conserve energy as they fly north, and they may skip an Austin stop all together, but if the winds reverse and come from the north, especially accompanied by heavy rain, go looking after it stops. Even if the weather is drizzly get outside.
- The most famous location in Texas to witness the spectacle of migrating warblers and other colorful songbirds like tanagers, orioles and grosbeaks is High Island just east of Houston. High Island is a high spot on the coast that birds use for landfall after their eighteen plus hour flight across the Gulf. Houston Audubon has four sanctuaries there, and sponsors several bird walks during April. There are even bleachers by a water drip where you can watch birds rinse the ocean spray off their feathers. Learn more about planning your visit Even non-birders will enjoy the experience.

COMPILED BY JANE TILLMAN, TRAVIS AUDUBON VOLUNTEER
REPOSTED WITH PERMISSION FROM KXAN’S WEATHER BLOG

Young Birders Club and Golden-cheeked Warblers

APRIL 12, 2017

On Sunday April 9, several Young Birder Club members and their friends were joined by the “First Lego League: Team Immortals” and Master Birder Sarah Jenevein at Travis Audubon’s Baker Sanctuary in hopes of seeing the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler. First Lego League is an organization that challenges kids in over 80 countries to

think like scientists and engineers. The theme of this year's challenge is "Animal Allies." Team Immortals chose Golden-cheeked Warblers for their research project and are attempting to solve the species¹ diminishing nesting habitat dilemma by designing nest replicas and securing these nests in Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat.

The group met on a pleasant, but overcast morning at the Jackie Arnold Education Center and wildlife biologist Cindy Sperry discussed Golden-cheeked Warblers, their habitat, nests, and banding. Most of the young participants already knew a lot about Golden-cheeked Warblers and were very eager to show off their knowledge. The group then explored the trails in search of Golden-cheeked Warbler, and learned about Black-capped Vireos, cowbirds, cochineal insects, rock quarry formations, and a little history behind the Baker family and property. After concluding our hike and with Cindy's guidance, a few members of Team Immortals affixed several nest replicas in trees. These nests will be monitored for signs of activity and reported in their data collection.

Forging a Path in South Austin

APRIL 14, 2017

A new path is being forged in South Austin. In 2006, planning of the Violet Crown Trail began. Its purpose is to create the first regional trail system in Central Texas. After years of strategic land acquisition and planning the first six-mile segment opened, and HCC's vision is becoming a reality.

The Violet Crown Trail, which will eventually extend from Zilker Park to Hays County, is part of an effort to give Austin residents greater access to natural areas and inspire them to care for Central Texas land and wildlife.

"When people spend time on land it helps them make that connection between land preservation and clean air and water," said Romey Swanson, Hill Country Conservancy's Conservation Project Manager.

Six miles of the trail are now open starting in Zilker Park to Highway 290 at Brodie Lane. Future additions will connect to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and City of Austin Water Quality Protection Lands in Hays County. Upon completion, the trail will total thirty miles and become the longest of its kind in Central Texas.

When asked about the best spots Travis Audubon members might enjoy, Swanson recommended "the stretch between the 290 Trailhead at Brodie Lane and the 360 Trailhead. This stretch is usually a bit quieter and less trafficked. However, birders should expect good opportunities along any portion of the current six miles."

You can learn more about the Violet Crown Trail and see maps at www.violetcrowntrail.com. If you visit April 14 -18 be sure to help document Austin species for the City Nature Challenge!

Texas Naturalist's Notes By Bill Reiner

APRIL 17, 2017

Milkweeds are not the most colorful of our spring flowers. Next to the brilliant yellows and reds, pinks and blues and snowy whites of other blooms, the overall pale green of the common Antelope-Horns milkweed tends to fade into the background. It's the structure of the big, globular flower clusters that draws one's attention, and, on closer inspection, the curious form of the flowers themselves. But as most naturalists know, they play an important role in the ecosystem, with significance for much of North America.

Two similar species of milkweeds that bloom in central Texas during the spring are commonly given the name "Antelope-Horns." Both apparently earned the nickname for the resemblance to the headwear of a pronghorn "antelope," of the paired, inward-curving seed pods (properly termed follicles by botanists).

The species called simply Antelope-Horns is *Asclepias asperula*, which primarily ranges westward from Austin into the desert Southwest. The other species, *Asclepias viridis*, called Green Antelope-Horns or just Green Milkweed, has broader, less pointed leaves, and ranges from central Texas eastward to Florida. In both species the pale green flowers are tightly packed into the flower heads, though in *A. asperula* the heads are more spherical.

Both species have flowers characteristic of the milkweed genus. The five petals form a shallow bowl, hiding the small sepals beneath them, and cupping the stout column of the reproductive parts – the stamens and pistils – in the center of the flower. So far, this is all very similar to other kinds of flowers.

Now a variation: the central column is formed by the fusion of the top parts of the stamens and pistils. This structure is unique to the milkweeds. Called the gynostegium, it takes a close look to see well, but is important in the plants' pollination.

The partial fusion results in a tiny slit, between adjacent stamens, that catches the legs, or hairs on the legs, of insects drawn to the flower's nectar. When the insect pulls its leg away, it often extracts a tiny "saddle" fitted with pollen in the two "saddlebags." This structure is termed a pollinium. If things go right for the milkweed, the insect then carries the pollinium away to be deposited in the next milkweed flower.

Some insects get their legs caught in the slit and are not strong enough to pull out. This occasionally happens to the nonnative honeybee. Native bumblebees are strong enough to pull themselves free; they and other native bees may once have been the principal pollinators of milkweeds. Nonetheless, most of the insects found to be "saddled" with pollinia in recent studies have been honeybees.

Though the gynostegia are difficult to see well enough to appreciate, other structures of the milkweed flower are often conspicuous, and distinctive to these interesting

plants. Cupped inside the petals are a set of five knobby structures arrayed around the central column. These features, called hoods, contain the flowers' copious nectar. They are often contrastingly colored – in the Antelope-Horns species they are usually a dark purple and white – to guide insects to them. Pollinators often land on them, and, while they are maneuvering to get to the nectar, a leg will slide into a gynostegial slit to be fitted with a pollen saddle.

In some *Asclepias* species, a claw-like point will project from each hood (or near it) toward the center of the flower. These structures are called horns. Ironically enough, the two species of Antelope-Horns can be distinguished from other milkweeds by the lack of these horns. (For a good illustration of a Common Milkweed flower, with parts labeled, see here.)

Milkweeds are perhaps best known for being the food plant for caterpillars of the renowned Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*). Most insects and other herbivores do not eat milkweed leaves because chemicals contained within the milky sap, or latex, are distasteful, and can be toxic when eaten in quantity. Milkweeds evolved this chemical defense against the hordes of herbivores that might otherwise feast on them.

Botanists have determined that the toxic chemicals are steroids called cardenolides, and that the concentration of these chemicals varies greatly between milkweed species. Some milkweeds, such as the bright orange Butterflyweed (*A. tuberosa*), have little or none of the toxin. Both species of Antelope-Horns average high toxin concentration, but it also varies greatly among individual plants.

Monarch evolution has outmaneuvered the milkweeds' chemical defenses, at least somewhat. The caterpillars are able to sequester the cardenolides into their own bodies, which, in turn, makes them distasteful to would-be predators. As the caterpillars grow and metamorphose into adult butterflies, the chemicals remain in their bodies, so the adults are also protected. A bird that samples a Monarch is unlikely to try one again.

Even Monarchs, though, have difficulty dealing with the sticky latex. Small caterpillars, in earlier growth stages, tend to avoid severing the leaf veins; the resulting rapid flow of latex can gum up their mouthparts to the point that they cannot eat. Larger caterpillars sometimes circumvent this problem by chewing quickly through the midvein to stop latex flow to the leaf before they start chowing down. The larvae also have trouble digesting high concentrations of the toxic cardenolides.

Female Monarch butterflies may be able to sense the concentrations in the plants. One experiment concluded that they preferentially laid eggs on plants of the species that contained higher levels of the toxin. They may also avoid plants with extremely high concentrations. Only 27 of the more than 100 species of North American milkweeds (in the *Asclepias* genus) have been found to host Monarchs.

The Monarchs that appear in central Texas in spring are the same individuals that sailed through here in fall. They are now returning toward their northern birthplace after

spending the winter in Mexico. But they are near the end of their lives as they push northward. So northbound females will stop to lay eggs on milkweeds here. In most cases, the host plants will be Antelope-Horns, since they are the most widespread milkweeds available on the Monarchs' migratory path, and usually contain suitable levels of cardenolides.

Another generation of Monarchs, raised on milkweeds in Texas and other southern states, will complete the circuitous journey begun by their parents (or grandparents). They will lay eggs in the northern states and Canada, and their descendants will be the ones to migrate to Mexico. So the plants here are critical to the life cycle of these amazing insects.

Alarms have been raised over the precipitous decline of the Monarch population, at least partly attributed to increased pesticide use in the Monarchs' breeding range. The loss may be linked both to direct poisoning of the butterflies and to dwindling numbers of the milkweed host plants.

Where herbicides are sprayed to control weeds, drifting droplets can be blown a quarter-mile or more (if applied negligently on windy days), where they can damage or kill unintended targets in natural areas. Milkweeds are frequent colonizers of old fields and the edges of croplands, so may be especially vulnerable to drift of these herbicides. The risk is greater where crops that have been genetically modified to withstand specific herbicides are sprayed with more toxic concentrations.

A campaign to save the Monarch by planting milkweeds is well underway. This effort can be beneficial in some places, but not everywhere. In rangeland, for instance, planting is probably unnecessary. Where livestock are the primary crop, milkweeds may be more numerous than on un-grazed sites. Herbicides are not often sprayed widely, and the milkweeds' chemical defenses dissuade grazers. If livestock show signs of poisoning from eating milkweed, the problem is that they have too little else to eat. The solution, for a wise land manager, rather than spraying the milkweeds, is to reduce grazing pressure so that the grasses rebound.

In urban and suburban areas, milkweeds and other native plants have been replaced by buildings, asphalt, and tidily-manicured lawns. For a female Monarch trying to find a site to lay her eggs, the ever-expanding cities can be hostile country. Planting native milkweeds in parks and gardens can provide oases for them. But a patch of milkweed next to a highway may do more harm than good, if the butterflies drawn to it end up on a windshield.

In landscapes dominated by row-crop agriculture, milkweeds planted in spots distant from carelessly-applied herbicides may help to replace those lost to poisoning. However, in the long run, the real solution will be to reduce our dependence on increasingly toxic pesticides.

Other references not cited in this article included “Evolutionary and ecological implications of cardenolide sequestration in the Monarch butterfly” by S. B. Malcolm and L. P. Brower in *Experientia*, vol. 45; “Insect pollinators of 12 milkweed (*Asclepias*) species,” by Robert F. Betz, et al, in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth North American Prairie Conference*; and the University of Minnesota’s “Monarch Lab” website.

Bird of the Week: Golden-cheeked Warbler

APRIL 19, 2017

Few birds have captured the imagination of Texans like the Golden-cheeked warbler. This diminutive songbird winters in the mountain forests of Central America, but its breeding range falls entirely within thirty-three counties in central Texas. Golden-cheeked warblers require a very particular habitat: mixed oak and juniper woodlands, like those found in the deeply dissected canyons of the Balcones Escarpment. This reliance on a specialized habitat has made the species extremely vulnerable to human encroachment, particularly given the rapid development of the Balcones Escarpment region. It has been at the top of the U.S. list of endangered species since 1990. The warbler’s beauty, uniqueness (it is the only bird to breed entirely within state lines), and vulnerability have made it a symbol of environmental conservation across the state.

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

Here Forever: Land Conservation in the Hill Country

APRIL 21, 2017

Hill Country Conservancy recently made a contribution to Travis Audubon’s Land Endowment supporting the protection of Central Texas habitat. In an interview with Travis Audubon’s Nancy Sprehn, HCC’s Conservation Project Manager Romey Swanson shared his thoughts on the importance of land conservation.

As Austin’s open spaces face ever increasing pressures from development, our open spaces become more important for the health and well being of the city and its residents. “Open space scrubs water before entering waterways. Austin’s drinking water sources are the Colorado River and Highland Lakes. If there are buffers of green spaces, less investment is needed in cleaning the water,” said Swanson. He believes more people are starting to understand this connection along with the idea that open space also means improved air quality and habitat preservation for species diversity.

When asked why HCC donated to Travis Audubon’s Land Endowment, Swanson said, “We saw a great opportunity to show support for efforts to conserve land and show our willingness to partner.”

HCC was formed with a goal of preserving 50,000 acres of networked land to protect vital resources, wildlife, and heritage for future generations. When asked about working together toward common goals, Swanson brought up the vast knowledge base and

skillset that our organizations offer, from land management to species identification. He mentioned how Travis Audubon's Master Birder program in particular serves an important role for the whole conservation community.

"There are a lot of elements to conservation work and experts that are needed in so many areas: butterflies, plants, birds, etc. Travis Audubon's Master Birder program is building that base of active and engaged people who can lend their time to these efforts; There are so many engaged birders – so many knowledgeable people. We're not chasing certifications, but we are chasing fellowships and we want to have conversations and share our knowledge. Master Birder strengthens your knowledge and skillset but it also gets you out practicing and sharing that knowledge."

Thanks to the generous donations of individuals and organizations like Hill Country Conservancy, Travis Audubon can continue protecting fragile habitat from urban growth and can mobilize members who are passionate about building and sharing their environmental knowledge.

Rare Bird Alert

APRIL 23, 2017

This is the Austin Area Rare Bird Alert and has been updated through 4/23/2017. To report rare or unusual bird sightings in the Austin area, provide recent sighting updates, or inquire about location details on birds listed below, please send an email to armanmorenobirds@gmail.com. If submitting a bird sighting, please include species name, location details, and contact information.

Rarities Found This Week

A WHITE-TAILED KITE was found off Earhardt Rd just off FM 969 in Bastrop County on 4/16.

A SWALLOW-TAILED KITE was reported flying over Hornsby Bend, Travis County, on 4/15.

A HARRIS'S HAWK was reported 1/2 mile N of Hwy 87 and CR 219 in Gonzales County on 4/20.

A ZONE-TAILED HAWK was reported from Little Webberville Park off FM 969 just west of the town of Webberville, Travis County, on 4/20.

A PIPING PLOVER was found at Hornsby Bend, Travis County, on 4/22. The bird was seen in the northwest corner of Pond 1 West.

A LAUGHING GULL was photographed off of Toll Bridge Rd near IH 35 South of Belton, Bell County, on 4/10. The bird was likely encountered along the Lampasas River. Another bird was photographed flying over Lake Travis at Windy Point Park, Travis County, on 4/11.

A RINGED KINGFISHER was reported from LBJ State Park & Historic Site in Gillespie County on 4/22.

A HUTTON'S VIREO was photographed at an inaccessible tract of land on the Balcones Canyonlands NWR northwest of Austin, Travis County, on 4/18 and continues through 4/22. A pair of birds were photographed off Lime Creek Rd in Volente, Travis County, on 4/20.

A WOOD THRUSH was heard and recorded on private property across from St. Edwards Park, Travis County, on 4/18. Another bird was reported from Warbler Woods in Guadalupe County on 4/12.

A WORM-EATING WARBLER was reported off Cow Creek Rd in NW Travis County on 4/22. This is in the vicinity of the Balcones Canyonlands NWR. Another bird was photographed at a private residence off FM 466 in Gonzales County on 4/15.

A LAZULI BUNTING was found on a private tract of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) off of FM 620 and FM 2222 in west Austin, Travis County, on 4/20. The bird was in with a group of Indigo Buntings.

Updates from National: Interview with Cynthia Pruitt

APRIL 24, 2017

Cynthia Pruitt serves as a Chapter Representative on the National Audubon Board. Travis Audubon Director Joan Marshall recently interviewed Cynthia about her involvement with the organization and her recent experience at the National Board Meeting in Columbia.

What motivated you to join the National Audubon Board as a Chapter Representative?

Having completed six years on the Board of Tucson Audubon and president for 4 years of that time, I was ready for another challenge within the Audubon organization. Having a strong business and technical background, much of it in executive management at IBM, I felt my qualifications would be of special value at National. The timing was perfect since the position became open for 2017.

I understand you recently traveled to Columbia to attend the National Audubon Board Meeting. What were the key issues and focus of the Board discussion?

Internally getting a strong network within the organization is a vital key to having strong communications across the organization and currently much work is in progress. This work is under the purview of David Ringer.

Another key area is in working to assure major environmental legislation such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act, are not weakened or undone in the current political environment. This calls for everybody to actively engage in communicating with congress in the broadest way.

The important Flyway work is proceeding and action plans against the strategic plan are moving ahead with support on the scientific side to assure results that can stand up when challenged.

Finally, because many birds spend more time outside the United States and Columbia is one of those countries, agreements are being put in place with the government as well as other NGOs that will encompass efforts to save key habitat and involve locals in ecotourism and other attendant jobs. That was the reason for meeting in Columbia.

With the change in the national political climate, where does National Audubon feel it can be most effective and how?

Referencing my earlier statement from the board, a strategy has been developed to interact with key elected officials at the national level to educate and persuade for action to assure the preservation of key legislation that has made such impact on the lives of birds and other wildlife. As I say earlier, we must all become strong advocates with our representatives in congress.

What's the most beautiful bird you've ever seen?

There are so many to choose from, but I'll go with the Resplendent Quetzal!

Cynthia will be joining Travis Audubon's birding adventure to Malawi this fall. She looks forward to adding to her diverse birding experiences in Kenya, South Africa, Namibia, Tunisia, and Morocco.

Bird of the Week: Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay

APRIL 26, 2017

Three species of Scrub-Jay can be found in the United States, but only one, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, resides in Texas. Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay prefer the montane pine forests of the American Southwest and far west Texas, but their range extends into the eastern Edwards Plateau and central Texas, where they live in juniper-oak woodlands. They resemble their eastern cousin, the Blue Jay, but are more muted in color and lack the Blue Jay's distinctive crest. One trait that Scrub-Jays share with Blue Jay is their resourcefulness and intelligence—in fact, jays have a brain-to-body mass ratio almost as high as that of humans. They have excellent memories, and can recall the

locations of dozens of food caches. Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay is also a very recent addition to most birders' checklists: until 2016, they were Western Scrub-Jays.

Compiled by Owen Moorhead. Sources include the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

Victor Emanuel: Birdman

APRIL 28, 2017

Few lands have gone unseen by Victor Emanuel. Though the 76-year-old naturalist and bird expert says he rarely left Texas the first 30 years of his life, that all changed when he started Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) in 1976. Since then, he has traveled to every continent and takes around 10 trips a year to exotic locations where the ecosystem is rich with wildlife and bird watching possibilities, like Madagascar and Peru. With a yearning to document a career chock-full of birding adventures, Emanuel enlisted the help of Austin-based author S. Kirk Walsh to write *One More Warbler: A Life with Birds*. In anticipation of the book's release in May from UT Press, Emanuel told the Alcalde what it is about birds that makes him sing.

You started venturing outside your Houston home regularly as an 8-year-old. What first piqued your interests in nature?

Many people who get interested in nature do so because a relative or a teacher is interested. But it just came out of my being, my soul. From very early on, I was interested in whatever was alive, whether it was a flower, an insect, a bird, a turtle, or a snake.

What's the most beautiful bird you've seen?

Hands down, the splendid quetzal. It is the sacred bird of the Maya. It is the bird whose feathers from its lower back were used by Montezuma in his magnificent headdress. I've probably seen quetzals 30 or 40 times and every time it's like the first time. If you're lucky, you'll see one flying across a clearing in the morning with its effervescent tail, several feet long, undulating behind it, and its bright red breast, calling as it flies across the clearing. The color is this beautiful green painted with iridescent gold and if the light changes, all of a sudden the bird is blue. It's unbelievable.

You write "There's something about warblers—the way they move, the lightness and intensity of life that they embody." Why did you focus on this bird?

My good friend suggested it because it captured my personality. The chapter titled "My True Obsession" captures the intensity I feel about nature, but particularly about warblers. I'm always wanting to see more each time I go out. I love the richness and the intensity of life that all animals have, whether a deer or a bird, but warblers more than any seem to exhibit that intensity.

What's one of the greatest lengths you've gone to see a bird?

On an island in New Zealand, there's the largest type of sea lion in the world. This small group and I were there there to look for a flightless duck, the Auckland Island teal. On the way, this sea lion came out of the water and came charging after us—after me. I was backing away but there was a rock behind me and I stumbled and almost fell. But one of the other bird experts had diverted the attention to him. All of us started running. We got across the water, but the sea lion kept coming. We went into the forest, the sea lion followed us. We kept going and the sea lion kept coming. We would stop and breathe thinking it was gone, but then there it came like a creature from the black lagoon. It wouldn't stop until finally we had gone far enough. It was absolutely terrifying.

Do you ever get bored on long bird watches?

That to me is impossible. There's always something to see and always something to enjoy. You notice things you haven't noticed before. Just the other day I was leading a bird walk in Travis Heights and one of the people pointed out a spider web I hadn't noticed. I looked at it with my binoculars and a slice of the web was iridescent. The sun was hitting it from behind and the spider web became a rainbow. There's always more beauty if you're open to it.

Kat Sampson's article originally appeared in The Acalde on March 1, 2017.

A book launch and signing for One More Warbler will be held on May 31, 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM at UT Austin's Thompson Conference Center. Call the Travis Audubon office or go to our website to purchase tickets.

Upcoming Field Trips and Classes!

May 2, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Super Tuesday at the Slaughter Creek Preserve Trail led by Rick Taylor and Ken Zaslow

May 3, 2017 – Birds & Blooms: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

May 6, 2017 – Birdathon: Early Birders

May 6, 2017 –Beginner's Bird Walk at Turkey Creek Trail 1600 City Park Rd, Austin, TX 78730, USA

May 6, 2017 – Chalupas & Chimney Swifts: Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary

May 7, 2017 – Young Birders Club: Camp Mabry

May 7, 2017 – Ruffled Feathers Book Club: Kingbird Highway

May 9, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Super Tuesday at Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park, led by Deb and Lee Wallace

May 13, 2017 – Nature Day at Baker Sanctuary

May 13, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Count

May 13, 2017 – Morning Canyon Crawl: Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary

May 13, 2017 – Chaetura Canyon Swift Watch: Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary

May 18, 2017 – Speaker Series: What Genetics Tells Us About Golden-cheeked Warblers

May 16, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Two-hour Tuesday at Mills Pond Park, led by Dan Callaway

May 21, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Commons Ford Prairie Plant Walk with Diane Sherrill

May 23, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Two-hour Tuesday at Big Webberville Park led by Ken Zaslow

May 27, 2017 – CLASS: Introduction to Nature Photography

May 27, 2017 – Blair Woods Restoration Day: Blair Woods

May 28, 2017 – Young Birders Club: Purple Martins

May 31, 2017 – Victor Emanuel Book Release and Signing

June 4, 2017 – Purple Martin Colony Visit with Laura Joseph

June 10, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Count

June 10, 2017 – Morning Canyon Crawl: Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary

June 10, 2017 – Chaetura Canyon Swift Watch: Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary

June 17, 2017 – Baker Restoration Day: Baker Sanctuary

June 17, 2017 – FIELD TRIP: Commons Ford Prairie Bird Walk with Shelia Hargis

For more information about these events, please visit: www.TravisAudubon.org