A Note
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Travis Audubon Members and Friends,

Thank you to everyone who helped make our 10th annual Victor Conservation Award Luncheon such a success – it was our best event yet! Thanks for celebrating Chris Harte’s important conservation work in Central Texas with us.

From celebration to bad news: you’ve no doubt heard about the release of National Audubon’s report announcing that two-thirds of North American birds that are at increasing risk of extinction from climate change. This is a crisis that each of us can address. We are grateful for everyone—including you!—who is taking action by decreasing their carbon emissions, keeping their cats indoors, avoiding pesticides, planting pollinator-friendly native species, and making windows safe for birds. We are working hard to protect birds and the planet we all share, and the work is certainly not finished yet!

Aren’t you enjoying fall migration and the cooler weather? We’re already looking forward to our celebrations that close out the year, including our week of events culminating in the 60th anniversary of birding at Hornsby Bend on November 23rd. Till then, join us on a birdwalk or at a fall class as we continue to celebrate birds and birders this fall.

Thanks for being in our flock,

Nicole Netherton
Executive Director
People
AT TRAVIS AUDUBON

Staff
Executive Director
Nicole Netherton

Land Manager and Educator
Chris Murray

Development Manager
Kelsey McKenna

Education and Program Coordinator
Caley Zuzula

Operations Coordinator
Judith Allen

Design Director & Website Producer
Nora Chovanec

Board of Directors
President
Eric Stager

Vice President
Karen Bartoletti

Treasurer
Carol Ray

Secretary
Sharon Richardson

Directors
Christy Esmahan
Suzaanne Kho
Clif Ladd
Julia Marsden
Lino Mendiola
Dennis Palafox
Virginia Rose
Jo Wilson
Mark Wilson

Committees
Advocacy
Christy Esmahan
Clif Ladd
Chris Murray
Mark Wilson
Shelia Hargis
Ellen Filtness
Paul Kyle
Georgean Kyle
Mark Wilson
Byron Stone
Cheryl McGrath
Dennis Palafox
Eric Stager
Jane Tillman
Cindy Sperry
Virginia Rose
Mary Kay Sexton

Advisory Council
J. David Bamberger
Valarie Bristol
Frances Cerbins
Victor Emanuel
Sam Fason
Shelia Hargis
Bryan Hale
Karen Huber
Mary Kelly
Susan Rieff
Andrew Sansom
Carter Smith
Upcoming Events
WITH TRAVIS AUDUBON

02 NOV, 19
Beginner’s Bird Walk: Barkley Meadows Park
4529 S SH 130, Del Valle, TX 78617

02 NOV, 19
Introduction to Lightroom

06 NOV, 19
Winter is Coming Wild Weekday Field Trip with Justin Bosler

09 NOV, 19
Birding by Ear with Mikael Behrens

09 NOV, 19
Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Count

10 NOV, 19
Commons Ford Prairie Bird Walk
614 N Commons Ford Rd, Austin, TX 78733

10 NOV, 19
Commons Ford Prairie Plant Walk with Kirsti Harms

14 NOV, 19
Migratory Birds in the Landscape
4801 La Crosse Ave, Austin, TX 78739

16 NOV, 19
Birdability Walk at Govalle Park
5200 Bolm Rd.

16 NOV, 19
Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Walk

16 NOV, 19
Baker Sanctuary Restoration Day
12219 Lime Creek Rd, Leander, TX 78641, USA

16 NOV, 19
Blair Woods Family Nature Day

16 NOV, 19
Palmetto State Park Field Trip
Led by Justin Bosler

17 NOV, 19
Camp Mabry Field Trip

19 NOV, 19
Lone Star Wild Happy Hour at Davis Gallery
837 W 12th St, Austin, TX 78701

20 NOV, 19
Wild Weekday at Devine Lake with Christy Esmahan
1807 Waterfall Ave, Leander, TX 78641

21 NOV, 19
Speaker Series: Hornsby Bend 1959-2019: 60 Years of Birds, Birding, and More with Kevin Anderson
4700 Grover Ave, Austin, TX 78756

23 NOV, 19
60 Years of Birding at Hornsby Bend Celebration

30 NOV, 19
Ecological Literacy Volunteer Day at Hornsby Bend
2210 S FM 973, Austin, TX 78725

01 DEC, 19
Young Birders Club: Charro Ranch Park

05 DEC, 19
Wild Weekend at Woodland Park Trail with Christy Esmahan

07 DEC, 19
Beginner’s Bird Walk

07 DEC, 19
Commons Ford Prairie Bird Walk
614 N Commons Ford Rd, Austin, TX 78733

07 DEC, 19
Blair Woods Restoration Day
5401 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Austin, TX 78721, USA

10 DEC, 19
Wild Weekday at City of Bee Cave Central Park with Amy Sugeno

14 DEC, 19
Birdability Walk at Berry Springs Park

14 DEC, 19
Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Count

14 DEC, 19
Blair Woods Family Nature Day

14 DEC, 19
Austin Christmas Bird Count

28 DEC, 19
Ecological Literacy Volunteer Day at Hornsby Bend
2210 S FM 973, Austin, TX 78725
Every spring and fall, over 400 species of birds migrate through Texas skies. Most of them are embarking on an incredible long-distance flight from their northern breeding areas in spring to their winter homes in South and Central America. Why such a long, arduous journey every season? Birds migrate in order to move to more agreeable environments with resources for building nests and raising their young in the spring. In the fall they move to where there is more of an abundance of food in the winter. Other contributing factors motivating this journey include the decreasing amount of light hours in the north and the colder winter weather.

**When is fall migration in Texas?**
Fall migration in Texas starts as early as July. You may have noticed that in August you weren’t seeing some of our early spring birds, such as the Purple Martins, Barn Swallows and Golden-cheeked Warblers. They had already made their way south toward their over-wintering grounds. Other birds migrate a little later. For example, by late August we start seeing more hawks moving into the area from the north, peaking by the second week of November. Whooping Cranes generally start their trip from Canada to their wintering ground in Texas around October. Different species of birds seem to have different environmental and physical factors that motivate them to migrate at different times, so the exact time a species migrates may vary from year to year.

**How can you see migrating birds in Austin?**
According to Shelia Hargis, President of the Texas Ornithological Society, "there are numerous places around Austin to go see specific types of migration, but I think Hornsby [Bend] is the best place to see several different types of migration – shore bird migration, hawk migration and passerine migration..." She also recommends Commons Ford Prairie for witnessing hawk and passerine migration. Also, you can get lucky just by remembering to look up occasionally wherever you are, as you are driving, working in the backyard or walking in a park.

**Is there a way I can find out what is migrating now?**
Yes! As a matter of fact there is! Cornell scientists created an online tool called BirdCast that uses weather radar networks to track birds on their migration routes in the spring and fall. The map uses near real-time data to forecast bird migration in the US. It is designed to help keep you informed so you know what to expect in the few days ahead, in order to plan your bird watching trips. To help you learn to read the BirdCast map and use the tool to your benefit, Cornell has created an online "how to" guide.

Fall and spring migration can be a great time to see birds that aren’t normally in our area. You can go out birdwatching at our local parks or be more of a casual birder looking to the skies. Technology can help you get a better idea of where and when to look. Remember to log your migratory bird findings in e-bird, and happy birding!

*Pictured above: Swainson Hawks spotted North of Austin – October 2018 – © 2018 Heather Valey*  
See sources in online Signal Smoke.

---

**Meeting the Cahills: Part 1**

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

By: Jean Warneke
I first met the Cahills while I was birding in Guatemala in 2017. JB Journeys runs a Guatemala Holy Week tour each year and I’d gone early to scout for a birding trip. I knew that the Golden-cheeked Warbler overwintered in the central part of the country so I hired a local guide for a day. I stayed in the Cobán area and my guide, Rudy Botzoc, and I traveled by public bus from one preserve to another. The birding was fabulous. I was surprised to see several private preserves set aside specifically for the protection of migrants. At one point, we heard a screech owl, got excited, but realized it was a tape that a birding group was using. Rudy pointed and said, “There is the best birder in Guatemala.” I assumed Rudy was referring to the older of the two guides, but I learned that the best birder in Guatemala was not Rob Cahill, but his 21-year-old son, John.

The group was staying at my same hotel, so I saw them at dinner. Rob asked if he could talk to me about his work in Guatemala. When I mentioned I was from Texas, he asked if it was anywhere near where Golden-cheeked Warblers nest.

Rob and Tara run Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC) at a campus in the cloud forest and work with local indigenous people from surrounding villages. During the school year, classes come to their campus for Kids & Birds, a 4-day environmental education program based on the Cornell Lab’s BirdSleuth, learning and experiencing the connection between the land and the creatures who call it home, and the need to protect it.

In November and December (school break) CCFC runs a 25-day residential program called Women in Agro-ecology Leadership for Conservation, or WALT. This program is life changing. Many of the girls come from large families facing poverty and malnutrition and live in areas of deforestation and environmental degradation. Traditionally, in rural Guatemala, girls leave school after 6th grade, marry, and begin up to 12 pregnancies.

In 25 days, they learn extensively about agro-ecology, but additionally they have instruction in nature, nutrition, cooking, hygiene, family planning, career options, self-confidence building, and other life skills. To complete the program, they must also establish a small agro-forest parcel at their home, planting native trees as well as heirloom and traditional crops. The result is a better educated person who can supply healthy food for her family (with additional to take to market) and to begin reforestation of the cloud forest, which has been overcut for several decades for firewood and subsistence farming. Upon completion, each girl earns a scholarship to attend school for another year.

Today, over 1,200 young women have completed the program. Most have gone on to finish secondary school, many attend university, and some are now in professional careers. Quite a few come back to CCFC and work as teachers in either Kids & Birds or WALT. These young women tend to marry later and have smaller families.

Before I forget, most of the students speak an indigenous language, Q’eqchi’, one of 22 Maya languages in Guatemala. The classes are taught in Q’eqchi’ and the Cahills all speak it.

Did I mention they have Golden-cheeked Warblers on their property? In fact, this area is where the bird was first described to science back in 1860.

When it comes to supporting groups with donations, there are areas that mean a lot to me. CCFC hits them all. Women. Conservation. Education. Sustainability. Women. Check and double-check.

Meeting the Cahills: Part 2

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

By: Jean Warneke

Now, let me tell you about the campus at Community Cloud Forest Conservation. At our first meeting, Rob showed me some pictures of the
buildings but until seen in person, it’s hard to imagine. Two large, undulating buildings have dorm rooms, large kitchens, and classrooms. The center is 100% off the grid, but no comfort is lacking. They have both solar and hydro power, grow much of their own food, use composting toilets, clean their wastewater through leaching fields, and much more. Just inside the front door you will see what appears to be a recumbent bicycle, but they use the contraption to grind freshly roasted coffee beans or wheat (or some non-gluten alternative) for breads.

Then there’s “Guatemala’s best birder.” John Cahill is now 23 years old and has birding and guide skills well beyond his years. John has done a few Big Years in Guatemala, each one bigger than the last. You can read about his big year here. He has helped train a number of guides in the country, and he continues to add to Guatemala’s list of birds. John attended university in Colombia for a couple of years and JB Journeys is planning a birding tour with him in Western Colombia for August 2021 (let me know if interested.) He is now studying in Cobán and helping with the running of CCFC.

In January of this year, JB Journeys ran two successful birding tours in Guatemala led by the super team of John and Rob Cahill. As a result of these two tours, one acre of land was put into reforestation and will be maintained for six years, effectively offsetting the carbon footprint of the tour. Another departure scheduled for January 2020 is already full, but we’d like to offer this tour each year in conjunction with Travis Audubon. It is my hope that Travis Audubon will partner with CCFC to support their efforts to educate and reforest the area where some of our own Golden-cheeked Warblers spend the winter.

San Marcos Garden Club
Presentation: Helping with those “LBJs”

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

By: Michael Jewell, Travis Audubon Master Birder
close to an hour if time wasn't limited, and even as we were leaving, members were asking us questions and telling us about all the birds they were seeing. As we walked back to our car, Janel and I were both saying how much we enjoy doing these, but how this one was special.

**Another Great Mediterranean Feast Takes Flight**

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

While the food was incredible, the Chimney Swifts were the true stars of the show, as they always are. Shortly after sunset, the crowd headed to the sanctuary's castle tower and watched with delight as over 180 Chimney Swifts sailed and circled through the air before settling into the tower for the night. Since most events at the sanctuary involve watching the birds from the house patio, seeing them from this new angle was extra wonderful for the guests who attend the fundraising dinner every year. Plus, the many newcomers in the group were clearly awed and enchanted by watching the little birds perform their aerial acrobatics.

"We want to thank everyone who came to the Mediterranean Feast and supported the birds," said co-steward Paul Kyle. "While we were surprised that the swifts decided to roost in the castle instead of the house this year, we were happy they gave people the chance to witness how fascinating they are in person and demonstrate how important it is to conserve and provide homes for these incredible creatures."

The 2019 Mediterranean Feast raised over $2400 for Chaetura Canyon, which will go toward care and maintenance of the property. Additional donations are always welcome, and there are several ways to support Chaetura Canyon directly. The three main funds are the Maintenance
Fund to cover yearly expenses, the Chaetura Canyon Endowment Fund to care for the Sanctuary into the future, and the Land Acquisition Fund to expand the Sanctuary as additional property becomes available. The Donor Brick program also benefits the Land Acquisition Fund.

Volunteers Break a Sweat at Baker

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Last weekend sixteen volunteers descended upon Baker Sanctuary to offer their support to the preserve. Over the course of three hours, approximately ten cubic yards of obstructing vegetation and a large pile of rubbish were removed from an invasive species management area. Many thanks to those who braved the morning showers to lend a hand!

Interested in helping with our efforts to ensure great wildlife habitat at our sanctuaries?

Accessible Birding and the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival 2019

POSTED ON OCTOBER 2, 2019

Happy fall! I am Virginia Rose, board member of Travis Audubon in Austin and founder of Birdability, an initiative whose mission is to get people with mobility challenges outside and birding!

I know you all are familiar with the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival taking place November 6-10 in Harlingen, Texas. What you may not know is that the Festival now has bird walks for people with mobility challenges, previously led by Laurie Foss. I am now leading those walks and thrilled about it. We will visit the famous Estero Llano Grande, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, Valley Nature Center, Quinta Mazatlan, and the National Butterfly Center.

Please think about people you know who have mobility challenges who would enjoy being out again on accessible trails and going at a manageable pace. We will not be bushwhacking, but I promise we will be seeing birds! Birds such as Altamira Oriole, Great Kiskadee, Green Jay, Plain Chachalaca, and others.

See the Rio Grande Valley birding Festival website and sign up for Mobility-challenged walks. If you have any questions at all about the Festival, please don’t hesitate to call or text me at 512-461-6920 or email me at info@birdability.com. Thanks!

Vote YES on Prop 5 Nov. 5

POSTED ON OCTOBER 7, 2019

By: Mark Wilson, Travis Audubon Board Member

Texas has an incredible system of state parks and other lands that provides bird watchers and bird lovers important opportunities to access and enjoy birds, and to provide vital habitat for those birds. But our parks and historic sites are overflowing and stretched to the limit as all Texans seek out outdoor opportunities in a state that is 95% privately owned. State Park visitation alone is nearing 10 million visitors annually. All of those visitors coupled with chronic underfunding has placed a strain on the system. If we are to meet growing demand and ensure future generations, the parkssystem needs a dedicated stream of funding. This fall, we have an opportunity to do just that.

On November 5, 2019 Texans will head to the polls for a Constitutional Amendment Election. Proposition 5 or “Prop. 5” is one of 10 measures on
which Texans will be asked to vote. Prop. 5 will dedicate revenue from the Sporting Goods Sales Tax, so those dollars can only be used by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission on public parks and historic sites, and not for any other purposes. Importantly, Prop. 5 requires no new taxes or fees. A YES vote on Prop. 5 on Nov. 5 will protect Texas' natural areas and historic sites, so we don't lose the very things that make Texas a special place in which to live. Travis Audubon supports this measure, and the Board and the Advocacy Committee ask all of our members to get out and vote for Prop 5!

More information at www.supporttexasparks.org. Travis Audubon is a member of the Texas Coalition for State Parks.

TBG Partners Beautify Blair Woods

POSTED ON OCTOBER 10, 2019

Many thanks to the landscape architecture firm, TBG Partners, for choosing Blair Woods as a recipient of their 'The Big Give' volunteer event. Over thirty participants spent the day at Blair Woods, cutting and removing invasive plants, watering saplings, and working on the butterfly garden, all in the 98 degree heat! A great deal was accomplished and TAS is thankful.

Want to build on their efforts? Join us for the next Blair Woods Restoration Day on October 26.

Vote for Prop. 5 on Nov. 5!

POSTED ON OCTOBER 21, 2019
By: Mark Wilson, Travis Audubon Board Member

Have you gone birding in a Texas State Park recently? Perhaps you enjoyed the bird blind at Pedernales State Park. Drove down to Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park to see some South Texas specialties. Or joined a Travis Audubon field trip at one of the State Parks in Central Texas. Our State Parks provide many opportunities to enjoy birding, and just as importantly, thousands of acres of protected habitat for all our Texas critters. And not just the major parks – I have spent time with friends and family birding at State Historical Sites, Wildlife Management Areas, State Beaches and State River Trails – any accessible natural area where I could grab a minute in the woods in a state that is 95% privately owned.

On November 5th, we have a chance to support our parks by voting for and passing Proposition 5 in a statewide Constitutional Amendment Election. Proposition 5 will dedicate revenue from the Sporting Goods Sales Tax, so those dollars can only be used by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept and the Texas Historical Commission on public parks and historic sites, and not for any other purposes. This involves no new taxes or fees. For over 25 years, only 40% of the revenue from the SGS tax has gone to the use for which it was intended. Prop 5 will end that practice. 100% of revenue will provide badly needed funds for maintenance, capital improvements and expansion. There are currently 5 new parks awaiting funding to open, and I can say from personal experience these parks include some exciting new birding and naturalist opportunities.

Travis Audubon is a member of the Texas Coalition for State Parks. We support the Prop 5 “Support State Parks” campaign. This amendment was sponsored and passed by the Texas Legislature in a bipartisan fashion with near unanimous support, including our Governor. Now we need to do our part to get all the YES votes we can to the polls. Talk to your friends and neighbors. Spread the word. Show up the first Tuesday in November and Vote Yes Prop 5 Nov 5!

You can get more information to help spread the word at www.SupportTexasParks.org, Twitter Vote Yes on #Prop5onNov5, or Like the Support Texas Parks Facebook page.
Thank You
TO OUR 2019 VICTOR EMANUEL
CONSERVATION AWARD LUNCHEON SPONSORS

Chris Harte

We were thrilled to honor Chris Harte for the 10th anniversary of the Victor Emanuel Conservation Award Luncheon for his conservation work at Spicewood Ranch.
Thank You
TO OUR 2019 VICTOR EMANUEL
CONSERVATION AWARD LUNCHEON SPONSORS

Canyon Wren
Chris Harte
Shield Ranch

Chimney Swift
Peggy & Matt Winkler

Video Sponsor
Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

Wild Turkey
Audubon Texas
Karen Bartoletti
Julia Marsden
Selah Bamberger Ranch

Northern Bobwhite Sponsor
Mickey Burleson
Carol & Amon Burton
Austin Community Foundation
Frances & Oskar Cerbins
Anne Donovan & Friends
Frost Bank
Hill Country Conservancy
Caroline C. Jones
Harris & Lynda Young Kaffie
Suzanne Kho & James Werner
King Ranch
Brenda & Clif Ladd & Patsy Turner & Timothy
Stuart
Nona & Dr. Andrew Sansom
Stacy & Carter Smith
Travis Audubon's Commons Ford Prairie
Committee
Travis Audubon Master Birders
Jo Wilson & Carol Bennett

TO OUR BIRDS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS

Solluna
Design Build Consult

Montemayor Britton Bender, P.C.
Certified Public Accountants

Panamazing Tours

9E Ranch Cabins Lost Pines Bastrop