

2024 Travis Audubon Master Birder Program Information for Applicants

The Travis Audubon Society (TAS) is pleased to announce the **2024 class of the Travis Audubon Master Birder Program (TAMBP)** – a program designed to help participants increase their understanding of birds and their habitats, while also developing the volunteering skills for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for birds and the natural world with others. This is **not** a beginner nor an expert birder course, but rather an intermediate-level course intended to strengthen the knowledge and skills of birders with several years of birding experience.

The 2024 class will include a series of lectures, classwork, and field trips led by **expert instructors**, such as **UT professor Peter English**, who will introduce participants to bird anatomy and specialization, bird behavior, flight and migration. **Biologists Bill Reiner and Chuck Sexton** will lead sessions focusing on native habitat and vegetation, the distribution of bird species in the area, and conservation issues affecting biological communities and species in Central Texas. Skilled birders **Rich Kostecke, Eric Stager, and Shelia Hargis** will lead sessions focusing on ID for challenging bird families and using eBird to record and better understand birds. The series of field trips is designed to increase participants' knowledge of habitats and birds in Travis County, and to prepare participants for sharing information and skills with the public.

Applying to the Travis Audubon Master Birder Program

The online application will open November 1, 2023 at 10:00 AM CST. Applicants must submit an application by 5:00 PM CST on December 15, 2023. Class size is limited and priority for acceptance will be given to applicants who demonstrate enthusiasm for birds and birding, willingness to participate in all program sessions and field trips, and commitment to volunteer service as a Travis Audubon ambassador. Written notice of acceptance will be emailed to applicants by December 20, 2023.

Completed applications should be
emailed to: volunteer@TravisAudubon.org
or mailed to:

Travis Audubon, Master Birder Program; PO Box 301629, Austin, TX 78703

The class fee is \$250 and will be due before the first scheduled class. No refunds will be given once the class begins. Accepted applicants who are not Travis Audubon members must sign up for membership before the first scheduled class.

Requirements for the Travis Audubon Master Birder Program

Participants are expected to have basic birding skills (use of binoculars and field guides, experience identifying common bird species) prior to entering the program. In addition, participants will be asked to commit to meeting the following criteria:

- Attend at least 8 of the 10 classroom sessions and 5 of the 8 field trips.
- Complete assigned reading and other "homework" activities on a regular basis.
- Pay class fee in full before the first scheduled class meeting.
- Perform a minimum of **30** hours of volunteer service in approved TAS-sponsored activities and **8** hours of continued education by **April 1, 2025**. Volunteer service can include any number of *pre-approved* activities, such as: leading field trips or hikes; giving public talks/presentations; representing Travis Audubon at community events; participating in work days at Travis Audubon sanctuaries; assisting at Travis Audubon meetings or in the Travis Audubon office. Continued education can include any Travis Audubon classes or lectures or *pre-approved* classes or lectures related to ornithology, bird identification, environmental education, and/or conservation provided by other organizations and entities.
- Maintain a Travis Audubon membership while completing a minimum of **30** hours of volunteer service and **8** hours of continued education per year for the two years proceeding April 1, 2025.