



Monthly FWAS Report

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President's Pen

Here we are nearing the end of our 2016 – 2017 season, and we already something big to look forward to for the next season. Our Vice President of Programs Ann Hoover has let me know that Victor Emanuel himself (of Victor Emanuel Nature Tour fame) will be our featured speaker in October. I've met Victor in person, and he has a lot of great stories to tell, so I know he will be a fascinating speaker to have with us. To make that program accessible to the most people, we intend to have the meeting on a Saturday like we did in March and November of 2016. We'll keep you posted on timing, of course. Kudos to Ann for snagging such a birding celebrity for our 2017 – 2018 season!

In the bigger picture, I want you to know that we have not been ignoring the political issues of our day, especially when it comes to protecting our birds. Instead of being on a hair-trigger, however, we've been waiting to see the impact of current trends in this country. Now that an actual national budget is being put forward in Congress, it seems like we really are in danger of major reductions to America's most important and bipartisan conservation initiatives – many of which support Audubon's efforts to protect birds and the places they need. In the words of David Yarnold, President and CEO of the National Audubon Society, "Audubon will be there at every turn, fighting for the support we need to protect and enhance our conservation legacy, fully engaged to shape an agenda that respects and preserves the natural world we all share. Audubon is built to do it: We speak for bird lovers from every shade of the political spectrum, a nationwide community united by our love of wildlife and our duty to protect it. Our long history of putting birds above politics gives us a unique and powerful credibility. And our members sustain this long-term work through their compassion and commitment."

What can ordinary citizens who care about the future do? You'll always get the advice to contact your respective representatives in Congress, and if you already do this, we salute you! For those who do not because of lack of time or resources, Audubon has made the process easier by providing a Website devoted to helping you learn about, identify, and quickly take action on political issues that affect what the Audubon Society stands for (it's an automated process that only take a few clicks). I urge you to please take a moment to go to the Audubon Action Webpage (via the link below) to sign-up to take action when needed – there is no extra cost associated with this service, but don't fuss at me if you get bugged to contribute from time to time. Here is that link: <https://action.audubon.org/signup/join-our-action-network>

As always, there will be lots more to come and I hope you'll lend your voice with ours on matters that we agree cannot be ignored. After all, our power is derived from our numbers. Please feel free to contact me to let me know what you think about issues of today, activism, birding and other activities, conservation in general, and all things FWAS. I'd love to visit with you in person, or "online" at take5birder@charter.net, or call/text me at (817) 965-7284.

Michael Francis, President, FWAS

Programs

April 2017 Member Meeting

Please join us this coming Thursday, April 13th, when our meeting subject will be “Doing an Alaska Big Year” as presented by Lynn Barber. Lynn will talk about her birding travels and adventures around Alaska during her 2016 big year in our largest state, and will show slides of the over 300 species of birds seen around Anchorage area, the Homer and Kenai areas, Dutch Harbor, Adak, the Pribilofs, Central Alaska, and Barrow. Many of you will know Lynn as a former president of FWAS. Lynn was born in Wisconsin and has lived in Oregon, North Carolina, Texas, South Dakota, and now Alaska. Her books *Extreme Birder: One Woman’s Big Year* (2011) and *Birds in Trouble* (2016) were published by Texas A&M University Press. In addition to doing a North American Big Year in 2008, she has also done state big years in Texas (2005), South Dakota (2012) and Alaska (2016). Other avocations include bird painting and photography, hammered dulcimer, baking cookies and church activities. She is married to David Barber, a meteorologist who works for the US weather service in Anchorage. If you want Lynn to bring a book for you to the Fort Worth Audubon meeting on April 13th, please contact her at dalybar@aol.com, telling her which book(s) to bring for you (\$30.00 per book). She will also take book orders at the meeting and ship books to you later if you prefer. There will be no extra charge for the shipping.

Annual Member’s Slide Show Meeting May 11

Did you go bird watching and take photos or video in some exotic locale or in your backyard during the last year? Please consider sharing your adventures with us at the May General Meeting Member’s Slide Show. Jim Jones will organize the material into a Power Point presentation for this meeting on May 11, 2017 and the deadline for getting your photos and videos to him is May 5, 2017. Please send your submissions by E-mail at jim_jones@fwas.org, or deliver them on a USB thumb drive or CD at our April meeting. In recent years, several members have used online photo storage and sent Jim a link to them. Whatever your method, please be sure to include identification of the bird species or activity, and where the photo was taken. Also, please reduce the photo size before sending them. Many online sites will reduce the file size for you, but if you send them directly from your camera’s uploaded file they are usually very large and it takes lots of extra time for Jim to reduce multiple images before using them. If there are any questions, contact Jim by E-mail (jim_jones@fwas.org).

In addition, we’ll be having a pot-luck snack/dinner time starting at 6:45 p.m. instead of the usual bird ID session. As such, please consider bringing a snack or casserole or some food item along with you to share at the meeting. FWAS will provide drinks, plastic-ware, paper plates, bowls, and cups, but feel free to bring a non-alcoholic beverage of your choice for just yourself, or for all of us.

Membership

If you haven't renewed your membership for the year or wish to join, you have some options. If you are coming to the meeting, simply bring your checkbook and save the postage – our membership chair Glenda Keilstrup will be on hand to collect your renewal dues. The amount is \$25.00 for a single membership, and \$35.00 for a family membership. If you prefer to use a credit card, you'll need to do that online as we do not have a way to process credit transactions otherwise. Simply go to www.fwas.org and look for the “Join FWAS/Membership Options/Pay Now” section on the left side of our Homepage to get started.

Field Trips

Please keep checking with our Website for a listing and details of new birding field trips as they get announced, as well as full details to existing field trips (see link below). For instance, Jim Jones will be leading a field trip on May 27th to private property (a ranch) near Glen Rose where we expect to see Black-headed Vireo among other species of that area. Once we get the details set, you can get all the information for this as well as all our excursions through the following link: <http://www.fwas.org/forumdisplay.php?10-Upcoming-Field-Trips>

Education

Birding Adventures for Teens

Teen birders are invited to Audubon's Hog Island Camp to follow the migration route of many of Hog Island's warblers and songbirds by heading to Costa Rica over winter break. This unforgettable birding adventure is designed for teens between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. More information and the registration link can be found on the Hog Island website as follows: <http://hogisland.audubon.org/programs/teen-week-costa-rica>. Please share this exciting opportunity with your teen birders through their social media of choice! In a story found through the link below, eight teenagers who recently returned from Costa Rica share their perspectives. Here's that link: <http://www.audubon.org/news/for-unforgettable-birding-adventure-teens-head-costa-rica-audubon>

Grants

FWAS has awarded three Community Civic Grants to two regional organizations. The Montessori Academy of Arlington received \$400 and Ft. Worth Nature Center & Refuge received two \$400 grants for conservation related projects.

The Montessori Academy (TMA) will build a barn owl box with outdoor game camera in their nature space (5 acres with barn). TMA is non-profit and TMA boasts a five-acre Wildscape where students engage in a biophilic (instinctive bond between humans and other living systems) program including nature play and hiking trails.

Friends of FWNC&R (FONC) – One grant will go towards a portable duck “hunting” blind for birding enthusiasts and photographers. FWNC&R’s goal is to offer this program in the fall / winter season to enhance duck and water fowl viewing opportunities.

Friends of FWNC&R (FONC) – The second grant will go towards education outreach program to be conducted at fourteen Ft. Worth Park and Recreation Community Centers giving one hour programs about birds.

FWAS Grants Chair Karen Rice reminds us that we were able to fund Community Civic grants through donations obtained during the North Texas Giving Day campaign. This year the campaign will be on September 14, 2017.

Miscellaneous

FWAS Spring Bird Count 2017

On Saturday, April 29, 2017, FWAS will once again sponsor our Spring Bird Count, which covers the same territory as our Christmas Bird Count. FWAS is unique in carrying on this tradition of an additional yearly bird count, and we invite the help of volunteers to tally all the bird species we can during the entire day on the 29th of this month. On the evening of the count, we will be sponsoring a dinner of sandwiches and snacks for participants who wish to join in on the countdown where we combine the results from all areas of our count circle. The “countdown” will be held at the Hardwicke Interpretive Center (visitor’s center) at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. To inquire for more details and sign-up to help out, please contact our Bird Counts chair Chuck Baskin via E-mail at chuckbaskin@sbcglobal.net or call/text his cell at (817) 718-5642.

Citizen Science to help Bluebirds

Happy spring to all of the bird lovers out there! We need excited volunteers like you to participate in the Sparrow Swap citizen science project. A common sentiment among bluebird monitors is that house sparrows are good for nothing. Make them good for something by gathering their eggs and sending them to the egg collection at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. We’ll investigate how to use these eggs for monitoring and mapping environmental contaminants. The data will also help determine the best management strategies for minimizing damage caused by house sparrows. Please go to the following link on the FWAS Website for full details on how you can help: <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2902-Sparrow-Swap-Project-to-protect-Bluebirds>