



Monthly FWAS Report

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President's Pen

I never expected to open up this way, but like Bob Dylan's song states, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" For starters, Dylan did win a Nobel Prize for literature – I mean, who could have seen that coming? Sorry, Mr. Dylan, but I just had to go there.

Seriously, I've been on this planet long enough to have seen a rapid change in our society when it comes to bird watching. From the realm of the older, intellectual geeks I birded with in the early-to-mid-1970s, mostly made fun of by the popular media if any attention was given at all, to the upstart youngsters of the late 1970s (think of today's celebrity birders Kenn Kaufman, Pete Dunn, and David Sibley), to the emergence of birding as the second fastest growing sport in the late 1980s, to the ever more competitive birding competitions of big years, big days, big sits, etc. of the 1990s, to the transition to butterflies and dragon flies of the early 2000s, to today's obsession with nature photography.

Of course, all of this has been aided and abetted with marketing and the concurrent industries of optics (give me a break – a couple grand for a pair of binoculars or that ten grand camera lens), not to mention all kinds of fancy feeders and such. And don't get me started on the dozens and dozens of nature watching tours around today – truly a dizzying array of options.

Now, don't think of this is a critique – I am simply in continual awe of all the vast knowledge and experience that is available in just a click or two, not to mention all the attention that is now given to the natural world. There seems to have been this shift to a complete democratization of birdwatching and the tools to pursue it (think of the 'apps' on digital devices and phones that take pretty darn good video and audio). What's even better is that even the most casual nature watching can be turned into a resource that contributes to scientific study (think eBird and iNaturalist).

So, why am I bringing all this up now? Well, besides the fact that I think about it a lot, I also feel the need to highlight all those youngsters out there now who still miss out on the joys of nature. Right now, my wife is working with members of the local Native Plant Society, Master Naturalists, an enlightened neighborhood activist, and one of the most innovative school principals in Fort Worth – all in an effort to improve the life of students at Meadowbrook Elementary School. I am so proud of all involved in this current project where they are starting a community, bird-friendly garden at this school, complete with classroom instruction on common birds, their habits, and habitat. They are applying for a grant for funds from Cornell regarding the bird friendly habitat, and they will apply for a FWAS grant when our grant process begins in November.

The skills and confidence these kids can earn will be life-changing, and it only takes a little bit of our time to make this huge difference. Please note that your gift to our organization via North Texas Giving Day (see our 'Grant' section below) makes our grant process possible. Of course, I do feel a little bit guilty about asking for funds right after the recent hurricanes, so be sure to check out the latest on how Hurricane Harvey has affected the Audubon community later in this newsletter (see the 'Conservation' section below).

As you might expect, I'm very excited about this new season at Fort Worth Audubon. We sure have a lot coming up to look forward to, including tons of fun-filled field trips and exciting guest speakers. Hopefully, you'll agree once you get through with this ever so humble newsletter. I'd love to visit with you in person at our meetings, or 'online' at take5birder@charter.net, or call/text me at (817) 965-7284. Warmest regards, Michael Francis, President, FWAS.

Programs

September Member Meeting Thursday, 9/14/2017

Can you believe our first meeting is almost here? Join us on Thursday, September 14, 2017, when our guest speaker will be David Sarkozi, a famous Texas birding personality who is currently working on a Big Year within our state. His topic will be "One of a Kind-Monotypic Species of Birds". Check out this link to the FWAS Website for more details:

<http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2957-September-14th-General-Meeting-Presentation>

October Member Meeting, Saturday, 10/21/2017

Yes, you read right, this is yet another special edition of our meetings, where we meet in the usual place, just at 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday (no Thursday meeting in October). Our very special guest speaker will be Victor Emanuel – yes, that Victor Emanuel – famous for the most elite of elite bird watching tours. Victor has a book out about his life and adventures with birds, published by the University of Texas Press, which FWAS will have on hand to sell for below list price (\$25.00) so you can get it autographed. If you already have his book, be sure to bring it along to get autographed. Check out this link to the FWAS Website for more details:

<http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2968-Special-Saturday-Meeting-October-21st>

Field Trips

Birding Burlison's Bailey Lake Sept. 23

FWAS board member Jean Ferguson will lead yet another walk – this time in Burlison on Saturday, September 23, 2017. Check out this link to the FWAS Website for all the details:

<http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2973-Birding-at-Bailey-Lake-Burlison-Texas-9-23-17>

Ted's Big Sit at Lake Waxahachie Oct. 7

FWAS member Ted Drozdowski is putting on his annual *The Big Sit!* event on Saturday, October 7, 2017. Hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest and sponsored by Swarovski Optik, *The Big Sit!* is a noncompetitive birding event held annually at locations all around the world. Ted's house on Lake Waxahachie is a perfect location for this event, so check out this link to the FWAS Website for all the details: <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2974-October-7-2017-Ted-s-Big-Sit-at-Lake-Waxahachie>

Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge Oct. 15

FWAS President Michael Francis will lead a field trip/nature walk around several trails at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge (FWNC&R) on Sunday, October 15, 2017, starting at 8:15 a.m. Check out this link to the FWAS Website for all the details:

<http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2979-Fort-Worth-Nature-Center-Oct-15>

Trinity River Birding Walk & Count Oct. 22

FWAS board member Tom Haase will be leading several walks along the Trinity River this season, the next of which will be held on Sunday, October 22, 2017. These will start at the Trinity River Trails access in Fort Worth at the intersection of Hulen and Bellaire. Check out this link to the FWAS Website for all the details: <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2975-Clear-Fork-Trinity-River-10-22-17>

Additional Hummingbird Extravaganza Excursion to Ecuador

Due to popular demand, FWAS Programs Chair Ann Hoover is setting up a second international field trip to Ecuador for the first part of 2018 – this one from February 1 - 6. When the January 2018 trip was first announced back in March of 2017, it filled up in a couple weeks, so get onto this one as quick as you can – simply check out this link to the FWAS Website for all the details: <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2969-Additional-hummingbird-trip-to-ecuador-date-change-now-Feb-1-6>

Recurring Monthly FWAS Birding/Nature Walks

- Join FWAS member Jim Sipiora for his monthly outing to the Village Creek Drying Beds in Arlington – see [http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2425-Birding-at-the-Beds-\(VCDB\)](http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?2425-Birding-at-the-Beds-(VCDB)) for details.
- Join Jean Ferguson for her monthly outing at Foster Park in southwest Fort Worth – see <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?129-Birding-in-the-Park-at-Foster-Park-in-Ft-Worth> for details.

Grants

North Texas Giving Day Sept. 14

The North Texas Giving Day (NTGD) program will be held the same day as our September 2017 meeting – Thursday, September 14, 2017. For the first time, however, you can make your donation ahead of time and it will not be processed until the 14th so that your donation will be eligible to help FWAS gain any bonus funds from NTGD. Since we no longer have to ask you to wait to make your donation the day of NTGD, why not do so now? All donations collected for FWAS during the NTGD will be used to fund our civic and community projects. Every gift of \$25 or more will make FWAS eligible for additional bonus funds and prizes, but any size donation will be more than helpful! All you need to do to participate is go to the following Website between now and 11:59 p.m. on September 14th and make a credit card donation: <https://northtexasgivingday.org/npo/fort-worth-audubon-society-inc>

Conservation

Hurricane Harvey Impact Updates

In Texas, Audubon staff, chapter leaders, and volunteers have begun assessing the destruction to communities, habitats, and bird populations. Information is being updated as received here: <http://www.audubon.org/news/the-latest-texas-hurricane-harveys-impact-coastal-habitat>

Hurricane Harvey was the worst natural disaster ever to strike Texas and killed more than 70 people, including a longtime Houston Audubon Society volunteer. Homes and businesses are still filled with water, and many people will have to rebuild their lives from scratch. Audubon Texas, Houston Audubon Society, and other Audubon chapters have a decades-long history of conservation and community building in Texas. There is much work ahead, and the whole Audubon family is committed to supporting that work.

Houston Audubon Society, which experienced damage at many of its sanctuaries, is updating its website with information and ways to help:

<https://houstonaudubon.org/ways-to-help/recovery.html>. We're heartbroken that Agnes Stanley, a longtime dedicated volunteer for Houston Audubon's Docent Guild, was killed in the storm. Among her other volunteer service, she taught preschoolers in the Titmouse Club at the Houston Audubon Society's Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary. The Audubon family extends our heartfelt condolences to her family and to Houston Audubon.

Two other Audubon chapters in Texas also experienced storm impacts:

- Coastal Bend Audubon Society (mid-coast): <http://www.coastalbendaudubon.org/>
- Golden Triangle Audubon Society (Beaumont): <http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org/>

Again, you can get postings on Harvey-related updates from Audubon staff and chapters at <http://www.audubon.org/news/the-latest-texas-hurricane-harveys-impact-coastal-habitat>

Volunteer Clean-up Effort

On Saturday, July 29, 2017, several members of FWAS participated in the clean-up of an area called Hidden Falls, a remote location below the Lake Worth dam. These falls are formed by the Trinity River flowing out from the dam and over a wide limestone flat. There is no public access on the stream side that was cleaned up, but people fish the area by hiking in from Sansom Park, which is across the river. Stephanie George of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) headed up this effort, and was joined by FWAS members Jim Jones, Mary Sanford, Bill Utley, and Mary Utley, along with other volunteers and employees of the TPWD (picture below).



Miscellaneous

Bird poem by local artist

FWAS Conservation Chair Bill Utley has shared a thoughtful poem about a wren from a book of poetry titled *In Brazos River Country* by Scott Lennox. Scott is a local artist, musician, and poet currently living in Fort Worth. Scott's poem titled *Wren* follows:

Tiny warrior,
no larger than my thumb,
where did you find such a voice?

Your cry has filled my garden,

has warned from far off down the river,
has taunted from the cactus thorns.

With your giant's heart,
you announce yourself,
push other voices aside.

Tiny force,
larger than life,
what engine drives you?

Birding News

- Did you know that the U. S. Farm Bill helps birds as well as farmers? The Farm Bill actually helps secure important habitat for more than 100 bird species on America's private lands. Each year, the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), a coalition of 28 federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and bird-focused partnerships that advance biological, social, and scientific priorities for North American bird conservation, puts out a "State of the Birds" report. The 2017 report shows that the introduction of key Farm Bill conservation programs in 1990 and 2003 helped turn around negative population trends for suites of wetland, grassland, and forest birds. Download the report through the following link to learn more and find out what birds need out of the bill's 2018 reauthorization coming soon:
<http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2017/state-of-the-birds-2017-pdf-download/>
- After a 60-year absence, the secretive Táchira Antpitta has been rediscovered in Venezuela. Until now, four specimens from the 1950s provided scant information about the species. Continued deforestation and human conflict in its home range mean that time is of the essence to save this critically endangered species. Read about the exciting rediscovery through the following link: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/lost-to-science-for-60-years-tachira-antpitta-is-rediscovered-in-venezuelan-andes/>
- The sight of a migrating songbird in a backyard or shorebird along a beach brings joy to millions of Americans each year. Our national passion for birdwatching also puts billions of dollars into the economy through our purchases of bird food, binoculars and travel to see our favorite birds. Yet many of the birds we love are in trouble from shrinking habitats or threats such as invasive species. Thanks to the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA), however, our migrating birds will benefit to the tune of \$18 million in federal and matching funds. Click on the following link for a full list of approved projects:
<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/grants/nmbcaprojects170711.pdf>
- The United States Geological Survey is planning to close the Whooping Crane captive breeding program at Patuxent Research Refuge. As such, many are concerned by the news and hoping for no long-term adverse effects on this endangered species. For more about the amazing recovery of the Whooping Crane, check out this blog post from Environmental Defense Fund: <http://blogs.edf.org/growingreturns/2017/07/25/15-birds-an-american-conservation-movement/>

Membership

We know it can be confusing, and one day we might change this, but our annual membership dues run from January through December of the year while our seasons run from September through May. If you wish to join or renew, the amount is \$25.00 for a single membership and \$35.00 for a family membership. 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" section on the left side of our Homepage and click on the Pay Now button to get started. If you wish to send us a check the old-fashioned way, go to the same section of our Homepage, but look below the Pay Now button where there is a link to our printable mail-in form.