



## Monthly FWAS Report

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### President's Pen

Happy New Year to you all! Much is happening in our organization as reflected in our humble newsletter. First, I hope to see you at the meeting on Thursday where we'll have a very fascinating speaker and passionate conservationist helping out the community he's "adopted" while promoting eco-tourism. Of course, we are featuring field trips that continue to be added so you have to keep checking back. Please note that the monthly walk at the Drying Beds will not be held in January, but will resume in February. This time of year is when we start putting out the call for volunteers to help us with judging at the annual Fort Worth Regional Science and Engineering Fair. You might also be interested in the results of our CBC, especially the many unusual species we had this year. We especially want you to join FWAS and the Texas Conservation alliance in lending your voice to promote the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in Congress. Please be aware that our Grants Program has yet to receive any applicants with the deadline being February 15<sup>th</sup>. Surely you must know of some local educational or conservation minded organization who could take advantage of some extra money to help in their efforts? Finally, we must again remind everyone that it's time to renew your FWAS membership dues. These and other topics are covered below.

As always, I'd love to visit with you in person, at our meetings, or 'online' at [take5birder@charter.net](mailto:take5birder@charter.net) – you can even call/text me at 817-965-7284.

Warmest regards, Michael Francis, President of FWAS.

### Programs

#### **January Member Meeting, Thursday, 1/11/2018**

*Subject:* Birding in Mexico – The Land of the Maya – Birds, Archaeology, and Culture

*Featured speaker:* Brock Huffman

*Synopsis:* A presentation of the abundant birdlife, archaeological sites, and the distinct culture in Chiapas, Mexico, with goals to preserve the forests for our migrating birdlife as well as to contribute to an improved quality of life and social equality in Mexico. Brock Huffman is the owner and founder of Chiapas Birding Adventures, LLC. A semi-retired criminal defense trial attorney from San Antonio, Texas, Brock began visiting Chiapas 6 years ago, to relearn Spanish. He fell in love with Chiapas and Johanna, now his wife, and moved to San Cristóbal de las Casas in July of 2010.

## **February Member Meeting, Thursday, 2/8/2018**

*Subject:* Purple Martins

*Featured speaker:* Sheila Hargis

*Synopsis:* Purple Martins and humans have a special connection that goes back hundreds of years. Purple Martins thrill people in a variety of ways throughout their life cycle. This presentation will cover that life cycle, dispel some of the myths surrounding martins, touch on some of the recent research findings and highlight some of the ways that birders and non-birders alike can connect with this spectacular bird. Shelia Hargis teaches Travis Audubon's "Introduction to Birds and Birding" class, gives presentations on a variety of bird topics, surveys birds for the City of Austin and the USGS Breeding Bird Survey as well as private landowners, regularly leads birding field trips and is Past President of Travis Audubon. She is currently on the Travis Audubon Board of Directors and the Education Committee and is Vice President of the Texas Ornithological Society.

For more information on this and all future meetings, general information about our meetings, and directions to our meeting location, please check the following link to the FWAS Website: <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?4-Monthly-Meetings>

## **Field Trips**

### **Clear Fork Trinity River, Sunday, January 21, 2018**

The Trinity Bird Count seeks to inventory the various bird species that use the Metroplex stretch of the Trinity River in order to inform bird habitat conservation and management along the river. Since 2011, birders have shared observations for more than 250 bird species!

This project welcomes participation from everyone, from novices to seasoned birders. Individual observations from solo birding are welcome, and guided groups counts are a great way for beginners to get involved. For more information, including a map of count areas and how to share your observations via eBird, please visit the Trinity Bird Count page through the following link: <http://tx.audubon.org/citizen-science/trinity-bird-count>

*Upcoming Guided Count:* Sunday, January 21, 2018 from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

*Meeting Place:* Meet between 7:30 – 8:00 a.m. for coffee at the Starbucks at Trinity Commons (3000 S Hulen St., #143, Fort Worth, TX 76109). We will park on Bellaire near the bridge crossing the river and walk along the paved trail (Fort Worth Trinity Trails) along the river to just under the Chisholm Trail Parkway bridge.

*Team Leader:* RSVP to Tom Haase at 817-229-4987 (call/text) or E-mail

[tom.haase@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tom.haase@sbcglobal.net) to let him know whether you will meet him at Starbucks or on the trail.

### **Eastern Ellis County, February 10, 2018**

Ted Drozdowski will lead a group of 20 participants in Eastern Ellis County. Meet at Veterans Memorial Park in Ennis at 7:15 a.m. Back at Veterans no later than 1 p.m. but possibility for those interested to continue birding. Because of limited parking in a few spots, we will carpool from Veterans Park. Bring snacks, or lunch, and drinks. At 12:30, we should be back at Veterans Park. Nearby is Bluebonnet Park where we can eat lunch or you may choose to leave for other destinations. If the weather is pleasant, or it's a birdy day, we can continue to explore other parts of Lake Bardwell throughout the afternoon if anyone is interested.

This trip will be general birding, a wide variety of birds, including geese. Walking will be leisurely and on fairly level terrain. Total walking will be about a mile. The Trinity River makes up the eastern border of Ellis County, with locations such as John Bunker Sands Wetlands and Richland Chambers Reservoir situated along the Trinity. A lot of birds use this corridor and winter along the floodplain. While Ellis County does not have a public tract of land quite like those two places, there are plenty of interesting places to explore for good birds.

Trip limited to first 20 RSVPs to Ted at [drozdovekie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drozdovekie@sbcglobal.net) or text/call 817-908-6897.

### **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. *Please note that there will be no walk in January, but walks will resume in February.*
- 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.

## **Education**

### **Fort Worth Regional Science & Engineering Fair**

For several years, FWAS has been an Assistant Level Sponsor at the Fort Worth Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Along with our sponsorship, we are asked to judge student's projects for a Special Award Conservation category. We have learned that showing interest in a young person's work is a great way to inspire them to continue their studies in scientific fields. Many of the students have exceeded my expectations in the quality of their work. However, there are many projects to evaluate and having a small team of volunteers really helps. FWAS Education Chair Jim Jones has been fortunate in the last 5 years with getting 6 or more volunteers to assist us.

The science fair is held at UT Arlington on February 16 & 17 (a Friday & Saturday this year instead of Sunday & Monday as in past years). Judging will be held on Saturday morning between 8:30 AM and noon. There is a continental breakfast set out for us before judging begins at 9:00. They also offer us a great luncheon as we go over our notes and select a winner from the Middle School and High School levels.

On a side note: if you happen to be a working or retired professional in one of the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) they also are asking for volunteers in other categories. If you are interested in helping FWAS, or would like to see what other categories are available, please send an email to [Jim.Jones@fwas.org](mailto:Jim.Jones@fwas.org).

## Bird Counts

### **FWAS Christmas Bird Count Results**

The Fort Worth Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, Dec 16th. A total of 47 birders participated in Audubon's 118th annual count. We recorded 128 species including some rare raptors (Harris's Hawk, Rough-Legged Hawk and Ferruginous Hawk) and Tundra Swan, plus three other rare species seen during the Count Week – Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle and Cave Swallow. Every year is different! The summary report is available as a downloadable PDF file you can get by clicking on the following link: <http://www.fwas.org/pdfs/FWAS2017CBC.pdf>

We are looking forward to covering the same area during the annual Spring Migration Bird Count to be held on Saturday April 28. More on that as the date approaches.

## Conservation

### **Recovering America's Wildlife Act "Best Shot" at Conservation Funding**

FWAS is joining with and wants you to help The Texas Conservation Alliance (TCA), which has taken on increased leadership in supporting the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, soon to be introduced in Congress. The bi-partisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act would direct \$1.3 billion annually from existing energy and mineral royalties on federal lands and waters to the currently-unfunded Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account. These revenues would be distributed to state wildlife agencies to fund projects that benefit species at risk of becoming endangered. Texas' share would be more than \$60 million per year.

TCA and other wildlife organizations have formed a steering committee for the Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife, the Texas arm of the national Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife, to promote conservation funding. Beginning in January 2018, TCA will serve as fiscal agent for the alliance. At a recent meeting with more than fifteen conservation organizations, TCA Executive Director Janice Bezanson emphasized the importance of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. "Because this legislation is bi-partisan and has widespread support from oil and gas producers, the outdoor recreation industry, and other businesses, it represents our best shot at significant funding for habitat improvement, land protection, research, and other conservation initiatives."

What can you do to help, you might ask? Simply contact your Member of Congress and ask him or her to be an original co-sponsor of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. To learn who your congress member is, click the following link for a Web page lookup of state and national Texas legislators: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>

For more information about the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, click on the following link to TCA's Website for a PDF flyer: <http://www.tcatexas.org/pdfs/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife.pdf>

## Miscellaneous

### **Raptors of North Texas program Jan. 27**

In celebration of Bird Sanctuary Week (January 21-27, 2018), the Grapevine Garden Club will host a program called Raptors of North Texas on Saturday, January 27, 2018, at 2 p.m. in the Grapevine Public Library, located at 1201 Municipal Way, Grapevine, TX 76051. The Blackland Prairie Raptor Center will have several species of live raptors that are native to our area on hand. Everyone is welcome to view and meet live birds and talk to Bird Education Ambassadors at this free event.

### **George & Mary Sullivan Charitable Foundation donation**

The board of the Fort Worth Audubon Society wishes to publicly thank the George & Mary Sullivan Charitable Foundation for its generous year-end 2017 gift to us. This money will be poured back into our community to further our mission statement to promote awareness, appreciation and understanding of birds and other wildlife while preserving and protecting their natural habitats.

## Grants

### **FWAS Community Civic Grant Process 2017 - 2018**

Does your civic organization (or school) birding or bird habitat conservation related project need money for materials and supplies? Or are you an Educator going for training about birding or bird habitat conservation? If so, the Fort Worth Audubon Society (FWAS) can help! See if the following qualifications describe your group:

- Would you describe your organization or group as civic, non-profit, or school-based?
- Is your project based in FWAS region (Denton, Johnson, Parker or Tarrant counties)?
- Can your project support the intent of the FWAS mission statement? *FWAS mission statement – to promote awareness, appreciation and understanding of birds and other wildlife while preserving and protecting their natural habitats.*

If your group meets the above qualifications and could use up to \$400 of grant money, please fill out our grant application form (see 2nd page of the PDF form on our Website using the following link: <http://www.fwas.org/pdfs/GrantApp2017-18.pdf>) and submit it to the Fort Worth Audubon Society, Attention Grant Chairman, 3023 South University Drive, Suite 206, Fort Worth, TX 76109.

Application deadline for 2017-2018 grant season is February 15, 2018. Grant awards will be made by March 15, 2018. For more information about this offer, please email [grants@FWAS.org](mailto:grants@FWAS.org). When your group has completed your project, FWAS requests a short follow-up report with photos.

## Membership

To keep this going, we need to ask for you to renew your membership with FWAS for the 2018 calendar year since our memberships run January 1 through December 31. 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](http://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 renew the old-fashioned way, please make a check payable to FWAS, and send it to our treasurer Vickie Moore in care of FWAS at 3023 S. University Dr. #206 Fort Worth, TX 76109.