Editor’s Corner

Hooray, hooray, our meetings will be live and in-person again very soon, and we do so look forward to seeing everyone at that first one on September 9! The North Texas Health Science Center where we have our meetings is finally opening their campus to not only students, but to outside groups like ours who pay fees to use their lecture halls. We’ll be back in the same room at the usual time, details of which follow in the “Programs” section (directly below) of this newsletter.

While we encourage and have the room for everyone to social distance, wear masks and follow the usual COVID related protocols, we will not be enforcing those rules. We know and trust our members to be safe. Of course, if you are uncomfortable, we will understand if you do not wish to show-up under those circumstances.

As you can imagine, we’ve had lots of inquiries already asking if we will either live-stream or record our meetings to make available online to those who cannot make it to the “live” meeting. We are looking into ways to provide this service and will do so if it’s easy enough and the extra cost is within our budget.

As always, I’ll be happy to continue visiting with you in person, at our meetings, or ‘online’ at take5birder@charter.net – you can even call/text me at 817-965-7284. Please believe me when I say that I’d really love to have you submit personal stories and pictures that you wouldn’t mind having published in this humble newsletter.

Programs

We at FWAS feel ourselves very lucky to be able to draw upon such a fascinating and diverse group of speakers bringing you an equally fascinating and diverse group of topics. All meetings are held monthly from September through May and are open to the general public and to every age group. With very few exceptions, all our meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month. The meetings come to order at 7:30 p.m. and speakers begin their talk after some brief
organizational business. However, we encourage you to come earlier as we provide some sort of birding ID program or brief educational opportunity beginning at approximately 6:50 p.m.

The location of all our meetings is held at Everett Hall, Room 100, in the Research and Education (RES) building at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd. Fort Worth, TX, 76107. The easiest way to find us is to take Camp Bowie and turn north onto Clifton St. (first street east of Montgomery). Be sure to use the first parking entrance north off Clifton that is on your left (west) side (there will be a parking attendant structure as you drive in). You can park anywhere there is an available spot even when marked as reserved as our meetings are outside of normal hours for the school. Enter the RES building ground floor at the northwest corner of this parking lot, turn right and go down the hall keeping the south-facing windows on your right. We will be in the first lecture hall (Room 100) you come to, with a prominent FWAS sign to lure you in. Here is a link to the campus map where the RES building is easy to spot: https://www.unthsc.edu/campusmap/

September Member meeting, Thursday, 9/9/2021
Subject: To be announced…
Speaker: To be announced…

Our next public meeting will not be until September 9 as we take the summer off. FWAS VP of Programs Ann Hoover is busy lining up speakers and topics for the rest of this year and we will have a list of next season’s meetings together online (www.fwas.org and www.facebook.com/fwas.org) by the middle of next month (August). Of course, we’ll announce meetings via E-mail as well.

Field Trips

We at FWAS are immensely proud of the local birding walks we offer to our members and the general public at large. Unless otherwise specified, they always open to anyone of any age, and we love having families along. FWAS VP of Field Trips Debbie Simek is back to setting up out-of-town field trips both within and without the state of Texas, which we’ll announce online (www.fwas.org and www.facebook.com/fwas.org) and in our newsletters.

Friday Feathers at Kelly Park, Friday, 8/6/2021
For all the retirees and those off on Friday, please join Chuck Baskin and others as they search for birds at Kelly Park in Arlington.
Timing: The first Friday of most months, starting at 7:30 a.m.
Location: Kelly Park, 4195 W. Arkansas Lane, Arlington, TX 76013
Directions: Meet in parking lot at the dead end of Creekside. From Arkansas, turn north onto Woodside, then east on Creekside and drive to the dead end and park.
Village Creek Drying Beds, 8/11/2021
Join Jim Sipiora for his monthly outing to the Village Creek Drying Beds (VCDB) in Arlington.  
*Timing:* 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. we’ll bird VCDB exclusively.  
*Location:* Meet in the parking lot of the Dunlop Sports Center (1500 NW Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76012) on the south side of Green Oaks Blvd. between Davis Dr. and Fielder Rd. in Arlington (Dunlop is directly across the street from the entrance to the Drying Beds).

Foster Park, 8/14/2021
Join FWAS for a monthly outing at Foster Park in southwest Fort Worth.  
*Timing:* The second Saturday of each month. Meeting times for the June through September walks will begin at 7:30 a.m.  
*Location:* Foster Park (4398 Trail Lake Dr, Fort Worth, TX 76109) on Trail Lake Dr. at South Dr., just 1 mile north of I-20 in Fort Worth.

Conservation

Proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir controversy gains momentum
In our November 2020 Newsletter, then FWAS Conservation Chair Jeremiah Kerns urged all of us to read about and act upon a report concerning a proposed reservoir project affecting our state. To summarize, he reported the following:

*The Marvin-Nichols Reservoir is a project that will take up a large portion of Red River County, in Northeast Texas, and extend into Titus, Franklin, Morris, and Bowie Counties. It is planned to consume over 66,000 acres and cost $4.4 billion. The Sulphur River basin includes forests, active ranchland, riparian habitat, many feeder streams, and homes. Water from Marvin-Nichols is wanted by Region C to support the projected explosive growth of the Dallas population. Opponents of the reservoir want Region C leaders to pursue alternatives for water supply. The project is expected to be finished in the 2050s.*

As you can imagine, there is an increased interest in providing a new water source for our rapidly growing area, which fuels pressure to try to make this reservoir a reality. There is also an equal amount of pushback coming from the affected communities, landowners, and conservation groups. We at FWAS feel strongly enough about this issue that we want our audience to learn more about it and make your voices heard.

To start, we wish to point out a 2002 economic impact study researched and published by Texas A&M University. At that time, the Marvin Nichols Reservoir was a fairly new proposal. The A&M report details just how much forested area would be lost, of course, but it really highlights the potential loss of economic output from uses of that land which include the logging of timber. There are some great “hard numbers” in this brief and easily read study that we recommend you familiarize yourself with to be aware of what is at stake. A link to the PDF version of this report can be found through the following link to the A&M Website:  
https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/Sustainable/econdev/mni_forest.pdf
With the growth of our region expecting to just about double our DFW (and Texas) population by 2050, providing water will inevitably loom large in our economic and political lives. The question to be answered is how we provide that water. As for this proposed reservoir, there is no question that it would flood 66,000 acres of heritage farmland, hardwood forest, and wetlands, while removing an estimated 130,000 additional acres from private land ownership for mitigation required by the federal government.

Two alternatives to this reservoir have been noted, the most obvious of which is greater conservation measures as outlined in a Dallas Morning News opinion article by David Marquis of the Texas Conservation Alliance (see https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2012/03/13/david-marquis-alternatives-to-reservoir-building/). More recently, a reporter (Kenny Mitchell) for the Bowie County Citizen’s Tribune wrote about the Bigfork Chert Aquifer in Arkansas that could be tapped instead of using a new reservoir, and the water quality is potentially better than could be provided by any current or future reservoir (see https://www.bowiecountynow.com/news/alternative-marvin-nichols-surfaces-arkansas).

One way to express any concerns you may have about this reservoir or water planning in general would be to contact the Region C Planning Group of the Texas Water Development Board. That team is headed up by Joe Koen, P.E., who can be reached at (512) 936-8169, and they will take time to discuss any projects with you. Another way is to check out what a recently formed group opposed to this reservoir has to say. Known as “Preserve Northeast Texas”, this organization has a petition you can sign onto as well as the usual social media outlets to get their word out. If you are interested, you can check out their press release through the following link to their Website: https://preservenortheasttexas.org/launch-press-release/

Fort Worth Prairie Park efforts move ahead despite setbacks
A recent article in Greensource D/FW has inspiring news about the efforts to protect the last remaining remnants of native prairie land in Fort Worth. Leading Fort Worth conservationist and FWAS member Marty Leonard is pictured as a participant in these efforts. Please read all about it on Greensource’s Website in the following link: https://greensourcedfw.org/articles/fort-worth-prairie-park-efforts-move-ahead-despite-setbacks

Grants

FWAS Community/Civic Grant recipient update
A 2020 FWAS Grant recipient had to put off their project for many months due to the pandemic, but the project is finally coming to fruition as they recently reported to FWAS Grants Chair Karen Rice. Below is a picture of the pollinator garden in Randol Mill Park which FWAS funded. This picture and caption appeared in the Randol Mill Park newsletter. They have a request to the Arlington City Parks person responsible for signs to move forward on signage FWAS also helped fund and expect to move forward on it soon.
Take a vicarious vacation watching West Texas hummingbirds
The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has a fun collection of videos featuring the incredible numbers and diversity of hummingbirds in the Fort Davis area of West Texas. A link to the live cam itself is there but it is not always online. However, there are several highlight videos they feature below the live cam link which we think you’ll enjoy. The following link on Cornell’s Website will take you to this hummingbird bonanza resource:
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/west-texas-hummingbirds/

FWAS participates in Fort Worth Police/Fire Department Safety Fair
FWAS was invited to have a booth at the recent Northwest Safety Fair held at Casino Beach Park on Lake Worth. Held on Saturday, June 26, FWAS board members Jim Jones, Shiela Shallcross, and Michael Francis setup and “manned” our booth which featured our new “wingspan banner” educational tool. Photos taken by Shiela at this fun and educational event follow.
Adults as well as children came by to check out their respective wingspans.
The legend of Lake Worth’s Goat Man “on the hoof”.
Supporting FWAS

How to become a FWAS Member or simply renew your membership
FWAS 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 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.