We have completed this year’s grant process, and thanks to the generosity of our members, we are able to fund several efforts to improve the north Texas ecosystem through education, conservation, habitat restoration and preservation. The book sale we had at our November meeting raised $374 dollars. Thanks to members for purchasing the books and special thanks to Jerri Kerr for organizing and managing the book sale. Contributions raised by our e-mail/mail campaign, local member dues, and other contributions raised $2102.

To each of you who donated through the book sale and/or direct contribution, the board wishes to heartily thank you for supporting the area’s wildlife. You are an important part in funding the continuing conservation of precious habitat and wildlife for future generations, which has been an Audubon tradition since the founding of the first chapters in the 1890’s. Being a part of this successful team is very satisfying and one of my major motivations for me to serve PTAS. It is much more rewarding to participate in the entire process from fundraising to seeing the end results than just sending in a check for $25 to then receive more appeal letters. It is so wonderful to have speakers come in from the organizations we support and get direct feedback. (So do not miss Kathy Whalen of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge speaking at our April meeting and join us visiting Erich Neupert of the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center at our May meeting.)

At the January meeting, the board approved multiple grants. $550 dollars was granted to the Heard Bird Banders to help send a member to be trained on the techniques of bird banding at Powdermill Avian Research Center in Pennsylvania. Powdermill Avian Research Center (PARC) is the bird banding and avian research facility of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Monitoring the birds at the Heard is an important part of tracking the changes in the health of our local biome.

A grant of $250 dollars was given to David Eason of Southeastern Oklahoma State University to fund continued field research on Tree Swallows under Prof. Wood. This is a follow up on the study presented by Ross Anderson to PTAS last year. Not only do we support local research on the health of birds but we also help support future naturalists.

A $1000 grant was given to the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge near Lake Texoma. This supports the continuation of the native habitat restoration in the refuge. Our grants are used to buy native seeds, including wildflowers, to restore the prairies. Our January field trip last year was to Hagerman and the last newsletter had an article by Bill Woodfin on the progress there.

A grant of $500 was given to the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center to continue the sponsorship of Miki, a Mississippi Kite, and Hunter, a Great Horned Owl. The purpose of these educational birds is to inspire local audiences to think about and actively participate in helping preserve raptors and their environment for generations to come. In addition, BPRC is about to begin construction of rehabilitation mews and needs funding for the materials. An additional grant of $500 was provided for this purpose.

A $500 scholarship was awarded to Caleb Frome to help fund attendance at the ABA Camp in Colorado this summer. He is a passionate young birder who has attended many of our field trips. Camp Colorado offers attendees a chance to improve their birding by a combination of gaining field experience and learning from other birders (both peers and adult guides), as well as learning about the natural history and geography of the Rockies.

A portion of our grant budget was withheld in anticipation of a grant to the Heard.

- Merrick Darley
Chapter Meeting Schedule

Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society meets the fourth Tuesday of the month, September through November, and January through May at the Heard Natural Science Museum in McKinney. Meetings start at 7:00 pm, there is a bird identification class downstairs for those who wish from 7:15 to 7:40. A short general business session is held from 7:45 to 8:00. The main programs start at 8:00.

Tuesday, February 28 - 7:00 pm
**Bird ID class:** Doves, Quail, Dickcissels, and other ground nesters  
**Main Program:** “Urban and Suburban Greenspaces For Migrating Birds” Tania Homayoun Ph.D., Senior Manager for Conservation and Education, Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center at Cedar Hill

Tuesday, March 27 - 7:00 pm
**Bird ID class:** Warblers  
**Main Program:** “Migration: Nature’s Greatest Feat” Linda Ergonis, PTAS Board member and Texas Master Naturalist

Tuesday, April 24 - 7:00 pm
**Bird ID class:** Local breeders – Cardinals, Indigo Buntings, Painted Buntings, Blue Jays, Yellow-billed Cuckoos  
**Main Program:** "Exploring Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge". Kathy Whalen, Refuge Manager

Tuesday, May 22 - 6:00 pm/7:00 pm
**Bird ID class:** None  
**Main Program:** "Blackland Prairie Raptor Center and its Birds” Erich Neupert, Executive Director  
**Notes:** LOCATION IS BROCKDALE PARK. 
Come at 6:00 and join us for a picnic in the park. Bring your own food and drink or co-ordinate your food with a group of your fellow members. Meeting starts at 7:00 pm. There are tables with covers, city water, and restroom facilities.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take U.S. 75 to Allen, exit Bethany Road. Go east 6.1 miles (Bethany becomes Lucas Road). At light go east on FM 3286 approximately 0.6 miles. Turn on to Brockdale Park Road and go approximately 1 mile. BPRC is on the left.

Field Trip Schedule

For “2nd Saturday at the Heard” trips register with the Heard in advance, 972-562-5566

For all other field trips RSVP to Linda Ergonis at lindaergonis@yahoo.com or Tom Heath at 972-867-8646 or heathwtom@netscape.net

The trip schedule is:

**Sat, Feb 11** — 2nd Saturday at the Heard  
**Leader:** Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas  
**Time:** 9:00 AM 2 hours  
**Meeting Place:** Heard Museum Reception area  
**Target:** Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

**Sat, Feb 18** — Jennifer Maxwell’s Property  
**Leader:** Jennifer Maxwell  
**Time:** 3:00 PM, 4 Hours  
**Meeting Place:** 1763 Hunt County Road 4105, Greenville, Tx. From Greenville take Lee St (SHW 67/302) east to Fannin St. (FM 118) go north (turn left) to Co. Rd 4105 go east (turn right). Jennifer's is down the road on your right. Look for a yellow balloon  
**Target:** Henslow’s Sparrow and American Woodcock

**Sat, Mar 10** — 2nd Saturday at the Heard  
**Leader:** Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas  
**Time:** 9:00 AM 2 hours  
**Meeting Place:** Heard Museum Reception area

Birdzilla.com

Over 4000 pages of information.  
10,000 images of wild birds  
Fun and Games
Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, Mar 24 — Heard Museum Bird Banding Station
Leader: Banding Station Members
Time: 7:30 AM, 4 Hours
Meeting Place: TBD
Target: We will do a prairie survey and banding of birds by setting up nets in the field and bird dogging the field, pushing the birds towards the nets. This will be group participation.

Sat, April 14 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard
Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas
Time: 9:00 AM, 2 hours
Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area
Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, April 14 — Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve
Leader: Kym Hughes, Linda Ergonis
Time: 7:30 AM, 3 Hours
Meeting Place: North Parking lot at 5901 Los Rios Blvd
Target: In search of Migrants

Sun, April 22 — Colorado Lek trip
Leader: Mike Flieg
Time: 1 Week Trip
Meeting Place: Denver, Colorado
Target: Chestnut-Collared Longspurs, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Lesser and Greater Prairie Chickens, Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and (Blue) Dusky Grouse

Sat, May 12 — 2nd Saturday at the Heard
Leader: Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas
Time: 9:00 AM, 2 hours
Meeting Place: Heard Museum Reception area
Target: Monthly survey of the birds of the Heard

Sat, May 19 Longhollow Ranch, Glen Rose, TX
Leader: Lee Clauser
Time: 7:00 AM, 5 hours
Meeting Place: TBD
Target: Black Capped Vireo and Golden Cheeked Warbler and western species.
Notes: We will meet at the cabin at 7:30AM. Longhollow Ranch is an approximate two hour drive from Plano. There are numerous hotels in Glen Rose if you wish to overnight on Friday. Please RSVP to lindaergonis@Yahoo.com for explicit directions and carpooling coordination.

PTAS Trip to View the Golden-Cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireos

The PTAS field trip for May is to Longhollow Ranch in Glen Rose, TX in pursuit of the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo.

The Golden-cheeked Warbler, Dendroica chrysoparia, is an endangered species that breeds in Central Texas from Palo Pinto County southwestward along the eastern and southern edge of the Edwards Plateau to Kinney County. The Golden-cheeked Warbler is the only bird species with a breeding range confined to Texas.

The Black-capped Vireo, Vireo atricapillus, is an endangered species that breeds in Central Texas as well as Central Oklahoma and Northern Mexico. They nest in "shinnery," brushy areas with scattered trees. Shinneries primarily consist of shin oak or sumac.

We will be welcomed by owners Bev and Lee Clauser. Lee is a retired V.P. of Chase Bank in Ft. Worth. Both he and his wife were wild bird rehabbers in Ft. Worth. Located just west of Glen Rose, they have 116 acres and Lee manages another 330 acres. Both Golden-cheeked Warblers and Black-capped Vireos nest on the 330 acres. Lee will guide us to their nest sites. We should also find other western species not regularly found in our area.

There is a two bedroom cabin with full kitchen and bath on the property, which we will have access to for breaks and lunch. The Clausers rent the cabin to birders for a nominal fee. It has numerous bird feeders and Bluebird boxes.
Rodney Thomas and Gailon Brehm led a great November 2nd Saturday walk. Mike Cameron provided additional help finding and identifying avian species. Ten people were in attendance. It was a cold sunny day with a light wind which made birding a delight. 50 species were seen. Water was back in the wetlands!

Species observed were:

- **Gadwall** (Anas strepera) 35
- **Mallard** (Anasplatyrhynchos) 20
- **Northern Pintail** (Anas acuta) 10
- **Green-winged Teal** (Anas crecca) 8
- **Ring-necked Duck** (Aythya collaris) 6
- **Double-crested Cormorant** (Phalacrocorax auritus) 7
- **Turkey Vulture** (Cathartes aura) 1
- **Northern Harrier** (Circus cyaneus) 1
- **Sharp-shinned Hawk** (Accipiter striatus) 1
- **Red-shouldered Hawk** (Buteo lineatus) 2
- **Red-tailed Hawk** (Buteo jamaicensis) 2
- **Killdeer** (Charadrius vociferus) 1
- **Ring-billed Gull** (Larus delawarensis) 1
- **Mourning Dove** (Zenaida macroura) 10
- **Greater Roadrunner** (Geococcyx californianus) 1
- **Red-bellied Woodpecker** (Melanerpes carolinus) 3
- **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (Sphyrapicus varius) 2
- **Downy Woodpecker** (Picoides pubescens) 1
- **Northern Flicker** (Colaptes auratus) 1
- **Eastern Phoebe** (Sayornis phoebe) 3
- **Blue Jay** (Cyanocitta cristata) 5
- **American Crow** (Corvus brachyrhynchos) 5
- **Carolina Chickadee** (Poecile carolinensis) 3
- **Tufted Titmouse** (Baeolophus bicolor) 1
- **Brown Creeper** (Certhia americana) 1
- **Carolina Wren** (Thryothorus ludovicianus) 3
- **Winter Wren** (Troglodytes hiemalis) 1
- **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (Regulus calendula) 1
- **Eastern Bluebird** (Sialia sialis) 8
- **Hermit Thrush** (Catharus guttatus) 2
- **American Robin** (Turdus migratorius) 40
- **Northern Mockingbird** (Mimus polyglottos) 3
- **Brown Thrasher** (Toxostoma rufum) 1
- **Cedar Waxwing** (Bombycilla cedrorum) 30
- **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (Setophaga coronata) 10
- **Spotted Towhee** (Pipilo maculatus) 1
- **Chipping Sparrow** (Spizella passerina) 3
- **Fox Sparrow** (Passerella iliaca) 8
- **Song Sparrow** (Melospiza melodia) 3
- **Lincoln's Sparrow** (Melospiza lincolnii) 3
- **Swamp Sparrow** (Melospiza georgiana) 4
- **White-throated Sparrow** (Zonotrichia albicollis) 6
- **Harris's Sparrow** (Zonotrichia querula) 4

The main speaker at our February meeting will be Dr. Tania Homayoun, Senior Manager for Conservation and Education at Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center. Her topic will be “Urban and Suburban Greenspaces For Migrating Birds.” Dr. Tania Homayoun’s interest in conserving and restoring native ecosystems in developed area dates back to her high school years, as she watched the rapid spread of development in the north Dallas area. While an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Austin, she became interested in how building connections between local residents and the nature around them can support conservation efforts, and made this the focus of her graduate research. Tania completed her PhD in Conservation Biology at the University of Minnesota, investigating the impacts of urban development on migrating landbirds through citizen science monitoring.

In addition to fieldwork on breeding grassland birds and migrating landbirds, Tania has coordinated the Mississippi River Twin Cities Important Bird Area Landbird Monitoring Program, a citizen science project she designed in collaboration with Audubon Minnesota. She has assisted with and taught a diversity of courses at the University of Minnesota, including Animal Behavior, Ethics in Natural Resources, and Citizen Science for Teachers. She has also contributed to curriculum development for the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program, Schoolyard Ecology Explorations, and Driven to Discover: enabling student inquiry through citizen science.

Tania joined the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center as the Senior Manager for Conservation and Education in July 2011, and is excited about the opportunity to develop conservation plans and education programs that complement and support each other. “I’m really looking forward to working to conserve this site’s unique biodiversity and finding ways to share it with Dogwood Canyon’s visitors and neighbours.”
PTAS has been working with the Blackland Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist (BPCTMN) and with the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center, BPRC, to establish a Native Plant Garden Trail in Brockdale Park on Lake Lavon. This is the site of the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center (BPRC). The trail was originally constructed with 4 beds along it and is now opened to the public during educational activities at BPRC. This garden and trail was funded in part by a 2008 grant from the Audubon Foundation of Texas. Supported by a new grant from AFT, PTAS decided to expand and improve the garden and trail. Before starting work the native plant garden was evaluated. It was found that this year’s drought had a severe impact on the existing vegetation. The lack of an immediate water source had discouraged watering to maintain the native plants as they established themselves. In addition many cedar trees were crowding the existing beds.

Therefore a plan was made to do extensive clearing and increase the size of the beds. In addition a water line with spigot was planned to facilitate watering.

The work this fall has concentrated on clearing additional areas around the existing beds and removal of cedar trees that were over shadowing the beds. Six volunteer days have been held from October to January. A total of eight different volunteers have helped on some or all of the days. An additional eight volunteer days are planned for the spring of this year. In February a water line to the garden beds will be installed. Planting is planned for March of this year but this is contingent on the drought conditions and subsequent water restrictions. Additional planting is planned for next fall.

The garden and trail features plants, shrubs and trees native to Texas that can withstand the rigors of the seasons in this area. The trail winds through sunlit and shaded areas to show the public the possibilities of native plants in their own yard. These plants are also a necessity for the local wildlife producing berries and nectar for birds, bees and other animals.

Sara Schaffer is the PTAS volunteer who has been organizing and coordinating our activity. I really appreciate all the effort Sara and our other volunteers have contributed. If you want to help us do it sooner and better please contact Sara at sgshaff@aol.com.

Merrick Darley
Collinwood Farm Field Trip

We had a nice turn out of 16 birders for the Nov. PTAS Bird walk to Collinwood Farm, in Plano. Gailon Brehm led the morning walk which was pleasant weather but, windy, cloudy with temperatures in the 60's.

LeConte's and Harris's Sparrows were highlights! The Le Conte’s Sparrow stopped just 12 feet from the group giving everyone a close study of the species.

We tallied 38 species for Susan Buhner, the owner, to report to the city for a check list when they take over the property and make it a city park in three years.

Gadwall (Anas strepera) 8
American Wigeon (Anas americana) 6
Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) 8
Northern Pintail (Anas acuta) 4
Green-winged Teal (Anas crecca) 4
Ring-necked Duck (Aythya collaris) 5
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 2
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 2
Red-shouldered Hawk (Buteo lineatus) 1
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 1
American Coot (Fulica americana) 3
Franklin's Gull (Leucophaeus pipixcan) 1
Rock Pigeon (Columba livia) 10
Red-bellied Woodpecker (Melanerpes carolinus) 2
Downy Woodpecker (Picoides pubescens) 1
Northern Flicker (Colaptes auratus) 6
Eastern Phoebe (Sayornis phoebe) 1
Blue Jay (Cyanocitta cristata) 10
American Crow (Corvus brachyrhynchos) 15
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Regulus calendula) 1
Eastern Bluebird (Sialia sialis) 20
American Robin (Turdus migratorius) 30
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 6
European Starling (Sturnus vulgaris) 10
Spotted Towhee (Pipilo maculatus) 1
Chipping Sparrow (Spizella passerina) 1
Savannah Sparrow (Passerculus sandwichensis) 1
Le Conte's Sparrow (Ammodramus leconteii) 2
Song Sparrow (Melospiza melodia) 1
White-throated Sparrow (Zonotrichia albicollis) 5
Harris's Sparrow (Zonotrichia querula) 2
White-crowned Sparrow (Zonotrichia leucophrys) 1

PTAS Surveying Collinwood Farm
Photo by Linda Ergonis

Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area Field

Dr. Ken Steigman, the director at LLELA, led our group in search of a Short-eared Owl. The temperature was in the mid 30’s but, we quickly warmed up as we spread out and walked the fields to scare up our target bird. We had flushed at least 25 Northern Harriers when at the end of the fourth field a larger bird flushed on our right. Then it turned left flying in front of everyone to give us all good looks at the Short-eared Owl. Success! Ken took us from there on a walk through the wooded area by the spillway and back to the ponds where we studied the ducks.

Linda Ergonis

Belted Kingfisher at LLELA
Photo by Linda Ergonis
Join bird watchers from coast to coast for the 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). The GBBC is open to bird watchers of all ages and skill levels. Participation is free and no registration is required.

It’s as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate list for each new day. You can also submit more than one list per day if you count in other locations on that day. Go to http://www.birdsource.org/downloadsGBBC/GBBCDataForm.pdf to download a blank data form of the information the GBBC asks about your bird observations. This form is in PDF format.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist (http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist) to get an idea of the kinds of birds you’re likely to see in your area in February. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.

3. When you’re finished, enter your results through the web page, http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/input. You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission.

Tom Heath

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**Great Backyard Bird Count**

**February 17-20**

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**Sabal Palm Sanctuary Fundraising**

National Audubon Society is raising money for the Sabal Palm Sanctuary in Brownsville through Pennies for the Planet. Pennies for the Planet is a successful nationwide campaign to help critical conservation projects. It’s powered by kids collecting pennies (and nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars, too!) to help save wild places and wildlife in the United States. Working in groups and troops of all sorts, in school classrooms, with their families, and on their own, kids have turned pennies into a gold mine for wild spaces and wildlife in need of protection.

If you are interested in helping and would like to distribute Pennies for the Planet packets in your area (schools, churches, girl/boy scout troops, etc.), please contact Danielle Madrid at dmadrid@audubon.org. Danielle is the Development Manager of Audubon Texas.

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**Grant Opportunity**

Have a favorite avian project? PTAS can get a grant from Audubon Texas and the Audubon Foundation of Texas of up to $1000 to fund it. Grants are in three categories.

1) Chapter Conservation projects which are designed for habitat conservation/protection/management projects not related to an IBA. (For example: an ecosystem restoration project, a citizen science project, working with a conservation group in Latin America, etc.).

2) Important Bird Area projects which may include non-habitat components such as training for IBA volunteers or preliminary work to determine IBA status.

3) Chapter Education Projects which are designed for proposals concerning educational programs on a local level. Examples include in-school programs, on-site programs, nature center-related programs, and educational materials intended for the broader public.

If you are interested in proposing a project for PTAS contact Merrick Darley (hmdarley@gmail.com) prior to Feb 15.

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**PTAS Election of Board Members**

At the PTAS February meeting elections will be held for Treasurer and three at large board members. If you would like to help us plan our activities or would like to nominate someone else contact one of the members of the nomination committee. They are Bill Woodfin, Rodney Thomas and Mercy Moffit.
PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers, Chairpersons and Board Members

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Vice President: Carolyn Oldham*..972-517-8987
Secretary: Betty Parker *......................972-618-1130
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Programs: Carolyn Oldham*...............972-517-8987
Publicity: Mercy Moffet..........................972-517-2542
Board Member: Sara Shaffer*..................972-881-0645
*Board Member

Membership Application

I would like to be a member of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS), knowing that my annual membership dues will be used to support local bird-related projects and habitats. Enclosed is my check for $12 (includes all family members at a single address) made out to: PTAS. PTAS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; your membership fee and any donations made to PTAS are tax deductible.

I would also like to support the National Audubon Society, where my annual membership dues will be used nationally and globally. Enclosed is my check for the special new-member introductory price of $20, made out to: National Audubon Society

Name_________________________________________________
Address_______________________________________________
City____________________________ State________________
Zip ______________________
Phone__________________
Email___________________________

(E-mail addresses are used to notify members of updated website newsletters, upcoming field trips, and important local bird-related issues. E-mail addresses are NOT shared with, or forwarded to, any other source.)

How did you hear about Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society?

_____From a member of PTAS
_____From the PTAS website
_____Other (please specify)_____________________________________________

Mail to: Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society
c/o Georgette Guernsey, 6405 Oak Hollow Lane
McKinney, TX 75070

Audubon code: 7XCH PTAS Chapter Code: W15

Earth Share of Texas represents the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll deduction plans for charitable giving. For information, E-mail estx@earthshare-texas.org or call 1-800-GREENTX