Get Involved with Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS) is an avian oriented non-profit affiliated with the National Audubon Society.

PTAS invites you to participate in our activities which feature programs to learn about birds, field trips to become aware of birds and nature, and conservation support for the North Texas Area avian community.

We have monthly meetings Sept-Nov, and Jan-May at 6:30 pm at the Science Resource Center of the Heard Science Museum and Sanctuary in McKinney, Texas. Also we have field trips and bird walks every month Sept through May. There is no cost to participate in our activities.

LEARN MORE: prairieandtimbers.org or www.facebook.com/PTAudubon
Dr. Jim Bednarz will describe his field experiences during an 8 year study on the Galapagos Islands. He and his students worked to answer "Why the Galapagos Hawk exhibits extreme polyandry?" This is the unusual mating system in which typically one female is mated to multiple males. Dr. Bednarz will describe the field methods used to capture and mark the hawks. He will discuss alternative hypotheses suggested to explain polyandry in Galapagos Hawks and present data that refutes most of these hypotheses. And he will present a new hypothesis to explain the behavior, crossing paths with Darwin in the process. Photos of many of the unique wildlife species that inhabit the Galapagos Islands will be featured.

Dr. Bednarz is a full time professor at the University of North Texas. Conservation. He has conducted field research on six continents and was the Editor of the Journal of Raptor Research for 5 years.

The Future of Texas Wildlife – What Will It Be
By Sam Kieschnick

Teaming With Wildlife: True To Texas (TWW: True To Texas) is a coalition of businesses and organizations that recognize the value of healthy wildlife populations and realize that our natural heritage is in jeopardy. Sam will discuss this ambitious and exciting initiative to provide for the future of Texas wildlife. Texas has historically enjoyed abundant wildlife populations and is known for its endemic species and wide open spaces but what is the future?

Sam Kieschnick is an Urban Wildlife Biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, serving the east side of the DFW metroplex. Sam holds a Masters Degree from Tarleton State University and has previously worked as a nature educator for the City of Mansfield, a naturalist at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge, a science interpreter with the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, a biologist with BRIT, and as an instructor at Weatherford College.
After more than 50 years of political unrest and drug cartel control, Colombia is at peace and enjoying economic prosperity and has been for the past eight years. With safe conditions, scientists have been able to enter the country’s remote areas to study the flora and fauna. They have been busy discovering many new species of plants, amphibians and birds. The country is working intently to preserve the habitats of the many endemic and rare species by buying up land with the help of conservation organizations and making preserves to save the endemics from the rapid development.

Colombia is a unique country! It lies 10 degrees north of the equator yet with the high elevation it is cool and comfortable throughout most of the country. It is the gateway to South America for migratory birds from North America. The geography of the land and its location make it one of the most bio-diverse places on earth. It boasts a checklist of 1,913 species, nearly 1/5 of the entire list of bird species on earth. This is more than any other country.

Our PTAS trip in January is to the northern Caribbean coast and the Santa Marta mountain range. The Santa Marta range is triangular, isolated and rises from the coast to 9,000 feet at its highest peak. This crown jewel of Colombia is just a small area but is home to 635 species of birds. This equates to 35% of Colombia’s list, of which 20 are endemics and 55 near-endemics. This is the highest concentration of endemics in the world. We will be staying at the El Dorado Biosphere Lodge, a World Heritage site, in the Santa Marta Range. It is situated at an altitude of 6,000 feet. At this elevation, some of the endemic birds we will find are White-tailed Starfrontlet, Streak-capped Spinetail, Black-cheeked Mountain Tanager, Colombian Brushfinch Santa Marta Antpita and Santa Marta Owl. Trips by jeep will take us to higher elevations to track down more endemic specialties such as Santa Marta Parakeet, Yellow-crowned Whitestart, Santa Marta Warbler, Rufous Antpita, Santa Marta Bush-tyrant and Brown-rumped Tapaculo.

The trip starts in Barranquilla, on the Caribbean coast, from where we will bird our way to El Dorado and spend four days. On our way back to Barranquilla we will leave the cool mountains for the lowland hot desert coast. There we hope to find the specialties of the dry hot habitat, Russet-throated Puffbird, Chestnut Piculet, White-whiskered Spinetail, Orincan Saltator, Pileated Finch, Vermillion Cardinal, and Black-crested Ant-shrike. We will go to coastal tidal flats for shore birds, which will include Scarlet Ibis and Flamingos. Our last day will be a trip to the beautiful Tayrona National Park. The park is a small rain forest and a change of scenery after the coastal desert. Some resident species include Military Macaws, Lance-tailed Manakins, Collared Aracari, Rufous-and-white Wrens and White-chinned Sapphires. I’m sure we will see at least one troop of Red Howler Monkeys and we hope to see the rare Cotton-top Tamirin before we return to Barranquilla for our last night in this birding paradise.

If you are interested in the trip details, contact Linda Ergonis at lindaergonis@yahoo.com
## Meeting/Presentation Schedule

**MEETINGS START AT 6:30**

- 6:30 Sign-in, Social time
- 6:45 Bird Identification Class
- 7:10 General Meeting
- 7:30 Presentation
- 8:30 Adjourn

**Tuesday, September 27 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Raptors – Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kites (lecture)
**Main Program:** “Galapagos Hawk” by Dr. Jim Bednarz, Professor at the University of North Texas.

**Tuesday, October 25 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Winter Sparrows (specimens)
**Main Program:** “The Future of Texas Wildlife — What will it be?” by Sam Kieschnick, DFW Urban Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife

**Tuesday, November 22 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Woodland Birds – Vireos, Wrens, Nuthatches, Creepers, Chickadees, and Kinglets (specimens)
**Main Program:** TBD

**Tuesday, January 24 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Buntings and Grosbeaks: Cardinals, Rose-breasted & Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo & Painted Buntings, finches (lecture)
**Main Program:** “Big Spring, Rediscovering a Piece of Forgotten Texas” by Ben Sandifer and Richard Grayson. Ben Sandifer is an environmental activist for the Great Trinity forest, author of the blog at DallasTrinityTrails.com and webmaster for BigSpringDallas.org. Richard is a Master Naturalist and teaches stream monitoring processes.

**Tuesday, February 28 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Corvids & cuckoos – Blue Jays, Fish & Am Crow, Roadrunner, Black & Yellow-billed Cuckoo (specimens)
**Main Program:** “Dogwood Canyon, A Tranquil Treasure” by Julie Collins, Conservation and Operations Manager, Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center

**Tuesday, March 28 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Warblers (lecture)
**Main Program:** TBD

**Tuesday, April 25 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** Miscellaneous (specimens)
**Main Program:** TBD

**Tuesday, May 23 - 6:30 pm**
**Bird ID class:** None
**Main Program:** “Potluck Picnic Dinner at Heard Museum”

## Field Trip Schedule

**For all field trips please RSVP to (unless noted):**
Linda Ergonis: lindaergonis@yahoo.com

Carpool meets in the northeast corner of the Walmart’s parking lot at the intersection of Central Expressway and Spring Creek in Plano. If you are carpooling let Linda Ergonis know when you RSVP.

On the Second Saturday of each month Sept– May, there is a bird walk at the Heard Museum. (see article)

**September 17**
**Location – Tishomingo National Wildlife Preserve, Oklahoma** - Tishomingo NWP, established in 1946, is comprised of 16,464 acres, including the 4,500 acre Cumberland Pool. The pool is teeming with nutrients and microscopic plants, which makes abundant food for the shore birds. Cumberland Pool is north of Lake Texoma and flows into it.
**Target Birds –** Late passerine migrants and shore birds
**Leader –** Doug Wood
**Time –** 8:00am
**Meeting Place –** Pavilion at Tishomingo Preserve
**Directions** - Take HWY 75 north through Durant OK. On the north side of Durant take 48/78 to the left and go north to west on 78 when it splits from 48. Stay on 78 as it turns west and north leading into the town of Tishomingo. Turn south(left) on Refuge road before the Tishomingo High School. The pavilion is located on the west side of Refuge Road just before you reach the Main Office building. It is a 2 hour drive.

**Oct. 29**
**Location -** Tyler State Park
**Leader –** Boyd Sanders
**Target Birds-** Eastern species
**Meeting Place -** Park Headquarters
**Time –** 8:00 A.M.
**RSVP-** Laura Darley slippy7@juno.com
Second Saturday Bird Walks

PTAS has conducted bird walks in cooperation with the Heard at their wildlife sanctuary for more than twelve years. These field trips offer a unique opportunity for beginners to get personal instruction from experienced members of PTAS in a very comfortable environment starting at 8:00am on the balcony behind the museum store; early birders arrive at 7:30 for birding around the building. Sign-in at the Heard store is required.

These field trips target beginners and intermediate birders who are looking for birding tips and guidance, but also provide an opportunity for birders of all levels to see the birds of the Heard Sanctuary throughout the season. Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas and Mike Cameron co-lead these outings. The route will traverse varied habitats including areas not open to the general public. Birding techniques will be explained on the go and all questions are welcome. Typically 40 - 60 species of birds are tallied. All observations are logged into the eBird database for use by researchers worldwide.

PTAS Monthly Field Trips

Field trips are open to all, members and nonmembers, beginners to world-class birders. We especially want to encourage and welcome first time birders to come on our local trips in the north Texas area. All trips have an experienced leader eager to help beginners see and enjoy new birds. These trips are an excellent way to get started learning the birds and the best locations and seasons to find them. The pace is slow and relaxed. Anyone that can walk along a nature trail can participate. We schedule at least one field trip each month Sept through May.

Birding Enthusiasts Needed

PTAS needs volunteers to lead trips. You don’t have to be an advanced birder to lead, just a willing one. If you feel unsure of your ability to identify all of the birds, we need co-leaders as well who can help the leader and further develop their skills at the same time. To volunteer contact Merrick at hmdarley@gmail.org

November 26
Location – 111 Ranch and Spring Creek Park, Garland
Leader – Mike Cameron/Rodney Thomas
Target Birds – Winter passerines
Meeting Place – Parking lot of One Eleven Ranch Park, 2121 Brand Road, Garland, TX
Time – 7:30
RSVP- Mike Cameron, mike.cameron01@icloud.com

December 11
Location Hagerman
Target birds – Migrating Geese and winter Ducks
Leader - Jack Chiles and Gailon Brehm
Meeting Place – Park Headquarters
Time – 7:30

January -20-29
Destination- Colombia, South America
Cost- $2080.00 pp, (double room occupancy) 
Includes; guide, transportation, all meals.
Not included; Airfare to and from Barranquilla, tips for guides and drivers, alcohol drinks, laundry and souvenirs.
Trip size 10
The trip begins and ends in Barranquilla, Colombia.
RSVP Linda Ergonis, lindaergonis@yahoo.com

January 21
Location – Lake Lavon
Target Birds- Ducks and Sparrows
Leader- Mike Cameron
Meeting Place - Albertson’s parking lot in Wylie (the sign may change to Tom Thumb on rumors that it was sold) 921 Westgate Way 9 near the intersection of FM544/SH78 in Wylie. We will meet in the corner of the parking lot near the Bank of America.
Time – 8:00am
RSVP- Mike Cameron, mike.cameron01@icloud.com

February 18
Location – TBA
Target birds- TBA
Leader – TBA
Meeting place- TBA
Time-

March 25
Location - Sod Farms
Target birds- Spring migrating shore birds
Leader – Linda Ergonis
Meeting Place – The Sod Farm building parking lot.
Time 7:00 A.M.
Directions - Take I-45 south from Dallas. Exit Maloy Rd and go east. Turn right onto Parkinsons Rd. At the T turn left onto Wolf Springs Rd. Continue to the Sod Farm building on your left at a right turn in the road.

April 29
Location Bob Woodruff Park, Plano TX
Leader- TBA
Target birds- Spring migrants
Meeting Place – Parking lot on San Gabrial Dr. at the Bob Woodruff Park
Time- 7:00am
Directions- East Plano on San Gabrial Dr. which runs between Spring Creek and Park BLVD. It is on the north/ west side of Dooley Elementary School and the same side of the road.

May 6
Location Possum Kingdom
Target Birds – Western nesting birds, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-crested Titmouse, Canyon and Rock Wren Leader –Richard Wilde
Meeting Place- TBA
Time – TBA
Directions- TBA
Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS) and the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center (BPRC) partnered to develop an exhibit that features the potential impact of climate change on the future of wildlife focusing on Texas raptors. The exhibit combined an educational presentation, a game activity, and a conservation activity. The primary objective of this work was to develop the exhibit for presentations at the First Saturday Events presented by BPRC, as well as youth events held at the BPRC site. In addition, it is portable to support educational events held by BPRC and outreach events held by PTAS across North Texas.

An educational exhibit featuring the impact of climate change on the Swainson’s Hawk was developed. The Swainson’s Hawk was chosen because it is a local raptor that the Audubon Climate report showed has a summer range which is severely threatened. In addition, the Swainson’s Hawk is a long distance migratory bird and faces many challenges in adjusting to changing climate from Argentina to Canada. A presentation was developed in Microsoft PowerPoint which can be displayed as a slideshow. The presentation featured the Swainson’s Hawk but material on Switchgrass was included to show how people could locally compensate for carbon emissions with a native plant. In addition, interactive live presentations can be done. For instance, the Audubon climate report can be accessed and the climate maps displayed when the species name is entered. To achieve this, the BPRC network was extended wirelessly to the main outdoor pavilion and welcome center. A television was purchased and its location can be easily changed as dual mounting brackets were purchased. This presentation was successfully run at the August 2016 First Saturday Event and received extensive complements.

A gaming activity to demonstrate the decreasing summer range of the Swainson’s Hawk was created. The activity consists of four banners that are 4’ x 2’. The banners have Audubon’s climate range predictive maps for 2000, 2020, 2050, and 2080. In each map a hole has been cut proportional to the stable summer range predicted for that year which gets progressively smaller. Small 1” balls were purchased and used to pitch at the hole from in front of the banner. The player is given 5 balls and sees how many he can successfully pitch through the holes which gets harder for each successive banner. This game was successfully played at BPRC’s August First Saturday Event 2016.

A conservation activity to promote prairie landscaping was created and is ongoing. Switchgrass seeds are planted in flats by participants in the February first Saturday event. The flats are then placed and maintained in a greenhouse at Allen high school. During a summer first Saturday event, participants transplant the seedlings from the flats to a development bed at BPRC. This bed consists of prepared soil and a drip irrigation system to insure the Switchgrass survives the first year. During a subsequent February first Saturday event the grass is transplanted to the desired area to be landscaped. This activity is now in its second year.

A grant to support awareness of climate change to PTAS from National Audubon funded the effort.

Swainson’s Hawk Photo by Mike Cameron
The Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society has contributed to many projects which support birds, environmental projects, and education of people interested in the environment. The list below is projects supported in our 2015/16 fiscal year. Without your support we could not accomplish so many worthwhile endeavors. Thanks to all our Supporting Members and partners.

- **$1000** — Contribution to the Heard Natural Science Museum for shrubs in the vicinity of the bird banding area to improve bird cover.
- **$1150** — Grant for the Heard Bird Banding Station to acquire new mist nets, banding supplies, nesting box supplies, and permit fees.
- **$1000** — Grant to the Connemara Conservancy for maintaining nature trails.
- **$1000** — Grant to the Friends of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge to plant trees around the new Butterfly Garden.
- **$800** — For travel expenses involved in student field studies by Gary Akin at Southeastern Oklahoma State University under Dr. Doug Woods. The title is Lark Sparrow (Chondestes grammacus) Abundance, Nest Success, and Brown-headed Cowbird (Molothrus ater) Brood Parasitism in Southern Oklahoma.
- **$500** — To the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center to support Miki, a Mississippi Kite, and Hunter, a Great Horned Owl. Both birds are used for Educational presentations.
- **$500** — To Blackland Prairie Raptor Center to purchase equipment necessary for the care and eventual release of raptors received for rehabilitation. This includes stains, a refractometer and solutions to do blood work and check for eye issues.
- **$2000** — To Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area for bird banding equipment, habitat restoration, and Bob White Quail reintroduction projects.

### Support the Partners of Prairie and Timbers

PTAS works with a number of organizations that support strong community-based charitable efforts. Our focus is on the health of the North Texas environment. Essential for avian diversity and human well-being. We would like to acknowledge the following organizations and encourage you to support them.

- **PTAS Supporting Members:** Our own members supporting North Texas avian and environmental efforts
- The Heard Museum for providing the facilities we use for our meetings as well as the sanctuary for birding.
- Audubon Texas and National Audubon for supporting PTAS via its baseline funding and supporting collaborative grants. Please consider joining National Audubon and support the Avian Community at a National level.
- Audubon Foundation of Texas (AFT) for funding PTAS’s collaborative grants and providing funds to PTAS. AFT’s mission is to support Texas Audubon organizations
- EarthShare of Texas for supporting environmental organizations state wide. AFT is a member of EarthShare and receives a majority of its funding from EarthShare.
- Texas Instruments for matching volunteers’ time with matching funds.
- Kroger for providing funds to PTAS through its Community Awards program. Consider signing up PTAS as your designated charity.
- Tom Thumb for providing funds to PTAS through its Good Neighbor program. Consider signing up PTAS as your designated charity.
- Central Market (HEB) for supporting Earthshare through its tear-pad campaign in April
- Reliant Energy for supporting Earthshare thorough its EcoShare program. Consider signing a Reliant’s EcoShare plan to supply your energy needs.
- Amazon for providing funds to PTAS through its AmazonSmile program. Consider signing up PTAS as your designated charity.
PTAS charges no participation fees and everyone is welcomed at our activities thanks to our Supporting Members. Come and join in.

Please consider becoming a Supporting Member by contributing $15 or more to PTAS. All money goes towards our programs, activities, and conservation efforts. Contribute by:

- Using PayPal: Click Donate on prairieandtimbers.org/join.htm
- Check: Send check with name, email address, and postal address to our treasurer:
  C. Glen Shaffer Jr.
  1421 Thames DR
  Plano, TX 75075

*Board Member Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/PTAudubon or our website: prairieandtimbers.org

**Membership**

To keep up with PTAS’ activities:
- Check our website at prairieandtimbers.org
- Subscribe to General Email List (notification of our meetings and general announcements once a month)
- Subscribe to Field Trip List (Notification of our field trips including last minute changes once or twice a month plus emails of changes)
- Subscribe to our Global Group List (People interested in multi-day out of state field trips)

To subscribe (or unsubscribe) send an email to:

ptaspresident@prairieandtimbers.org

specifying the lists you wish to join. Addresses are not given/sold to any other organizations.