Welcome! While many of you are familiar with our organization, some of you may be new. The Audubon name is synonymous with birds, and Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS) is no different. We are an independent 501(c)(3) organization centered in Collin County that is affiliated with National Audubon, and we are focused on birding and bird-related activities, including conservation, preservation, and education.

We are starting our 2018-2019 year and have been busy planning a variety of interesting field trips and programs, the details of which you will find in this newsletter. Membership in our organization is free, and participation in our meetings and field trips is open to everyone. I want to personally invite you to our next meeting on Sept 25th at 6:30pm at the Heard Museum in McKinney, TX - Dr. Jim Bednarz, Lecturer at UNT and researcher at the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, headlines with a program on Painted Buntings.

We will also have our popular “Bird ID Class” led by Gailon Brehm and Rodney Thomas, our audience sourced “Bird Sightings”, and updates on our upcoming activities. I hope to see you there!

Mike Cameron
President, PTAS

LEARN MORE: prairieandtimbers.org or www.facebook.com/PTAudubon
# PTAS Meeting 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

All meetings are at the  
Science Resource Center  
Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary  
1 Nature Place,  
McKinney, TX 75069

### September 25, 2018
- **Bird ID:** Raptors – Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kites  
- **Presenter:** Dr. Jim Bednarz, Lecturer UNT  
- **Title:** Use of MOTUS System for Painted Buntings  
- **Student Presenter:** Kacy Metcalf, Student  
- **Title:** Trip to Hog Island

### October 23, 2018
- **Bird ID:** Winter Sparrows  
- **Presenters:** Gailon Brehm, PTAS member  
- **Title:** Trip to Cuba

### November 27, 2018
- **Bird ID:** Woodland Birds – Vireos, Wrens, Nuthatches,  
  Creepers, Chickadees, and Kinglets  
- **Presenter:** Kelly Bryan, Founder of WTAR Inc  
- **Title:** Overview of West Texas Hummingbird Project

### January 22, 2019
- **Bird ID:** Buntings and Grosbeaks: Cardinals, Rose-breasted  
  & Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo & Painted Buntings, finches  
- **Presenter:** Charlie Amos, Past President FWAS  
- **Title:** Identifying Ducks in Flight

### February 26, 2019
- **Bird ID:** Corvids & cuckoos – Blue Jays, Fish & American  
  Crow, Ravens, Roadrunner, Black & Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
- **Presenter:** Kathy Rogers, Founder of RWRC  
- **Title:** Rogers Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

### March 26, 2019
- **Bird ID:** Shorebirds  
- **Presenter:** Blake Shook, Past President Texas Beekeepers  
  Association, Owner Desert Creek Honey  
- **Title:** Bees

### April 23, 2019
- **Bird ID:** Warblers  
- **Presenters:** Mike Cameron and Linda Ergonis, PTAS  
  members  
- **Title:** PTAS Field Trip to Washington State.

### May 28, 2019
- **Picnic/Potluck**

---

### Presentation Highlights

Our program committee of Candy Anandagoda, Kristen Carlson, Denise Dengler, and Carolyn Oldham have worked hard to put together an outstanding set of diverse programs for our new year.

![Lucifer Hummingbird](image)

If you are wild about hummingbirds, do not miss our November presentation by Kelly Bryan. An active birder since he was 14 years old, Kelly has spent his life studying birds specializing in west Texas hummingbird species. He served as Park Ranger at Huntsville State Park, Aquatic Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife, Park Superintendent for Kickapoo State Park, Devil’s Sinkhole State Natural Area, and Davis Mountains State Park, and Natural Resource specialist for State Parks Region 1, Fort Davis. He is a Master Bander and lives in the Davis Mountains of West Texas. He and master bander Charles Floyd were instrumental in forming West Texas Avian Research Inc. to expand the knowledge of the special birds of West Texas. Kelly Bryan’s article the Hummingbirds of West Texas lists the hummingbirds found in West Texas. Additionally, he has been a keynote speaker, birding guide, and hummingbird bander at the Laredo Birding Festival, the Fort Davis Hummingbird Festival, and the Rockport Hummer Fest.

Interested in Painted Buntings with their vivid fusion of blue, green, yellow, and red? At our September meeting, Jim Bednarz will report on research at LLELA on Painted Buntings. The University of North Texas is conducting a study of Painted Buntings using the MOTUS System for tracking. MOTUS is a research network that uses coordinated automated radio telemetry arrays to study movements of small animals tagged with nano transmitters. An unusual feature of Painted Buntings is the second year male retains the green plumage of a female although reproductively mature. The study is trying to understand evolutionary advantages of this strategy. PTAS has supported this research through funds to purchase the required equipment. Jim is a Senior Lecturer and Advisor with the Department of Biological Sciences at University of North Texas.
During the same meeting we will have a short presentation from Kacy Metcalf, on her trip to Hog Island last June sponsored by PTAS. She attended a 5 night, 6 day program when participating in the Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens. Kacy will be sharing her experience on Eastern Egg Rock, where Atlantic Puffins raise their young, and what she learned while on Hog Island and neighboring islands.

At the October meeting, Gailon Brehm will give a presentation on his trip to Cuba in March, 2018. Gailon toured the majority of the island of Cuba in 11 days, seeing all the 25 expected endemic and 17 near-endemic species of birds. He was led by a well-known local guide and accompanied by experienced birders Byron Stone, Randy Pinkston, and Don Stone. Accommodations and food were excellent, mostly in small towns or park areas. Experiencing the people, antique cars, horse-drawn vehicles, and mid-twentieth century buildings combined with the varied wildlands, farmlands, towns and cities made this a memorable experience. Gailon Brehm is a retired electrical engineer with a passion for seeing birds and protecting the natural environment that is crucial to their ability to thrive. He is a Master Naturalist, past president of PTAS and currently serves TOS as director of the North Central Texas Region.

The January meeting will feature Charlie Amos presenting a talk on identifying ducks in flight. Charlie is a past President of Fort Worth Audubon and a birder for almost 30 years. He is a Master Naturalist and volunteers at local parks and all over the state where he leads bird and nature walks for children and adults. Charlie Amos’ favorite place to go is Big Bend.

At our February meeting Kathy Rogers, the founder of Rogers Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, will tell us about their operations. Rogers Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is a nonprofit wildlife rescue organization in the Dallas Fort Worth area specializing in the rescue and rehabilitation of injured, sick and orphaned birds of all types. PTAS proudly helps fund it. The goal of the center is to restore the health and independence of injured birds brought in from all over North Texas. They operate on 20 acres of restored wetlands in Hutchins, Texas. RWRC has grown to be the largest all-species avian rehabilitation and education center of its kind in North Texas. In 2015 alone, RWRC received 3,283 birds, of which 79% are protected by federal and state law. After months of medical treatment, care, and rehabilitation, they successfully returned 76% of the various hawks, owls, and other protected species back to their native habitat. Rogers Wildlife serves as a sanctuary for the remaining birds, as they are deemed non-releasable due to the extent of their injuries. All of their permanent residents live in habitat-specific settings and are cared for seven days a week, year-round, by dedicated staff and volunteers.

In March Blake Shook, will tell us all about the management of bee hives and the production of honey. In an effort to promote beekeeping, Blake serves as a director for the American Beekeeping Foundation and is on the National Honey Board. Blake also served as the President for the Texas Beekeepers Association and the Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association and has had the privilege of speaking at meetings and conferences in local, state, national, and international organizations. Blake began beekeeping as a casual hobby when 13 years old. After graduating from high school, he and his wife, Kathleen, built Desert Creek Honey into a thriving company that emphasizes honesty, integrity, and farm to table products. They produce all the honey that the company sells insuring the highest quality of raw, unfiltered, and delicious honey, straight from their hives and into the customer's home.

Mike Cameron and Linda Ergonis will report on the PTAS sponsored Washington state field trip of the Cascade loop from June 2 to June 8 of 2018 at the April meeting of PTAS.

Learn the Heard Birds

Each month, prior to the formal meeting, we provide instruction in identifying birds commonly seen at the Heard Sanctuary and surrounding area. This is done by alternating lectures and specimens (study skins). Emphasis is placed on observing shape and structure and light/dark coloration pattern, the bird’s “jizz”. Then we highlight plumage, color, and bird sounds. We meet in the SRC auditorium when slides are used and in the SRC Classroom 2 when study skins are used. Rodney Thomas and Gailon Brehm will co-teach.
Field Trip Schedule

September 29-30, 7:30 am
Location: Hazel Bazemore Hawk Watch, Corpus Christi
Leader: Linda Ergonis
Target Birds: Raptors and migrants
Meeting Place: Hazel Bazemore parking area
Length: All day Sat and Sun morning
RSVP: Linda Ergonis <lindaergonis@yahoo.com>

April 24-28
Location: Guadalupe Mountain National Park
Leader: Chris Runk
Target Birds: - Western and high elevation species
Meeting Place: TBD
Length: Multi-day trip
RSVP: For information on carpool, food and lodging, and cost please, contact Linda Ergonis at lindaergonis@yahoo.com

May 4: TBD - Save the date

October 27, 7:30 am
Location: Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Center. Lewisville, Texas
Leader: Ken Steigman
Target Birds: Migrants
Meeting Place: Entrance gate at E Jones St and N Kelly Ave. Do not be late as gate is locked.
Length: 4 1/2 hours
RSVP: Linda Ergonis <lindaergonis@yahoo.com>

December 1, 8:00 am (arrive at 7:30 am to bird area around the center)
Location: Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, Sherman, Texas
Leader: Gailon Brehm
Target Birds: - Geese, Geese and more geese plus ducks and winter residents
Meeting Place: Visitor Center at Hagerman NWR
Length: 4 - 5 hours
RSVP: Gailon Brehm g-brehm@msn.com

January 25-27
Location: Bolivar Flats, Port Bolivar, TX
Leader: Chris Runk
Target Birds: - Gulls and winter shorebirds
Meeting Place: Beach House in Crystal Beach
Length: Multi-day trip
RSVP: For information on carpool, food and lodging, please, contact Linda Ergonis lindaergonis@yahoo.com

February 23, 7:30 am
Location: Chalk Hill Farm, 4696 CR 412, McKinney, Tx. The home of Bill and Fran Woodfin (long time PTAS members)
Directions: take Hwy 380 (University) east ~3 miles from US 75 to FM 1827 (New Hope Rd.) It winds northeast through New Hope. In about 2.5 miles New Hope Community Church is on the left. ~200 yards past this turn left, North, onto CR 409. Go ~1.5 miles. 409 T’s onto 412 where you go right ~0.4 miles and turn right into Bill’s driveway. Go right where the drive Y’s uphill past the barns and to the house.
Leader: Linda Ergonis
Target Birds: - Winter Sparrows and passerines
Meeting Place: Bill’s home (no carpool)
Length: TBD
RSVP: Linda Ergonis lindaergonis@yahoo.com

Our trips are designed to take birders to a variety of habitat environments and find a variety of bird species in our area and other locations in Texas. Thanks to Linda Ergonis, our field trip chair, and her committee for planning. The public is encouraged to participate. Please remember to bring binoculars, sun screen, water and snacks.

To participate, monitor the website field trip page (http://prairieandtimbers.org/fieldtrips.htm). Tom Heath maintains a field trip email list to inform potential participants of trip activities. Send Tom (heathwtom@netscape.net) your name and email address if you want to be on the list.

It is important to RSVP to the person noted for trips you plan to attend because plans may change due to weather, the guide or birds spotted at a different location. You will be emailed of any change in plans if you RSVP. Also, it is to be considerate to the leaders, to know how many will attend and to better organize the group.

For most field trips, carpooling is available and encouraged as it makes coordination simpler and reduces pollution. The typical meet-up point for carpools is 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 the coordinator know when you RSVP.

Birding with Chris Runk
At His Favorite Texas Spots

Chris Runk just retired from the Dallas Symphony Orchestra as a Bass Clarinet player and is looking forward to year-round birding. We have taken advantage of this opportunity to have him lead two out-of-town trips. He has already led us on a marvelous day of birding in Aug. to the sod farm and Southside Water Treatment Plant for a grand total of 79 species. Chris’ passion for birds started as a child in central Pennsylvania watching the birds that came to the family’s feeder. He was delighted with the dozens of Evening Grosbeaks, Redpolls
Rustlin's - 5

and Juncos. He began using eBird to document his sightings in 2008 and became hooked on patch birding, regularly birding White Rock Lake area, Lake Ray Hubbard, and other places. He has also led annual trips to the Guadalupe Mountains. He especially likes to camp and wake up with the birds. He is an expert in bird identification, the eBird reviewer for the Dallas area and serves on the Texas Bird Records Committee.

Chris is an expert at aging gulls by plumage. Saturday will be a full day of studying shorebirds with a trip to Sea Rim State Park as well as Bolivar. Sunday we will have time for morning birding before returning to the Dallas area. The trip is limited to 12. Deadline to register is Dec. 1.

In April Chris will lead us out west to the Guadalupe Mountain National Park. The Guadalupes are sky islands that attract high elevation species that travel from islands in the sky in Mexico’s mountains to the Davis Mountains and onto the Guadalupes. We will hike Dog Canyon, McKittrick Canyon and Rattlesnake Springs. As Chris says, “this is an amazing spring migrant trap.” We will look for western species such as Golden Eagles, Black-chinned Sparrow, Virginia’s Warbler, Juniper Titmouse and many more.

The trip will start Wed. April 24 thru Sun the 28th. We will drive west to White City, NM (Roadway Inn) just South of Carlsbad. You may camp in the park where Chris will be and wake up with the birds. We will return to the Dallas area on Sun. Handy birders May want to stay with Chris and make the six mile hike to the bowl for more high elevation species. The trip is limited to 12.

Another multi-day field trip is planned this month to the Hazel Bazemore Hawk Watch in Corpus Christi. It is a world class Hawk Watch that far exceeds any other in all of North America, for the number of birds and species it counts. All this and it is only about six hours from McKinney. The counting lasts from Aug. 1 through Nov. 15. Some years the total count exceeds a million raptors with 30 species of raptors recorded. The peak time is the last weekend of Sept. This year the birding festival is Sept. 28-30. They will have vendor booths, live raptors and programs. The volunteers on the platform are very informative and teach you how to ID the raptors high in the air and how they count them. Some kettles are in the thousands.

Corpus Christi is the birdiest city in North America. A few of the southern specimens found along the Texas border have extended their range into the Corpus area, namely Great Kiskadee, Green Jay and Green Kingfisher. After the Raptor show has quieted down in the afternoon we will move onto some of the hot spots in Corpus. We should catch a few passerines in migration. Also, we will go to the coast for shorebirds. We should find Red Knots as it will be time for them to stop over on their way to Terra Del Fuego, Chile. Sunday morning we will have time to bird the places we missed or return to the platform before returning home.

The field trip committee is also planning five local field trips. The first one to the Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area is in October and will be led by Ken Steigman. Ken is the Director/Research Scientist at LLELA. He is an ornithologist with a PhD in ecology. His bird walks are always very interesting as he tells stories about the plants, habitat and birds along the way. We will learn about LLELA’s restoration of the prairie and the latest project - reintroduction of land turtles. LLELA is current using MOTUS system to study Painted Buntings, which is supported in part by PTAS grants.

The second local field on Dec 1 is planned to Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge on Lake Texoma. The refuge provides a winter home for thousands of waterfowl with the most numerous being the Canada goose. Five species of geese are seen at Hagerman most years. Also, expect ducks in abundance with diversity plus wintering raptors, sparrows and woodland birds. The field trip will be lead by Gailon Brehm who is hoping to see eighty or more species.

On February 23, our third local field trip will be to Chalk Hill Farm, the home of Bill and Fran Woodfin. Bill and Fran are long time PTAS members, Bill is a past board member. Linda Ergonis, our field trip chairperson, will lead us in search of winter sparrows and other passerines.

The details of the remaining two field trips in March and May are not yet determined.
Second Saturday Bird Walks

**When:** 8:00 am, the Second Saturday of each month – September through June

**Where:** The Heard Museum in McKinney, main entrance

Continuing our long-standing tradition, PTAS volunteers will lead monthly bird walks in cooperation with the Heard. These field trips explore the trails of the Heard Sanctuary and provide a unique opportunity to observe birds in a natural North Texas environment surrounded by an area of continuing urbanization. These walks are quite popular with beginners, families, and experienced birders. Three leaders, Gailon Brehm, Rodney Thomas, and Mike Cameron intersperse within large groups to allow each participant to interact with a leader. The walks start promptly at 8:00 am with sign-in at the Heard store prior to that. Early birders arrive at 7:30 for birding around the building.

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. The route will traverse varied habitats including areas not open to the public. Birding techniques will be explained on the go and all questions are welcome. Typically, 40 - 60 species of birds are tallied. Special effort is made to hear and/or see all the birds present, and this monthly survey of bird population is logged into the eBird database for use by researchers worldwide.

**Bird Feeder Cleaning Event At**

**Wild Birds Unlimited It’s Free!**

Wild Birds Unlimited will give your bird feeder a good scrub for free. Drop off on Saturday September 15 10 am to 4 pm and pickup Monday Sept 17 at the store, 3001 S. Hardin Blvd, McKinney, TX. Donations are appreciated and will be given to Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society.
SOMETIMES BIRDING SCRAMBLES MY BRAIN.

Normally I’m capable of cogent thought. I can look at things, sort details and reach correct conclusions. Sometimes, the excitement of birding messes that up. Two plus two goes into my noggin; five spills out.

Fall birding causes me the most trouble due to juvenile birds of some species looking the same. But in actuality, they’re still giving ID cues. They simply require a less agitated mind to tell yolk from white and juvenile Broad-winged Hawks (BWHA) from young Cooper’s Hawks (COHA) and Red-shouldered Hawks (RSHA).

I correctly ID’d only one of these hawks. But one was extra tough and required hawk expertise from south TX. Twice, excess focus on breast streaks smudged egg on my face. Answers at the end.

For those of you going, or thinking of going, to the January Bolivar Flats Field Trip, you can get a sense of what you might see by visiting master digiscoper Joseph Kennedy’s photo page at http://www.pbase.com/joseph_kennedy_36/root&view=recent.

His Smith Point Hawk Watch photos can also serve as a preview to the September Hazel Bazemore Hawk Watch trip even though the two spots are 200 miles apart. Hawks in Flight by Dunne, Sibley & Sutton would be a good guidebook for that trip.

In case you’re considering a visit to Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, you can find lake level information at http://www.swt-wc.usace.army.mil/webdata/gagedata/DSNT2.current.html. A caveat: the site is frequently down lately on weekends and weekday evenings. For shorebirds, Lake Texoma water depth in the 615’ range is good. Lower is better. When it rises to 618’, it’s usually too deep in most areas for shorebirds smaller than Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets. Lately it has been a few inches under 617’, shallow enough for Least Sandpipers in spots, but numbers have been low. On the bright side, White-faced Ibises and a Roseate Spoonbill like the water depth just fine and it will be good when ducks fly in.

More recent days have brought rain, which will force migrating birds to stop for a visit. That makes for excellent rainy birding. Birds, especially smaller ones, need more nourishment during the chill of a rain and forage to survive. Hungry Violet-Green and Tree Swallows appeared on a Labor Day Southside Waste-water Treatment Plant checklist along with Greater White-fronted Goose and Caspian Tern.

On Sunday 9/2, Peter Assmann reported a continuing singing Bell’s Vireo at Bob Woodruff Park in Plano. But the Mourning or Connecticut Warbler Peter recently saw turned out to be a Mourning with a full eye-ring or possibly a hybrid. Although Alexander
In case you’re still wondering about the hawk ID. Hawk 1 and Hawk 5 are the same BWHA photographed by two people from different angles. Hawk 3 is also that same species. Hawk 2 is a COHA and Hawk 4 is a RSHA. Keep a clear head. Happy Birding!

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 birding, environmental efforts, education, and scholarships.
- **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 PTAS TI 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

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.