



THE WOOD DUCK



Newsletter #262

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

May 2022

www.LowerTrinityValleyBirdClub.org

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PO Box 6051 Liberty, Texas 77575

LTVBC Picnic *Sunday, May 15, 2022*

4:30 pm

Hosted by Steven & Shelli Ellerbe

212 Wallisville Rd, Liberty

936-334-2874

We appreciate Shelli and Steven hosting our first picnic since 2019. The picnic will be a wonderful time to visit, and we will introduce our 2022-2023 plans for our speakers, field trips, weekend trip and 2023 birding adventure. Also, we will elect our officers for 2022-2024.

Shelli will prepare **chicken taco meat for soft tacos or taco salad**, and will provide plasticware and plates.

Please check your email and respond to let Gary know what you will be bringing.

Don't forget to bring your binoculars.

Throw a folding chair in your car in case it's great weather for being outside.

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**It's time to pay
your membership
dues for 2022.
See last page.**

Editor's Note:

There was not a April 2022 newsletter, so the minutes for the March 2022 meeting were not published. There was also no April meeting in which to approve them.

-Shelli Ellerbe

Meeting Minutes



March 10, 2022

The Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club met Thursday, March 10, 2022, via virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 Virus. Eleven members were present at this month's meeting. President Gary Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM.

Treasurer's Report: Checking Account Balance: \$2,252.30
Savings Account Balance: \$1,047.82

Old Business:

- Duck Stamps for 2021-2022 (Lesser Scaup) will be available for purchase until the end of April. If you are interested in this year's duck stamp, please contact Shelli Ellerbe.
- Mont Belvieu Spring Outdoor Celebration will be April 30, 2022, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This year we will join the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge and the Texas Master Naturalists at their booth. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Gary Holmes.
- The LTVBC Summer Adventure to the Davis Mountains will be August 18-23. This is a 6-day 5-night trip. Nine rooms have been reserved at Indian Lodge with 20 participants. We would like to reserve space at McDonald Observatory-Star Party. The cost is \$25 for adults and \$20 for seniors. Gary will send out an e-mail to see who would like to attend the Star Party.
- The LTVBC Picnic will be May 14 at the Ellerbe's.

New Business:

- An election for officers for a two-year term (2022-2024) will be held at the May meeting.
- It was suggested that the Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club form a Bird-a-Thon team this year. Barbara Tilton made a motion to donate \$250.00 to either the newly formed LTVBC Team; or, if a team is not formed, donate the money to the team Barbara is on. This motion was seconded by Shelli Ellerbe, all agreed and the motion was approved.
- The field trip this month is to the Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge in Eagle Lake on Saturday, March 19, 2022. Must arrive at 7:30 AM.

Bird Tales: Shelli Ellerbe had the first spotting of a Swallow-Tailed Kite. Shelli also mentioned that the Liberty City Park is a great place for birding – especially in the north end of the park. Stuart Marcus had a bald eagle fly over his house today. David Knutson had a Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawk in his back yard. Barbara Tilton spotted a Crested Caracara from her yard.

Presentation: Gary Holmes gave a review of Spring Warblers.

Since there was no more new or old business to discuss, Barbara Tilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Margo Taylor seconded, all agreed and the meeting was adjourned.

Renie O'Connor
Secretary

President's Message by Gary Holmes

Hello Bird Club,

April was a wonderful birding month, and the club took part in many activities:

High Island Volunteers: Late March through April

The LTVBC continued our strong support for the Houston Audubon Society with volunteers for the Kiosk at Boy Scout Woods. Ed and Bernice Jackson volunteered every Saturday and Sunday, while Ceal and Jim Tomlinson volunteered one day a week. Barbara Tilton spent many volunteer days in her role as a HAS volunteer coordinator & managing the kiosk.

We appreciate all they do for the HAS Sanctuaries and the great friendly, knowledgeable assistance they give the visitors who come from all over the world to visit High Island during migration.

LTVBC Birdathon Team, Wednesday, April 13, 2022

The LTVBC Lady Twitchers - Barbara Tilton, Shelli Ellerbe, Margo Taylor, and Lisa Holmes - spent a



The Lady Twitchers on the hunt.

long day chasing birds on the coast. The Lady Twitchers identified 126 species and raised \$4,115 for a fifth-place finish in Birdathon. The LTBVC donated \$250 and several of our members made individual donations.

Houston Audubon stated, "Thanks to our supporters, participants, and sponsors, the 2022 Birdathon was a resounding success and raised over \$45,000 this year! We are especially grateful for the efforts from everyone involved who helped support our mission to advance the conservation of birds and positively impact their supporting environments".



The LTVBC Big Day, Saturday, April 16, 2022

We visited High Island, Bolivar, and Anahuac and identified over 122 species which was excellent for a day with a strong south wind. The surprises were Ruddy Duck and American Bittern at ANWR and thousands of American Avocet at Bolivar. High Island had a few migrants, and the Smith Oaks Rookery had a

unusually large number of Tricolored Herons on the nest.

Participants were Billie & David Brinkley, Gary & Lisa Holmes, Shelli Ellerbe, Margo Taylor, Stuart Marcus, Joe Hall, Marvin Masters. Of course, we found Barbara, Ed, and Bernice staffing the kiosk.



Warbler Day at Sabine Woods, Tuesday, April 26, 2022

We timed our Warbler Day with a cold front that moved into the gulf and had great results. We identified 70 species including 22 warblers with Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Magnolia, and Black-throated Green being the most common. We saw an amazing number of Veery, Ovenbird and Hermit Thrush.

We were astonished by a Merlin in a tree feasting on an Indigo Bunting. It was a fabulous day!



Participants were Carlton Collier, Barbara Tilton, Gary & Lisa Holmes, Shelli Ellerbe, Margo Taylor, David Knutson, Joe Hall, and Marvin Masters.

Spring Outdoor Celebration- Mont Belvieu Saturday, April 30, 2022

We shared a booth with the Texas Master Naturalist and the Friends of the Trinity River Refuge. It was a good time to meet with kids and young families- most of the visitors were parents with elementary-age kids.

The Bird of Prey Program was excellent and informative. LTVBC participants were Billie & David Brinkley, Gary & Lisa Holmes, Shelli Ellerbe, Margo Taylor, Stuart Marcus, Joe Hall, and Marvin Masters.



Upcoming event

The **LTVBC Picnic** will be at Shelli Ellerbe's home on Sunday, May 15, 2022. The picnic will be a wonderful time to visit, and we will introduce our 2022-2023 plans for our speakers, field trips, weekend trip and 2023 birding adventure. We appreciate Shelli and Steven hosting our first picnic since 2019. See your email and reply to me with what you will bring for our meal. (Details, front page.)

Also, we will elect our officers for 2022-2024. Nominations are:

President- Gary Holmes

Vice President- Stuart Marcus

Secretary- Renie O'Connor

Treasurer- Shelli Ellerbe

Chronicler- Margo Taylor

Newsletter- Shelli Ellerbe

Presentation Coordinators – Stuart Marcus & Lisa Holmes

Hope to see you at the picnic...

Gary



Be a part of birding's biggest team! [Global Big Day](#) is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on 14 May, help celebrate [World Migratory Bird Day](#), and share the birds you find with eBird.

Last year, Global Big Day brought birders together virtually from more countries than ever before. More than 51,000 people from 192 countries submitted 134,000 checklists with eBird, setting [four new world records](#) for a single day of birding. Will you help us surpass last year's records? However you choose to participate, please always [put safety first](#) and follow your local guidelines.

How to participate

Get an eBird account: eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's sightings into a single massive Global Big Day list—while at the same time collecting the data to help scientists better understand birds. [Sign up here](#). It's 100% free from start to finish.

Watch birds on 14 May: It's that simple. You don't need to be a bird expert or go out all day long, even 10 minutes of birding from home counts. Global Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You can report what you find from anywhere in the world.

Enter what you see and hear in eBird: You can enter your sightings [via our website](#) or download the [free eBird Mobile app](#) to make submitting lists even easier. Please enter your checklists before 17 May to be included in our initial results announcement.

Watch the sightings roll in: During the day, follow along with sightings from more than 170 countries in real-time on our [Global Big Day page](#).

Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, & Stephen F Austin State Park Saturday, March 19, 2022

The day started early with a two-hour drive to get to the Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR at dawn. We slowly drove the four-mile loop looking at hundreds of clumps of grass, but no prairie chickens. After lunch we drove the loop again, even though it was past the window for the chickens, and were awarded with a flock of America Golden Plovers (72) and an excellent look at a Brewers Blackbird (1). We identified 32 species including America Kestrel (1), Merlin (1), Crested Caracara (1), Northern Harrier (1) and Red-tailed Hawks (3). All the fence posts and signs on the refuge were topped with bird deterrent wire spikes- we think it is to eliminate the hunting roosts for the Red-tailed Hawks to help protect the prairie chickens.

The highlight of the trip was meeting the **Harvard University Ornithology Class** and their professor who were spending their spring break birding in Texas. The group include students from Harvard, Yale, and Cornell. The students were very friendly and were delighted to take a picture with the LTVBC.



With a total population of less than one hundred prairie chickens on the refuge and their secretive behavior, we knew it would be difficult to see one. Hopefully, we will try for the prairie chickens next year with a guided visit to the booming grounds.

At Stephen F. Austin State Park, we identified fifteen additional species with white-eyed Vireo (4), White-throated Sparrow (11) and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1). The most interesting bird was the **Pileated Woodpecker** that was working in its nest hole and flicking out wood chips.

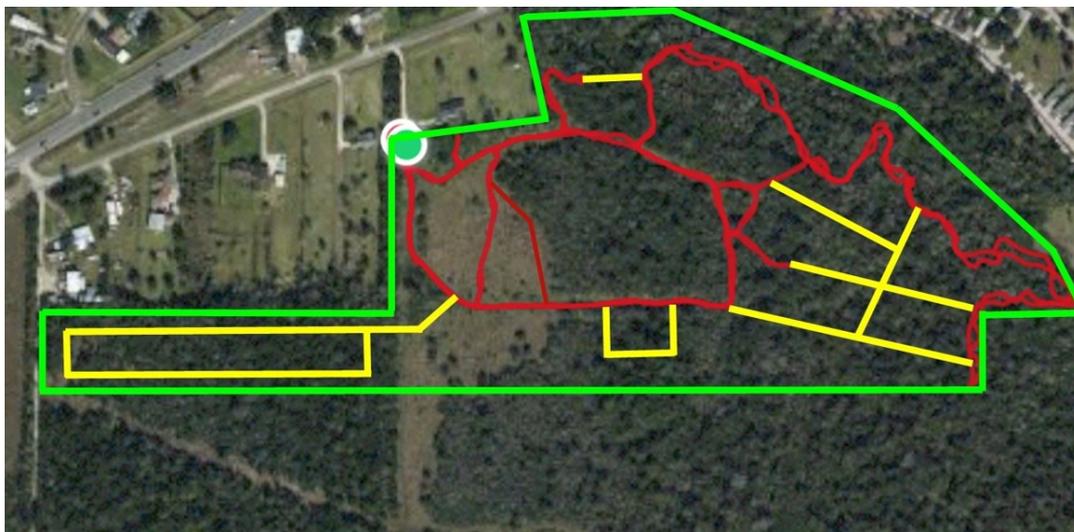
Paul Fagala's Trails

You are invited to come out for birding anytime

Contact Paul at covebirder@yahoo.com

I am fortunate to be the 4th generation living on my family's property in west Chambers County. The property runs along the west bank of Hackberry Gully, not too far east of the FM 565 and FM 3180 intersection. We have approximately 35 acres with different habitats – mature hardwood forest, tallow forest, grassy pasture, yard and a creek. Since moving here in 2003, I have seen 214 species of birds either on or flying over my property, including 33 species of warblers. In addition to the birds, I have identified 37 species of butterflies, 12 species of mammals, 29 species of dragonflies and 18 species of reptiles. In years past, we had a trail around the perimeter of the property to maintain the fence line, but the trail was not maintained and grew over. I didn't have a good way to walk in the woods to look for birds.

In 2019, I began clearing a new trail wide enough to get my lawnmower down there to keep it mowed. My son and I began clearing a trail through thick stands of yaupon, Chinese privet, trifoliolate orange trees and blackberry vines. We worked hard to save all the hardwoods and cedar trees we could. With the trails I have mowed in the pasture area, we have cleared just about a mile. Some of it is easy to walk on, but there are some very uneven parts especially further down in the woods. Also, it stays fairly wet, so if we're getting average rainfall, there are puddles that we have to splash through. Right now, the trail in the woods is one way, meaning I have to double back to get out.



- Property Border
- Current Trails
- Future Trails by spring of 2023

We are approximately 700 feet from making a complete loop. There are a few other trails we'd like to cut. We hope to have them all cut by spring 2023. You are invited to come out for birding anytime. Bring insect repellent and waterproof shoes/boots especially if it's rained recently.

You can contact me at covebirder@yahoo.com to let me know you want to visit,

Paul

Another Great Yard Bird from David Knutson

(Reported by email with a Happy Mother's Day to all the moms.)

5/8/22 This morning while enjoying coffee on the back porch with my first wife and the Mother of our children, the lovely Linda Gene Hailey Knutson, I witnessed a Swallow-tailed Kite (STKI) glide across my neighbor's back yard. I was totally surprised to see one out here in Near West Texas and am going to check in with my resident birding buddy, Gene Prejean, and see if this is a regular occurrence. I will let you know what he thinks. All I know is it made my day. I had seen one on Hwy 90 outside Devers when I went to High Island last Tuesday for my first sighting of the year. I know that they are probably old hand for you folks. Now if I can spy both a Mississippi and White-Tailed Kite I will be an even happier man.

Again Happy Mother's Day

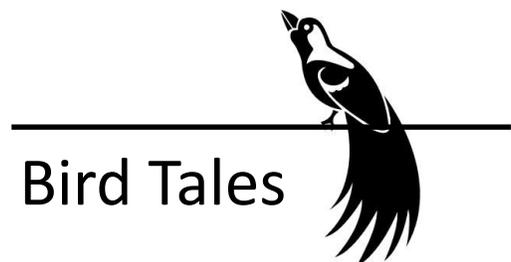
David

P.S. In a non-scientific poll, raise your hand if you wished the White-tailed Kite was still called the Black-shouldered Kite?

Lisa Holmes has raised her hand, figuratively, of course.

5/10/22 Update to email:

Per the lovely Nancy Prejean, STKI's have been seen in the Woodlands area for several years. She saw one a week ago Monday while on the Spring Creek Trail nature walk. My house is south of Spring Creek by less than a mile as the STKI flies.



Plan to start our fall newsletter season with a bird tale of your own. We would love to hear from you - look at all this space!

-Shelli Ellerbe

shellerbe@gmail.com

lowertrinityvalleybirdclub@gmail.com

Bird tip for the summer:

Keep those hummingbird feeders cleaned and filled, no red dye needed.
1/4 cup sugar and 1 cup water is all hummers need from you.



LOWER TRINITY VALLEY BIRD CLUB

Membership Information

[Check us out on Facebook!](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/98618981435/>

**It's time to pay 2022 club dues.
Please make checks payable to
LTVBC.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

_____ Update my information

_____ New Member _____ Renewing Member

_____ Donation \$ _____

_____ Donation to D. Dauphin Memorial Fund

\$ _____

_____ Student Membership \$10.00

_____ Individual Membership \$20.00

_____ Family Membership \$35.00

_____ Sponsor Membership \$50.00

Dues can be paid online at <https://www.lowertrinityvalleybirdclub.org/>

Or mailed to:

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

P.O. Box 6051

Liberty, TX 77575