



THE WOOD DUCK



Newsletter #231

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

January 2018

www.LowerTrinityValleyBirdClub.org

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PO Box 6051 Liberty, Texas 77575

Editor: Shelli Ellerbe

Happy New Year!

January Meeting

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

Thursday, January 11, 2018

6:30 pm

The FLNB Corner

1822 Sam Houston Ave., Liberty

Directions: From Highway 90, turn north on Travis St., between Kentucky Fried Chicken and Whataburger, and cross over the railroad tracks. The FLNB Corner is at the intersection of Sam Houston Ave. and Travis St., across from First Liberty National Bank.

Be sure to come early for our “Birder’s Chat” time. If you have any questions, call President Gary Holmes at 281-576-0574, or e-mail him at geholmes52@gmail.com .



Meeting Presentation

Our January meeting will feature winter sparrow identification and a workshop session over the use of the online birding resource eBird.

eBird is a real-time, online checklist program that has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution.

Be sure to bring your laptop and smart phone. If you do not already have an eBird account, follow this link ebird.org to go directly to the sign-in page where you can create an account. Or, you may type ebird.org into your browser, click the “My eBird” tab, then click “Create Account” near the bottom of the page to sign up for an account. Please take care of this before the meeting. If you are also using a smart phone, please download the eBird app and get signed in to your account. The FLNB Corner does have wifi, but if you can use your mobile phone as a hotspot for yourself, please be prepared to do so. We don’t know how many connections the Corner wifi can carry without becoming too slow to carry out the presentation.

Please be sure to read the article on eBird in this newsletter.

As always, all are invited, and visitors are welcome.

Links have been checked for accuracy and take you to the website indicated.

President's Report

By Gary Holmes

Hello Bird Club:

It was a cold morning on January 3, 2018, Champion Lake had a thin sheet of ice extending 50 feet out from the shore and it lasted to till past noon! I watched a Eastern Phoebe as it perched on Cypress knee and made flycatching forays over the ice.



Photos courtesy of Gary Holmes

Our **Christmas Nibbles** and Shelli's presentation over the **McGee Marsh - Kirkland Warbler Trip** at the December meeting were wonderful. A special thanks to Shelli and all who brought food.

Our January meeting will feature a workshop session over the use of the online birding resource eBird. **Be sure to bring your laptop and smart phone.**

If you need to create a eBird account, go to ebird.org and click "create account" to create a new account. See the eBird article in this newsletter to learn about why eBird exists and what it does. Also, we will continue planning for a **Spring Weekend Trip** and our summer adventure to **Maine** in June.

On Saturday, January 27, 2018, our field trip will be to Katy Prairie. It will be a great opportunity to see ducks, geese, and sparrows. Target birds will include **Sedge Wren, Le Conte's Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Lincoln's Sparrow**. We will review sparrow identification at our next meeting. Car pools will leave Dayton at 6:30 am and should return by 2pm. We will have a guide for this tour- so be prepared to make a donation to the Katy Prairie Conservancy.

I hope to see everyone at the January 11th meeting and the field trip on the 27st.

See you at one or both activities,

Gary



Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2017

The Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club met Thursday, December 14, 2017, at the First Liberty National Bank Corner in Liberty, Texas. President Gary Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. Twenty-three members were present at this month's meeting. Joe Hall made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 2017 meeting as published in the December *Wood Duck* #230. Denise Barkis seconded, all agreed, and the motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report: Current checking account balance is \$1,829.49. We incurred expenses in the amount of \$101.00 for postage and post office box rental. We received \$135.00 for dues. Current balance in the David Dauphin Memorial account is \$1020.18 which includes \$0.13 in interest.

Old Business:

- There is no weekend field trip in December. Instead field trips in December will be annual Christmas Bird Counts. Please check the Audubon web site for information or the December *Wood Duck*.
- Colette Micallef has volunteered to work on a four-day weekend trip to Brownsville, Texas. There will be more information at the next meeting.
- Please check out our new web page. Lisa Holmes did a fantastic job in putting it together.
- The Maine trip will be in June. Please contact Gary Holmes if you are interested. We will discuss all the particulars in the upcoming meetings.

New Business: None

Bird tales: Bernice Jackson has had Anna's and Buff-bellied Hummingbirds at her house. Gary and Lisa Holmes have had Wood ducks at their house on the lake. Paul and Colette Micallef have had over one hundred American goldfinches and about 50 Chipping sparrows at their house.

Speaker presentation: Shelli Ellerbe and Lisa Holmes gave a wonderful presentation on the McGee Marsh – Kirkland Warbler Trip in May.

Door prizes were donated by Lisa Holmes, Shelli Ellerbe, Stuart Marcus, Barbara Tilton and Annie Benson.

Since there was no more business to discuss, Stuart Marcus made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Renie O'Connor seconded, all agreed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Renie O'Connor, Secretary



<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/>

Global tools for birders, critical data for science

- Record the birds you see
- Keep track of your bird lists
- Explore dynamic maps and graphs
- Share your sightings and join the eBird community
- Contribute to science and conservation

Overview

A real-time, online checklist program, eBird has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

eBird's goal is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. It is amassing one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence. For example, in May 2015, participants reported more than 9.5 million bird observations across the world!

The observations of each participant join those of others in an international network of eBird users. eBird then shares these observations with a global community of educators, land managers, ornithologists, and conservation biologists. In time these data will become the foundation for a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere and beyond.

How Does it Work?

eBird documents the presence or absence of species, as well as bird abundance through checklist data. A simple and intuitive web-interface engages tens of thousands of participants to submit their observations or view results via interactive queries into the eBird database. eBird encourages users to participate by providing Internet tools that maintain their personal bird records and enable them to visualize data with interactive maps, graphs, and bar charts. All these features are available in English, Spanish, and French.

A birder simply enters when, where, and how they went birding, then fills out a checklist of all the birds seen and heard during the outing. eBird provides various options for data gathering including point counts, transects, and area searches. Automated data quality filters developed by regional bird experts review all submissions before they enter the database. Local experts review unusual records that are flagged by the filters.

Data Integration

eBird collects observations from birders through portals managed and maintained by local partner conservation organizations. In this way eBird targets specific audiences with the highest level of local expertise, promotion, and project ownership. Portals may have a regional focus (aVerAves, eBird Puerto Rico) or they may

have more specific goals and/or specific methodologies (Louisiana Winter Bird Atlas, Bird Conservation Network eBird). Each eBird portal is fully integrated within the eBird database and application infrastructure so that data can be analyzed across political and geographic boundaries. For example, observers entering observations of Cape May Warbler from Puerto Rico can view those data separately, or with the entire Cape May Warbler data set gathered by eBird across the western hemisphere.

Data Accessibility

eBird data are stored in a secure facility and archived daily, and are accessible to anyone via the eBird web site and other applications developed by the global biodiversity information community. For example, eBird data are part of the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN), which integrates observational data on bird populations across the western hemisphere. In turn, the AKN feeds eBird data to international biodiversity data systems, such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). In this way any contribution made to eBird increases our understanding of the distribution, richness, and uniqueness of the biodiversity of our planet.



Bird Tales



Photos courtesy of Gary Holmes

Gary Holmes: Since we celebrate Christmas with the family on Christmas evening, Lisa and I spent Christmas morning birding on **Champion Lake, Trinity River NWR**. It was a beautiful morning and we identified 33 species in two hours. As we arrived, we saw an immature **Bald Eagle** roosting in a tree and were surprised by a **Bald Cypress Christmas Tree** decorated with **three Brown Pelicans**. Other good birds were **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Hermit Thrush, and American Pipits**.

House Sparrow-The Gateway Bird

By Laurie Lomas Gonzales

It was a nice cool morning and I had some birdseed to use up so I placed it in the bird feeder. Jake and Andy, my almost 3 year old sons, helped me and then we headed to the garage. We walked back into the backyard and a flurry of little brown birds flew up from the ground around the bird feeder. House Sparrows may be the dirty little mice of the bird world, but I thought it would be the perfect time to introduce Jake to birding. Andy is a little birder who knows several species already.

We shuffled ourselves onto the picnic bench and I asked them to stay very still. That is a tough request for a pair of wiggleworm toddlers. In our jackets and mittens, we snuggled in our corner. It didn't take long before the sparrows returned. Jake watched the birds. We pointed out the birds in the trees and practiced counting... ooone, twoooo, treeee (threeeee)...sevvvvven...

We talked about the birds with black on their chins being boy birds. We listened to them calling. Then a "rrrrwwackk!" sounded. Then they all flew away with a buzz. We talked about the Blue Jay who just scared them away like a bully. And then we talked about the Mockingbird in the Firecracker Bush nearby, eating the fruits. The house sparrows returned.

The whole time, Jake and Andy sat still, mesmerized like a pair of junkies after taking a hit of sparrows, the gateway bird, just like their mom used to sit at her grandma's screen door and watch them too, 30 years ago.



Photo courtesy of Shelli Ellerbe

Gary Holmes: Lisa and I participated in the **Old River Christmas Bird Count** on Jan. 2, 2018, it was a cold, gray morning (25°F) which turned into a cold, gray day (35°F) and the birds were not very active. Still, we were able to identify **61 species**. Section 5's best birds were **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** (1), **Hermit Thrush** (2) and **Red-headed Woodpecker** (3).

Our group in Section 5 included **Lisa Holmes, Gary Holmes, Dennis Outlaw, Patty Hardy, and David Knutson** on feeder watch. The total for the Old River count was a respectable **142 species**.



Buff-bellied hummingbird courtesy of David Knutson

Be sure to visit our Facebook page for bird tales, photos and videos from **Terri Ford, David Knutson, Collette Micallef** and others.

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club



Click here

Stuart Marcus: The **Trinity River Christmas Bird Count** was held December 28th on a cold, gray day with temperatures in the upper 30's to low 40's. I want to thank the 16 birders who helped out this year. Almost all the bird species we saw were well down in numbers compared to past years. All 7 area groups recorded at least 1 species that no one else saw. We also added 2 new species to the count, White-tailed Kite and Greater Scaup along with a third species that probably will not be accepted by Audubon – Orange Bishop. We did miss some common species we usually get every year like the House Sparrow (good or bad??), Snowy Egret, Field Sparrow, and Hooded Merganser. With that said, we did end up with 80 species (without Orange Bishop) with a total of 3819 birds seen. Mark your calendars for Dec 27, 2018 when we will do it again, trying to break the 100 species mark.

Trinity River CBC Bird List

Black-bellied Whistling Duck-- 122
 Wood Duck-- 10
 Mallard-- 25
 *Greater Scaup-- 2
 Duck sp.-- 12
 Pied-billed Grebe-- 2
 American White Pelican-- 6
 Neotropic Cormorant-- 5
 Double-crested Cormorant-- 150
 Anhinga-- 28
 Great Blue Heron-- 31
 Great Egret-- 34
 Black Vulture-- 197
 Turkey Vulture-- 171
 Osprey-- 5
 *White-tailed Kite-- 1
 Bald Eagle-- 10 (7-adult, 3 imm)
 Red-shouldered Hawk-- 25
 Red-tailed Hawk-- 5
 American Kestrel-- 19
 Sandhill Crane-- 4
 Killdeer-- 158
 Spotted Sandpiper-- 17
 Least Sandpiper-- 14
 Ring-billed Gull-- 6
 Gull sp.-- 3
 Caspian Tern-- 38
 Forster's Tern-- 30
 Rock Pigeon-- 84

Eurasian Collared-Dove-- 9
 Mourning Dove-- 49
 White-winged Dove-- 69
 Barred Owl-- 1
 Belted Kingfisher-- 33
 Red-headed Woodpecker-- 6
 Red-bellied Woodpecker-- 74
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker-- 27
 Downy Woodpecker-- 25
 Northern Flicker-- 42
 Pileated Woodpecker-- 48
 Eastern Phoebe-- 48
 Blue-headed Vireo-- 3
 Blue Jay-- 73
 American Crow-- 135
 Carolina Chickadee-- 35
 Tufted Titmouse-- 27
 Carolina Wren-- 33
 House Wren-- 8
 Winter Wren-- 1
 Sedge Wren-- 6
 Golden-crowned Kinglet-- 1
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet-- 95
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher-- 8
 Eastern Bluebird-- 107
 Hermit Thrush-- 18
 American Robin-- 242
 Gray Catbird-- 3
 Northern Mockingbird-- 26
 European Starling-- 13

American Pipit-- 21
 Cedar Waxwing-- 172
 Orange-crowned Warbler-- 7
 Yellow-rumped Warbler-- 252
 Pine Warbler-- 42
 Common Yellowthroat-- 1
 Eastern Towhee-- 9
 Chipping Sparrow-- 70
 Savannah Sparrow-- 12
 Le Conte's Sparrow-- 10
 Song Sparrow-- 13
 Lincoln's Sparrow-- 4
 Swamp Sparrow-- 18
 White-throated Sparrow-- 60
 White-crowned Sparrow-- 3
 Dark-eyed Junco-- 2
 Northern Cardinal-- 91
 Red-winged Blackbird-- 8
 Eastern Meadowlark-- 41
 Brewer's Blackbird-- 50
 Blackbird sp.-- 150
 House Finch-- 1
 American Goldfinch-- 337
 **Orange Bishop-- 1
 *New count record
 **May Not be accepted
 TOTAL SPECIES - 80 plus possibly 1
 more (Orange Bishop)
 TOTAL BIRDS SEEN - 3819

Coming Up....

2017-2018 Meeting/Speakers Schedule		
Day/Date	Speakers - Topic	Events
Thursday, January 11, 2018	Shelli Ellerbe - ebird	
Thursday, February 8, 2018	David Sarkozi Birding in Maine	Great Backyard Bird Count
Thursday, March 8, 2018	TBD	
No Thursday meeting in April	"LTVBC Big Day"	
No Thursday meeting in May	Picnic	
All meetings on Thursdays Night at 6:30		

2017-2018 Field Trip Schedule	
Day/Date	Location
Saturday, January 27, 2018	Katy Prairie
Saturday, February 17, 2018	Anahuac NWR
Saturday, March 17, 2018	Peveto Woods, Cameron, LA
Saturday, April 14, 2018	High Island, Bolivar, Anahuac

Meeting Field Trip Discussion:

We will discuss a potential 4-day weekend trip to **Brownsville/South Padre Island** (possibly fly).

The 2018 LTVBC Adventure (6-8 days) will be to **Maine - Canada (June)**. The trip will be limited to 10 participants. Reserve your spot now!

Maine Trip Reservation (limited to 10 participants)	
1	Gary H
2	Lisa H
3	Shelli E
4	Margo T
5	Barbara T
6	Stuart M
7	Denise B
8	
9	
10	
stand-by	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

LTVBC Field Trip Katy Prairie Conservancy Preserves January 27, 2018

Carpool to Katy Prairie: Meet at Brookshire's parking lot in Dayton. We will need to leave Dayton by 6:30am. Distance 83.5 mi (about 1 hour 48 min).

Directions will be sent by email before the trip.

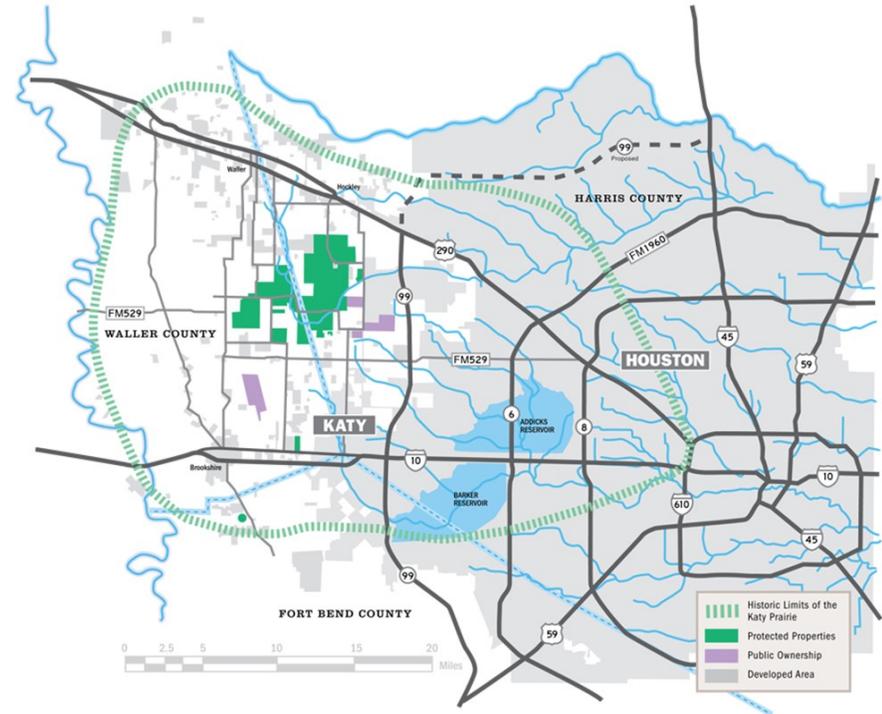
We begin birding as soon as we arrive and we should have a guide from 9am to noon. Then we will head back to Dayton.

Bring your lunch and water.

Protected Properties on the Katy Prairie



KPC has already protected more than 20,000 acres of the Katy Prairie and is working to increase its preserve system while land is still available. Originally consisting of nearly 750,000 acres of a pristine coastal prairie, the Katy Prairie today has fewer than 200,000 acres that remain undeveloped. KPC buys land outright and also works with landowners to place conservation easements on their land to permanently protect the land’s conservation values.



**Join us
on the Katy Prairie
Saturday
January 27, 2018**



LOWER TRINITY VALLEY BIRD CLUB

Membership Information

[Check us out on Facebook!](#)

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

Would you like to get your newsletter by email?

Let us know at:

geholmes52@gmail.com

You'll get full color pictures and live links.

Give it a try!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

New Member Renewing Member

Donation \$ _____

Donation to D. Dauphin Memorial Fund
\$ _____

Update my information

Send newsletter by email or mail

It's time to pay dues for 2017-18.
Please make checks payable to LTVBC.

<input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor Membership	\$50.00

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

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