



# THE WOOD DUCK



Newsletter #245

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

November 2019

[www.LowerTrinityValleyBirdClub.org](http://www.LowerTrinityValleyBirdClub.org)

~

PO Box 6051 Liberty, Texas 77575



Our speaker for November is Edward Ellerbe, he will be teaching us about Eastern Screech-Owl ecology and characteristics.

Ed is a founding member of the Texas Master Naturalists, Blackland Prairie Chapter. As a Texas Master Naturalist, he has volunteered for 15 years at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center doing bird care and education programs with the Center's dozen or so un-releasable birds. Ed discovered that Eastern Screech-Owls (EASO's) were fairly social birds and pre-adapted to thrive in an urban setting. And they are "cute as the dickens." Willing to nest around homes, EASO's can be good pest control.

Following retirement from Schlumberger and post-retirement work in the tech sector, Ed fills his time with volunteering. To better understand the birds he works with, Ed completed and received a certificate in Ornithology from Cornell University's well-respected online course. Ed resides in Plano, Texas with his wife Loretta.

If you have any questions call President Gary Holmes at 281-576-0574 or e-mail him at [geholmes52@gmail.com](mailto:geholmes52@gmail.com)

## Meeting Information

Thursday, November 14, 2019

6:30 pm

1822 Sam Houston Street

Liberty

From US-90, turn north onto Travis Street, between Whataburger and KFC. FLNB Corner will be at the intersection of Travis Street and Sam Houston Street.

Meeting Minutes	page 2
President's Report	page 3
Field Trip Schedule	page 2
Box Building Report	pages 4-5
Big Sit Report	page 6
Duck Stamps	page 7
Meeting Schedule	page 8
November Field Trip	page 9

## Meeting Minutes October 12, 2019



The Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club met Saturday, October 12, 2019, at the Champion Lake Pier for the Annual Trinity River Refuge Big Sit. Gary Holmes called the meeting to order at 9:30AM. Eight members were present. Margo Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 2019 Wood Duck #244. Carlton Collier seconded, all agreed, and the motion was approved.

**Treasurer’s Report:** The checking account balance is \$2,276.22. There was a \$25.00 donation and \$485.00 was received for screech-owl boxes. A check for \$50.00 was written to our September speaker. The David Dauphin savings account balance is \$1,475.95.

**Old Business:**

- We will assemble the owl boxes on October 19th. All the materials have been purchased. We will need three teams with two people on each team.

**New Business:**

- Shelli Ellerbe has contacted Amplex Corporation and has contracted with them to purchase Duck Stamps. After the initial order of 25 stamps, the Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club will become an official consignee. Contact Shelli to get your duck stamp.
- The Weekend Trip to the Laredo Birding Festival will be February 5-8, 2020. Please see the September newsletter for information on registration and activities.
- The LTVBC is a partner with Friends of Trinity River Refuge in an Environmental Education Grant Program. We will provide our expertise and volunteers when functions are happening on the Refuge.
- Stuart Marcus’ retirement party is October 26, 2019. Contact Bonnie at the Refuge Office if you plan on attending.
- At the November 14th meeting, Edward Ellerbe will be giving a presentation on Screech-Owls. We will also have the owl boxes ready to be picked up.
- The November 16th field trip will be to the Baytown Nature Center.
- The LTVBC Adventure 2020 will be a 5-7 day trip to the Florida Keys and the Dry Tortugas. We need to look at dates for this trip. Carlton Collier has suggested going during Spring Migration. Shelli Ellerbe and Lisa Holmes are coordinating the trip.

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

Renie O’Connor, Secretary

<b>2019-20 Field Trip Schedule</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Saturday, November 16, 2019	Baytown Nature Center
Your Choice	Christmas Bird Counts
Saturday, January 11, 2020	Cattail Marsh, Beaumont
Saturday, February 15, 2020	Anahuac NWR
Saturday, March 14, 2020	Brazoria Bend State Park
Saturday, April 18, 2020	High Island, Bolivar, Anahuac
Saturday, April 25, 2020	Sabine Woods
Saturday, May 16, 2020	Big Thicket, Roy Larson Sandyland

## President's Report

By Gary Holmes



Hello Bird Club:

In October, we held our LTVBC meeting and the Big Sit at the Champion Lake Pier. It was a delightful day with wonderful cool temperatures, good birds and excellent participation by LTVBC members (see article).

At the meeting, we discussed the need for a **club storyteller** or **chronicler**. We have old scrapbooks which chronicle the activities of **David Dauphin and the founders of the**

**LTVBC** (up to 2010). But for the past 10 years, we have a many wonderful digital photos, newsletters, Facebook stories/photos and PowerPoint presentations that need to be arranged and stored in one location - perhaps our website. Also, the scrapbooks need to be digitized and stored electronically. We will discuss possible solutions at our next meeting.

Our speaker on November 14, 2019 will be **Edward Ellerbe**. He will be talking about Eastern screech-owl ecology and characteristics. If you ordered a nest box you can pick it up at this time. On our November field trip, we will participate in the **Baytown Birding Challenge**. We will visit several Baytown birding sites attempting to identify 50 species (see field trip article for details). On completion of the challenge, you receive a medal and have an opportunity to win a spotting scope. I hope we have a great turn-out for both events.

Thanks to the efforts of **Shelli Ellerbe**, The LTVBC now sells **Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps**, commonly called "duck stamps." A study found that "**Just 20 percent of the birders had purchased duck stamps within the past two years**". Follow the links in the article on page 7 to learn more about duck stamps. It is important that we individually and as a club support this important conservation effort. Shelli will sell the stamps at the next meeting.

See you at our meeting and field trip.....

*Gary*



## Update on the LTVBC Adventure for 2020:

Florida is out, Arizona is in. LTVBC will be doing a late May trip to Arizona to find sky island specialties. While there will be hummingbirds, this is *not* the usual August trip where hummers are the main target species. Among our target birds are several species of owls and nightjars, five-striped sparrow, black-capped and black-tailed gnatcatchers, and possibly rose-throated becard. Mark your calendar for about a week beginning May 22, 2020 and watch for more information. We will need early and firm commitments for this trip to set up the appropriate guides for the owling.



### Screech-Owl Nest Boxes Assembled!

Reported by Joe Hall

The **LTVBC Habitat for Hoo-manity Team** assembled at Gary and Lisa's house on October 19 to build 22 Screech-Owl nest boxes in lovely rustic cedar. Putting in the sweat equity for the birds were **Lisa, Gary, Jim, Marvin, Sam, Terri and Joe**. Boards precut by Gary and bundled into pre-sorted IKEA-like assembly flat packs were fastened together, if not swiftly and surely, then at least eventually completed in compliance with the local Liberty County Owl Codes, creating living spaces that any Eastern Screech-Owl will be proud to occupy and raise a family.

Watch for the special one-of-a-kind "left-handed" door owl box which Team Marv and Lisa assembled to add the "custom design" feature missing from your run-of-the mill imported owl boxes available on the internet and from swap-meet vendors. **These LTVBC owl boxes are proudly Made in the USA by American workers for American owls.** The owl boxes are hand-crafted from the finest cedar and show the Team's commitment to handicraft and conservation. All this hand-craftsmanship is a steal at the price. Screech-Owls will now be moving out of dilapidated drafty nest holes in trees and moving on up to roomy, airy well-built LTVBC-brand nest boxes affixed to appropriate poles and trees all over southeast Texas.



The LTVBC-brand Screech-Owl nest boxes will be available to be picked up at the November meeting.



## Trinity River Refuge- Big Sit 2019

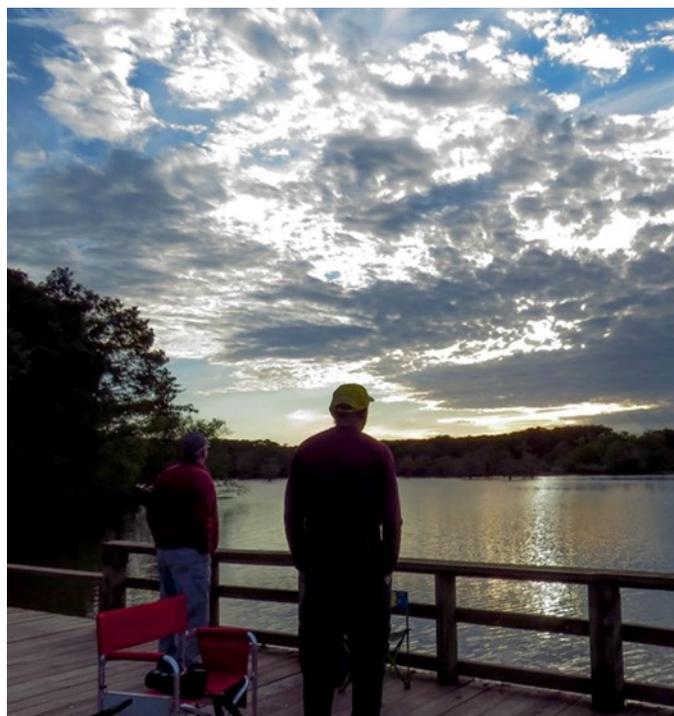
By Joe Hall

The LTVBC Big Sit at Champion Lake was outstanding on October 12. Weather was perfect (for hardy well-dressed birders with jackets and hats and gloves) and light conditions were prime. Four species were added to the Champion Lake Big Sit list and a total of **39 species** seen by the **eleven LTVBC participants**. The LTVBC was given an assist in their avian endeavors by a neighboring group of fisherpeople. The novice birders asked, while the semi-professional birders were all looking east, what birds were circling in a large group to the west. Turns out it was a large kettle of **Wood Storks** that, in “stealth mode,” had snuck up unseen on the birders. Apparently, the more eyeballs the better for birding.

**White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, a Peregrine Falcon and a Vermillion Flycatcher** were species not previously logged on a Big Sit at Champion Lake that were seen by the participants. Windy conditions kept the number of small birds seen low, as the birds sheltered in thickets to escape cold breezy conditions. **Wood Ducks** were plentiful, a good number of raptors and cormorants flew by and the “rare” **Wood Stork** were seen in the hundreds. Medium and large birds, as well as those with bright-colored plumage pre-dominated on the list as alas, for the most part, the participating birders were forced to bunt on observation of the smaller sparrow, warbler and wren species.

As frosting on the cake, at the end of the day the remaining LTVBC birders were treated to a **Sun Dog** (see next page) as the October sun declined in the west.

The LTVBC members making their effort for bird conservation were **Joe Hall, Gary Holmes, Marvin Masters, Carlton Collier, Terri Ford, Rene O’Connor, Margo Taylor, Shelli Ellerbe, John Pike, Colette Micallef and Paul Micallef**.



## What is a Sun Dog?

A sundog is a concentrated patch of sunlight occasionally seen about 22° to the left or right of the Sun. Sundogs often form in pairs on either side of our daytime star when sunlight refracts through icy clouds containing hexagonal platecrystals aligned with their large, flat faces parallel to the ground. (Picture taken from the internet.)



---

## LTVBC has Duck Stamps



*Joe purchased his Duck Stamp from the LTVBC*

Officially called the **Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp**, these stamps help conserve habitat for birds. The bird club is allowed sell them to you at face value plus a handling fee. We're going to **sell them at face value which is \$25**. We will not sell them by mail, **you must buy it in person**. If you want a key chain to display it in, we have those too. Mine is going on my scope case. The **blank key chain will be \$2.00**. The stamps and key chains will be available at our next few meetings. **Cash or check, please.**

*Shelli*

Learn more about Duck Stamps at

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp/duck-stamp-dollars-at-work.php>



## Champion Lake Lodge Preservation Begins

The Friends of Trinity River Refuge (FOTRR) will have three Saturday workdays which are open to all interested individuals. The **Nov. 9, 2019 workday** will focus on cleanup, window and screen repair, and the sealing of openings. On **Nov. 23, 2019**, the crews will complete the window/screen repairs and demolish a small addition on the back of the lodge. The final workday, **Dec. 7, 2019**, will concentrate on roof repairs and building an exterior wall section. The workday times will be from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm.



The workdays have tasks for volunteers of all skill levels and the donation of time and funds are greatly appreciated. Please contact Gary Holmes, FOTRR board member, at [geholfmes52@gmail.com](mailto:geholfmes52@gmail.com) for more information to volunteer for a workday.

2019-2020 Meeting Schedule		
Meetings - Second Thursday at 6:30 pm		
Thursday, November 14, 2019	Screech-Owls Edward Ellerbe	Deliver owl boxes
Thursday, December 12, 2019	Big Bend Trip Report	Christmas Nibbles
Thursday, January 9, 2020	Ducks Unlimited	
Friday, 2/7/2020 to Sunday, 2/8/2020	LTVBC Weekend Trip	
Thursday, February, 13, 2020	Conservation Chris Holmes, Houston Zoo	
Thursday, March 12, 2020	Native Plants for Birds Native Plant Society	
No Thursday Meeting in April		
No Thursday Meeting in May	Picnic - Date TBD	

## **LTVBC November Field Trip**

*Saturday, November 18, 2019*

### **Baytown Birding Challenge**

Baytown Nature Center/ Baytown Parks

6:30 am - 2:00 pm

**Bring: snacks, lunch (or plan to grab fast food), drinks, chairs, and mosquito repellent**

*Baytown Nature Center gates open 30 minutes before sunrise and close 30 minutes after sunset.*

*There is an entrance fee of \$4 for adults 13 and older. Children 5-12 and Seniors are \$1.*

**6:30 am-9:30 am at Baytown Nature Center – meet at the parking lot at the main entrance.**

Find any 50 bird species in Baytown to complete the Challenge. Some species are common and found in many places, while others are rare and may be limited to a specific habitat or part of Baytown. We will bird several of the other Baytown sites and perhaps **Billie's backyard**. If needed, we will visit JJ Mayes and Anahuac one afternoon in December to reach our 50-bird goal.

#### **Great Baytown Birding Locations:**

Baytown Nature Center  
6213 Bayway Drive

Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Education Center  
1724 Market Street

Jenkins Park  
4334 Crosby Cedar Bayou Road

Evergreen Park  
1530 Evergreen Road  
Nature Center  
6213 Bayway Drive

#### **Other Birding Locations:**

15 bird species out of 50 may be found at the following nearby birding locations:

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge  
4017 FM 563, Anahuac, TX 77514

JJ Mayes, Wallisville Lake Project  
1140 US Army Corps Road, Wallisville, TX 77597

*Baytown Nature Center: eBird Checklist for November- 166 species*

<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L160443?m=11&yr=all&changeDate=Set>



# 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](mailto:geholmes52@gmail.com)  
 You'll get full color pictures and live links.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New Member    \_\_\_\_ Renewing Member

**Please make checks  
payable to LTVBC.**

\_\_\_\_ Student Membership    \$10.00

\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership    \$20.00

\_\_\_\_ Family Membership    \$35.00

\_\_\_\_ Sponsor Membership    \$50.00

\_\_\_\_ Donation    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Donation to D. Dauphin Memorial Fund  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Update my information

Send newsletter by \_\_\_\_ email or \_\_\_\_ mail

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club  
P.O. Box 6051  
Liberty, TX 77575