



Volume 28, Issue 1

October / November 2009

BIG COUNTRY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Penfeathers



Earth Share
OF TEXAS

Upcoming events

Thursday, Oct. 1, 2009 – Membership Meeting at 7:00pm at the Rose Park Senior Activity Center. Larry Millar will tell us about his recent trip to China. He'll tell us about the birds as well as the culture he and his family encountered on this very special trip. Come and bring a friend!

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2009 – Board Meeting at 7:00pm at Mez Amiz Coffee Shop. Come earlier to order dinner. All interested members are invited.

Saturday, Oct. 24, 2009 – Abilene State Park celebrates its 75th anniversary. We will be assisting attendees who visit the bird blind to identify the birds commonly seen at the feeders. Noon until 4pm.

Mark your calendar!!! Big Country Audubon Christmas Bird Count—Saturday, January 2, 2010. We need lots of eyes counting birds. You don't have to be an expert. It's a great way to learn the birds and birding areas. We hope to have as many of last year's leaders as possible covering their areas. Email BigCountryAudubon@live.com if you can help or see Dan at one of the upcoming meetings.



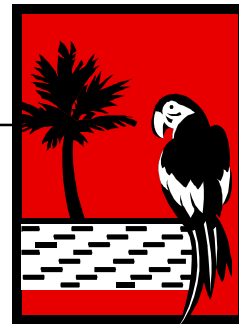
Laura Packer Honored by Bluebird Society



Laura Packer has been honored by the Texas Bluebird Society with two plaques that will be placed on bluebird boxes at Oakwood Trails and Dyess AFB. Kathy Hampton and Charlene Wheeler check the bluebird box at Oakwood Trails. Photo by Dan Symonds



Tropical Adventure



BCAS member Gary Hunter is planning a birding trip to Costa Rica. **This is not a Big Country Audubon Society sanctioned or sponsored event**, but Gary will extend the benefit of his research and experience to other BCAS members who might be interested. The dates are May 17th through 25th, 2010.

Here's info from Gary's email:

This trip will be exclusively within the Caribbean lowlands, so no iconic quetzals (though I can readily offer guidance for anyone who wants to do a Talamanca Mountains trip in combination with this). As of right now, we plan to stay all eight nights at Tirimbina Rainforest Center just north of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. Our 05/17 flight arrives early enough in the day that we can transfer there directly, and our 05/25 flight departs late enough that we can transfer directly from there (we do not plan to rent a vehicle). Tirimbina itself is a great place to spend several days (almost 900 acres of primary rainforest at 600-720 feet in elevation), but we will almost certainly spend one morning on a guided walk at the legendary La Selva Biological Station (lower in elevation). In addition, we will probably spend two days with a local guide: one day in search of Great Green Macaws, Sunbitterns, Green Ibis, and other lowland specialties, and another in the pre-montane higher elevations around Colonia Virgen del Socorro.

Tirimbina has offered me a discounted rate of \$62 per room (double or single, including breakfast and taxes) and has set aside four rooms for now (more are feasible). Because student groups use Tirimbina at times, some of the rooms do (I think) have three twin beds rather than the customary double and twin.

One option being considered is a brief stay (possibly the last two nights) at Playa Negra Guest House along the Caribbean coast near Cahuita National Park (for birds like Blue-headed Parrot and Black-chested Jay, and perhaps for better chances at Purple-throated Fruitcrow).

Of course, we can't guarantee the kind of results that are likely for people on formal tours like those offered by many companies, but I think most beginning and intermediate birders would find the experience quite satisfactory for a fraction of the cost. My friends can attest to the lengths I will go to stay within a modest budget!

As you can imagine, I could go on with almost missionary zeal. I've read that in contrast to the Pacific Slope a greater percentage of the species found on the Caribbean Slope are birds that are also distributed in tropical South America, making a trip like this something of a primer for those whose ambitions extend to that continent.

May seems quite distant, but if lodging is to be secured I recommend acting soon. We'd welcome the participation of people who want to accompany us for the entire duration of our itinerary and of people who want to travel independently but would like to spend time with kindred spirits at Tirimbina. And I'd certainly be glad to pass along recommendations that might prove useful.

I can be reached by mail (gdhunter@gmail.com), at my home telephone 325.692.2658, and at my work # 325.795.5625.

★★

Board Meeting Notes:

- ◆ The Board decided to name the bird blind at Abilene State Park after Laura Packer.
- ◆ Harry Dahns will look into painting the floor at the blind.
- ◆ Bera Johnson was elected to the Board and member-at-large.
- ◆ A treasury report was received. Several donations in Laura Packer's memory have been received.
- ◆ The hot line phone needs replacing and the hotline will be moved to Dan Symond's home.
- ◆ A digital projector is needed for BCAS programs.
- ◆ Programs will continue to be held at the Rose Park Senior Activity Center. Carolyn will reserve room.
- ◆ Dan will complete the National Audubon annual report.
- ◆ Kathy, Larry and Dan will locate literature for the October celebration at Abilene State Park.

Reported by Carolyn Wiggins, Secretary



Bird Tales...

I was working in Eldorado this morning, but I came prepared with my spotting scope, binoculars and bird book.

I asked Floyd Fay, the Utilities Superintendent, if he would do me the favor of allowing me to go to the wastewater ponds during my break. He went with me. One Least Grebe was hanging out with a Pied-billed Grebe in one of the ponds. They submerged many times, and seemed to always watch for each other and come closer to one another when they reached the surface again. Is that companionship, competition, or a little of both? Mallards, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Black-crowned Night Herons, and Double-crested Cormorants all seemed to stay together in a second pond. Mr. Fay had been with other birders, but had not gotten a good look at the bird. He enjoyed seeing the bright yellow eye of the Least Grebe through my spotting scope. All that in a 15-minute break!

The wastewater ponds are open to the public on weekdays from 8 AM to 5 PM. Call ahead: (325) 853-2691.

From Linda White, 9/26/09

TOP TEN REASONS TO GET YOUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 10—More color! | 5—You can keep them on |
| 9—No mangled mail! | on you PC—no clutter! |
| 8—Lorie hates those | 4—More color! |
| little seals | 3—Get it faster! |
| 7—Save postage cost | 2—Save Paper! |
| 6—More color! | |

And the #1 reason is...It's really easy to enlarge the print!

Email Lorie at lorie.black@suddenlink.net to get your Penfeathers by email.

Dues are due!!

It's time to renew! You can pay your dues at the October meeting or you can mail your check to:

Big Country Audubon,
P.O. Box 569

Abilene, TX 79604

(please note address correction from previous newsletter)

THINK GREEN...RECYCLE ALUMINUM CANS!

From the Alcoa Aluminum website:

If we could recover and recycle 75% of the aluminum cans being currently tossed into landfills—600,000 metric tons of aluminum—we could save 1286 megawatts of generated electricity. That's the amount produced by two coal fired power plants, and consumed by two aluminum plants. Replacing this production with recycling would keep 11.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from being generated and released into the atmosphere. http://www.alcoa.com/alcoa_recycling/en/global_rates.asp



The BCAS Board of Directors has decided to donate aluminum cans to Rescue the Animals. You can bring your cans to meetings for Joan Howard to collect or take them directly to Rescue the Animals at



What does Rescue the Animals have to do with Audubon? They promote spaying and neutering of pets. This helps to decrease the number of unwanted animals on the loose that can become serious predators on birds and other wildlife.

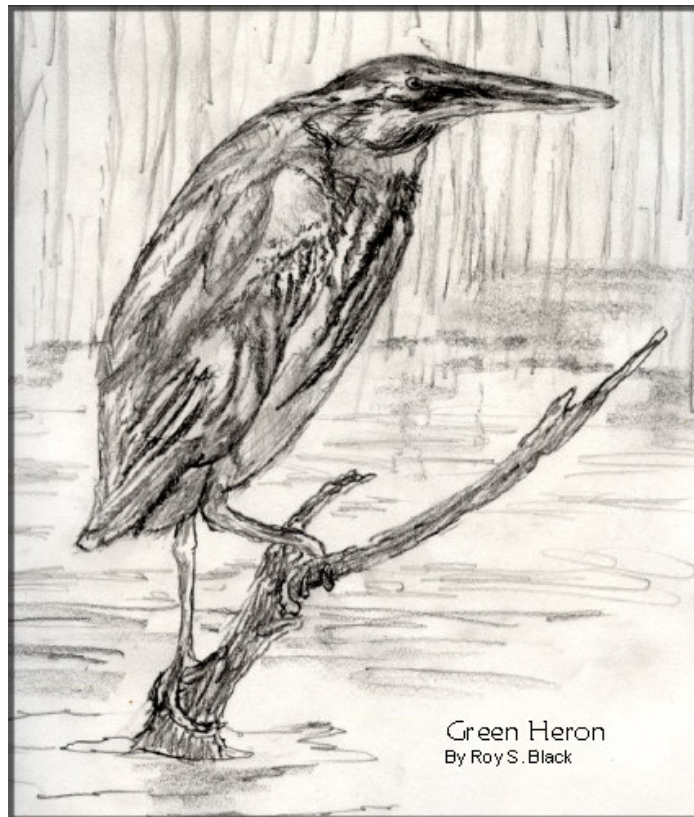
By the way, Reynolds Aluminum now offers 100% recycled aluminum foil for cooking.

Bird Tracks.....

by Lorie Black

Reported sightings for August and September 2009:

White-faced Ibis: (12) 29 August (LB), SeaBee Park; (19) 13 Sep (KH), 2000 EN 10th (In town!!)
 Great Egret: (30) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Snowy Egret: (50) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Cattle Egret: (9) 8 Sep (KH), Lk Ft Phantom Hill area
 Green Heron: (2) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Common Moorhen: (2) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Lesser Yellowlegs: (4) 29 August (LB), Lk Ft Phantom Hill
 Black-necked Stilt: (5) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 American Avocet: (3) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Spotted Sandpiper: (5) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Pectoral Sandpiper: (2) 29 August (LB), Lk Ft Phantom Hill
 Sanderling: (1) 29 August (LB), Lk Ft Phantom Hill
 Greater Yellowlegs: (3) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Tree Swallow: (10) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Cliff Swallow: (12) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Barn Swallow: (12) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Willow Flycatcher: (1) 29 August (LB), SeaBee Park
 Least Flycatcher: (1) 29 August (LB), SeaBee Park
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: (1) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Curve-billed Thrasher: (1) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Lark Sparrow: (3) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake
 Blue Grosbeak: (1) 12 Sep (KH, JW), CR 107
 Orchard Oriole: (2) 8 Aug (DS), Kirby Lake



Green Heron
By Roy S. Black

Field Trip Report

Abilene State Park, September 19, 2009

Twelve birders enjoyed a beautiful morning of birding to, at and from Abilene State Park. They were Esta Wiginton, Joan Howard, Bera Johnson, Joe Scraggs, Linda Beyer, Linda from Breckenridge, Linda Collins, Betty Miller, Charlene Wheeler, Diane Martin, Trish Oxford and Kathy Hampton.

The group birded at the park then cleaned the area and put out seed and nectar at the blind. Everyone enjoyed watching the birds come in to the feed when they had finished. Several new birders added life birds.

It was a great morning to be outdoors, enjoy God's creatures—birds, butterflies, spiders, fish and snakes, to enjoy friends and meet new friends.

- Kathy Hampton

Trip list:

Rock Pigeon	Carolina Wren
Grackles	Black-crested Titmouse
Wild Turkey	Carolina Chickadee
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Turkey Vulture
Mourning Dove	N. Mockingbird
White-winged Dove	Blue Jay
Eurasian Collared-Dove	House Finch
Eastern Bluebird	Lark Sparrow
European Starling	

If you find yourself not birding on a Saturday morning, check out *Birding Adventures* on Fox Sports Southwest. That's right, a birding program on a sports channel. It comes on at 7:30AM and covers a number of different birding locales. Gary Hunter told me about the show and I watched it on the 26th. It was fun to watch other birders and see a few familiar faces. For more info see the website: <http://www.birdingadventures.com/index.php>
 Lorie B.

Member Photos



Linda White was fortunate to play host to a Rufous Hummingbird for several weeks in August and September.



Lorie Black found this Sanderling at Lake Fort Phantom in August.



Joe Thompson found the beautiful Elegant Trogon near Tucson in August plus another southeast Arizona specialty, the Painted Redstart



Greater Roadrunner found at Lake Fort Phantom Hill by Lorie Black



Yellow-breasted Chat at South Llano River State Park
by Dan Symonds

If you have photos to share, email to Lorie Black at
lorie.black@suddenlink.net





BIG COUNTRY AUDUBON SOCIETY

P O BOX 569

ABILENE, TX 79604

BIG COUNTRY AUDUBON SOCIETY

President – Dan Symonds
Vice-President – Larry Millar
Treasurer – Kathy Hampton
Secretary – Carolyn Wiggins
Membership – Charline Wheeler
Education – John English
Field Trips – June Estes
Publicity – Esta Wigginton
Recycling – Joan Howard
Member-at-large – Bera Johnson
Newsletter Editor: Lorie Black

Big Country Audubon Society meetings are held at Rose Park Senior Activity Center on the first Thursday of October, November, December, February, March and April. Meetings are free and open to the public.

Hotline: 325-691-8981

Web Page: www.bigcountryaudubon.org



Big Country Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the Big Country Audubon Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Individual membership:

One year—\$20.00

Prorated Dues:

If you join in Sep, Oct, Nov	Dec, Jan, Feb	\$15.00
	Mar, Apr, May	\$10.00
	Jun, Jul, Aug	\$ 5.00

Family Membership:

One year—\$30.00

If you join in Sep, Oct, Nov	Dec, Jan, Feb	\$22.50
	Mar, Apr, May	\$15.00
	Jun, Jul, Aug	\$ 7.50

Student Membership:

One year—\$10.00

If you join in Sep, Oct, Nov	Dec, Jan, Feb	\$ 7.50
	Mar, Apr, May	\$ 5.00
	Jun, Jul, Aug	\$ 2.50

All dues renew on September 1st

Mail to: Big Country Audubon Society, P O Box 569, Abilene, TX 79604