BIG COUNTRY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Penfeathers

In Remembrances of Dr. John L. Estes, Jr.



This picture of June and Dr. John was made August 12, 2010 in Rustler Park, elevation 8000+ feet, atop the Chirackawa Mountains, near Portal, Arizona. It shows his determination to live life to the fullest and to be a participant with June in her passion for birding. Dr. John L. Estes, Jr. was a great birding spotter for June and those others in the birding group. He could spot the birds and June could I.D. them. Good team, yes!

He passed from this life October 25, 2010, at the age of 89. Dr. John appreciated God's beautiful scenery creations and his beautiful birds, butterflies, mushrooms, plants, flowers and trees. His frequent comment was, "Oh, just look at that! Isn't it beautiful!" He was always looking for some seeds or plants to take home for their yard. And, oh yes, if you've not tasted his wild plum jam, you've missed a tasty treat!

Dr. John was a good man who loved God first, and his family second. He showed kindness to birders and many "little people." Little people to him were children, elderly, his patients, anyone in pain, poor or mistreated, especially if they had a toothache. He recently stated, "I love my work. I love my patients, and I love the artistry of dental work." Many "little people" miss Dr. John L. Estes, Jr. Count me as one of those. --Kathy Hampton

Lois Preslar, age 96:

Dr. John was my dentist for more than 40 years. He was the only dentist I would let touch my mouth. I taught first grade. He came to my class and told my students how to brush and care for their teeth. He laughed and told them I was afraid of dentists. When I saw him at Bill Agnew's Superette, he teased me, "Are you going to run from me here?"

He was kind and gentle as he worked on my teeth. If I was upset about anything, he would calm me down.

I live at the Oaks Nursing Home. About three years ago, when I was 93, I had broken a piece off my jaw tooth. I called to see if I needed to come to the office. Dr. John said, "No, you do not need to come to the office, I'll come out there." That's just what he did. He brought his nurse with him and examined my tooth. He said, "I'm not going to touch that tooth. It will be o.k." Three years later it is still o.k. Dr. John was more than my dentist, he was my very good friend--a fine man.

Greg Hepner:

It was always good to have John around. He certainly had a sense of humor and was a pretty observant bird lookout guy! I've been on a couple of trips with John and June myself--always a memorable experience!

John English:

Dr. John was a man dedicated to his God, family, work and doing what he could to ease the pain and suffering of others (at home and abroad).

Even though he had breathing problems, Dr. John did not let it keep him from traveling and being with wife June. I admired that in him. On our birding trip to Arizona, I would sometimes order one Margarita with my meal of Mexican Food. Dr John called it a "Margaret" so it became a little private joke about ordering a "Margaret." I would at times call him Margaret" and he would have some name for me. It was fun and we had a fun trip.

Joan Howard:

Dr. John went on many, many of our birding trips. WE were the birders--he just went along to "ENJOY." You can just see all of us looking through our binocs trying to locate a certain bird. Guess WHO would mention, "What is that bird over there?" Of course, HE would find the birds FOR us. He definitely was one of our BEST SPOTTERS!



I Remember Dr. John...

Early this year, January 30, 2010, I had the opportunity to spend a couple of hours with Dr. John Estes. Word had spread through the local birding community that I had large flocks of Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs that were wintering on my property outside of Tuscola. Apparently June Estes needed both of those species to round up her already formidable life list of birds. Kathy Hampton organized an afternoon visit and eventually Dr. John and June Estes, Kathy Hampton, Kim Berry and I met at my place to spot these birds.

It was an absolutely breathtaking crisp and clear winter day as we set out to circumnavigate my ten acre lot. Kathy made me aware that Dr. John generally needed oxygen and would not necessarily be up to wondering around my field. Although Dr. John was not the birder of the pair, his excitement over the erupting flocks of Longspurs was immediately apparent and he kept up with the group as we canvassed the field. Within a few minutes we had a Red Tailed Hawk soaring overhead and then the flocks of Sandhill Cranes started coming over the hills east of my place and gathering and landing in the fields to the south. The scene could not have been more idyllic if it had been plucked from the "best of" archives of National Geographic. Eventually many hundreds of Sandhill Cranes flew low over our heads as the Longspurs intermittently flew up and landed around us. I remember Dr. John repeatedly saying ,"How Sweet, How Sweet" as the splendid West Texas scene unfolded around us. I even pre-focused a pair of low power wide field binoculars and was able to convince John to get a closer look at the Cranes against the deep blue sky. Once again the heartfelt, "How Sweet" comment summed up Dr. John's impression of the scene.

Dr. John was able to complete the entire circuit around my lot. I believe that each step was buoyed by his appreciation of the activity and sharing June's passion for one of her hobbies.

The true high point of the day had to be when Dr. John turned to June and said, "We had to drive all the way to Arizona and never saw this many birds?" Truly this was a day to remember for everyone involved. For me, only having one chance to meet Dr. John, I can only sum up my experience as, "How Sweet"!

Joe Thompson



Upcoming Events...

Christmas Party: Tue., Dec. 7, 2010 6:00pm at the ...501 Ben Richey Drive (in the old Lueders Train Depot). Bring your favorite finger food and join us for an evening of fellowship. If you wish to participate in a gift exchange, bring a nature-related gift with a value of \$10 or less.

Board Meeting: Tue., Dec. 14, 2010 7:00pm at Mesamiz Coffee Shop. This is a special meeting to organize for CBC.

Christmas Bird Count: **Sat., Jan. 1, 2011** - Please call the hotline or email us if you plan to participate. This is usually an all day event that begins as early as 7am till 7pm after the countdown and dinner at a local eatery. Watch your email and the website for further information.

Field Trip: Sat., Jan. 22, 2011, Waste Water Treatment Plant. Depart at 8:00 AM. from McDonald's, 1201 N. Judge Ely. Come early if you would like to buy breakfast. Target birds: Black-neck Stilt, Wilson's Phalarope, and sandpipers. Bring water and snacks.

Field Trip: Sat., Feb. 26, 2011, Colorado City State Park. Depart at 7:00AM. from Whataburger, 4241 South 1st St. Come early if you would like to buy breakfast. Target birds: Bushtits, Verdin, and Pyrrhuloxia. Bring water and snacks. We will plan to eat lunch in Colorado City.



Laura's Blind Feeder Patrol...

December 4 W. K. and Carolyn Wiggins

December 11 John English

December 18 Larry Millar

December 25 Bera Johnson

January 1 CBC Buffalo Gap crew

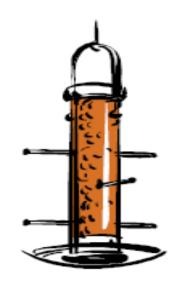
January 8 Joe Thompson

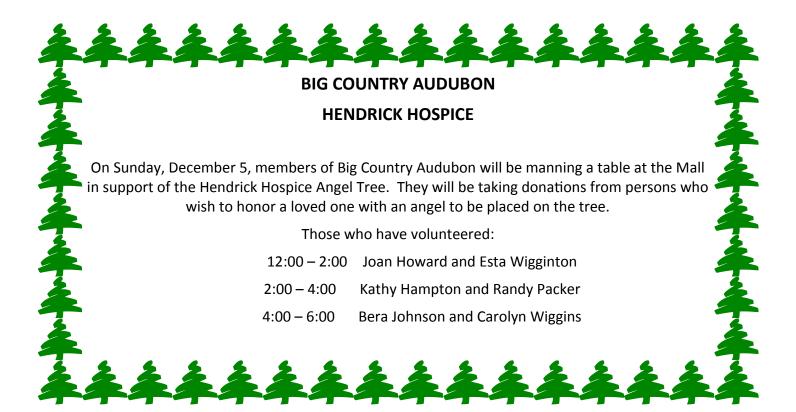
January 15 W. K. and Carolyn Wiggins

January 22 Kim Berry

January 29 Dan Symonds

And that's the schedule for those who have volunteered to clean and fill the feeders at the bird blind at Abilene State Park. If you want to help, contact one of the board members.





Merry Christmas

And A Happy New Year



ACORNS

If you have oak trees nearby, do you find yourself crunching on the acorns which have fallen? Curiously, what you're seeing may be the home of a small, grub like creature which was born inside and has fed on the meat of the acorn. It is an acorn weevil.

The adult acorn weevil is a brown and has a very long thin snout. The small hole in a developing acorn on the hole. Her eggs hatch and the the developing acorn inside the nut inch in length and is off-white in colis curved and fat in the middle, tawithin the acorn on the tree fall to mer or fall.

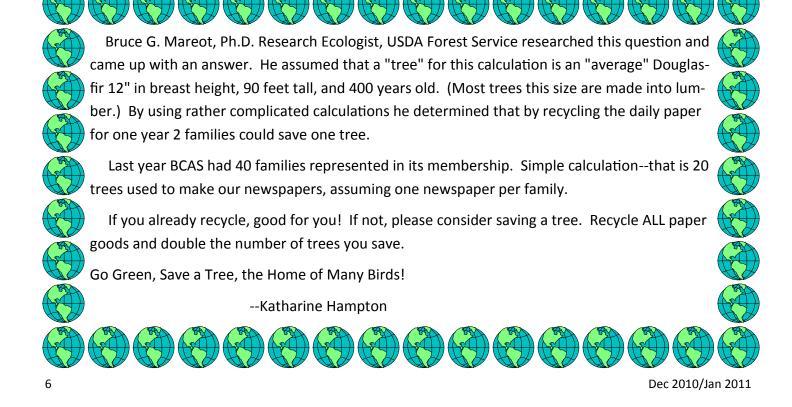


colored beetle about 3/8 inch long, female uses her long snout to make a the tree. She lays several eggs within creamy white, grub-like larva feeds on until fall. The larva grows to 1/4 to 3/8 or with a brown head. The legless grub pering toward both ends. The larvae the ground in the nut in the late sum-

In the fall the fully grown acorn weevil larva chews a perfectly round 1/8 inch hole in the side of the nut and emerges. I would like to see them actually do this since the hole does not look large enough for the larvae to fit through. If the acorn were still outdoors, these larvae would tunnel into the soil to complete development. They remain in the soil for one to two years before emerging as a new adult weevil to repeat the process.

Part of the reason you find so many "wormy" or "holey" nuts under the trees is because the squirrels leave them behind. It appears the squirrels are able to select the good acorns and hickory nuts during their fall frenzy of nut gathering and burial. This leaves only "wormy" nuts for you. If you want to collect the uninfested nuts for yourself, you will have to get up early and do your collecting ahead of the squirrels.

Laura Jesse, Entymologist Iowa State University



Member Photos...



Member Photos... continued



All Photos by Joe Thompson

Vesper Sparrow.
Page 2: Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-fronted Geese, Song Sparrow, Snowy Egrets, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Canyon Towhee.

Page 1: White-fail Deer, Northern Harrier, White-crowned Sparrow, Rock Wren, White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, Ruby-crowned Kinglet,

LAKE O. H. IVIE FIELD TRIP

NOVEMBER 13, 2010

The day was crisp and the sun was bright as Dan Symonds led Linda Beyer, Peggy Baker, Bera Johnson, Joe Thompson, and Cherrie-Lee Phillip on a birding trip to Lake O. H. Ivie southeast of Ballinger. Because the habitat is varied, there were many species of birds to spot.

The lake was teeming with water birds. The best ones were Canvasbacks, American Wigeons, Gadwalls, Northern Pintails, Double-crested Cormorants, Northern Shovelers, Egrets, and a lone White Pelican. The best land birds seen were Rock Wren, Canyon Towhees, Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, Vesper Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ladderback Woodpeckers (one very graciously performed for us at close range), Northern Flickers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and White-crowned Sparrows. Birds putting on an aerial show were Northern Harriers, Red-Tailed Hawks, and Black and Turkey Vultures.

The most entertaining moments were at the bridge below the dam. A pair of beavers was busy preening along the bank and then splashing in the river. Also, a Belted Kingfisher showed its expertise in fishing as it perched on a wire high above the river, dove into the water, and successfully landed back on the wire to eat its catch. Joe captured a lively photo of a leaping deer fording the river under the bridge.

Going to Lake Ivie is always a productive field trip for birding, this time being no exception---a most enjoy-

able day!



BCAS BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 9, 2010

Randy Packer presided over the meeting.

A new bank account has been opened at First Financial with no monthly service charge and no minimum balance required. The total bank balance is \$3161.

A unanimous decision was made to contribute \$100 to the Zambia Medical Mission fund from the BCAS in memory of Dr. John Estes.

The Board meetings are regularly scheduled the second Tuesday of the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November. The regular meetings of the Society are the first Thursday of the months of September, October, November, December, February, March, April, and May.

John will be giving educational programs about birding, photography, and nature in Brownfield and here in Abilene. He always gives BCAS cards to persons attending those events.

Christmas Bird count will be January 1. Larry and Dan will need to coordinate and plan that event.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, Jan. 9. The next regular group meeting will be Thursday, February 3. Someone from the zoo will give the program.



Big Country Audubon Society
PO Box 569
Abilene, TX 79604

Big Country Audubon Society

President - Larry Millar

Vice President - Joe Thompson

Treasurer - Randy Packer

Secretary - Carolyn Wiggins

Environment - Kathy Hampton

Big Country Audubon Society meeting are held at Rose Park Senior Activity Center on the first Thursday of October, November, December, Febuary, March, April and May.

Hotline: 325-691-8981

Website: www.bigcountryaudubon.org

Email: BigCountryAudubon@live.com

Big Country Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application

Please enroll as a membe	r of the Big (Country Aud	ubon Society.
Name			
Address			
City	State	Zip	
Phone			
Email			

Annual Membership

Individual - \$20 Family - \$30 Student - \$10

Prorated Membership

Dec., Jan. or Feb -Individual - \$15 Family - \$22.50 Student - \$7.50

Mar., Apr. or May - Individual - \$10 Family - \$15 Student - \$5

Jun., Jul. or Aug - Individual -\$5 Family - \$7.50 Student - \$2.50

All dues renew on September 1st

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