



Volume 32 Issue 2

BIG COUNTRY AUDUBON SOCIETY

# Penfeathers

## Upcoming Events...



### September 4, 2014

Regular meeting at Abilene State Park, Wagon Circle Building 6:00 p.m. Come early if you want to bird. We will be dedicating a plaque at Laura's Blind and electing new officers. Bring your own sack lunch and drink and a dessert to share.

### September 13, 2014

Field trip to Lake Kirby. We will meet at the east entrance to the lake at 7:30 a.m. Park in the paved lot across from the playground.

### October 2, 2014

Regular meeting at Rose Park Senior Center, 7:00 pm. Speaker TBA.

### October 18, 2014

Field trip to Lake Stamford and other locations in the area. Meet at the McDonald's on Judge Ely at 6:30 a.m. Come early if you wish to eat breakfast. This will be a full-day trip. We plan to eat lunch at the Dairy Queen in Haskell. Bring snacks, binoculars, and water.

### November 6, 2014

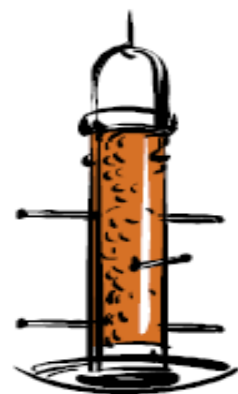
Regular meeting at Rose Park Senior Center, 7:00 pm. Jay Packer will share his experiences and birding in Brazil.

### November 15, 2014

Field trip to Midland, TX. We will visit the Sibley Nature Center, I-20 Wildlife Preserve, and other locations in the area. Meet at the McDonald's in Midland off IH-20 at 7:30 a.m. The address is 2307 Rankin Hwy, Midland, TX 79701. It takes about 2 1/2 hours to drive from Abilene to Midland, so your options are to get a hotel room in Midland Friday night or to leave Abilene by 5:00 a.m. on Saturday morning.

## Laura's Blind Feeder Patrol

We fill the feeder and maintain the bird blind at the Abilene State Park. We need volunteers! If you would like to help out, contact Bera Johnson by phone at (325) 690-6355 or email at [bebe\\_3754@hotmail.com](mailto:bebe_3754@hotmail.com)



# Laura's Blind—Abilene State Park

November 2007-September 2014

By: Bera Johnson

Laura Packer and the Big Country Audubon Society dreamed and planned for a long time about putting a bird blind at Abilene State Park. Because of state park regulations concerning placement of anything new in parks, it took many tries and proposals before a site was finally chosen and accepted. Laura spearheaded those efforts. Not only did she search for a possible location in the park, but she, along with other members, visited other state parks where there were bird blinds.



Laura Packer — photo by John English

She also had a quandary: would birds be attracted to the area that was chosen? It was Laura's nature to put feet to her wonderings, so she hung bird feeders to check it out. "If you feed them, they will come," proved to be true---they came. In the meantime, she decided for better light, especially for photographing, the blind should be put across the lane where viewers would look north toward the birds.

Abilene Portable Buildings was chosen to build the 8x12 building with many windows for bird viewing. Their truck brought the completed building to the site, squeezed down the narrow lane leading to the location, and gently unloaded it. Several Audubon members were there to witness this momentous occasion. However, this was only the beginning.

John English began putting his ideas for a water feature with a solar powered pump in place, and after a great deal of effort, it was a completed project. He did this in spite of the fact that there is no water source nor pump power at the blind. In the meantime, Laura was furnishing the place with feeders, feed, and tools to maintain. Her work didn't stop, though, and she made many trips to make sure the birds were fed.



Entrance to Blind — photo by John English

A work day was held to build benches, paint, and build a fence. Audubon members turned out to assist in those endeavors.

It soon became apparent that squirrels and other critters whose homes the blind invaded were going to

be a problem. Other members stepped up to help solve the issue. W. K. Wiggins constructed poles on which the feeders could be hung. Unfortunately, because squirrels excel in acrobatics, they can climb the poles faster than a person can blink. The problem still exists and there is a crop of very fat squirrels who continue to feast on the seeds put out for the birds.

When Laura's health became critical, it was evident that assistance was needed to keep up the bird blind so it would continue to be a vital part of the park offerings. Many members stepped up and agreed to maintain the blind on week ends. Harry Dhans, Linda Beyer, and Bera Johnson maintain regular weekly schedules to help. John continues to maintain the water feature, and Larry and Donna Barnett who live near the park assist often. Lorie Black's brother fixed a rain barrel for the blind.



Feeders—photo by  
John English

The blind has proven to be a source of enjoyment for park visitors, campers, adults, children, and Audubon members. Seeing the beautiful Northern Cardinals, frisky Black Crested Titmouses, Carolina Chickadees, Painted Buntings, Spotted Towhees, Carolina Wrens, Red-Breasted Nuthatches, woodpeckers, many migratory birds, and various others has sparked interest in birding among ones who come to watch.

Every effort by each and every member has made continuing to keep bird watching at the blind a vital experience at Abilene State Park. Plus, many of God's wonderful feathered creatures (and a few furry ones!) are attracted to and thriving on our offerings day after day, year after year.



Carolyn Wiggins and Susie English — photo by John English

**BIG COUNTRY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

*President* Jay Packer  
*Vice President* Amy Packer  
*Treasurer/Membership* Dolores Owens  
*Secretary* Bera Johnson  
*Education* John English  
*Members-at-Large* Larry and Donna Barnett

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.

Web Page: [www.bigcountryaudubon.org](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**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

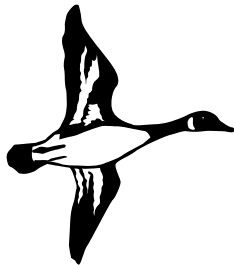
**Family Membership:**

One year—\$30.00	Prorated Dues
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	Prorated Dues
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.



**Big Country Audubon Society**

**P.O. Box 569**

**Abilene, TX 79604**