

TEXAS BLUES

The Newsletter of the Texas Bluebird Society

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In This Issue:

October 2002 saw Texas Bluebird Society hold their first annual meeting in San Marcos, and we thought it would be a great idea to highlight that meeting in this newsletter.

The programs assembled by the team planning the meeting were superb. In addition to the information on bluebirds and their habitat, speakers provided a diversity of topics and perspectives. All were extremely knowledgeable in their field. Mark Klym summarizes these programs in the next article.

Kate Oschwald presents us with a report of the birds seen during a nature walk at Aquarena Center, one of the wonderful natural features of this Central Texas town. If you get a chance to visit San Marcos, Aquarena Center is a must see!

Doug Rohde did a wonderful job of coordinating the silent auction. The auction was a huge success and Doug provides us with a brief report.

Pauline Tom writes the president's column, and I am sure she will have some great news about the 2003 meeting! Texas Bluebird Society has benefited from the work of some great bluebird enthusiasts, and I am sure our knowledge and enthusiasm for these beautiful birds can only improve.

Mark Klym mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us



A Celebration Answers Many Questions

Celebration of Texas Blues is history, but the great presentations made at this event will encourage and strengthen the many bluebird enthusiasts who participated for years to come.

Keith Kridler got us off to a great start with his program "For the love of bluebirds." This is why we were all here and Keith's program generated enthusiasm and excitement that carried through the weekend.

Saturday morning David Shiels reported on his "Heat Shield" project that is drawing attention and answering some of the concerns about nesting birds in our hot Texas sun. Steve Garr, our keynote and guest speaker from Tennessee Bluebird Trails, provided insight on hosting bluebirds year round, after which Brian and Shirley Loflin talked about backyard photography.

Saturday afternoon we added some diversity with Amy Wilson of Bat Conservation International providing a program on Texas Bats and Mark Klym providing information on backyard habitats. Melissa Millecam, of our host city, gave tips on media relations while John Cys brought us back to bluebirds with his program on the Lake Arrowhead State Park trail.

The Saturday night highlight was a program by Steve Garr on urban Bluebirds. With his presentation, Steve provided encouragement to urban Texans that, with effort and time, they can enjoy Bluebirds too. While Celebration of Texas Blues 2002 may be history, there will be plenty of opportunities for similar meetings in the future of Texas Bluebird Society. Plans for the 2003 annual meeting are already underway. Tentative dates are November 14 - 15. Mark your calendar. We hope to see you there.

Mark Klym mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us



Photos of a Celebration!



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Happy New Year! Are you ready for the blue season? This is the month bluebirds begin "house shopping". In Texas, bluebird pairs begin their first clutch as early as February.

The new year is a good time to install new nestboxes. (Well, anytime is a good time.) We'll be more effective in our quest for "Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time" if you will place at least one nestbox a bit farther than where your "farthest" nestbox is now.

You might monitor new nestboxes, but we'll have even more effect if you will serve as a mentor to someone else. Recruit a new monitor. We'll provide printed "how-to" material on our website.

In the new year we'll be revamping our website (www.texasbluebirdsociety.org) What would you like to see on the site? Mail or email suggestions, please.

This year we'll start up our "TBS Bluebird Ambassador" program. The plan is in the making. In the planning stages the "bluebird ambassador" is designed to be the local (county) media contact person for bluebird / Texas Bluebird Society stories and the person who will assist in matching nestbox builders with nestbox monitors.

If you have interest in serving as a "TBS Bluebird Ambassador", please contact me.

Mark your new 2003 calendar with the dates for our next Annual Convention – November 14 – 15!

By Pauline Tom ptom@austin.rr.com

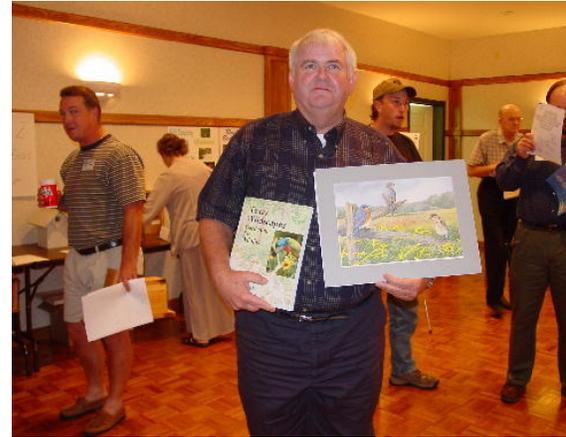
Charter Members (those who joined in 2001),
Your membership expired 12/31/02. Please send
your 2003 along with your renewal notice.
Thanks!



Silent Auction a Great Success

One of the highlights of the Celebration was the silent auction. Twenty-five generous donors, many in attendance, donated 58 items to be auctioned and given away as door prizes. The items included a dazzling array of nestboxes and feeders. There were a number of books, many of them autographed by the author. Artistic items included prints and home decorative items. And last, but not least there were gift certificates for B&B stays, nature tours, restaurant meals and even mealworms. The auction opened first thing Saturday morning and closed during dinner Saturday night. The bidding was spirited with most of the items drawing multiple bids. The high bid of the night was submitted by Tim & Lynne Warfield for a two night stay at the Bluebird Hill B&B, donated by LeAnn & Anthony Sharp and Rio Frio Lodging. The "early registration" doorprize of a mealworm feeder and mealworm gift certificate was won by Johnny & Jennifer Fleming. When the "smoke cleared" the successful bidders raised over \$800 for TBS.

By Doug Rohde d.rohde@attbi.com



Celebration Field Trip Finds Interesting Central Texas Birds

Saturday morning, the Texas Bluebird Society paid a visit to Aquarena Center, a research and educational facility of Southwest Texas State University near downtown San Marcos. Armed with binoculars and field guides, the group set out to explore the avian wonders of the eastern end of the Texas Hill Country as they walked along the newly constructed boardwalk.

Among the birds seen were:

Couch's Kingbird (2 seen)
Turkey Vulture
Black Vulture
Black-crested Titmouse (this species only recently distinguished from the Tufted Titmouse by the AOU)
Blue Jay
Nashville Warbler
American Coot
Belted Kingfisher (2 seen)
Carolina Wren
Green Heron
Northern Mockingbird
Downy Woodpecker
Mourning Dove
White-winged Dove
House Finch
Northern Cardinal
Yellow-crowned Night Heron
Common Yellowthroat
Great-tailed Grackle
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (2 seen)
Wood Duck
Pied-billed Grebe

Also seen was the exotic species of Mute Swan. This site is a great birding opportunity for any visitors to the San Marcos area.

By Kate Oschwald nestbox@1starnet.com



Birding is the fastest growing outdoor activity in North America.

Grants Offer Opportunity For Study, Growth

As the Texas Bluebird Society grows, one of our greatest challenges is going to be an increasing number of requests for assistance in developing trails and working with groups with limited budgets and resources. While we would like to say "yes" to every opportunity that comes our way, the reality is that we must prioritize each opportunity with the potential impact on the bluebird / cavity nester population in Texas. A potential aid in this effort is a good number of environmental outreach granting organizations that work in this state. Coupling our work with these organizations may help us present a report of work at next year's meeting that will show significant growth in the trail network within our state.

There are opportunities to extend our ability to meet these requests through grants made available by environmental organizations and corporations. Tapping into these resources means finding them and preparing grant applications. And that takes volunteers to search out granting agencies that might be interested in supporting TBS goals. That search may require a trip to the library or may be as simple as an internet search.

With your help, we will have a positive report on growth of the trail network at next year's meeting. If you can help, please let the board know.

By Mark Klym mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us



Keith Kridler does extensive work with school and youth groups. Here he talks of his efforts on one of the largest, most productive bluebird trails in North America.

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