TYLER AUDUBON SOCIETY

OFFICERS
President – Tappa Burt
tappa@hughes.net
Vice President – Marvin Mayer
mayer.m@sbcglobal.net
Secretary – Kay Chambers
kchambers4404@att.net
Treasurer – Sammy Rhodes
rhodes64@suddenlink.net

DIRECTORS
Euva Scott (2 year)
euvals@cs.com
Dennis Scott
jennifer5603@sbcglobal.net (3 year)
Robert Rowlett (Honorary)
tyr75080@tyler.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Membership – Euva Scott
euvals@cs.com
Publicity – Marvin Mayer
Mayer.m@sbcglobal.net
Finance – Sammy Rhodes
rhodes64@suddenlink.net
Conservation – open
Langley Island – Joe Marsey
joetexas75757@aol.com
Program – Marvin Mayer
mayer.m@sbcglobal.net
Newsletter – Mary Wilkins
wilkins.mary@att.net
Hospitality – Alice Rhodes
rhodes64@suddenlink.net

See you at our next meeting!

Tuesday, November 10, 6:30 pm
Pollard Methodist Church
on New Copeland Road

Please note the new earlier start time
(6:30 rather than 7:00).

UPCOMING PROGRAMS
November 10, 2009  Birding By Ear  (see article included)
Cliff Shackelford

December 8, 2009  CHRISTMAS PARTY

January 12, 2010  Summer Birding in S.E. Arizona
Bob Metzler

February 9, 2010  Getting Others Involved In Birding
Boyd Sanders

March 9, 2010  Bird Banding
Dr. Jim Ingold

April 13, 2010  Forest Folklore And The Pioneer Use Of Trees
Dr. Mike Legg

May 1, 2020  Annual Picnic

Tyler Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization – all donations are deductible
Audubon Christmas Party with Monthly Meeting on December 8

The joint NPSOT/Audubon Christmas Party will be held Tuesday, December 8, 2009, 6 PM to 9 PM at Fairwood United Methodist Church, 1712 Old Omen Rd, Tyler. The Native Plant Society of Texas – Tyler Chapter offered to be the host and provide the location. Members should bring their favorite dish to share with others and prepare to be judged for best food in several categories. Each group is asked to bring 5 or 6 small gifts for door prizes and food judging as we have done in the past. The meeting location changed this year from Camp Tyler, where it has been held for many years. We will miss the fireplace and the piano.

Wildlife Photographer Andy Long Speaks to TAS

Naturalist, birder, writer, photographer, and outdoor photography tour guide Andy Long spoke to the Tyler Audubon Society at its regular meeting on Tuesday, October 13.

For about an hour, Long took us on a pictorial “tour” of birds he had photographed at multiple sites from the arctic to the Antarctic, as well as, various birding sites in several states in the U.S. Not only were we treated to sights of unusual birds, but the photos themselves were spectacular as works of art.

Long has been a professional photographer since 1982. In 2003, he began showing his work at numerous art festivals throughout Colorado. He moved to Tyler in 2008.

Cliff Shackelford Returns to TAS

Cliff Shackelford, who presented a delightful program about hummingbirds last January, will return to TAS in November to present his program, “Birding by Ear.” You won’t want to miss this program, so mark the date November 10, and bring a friend!

Birding Field Trips with Tyler Audubon

Have questions? Need directions? Contact Peter Barnes at 903-839-8359 or pbarnes123@gmail.com. On field trip days, call Peter at 903-343-3437.

If you are not receiving emailed information about these trips, please send an email to Peter to be added to the mailing list.

Saturday, November 7  Camp Tyler at 8 a.m.
Saturday, November 14  Kurth Lake (north of Lufkin) at 7:30 a.m.
Saturday, November 21  Lake Murvaul in Panola County at 7:30 a.m.
Saturday, December 19  TYLER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
The following have signed up: DD Currie, Dell Little, Linda Price, Janet Cook, Boyd Sanders. Please let Peter know ASAP if you are available for the count.

Cliff Shackelford, who presented a delightful program about hummingbirds last January, will return to TAS in November to present his program, “Birding by Ear.” You won’t want to miss this program, so mark the date November 10, and bring a friend!
The Invaders of Texas Project
by Clyde McKinney

The Invaders of Texas is a citizen scientist project of the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, with the help of the Texas Forest Service and others. The training is approved for Master Naturalist Advanced Training Hours and the volunteer time is approved by the East Texas Master Naturalist Chapter. The volunteer organizes or participates in invasive species hunts as a group or as an individual. When invasives are found, a photo is taken for verification, a GPS location is recorded, other information about the site is recorded, and the information is later transmitted on your computer to the central database in Austin.

Volunteers must go through a one day training program where you will learn how to identify invasive plant species, conduct a field trip, and record and input the data. The state is broken into areas and ours is called the "East Texas Pineywoods Invaders (ETPWI)." As far as I know, I am the only active (and I have not been active lately) member of this group in Tyler area and it would be fun to have others to join on invasives hunt field trips that we could schedule for the ETMN chapter.

Mike Murphrey, the ETPWI leader and is with the Texas Forest Service, has received the go ahead to try and put together an all-day Citizen Scientist Plant Invasive Species Workshop in Lufkin on Saturday, October 24 (registration 8:30 am, program from 9:00 am till 4:00 pm. at the Angelina County Agri-Life Extension Building). There will be program-style lectures in the morning and a short field trip that afternoon. The cost of the program will be $10/person which will include program materials, coffee, snacks, drinks and lunch.

For additional information and to RSVP, go to http://texasinvasives.org/invaders/workshop_results.php. Find the information under the East Texas Piney Woods Invaders Workshop.

For further information, contact Mike Murphrey at (936) 639-8179, mmurphrey@tfs.tamu.edu or Clyde McKinney at 903-967-3998, clydeclyde@yahoo.com.

---

**Tyler State Park Events on Birding**

**November 7, 14, 28 (Saturdays)**

Let’s Go Birding!

8:30-10:30 a.m.

Easy to moderate hike. Bring binoculars, field guide, comfortable shoes. Accessible for mobility impaired.

**November 21 (Saturday):**

Birding 101: An Introduction to Birding

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Learn how to identify birds by sight and sound as well as the environment in which they live. Bring binoculars, comfortable shoes, be ready for a short hike. Accessible for the mobility impaired.

**November 21 (Saturday):**

Woodpeckers!

3:30-4:30 PM

Short half-mile or so hike up the Old Road. Bring binoculars, a field guide if you have one, good walking shoes and water. Meet at the Boat Ramp Parking Area. Accessible for mobility impaired.

**November 27 (Friday):**

2nd Annual “Walk Off The Bird” Bird walk.

8:30 a.m.-2 PM

Bring binoculars, good walking shoes, snacks or picnic lunch and your stamina. Take a break at any time and rejoin by contacting Park Headquarters for current location of birders.

**Note:** All bird walks start from the main headquarters; all Birding 101s start at Brown’s Point Fishing Pier area. For further information, call the park at (903) 597-5338.
Storms and some cool fronts may have contributed to some notable fall sightings this month, including Least Grebe, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Whip-poor-will and Purple Finches.

A Least Grebe at Texas Eastman in Longview from Sept 12 (Tyler Audubon field trip) (ME) was a first for north-east Texas and the farthest north that this species has been recorded in Texas. They may also be present but undetected elsewhere in our region, as they have been seen at Red Slough, Oklahoma, in the past. Lake Fork, Wood Co., yielded the first Common Loon of the fall on Sept 21, 4 Canada Geese on Sept 25 and 11 Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, including 3 young, on Sept 5 (all JC). An Anhinga and a Tricolored Heron and were at Texas Eastman in Longview on Sept 2 (ME, DB) and 10 (ME), an immature Black-crowned Night Heron was there on Sept 2 (ME, DB), 5 Anhingas were present on Sept 12 (Tyler Audubon field trip), and 3 Anhingas and a Tricolored Heron were still there on Sept 24 (ME). Thirty Wood Storks were at Richland Creek WMA, Navarro Co., on Sept 3 (MB). On Sept 5, approximately 40 Wood Storks (30 in Navarro Co., 10 in Freestone Co.), a Black-crowned Night Heron (Freestone Co.), 3 Plegadis ibis and an unusually high number of 6 Tricolored Herons (all Navarro Co.) were at Richland Creek WMA (Tyler Audubon field trip). Seven White Ibis were at Old Sabine Bottom WMA on Sept 19 (MB).

Late September sees the passage of the largest numbers of migrant raptors. Broad-winged Hawks are the dominant species, and impressive numbers of 2,280 and 1,271 birds passed over Daingerfield State Park on Sept 25 and 26, respectively (DB, LB, MD). Other migrants included a White-tailed Kite and 2 Mississippi Kites at Richland Creek WMA, Freestone Co., on Sept 5 (Tyler Audubon field trip), 2 Ospreys over Lake Fork, Wood Co., on Sept 2 and 20 (both JC), and 2 Ospreys at Lake Bob Sandlin, Titus Co., on Sept 26 (PB). A Swainson’s Hawk, a scarce migrant in the pineywoods, flew over Daingerfield State Park on Sept 28 (MD, LB). A Crested Caracara was in Hopkins Co. on Sept 4 (DC, DL). Richland Creek WMA, Navarro Co., hosted the first Northern Harrier of the fall and 2 Western Sandpipers on Sept 5 (Tyler Audubon field trip). Eight Caspian Terns and 1 Least Tern were at Texas Eastman in Longview on Sept 12 (Tyler Audubon field trip).

Single Great Horned Owls were observed on Pleasant Hill Road on Sept 9 (LP) and at Lake Fork, Wood Co., on Sept 18 and 20 (JC). A Whip-poor-will, a rare migrant in our area, was heard at Lake Fork, Wood Co., on Sept 18 (JC). Two Greater Roadrunners were spotted in Smith Co. on Sept 5 (JV). A Selasphorus Hummingbird, probably an immature male Rufous Hummingbird, was a second record for Smith Co. on Sept 3 (JV). A female Black-chinned Hummingbird, the third sighting for north-east Texas, visited Peggy Harding’s yard in Rusk Co. on Sept 9. Ten Tree Swallows were in Wood Co. on Sept 4 (DC, DL). An Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Tyler State Park on Sept 9 (BS), a
late *Eastern Kingbird* was still at Texas Eastman in Longview on Sept 30 (ME), and a *Yellow-bellied Flycatcher* was at Daingerfield State Park on Sept 30 (LB, MD). Two *Fish Crows* were at Texas Eastman in Longview on Sept 11 (ME), continuing the trend of range expansion southward in east Texas. The first 2 *Cedar Waxwings* of the fall were reported from Longview on Sept 17 (CT). Richland Creek WMA, Freestone Co., hosted the earliest NETFO fall record of *Ruby-crowned Kinglet* on Sept 5 (DC, DL), as well as 8 *Loggerhead Shrikes* (7 in Freestone Co., 1 in Navarro Co.), a lingering *Swainson’s Warbler*, 5 *Northern Parulas*, a *Northern Waterthrush* and 8 *Baltimore Orioles* that day (Tyler Audubon field trip). Two *Blue-winged Warblers*, rare fall migrants, were in Palestine on Sept 25 (LJ). A *Wilson’s Warbler* was at Camp Tyler on Sept 20 (PB). Five *Purple Finches* were an amazing sighting in Canton on Sept 15 (DOh), as the previous earliest fall NETFO record is from early November.

### Bellwood Lake Project Update – by Dolph Miller

The master plan presented to the City Council in June by Planning Concepts has been approved. Jane Purtle and I have met with Planning Concepts on several occasions to express our concerns as Audubon members and as local citizens. The master plan as presented to the City Council contains several items suggested by Jane and myself: extending the trail to connect with Cascades trails at the dam, special attention (preservation) to wetland areas and reed beds as well as recognizing and facilitating the teaching potential of the area.

It was hoped the Bellwood Lake area would be a dedicated natural area, however, this will not be the case as the project stands today. Considering the economic forces involved it appears there will still be a portion of the property suitable for birding, as one gets further away from the proposed development.

At present the Bellwood Lake project is on hold by the city and the resort developer as a result of economic conditions. In my recent conversation with Gregory Morgan, Director of Tyler Water Utilities, I asked if he felt the project would pick up anytime soon. He did not see it moving forward until the developer is able to construct the New Sunnybrook extension from Loop 323 to Hwy. 31 and he did not feel this would happen anytime soon. Progress on the project is determined by the New Sunnybrook extension since the present entrance to Bellwood Park does not allow for heavy equipment to be moved into the area due to the low overhead railroad crossing.


### Langley Island Project

The Tyler Audubon Society, working with Audubon Texas and the City of Tyler, has accepted a habitat improvement project at Langley Island funded by a Texas Commission On Environmental Quality (TCEQ) settlement thru the Supplemental Environmental Project Program. The project objective is to improve the access, enhance the habitat, and increase the educational value for visitors while maintaining the uniqueness of the island. In the last year various committees have been formed and a permit from the city has been approved. Members of the community, Boy Scout groups and organizations are involved. The work is planned from November of this year through April of 2010. **If you are interested please call Joe Marsey at (903) 825-0123.**
First things first – what is eBird? eBird is a website run by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. eBird is an internet-based checklist program that provides users with a nice tool for maintaining personal records. Much more than that, by using eBird, personal birding records automatically become part of a universal data bank that has become a repository for observations of birds in the North, Central and South American Hemisphere.

After entering observations into eBird, the information becomes available to bird researchers the world over. Every record submitted to eBird goes through some level of data verification to further improve the scientific value of the data.

eBird is designed to be used by birders of all levels. You need not be a birding expert—some of the most valuable checklists submitted to eBird are repeated observations from people who have never looked for birds outside their own backyard! You need not know every bird that flashes through your binoculars either, the eBird data quality process guards against many potential identification errors.

The primary purpose of eBird is not to be a rare bird reporting network or a competitive listing website, although it does have some features that highlight these things to help engage birders. eBird is fundamentally a tool to help ornithologists understand and document bird occurrence across the landscape: any bird, anywhere, any time. For this reason, every birder has something to contribute, every time they go birding. The more birders that make an effort to record observations in eBird, the better ornithologists are able to understand the global changes in bird populations. This data can be critical in understanding birds as “bio-indicators” and to help in understanding the health of our ecosystems.

I’ve been using eBird for four years. I’ve found that using eBird has made me a better birder but more importantly I’ve found that I enjoy monitoring a local area on a regular basis and slowly learning the birds in the area. The discipline of recording observations of an area on a semi-regular basis has helped me to learn the local birds and to recognize when an unusual species appears. Many birders have had the same experience in maintaining a yard list. With eBird, the place monitored can be your yard but could also be a local park or nature area that is close-by and birded on a regular basis. Habitual records of local birds are probably the most useful data scientifically. I find that keeping the eBird records makes local birding very satisfying – I know that my observations are not just forgotten in a desk draw – the observations are permanent records that can help ornithologists study birds.

I also use eBird to keep records of all my sightings. However, not all sightings can be recorded in a manner that is useful scientifically. Sometimes when I am birding a large area, I just enter the records in eBird as “casual” sightings. The records go into my personal life list just as the more detailed records. There is a lot of information on the eBird website about how to make “good” bird observations and enter the records. The shortest record that is useful scientifically is about 20 minutes. Often if I am birding a large area, I will pick one very birdy location and stay there for 20 minutes trying to record all the birds I can see or hear from one spot. I will enter these records as a “stationary count”, giving the start time and duration. For the remainder of the birding outing, I will just keep a list of what I see and enter those records as “casual” records. In that way, I can incorporate some time to make scientifically valuable observations (for the 20 minute period) without the burden of trying to maintain that level of concentration for the entire birding outing. I certainly don’t have the skill to make every minute of birding a time for counting, but I have learned to do the 20-30 minute counts and improved my birding skills in the process.

Using eBird is fun. Learning to count and make systematic sightings is not a burden if it’s broken up into smaller “bites”. Getting to know the birds in your own “private patch” can be very satisfying.

If people in the club would like help is starting to use eBird, maybe we could set up a special meeting somewhere that has internet and I could help get others involved. If you haven’t figured out yet, I am a great eBird fan! To find out more about eBird or to set up an account and get started, go to the website. http://ebird.org/content/ebird
President’s Message ~ October/November 2009

Recently I received information from National Audubon about their Audubon Adventures Program, marking the 26th edition of this educational program for grades 3 – 6 in community schools. This year the focus is on energy, water, and habitat issues, entitled “Action for Planet Earth,” an exploration of earth science topics from a conservation perspective. The curriculum provides information and activities for learning the science behind challenges we face with energy, water and habitat. The students will explore how these challenges affect individuals, communities and wildlife. They will find out how they can help to protect local and national resources.

Tyler Audubon has participated in this program in years past, buying the classroom kits for the Chapel Hill ISD. Euva Scott was the teacher who utilized Audubon Adventures until her retirement. Euva has agreed to try to locate elementary schools or organizations providing after school programs which would be willing to incorporate the curriculum in theirs. This seems to be a very worthwhile endeavor for TAS and the Chapter will underwrite the minimal cost for the kits.

I am asking members who live in out-lying communities to participate, making contact with school administrators or teachers to determine if their school would be interested in using Audubon Adventures this next semester. National is sending TAS the curriculum materials in order to have specific information about this edition. This should be available within 10 days. If you are willing to locate interested parties, contact me at 903-882-5532 or Euva Scott at 903-566-0525.

Tappa Burt, President

It’s time to pay your local Audubon dues!

Please mail this form and your check to: Tyler Audubon Society, P. O. Box 132926, Tyler TX 75713  Make checks payable to Tyler Audubon Society. (You may also pay local dues at the regular meetings.)

Choose your membership level:

Kestrel:                      Sustaining (family):
☐ Individual ($30)           ☐ Merlin ($75)
☐ Family ($40)               ☐ Red-tailed Hawk ($150)
☐ Student ($15)              ☐ Peregrine Falcon ($250)
☐ Osprey ($500)

Lifetime Member:
☐ Bald Eagle ($1500)

Name ____________________________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________

E-mail __________________________________________________________

Phone Number __________________________________________________

Please send my newsletter ☐ by e-mail or ☐ by snail mail.
The Tyler Audubon Society
Meets the second Tuesday of each month, September through May, at the Pollard United Methodist Church at 3030 New Copeland Rd beginning at 6:30 PM (except for the December Christmas Party and the May Picnic). Visitors are always welcome to the meetings.

Please park in the front parking lot and enter through the main doors. Go up the ramp and turn left. The meeting room is in the middle on the left.