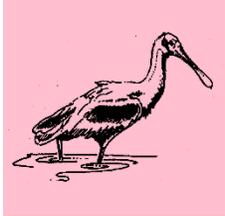


Monthly Meeting December 5, 2016

Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX



6:30 pm Holiday Social

7:00 pm [Ornithology Group](#) (OG) Business Meeting

7:30 pm [Program](#): Costa Rica Birding Trip (led by Glenn Olsen)
by Mark Kurtz and JoAnn Raine

[Field Trip](#): No field trip this month; participate in some of the many Christmas bird counts!

[Field Trip Report to Hagerman](#)

Costa Rica Birding Trip (led by Glenn Olsen)

by Mark Kurtz and JoAnn Raine

Glenn Olsen led seven of us birding in the nicest country in Central America. I would always advise families to visit Costa Rica as it is welcoming and safe for car travel. Both water and food are palatable. Our Southwest flight ran into the national "outage" on the departure day. But the travel Gods were with us as the plane was at the gate and only delayed. Could have disrupted the whole plan. Remember your trip insurance.

Chris was such a good guide and full of info about the towns and trails. We stayed at two lodges, minimizing the driving. Can't pick a favorite, as both were special with lovely lodge grounds. First half of the trip was located at Rancho Naturalista. This location is at about 2,500 feet and considered Central Valley. We toured in my favorite vehicle, the comfortable small bus. Rancho is one of the best known lodges and advertised also in Europe. The upstairs porch has hummingbird feeders. Coffee on the porch and 10 varieties of hummer 6 feet away.

Midweek we drove higher and encountered mountain species. A central spine of volcanic mountains divides East and West. Driving over the top of the 11,000 foot pass, offers a stop at the radio towers for the rare birds in that environment. Descending the mountain, to the west, we found great highway restaurants with feeders and their flowering attractions. July finds the Central Americas green with rain and full of blooming plants. The final accommodation was Suria Lodge on the side of the Savagre Valley at 7,500 feet. The lodge is a joy and full of places to watch birds.

We saw most of the spectacular birds and enjoyed feeding flocks of warblers and flycatchers.

The roadside encounter with the Resplendent Quetzal is not to be missed. Toucans, tanagers and waders round out the days. OG is planning several programs with Costa Rica in mind. Pictures

can be seen on JoAnn Raine Facebook, Costa Rica July 2016.

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Report of the OG Field trip to Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Sherman, Texas and Lake Tawakoni State Park, November 12-13, 2016

By Jean Booth



Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Sherman, Texas

Our Fall Weekender Field trip offered a change of pace and a little farther to drive. Saturday, Nov 12, we visited Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Sherman, Texas, located in Grayson County, and guided by Jack Chiles who is a Naturalist and leads the weekly bird counts at the Refuge. There were 8 OG members traveling to Hagerman, Jean Booth, Debbie Repasz, Jerry Stanislav, Bill Wright, Betty and Paul Lester, Letha Slagle

and Cynthia Hughes. Jack met us with a friendly smile to provide us an overview of our day. We were excited to see him pull up in the large Refuge VAN. We birded the refuge in the van from 8 am until 3 pm, driving on closed roads inside the refuge and around all the dikes. Snow geese and Ross's geese had arrived at the refuge, and Jack was happy to have them there for us. Some of the highlights for the day included most of the waterfowl including Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers. We had Franklin's Gull, Greater Roadrunner, 5 woodpecker species including Hairy and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Winter and Bewick's Wren, lots of Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Hermit Thrush and 7 sparrow species, including Fox, Field, Harris's, White-throated, Vesper, Song and Savannah.



Hagerman NWR, a haven for migratory birds and other wildlife, lies in Northwestern Grayson County, Texas, on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma, on the Red River between Oklahoma and Texas. This 11,320-acre Refuge is a mixture of forests, grasslands, creeks, freshwater wetlands, and Lake Texoma. Each habitat has its own unique natural history and supports a variety of native wildlife. Its location on Lake Texoma and within the Central Flyway ensures Hagerman NWR is host or home to an amazing diversity of wildlife species.

Our congenial OG group enjoyed dinner together on Saturday evening at Tony's Italian Kitchen in Greenville. After discussing our best birds of the day, each of us shared a favorite personal birding experience. It was a great opportunity to celebrate a shared passion with new as well as long-time friends.

Lake Tawakoni

On Sunday the group headed to Lake Tawakoni State Park, southeast of Greenville. Special thanks to Bill Wright for contacting Richard Kinney and securing him as our local guide. Richard invited a few of his local birder friends to help us get on the birds – what a pleasant surprise and lots of fun. Richard has been birding since he was a teenager and is excellent at birding by ear. He conducts the monthly bird counts for several hot spots in the Lake Tawakoni area. He, Russ, Ron and Kelly were all great at finding the birds and coaching us on the calls of many of them.



Highlights from Sunday included close encounters with at least 4 Bald Eagles, being dive-bombed by a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and having a flock of more than 300 Cormorants fly directly above our heads, so close that we could feel and hear the beating of their wings. We had excellent looks at Golden-crowned Kinglets and Orange-crowned Warblers. We were delighted with such great diversity from Common Loons to American Pipits.

If you have not experienced a Weekender birding adventure with the OG, we highly recommend it and hope you will consider making a trip very soon. There is nothing like spending time with great company in the great outdoors.

P.S. from the Participants: Bravo, Jean Booth, and many thanks for planning and organizing an amazing adventure. We appreciate you!

(Photos: Ross's Geese, Fox Sparrow, Trip Participants)

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