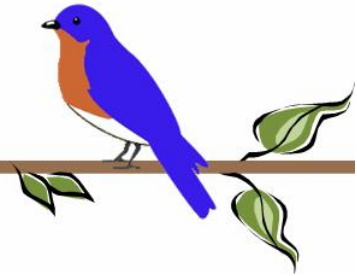


TEXAS Blues



Texas Bluebird Society Newsletter March 2017 • Volume 16. Issue 1

President Pauline Tom's State Of The Organization Report

Another year passed, and we're working ... "one nestbox at a time." The 2016 chapter in the Texas Bluebird Society is remarkably similar to previous years. We just keep on keeping on. In doing so, we make an impact in bluebird conservation and in the lives of humans who encounter "our" bluebirds.

Thank you for your support of Texas Bluebird Society through your membership. Your membership is one of **1,067 memberships current** at the close of the year.

Each of you cared enough to make the commitment to support our cause with a membership. And, most made a commitment to install at least one nestbox. A significant portion of our members (1/3 of those responding to the annual survey) do not, yet, have bluebirds nesting. How proud I am that we are introducing Texans to bluebirds and [NestWatch](#), and, in the process, many become aware of other conservation issues.

Texas Bluebird Society closed 2016 with **Membership #05852**. Most of these household memberships are husbands and wives. It's safe to say **over 10,000 have passed through our door of membership**.

Each year, some "join TBS" just to obtain a free nestbox (our offer made at events and through distributors), and do not renew. And, each year, some who joined that previous year renew along with others who have renewed year after year. And, each year we add Life Members (now 58!) who renew at \$250. This results in an ever higher proportion of current members compared with total membership.

To upgrade to a \$250 lifetime membership, go to the Membership section at <http://txblues.org> or contact us and ask for a membership form.

Most of you accept an email notification when the newsletter is posted online, so **your entire (tax deductible) membership dues go towards the work of the organization.**

Roughly one-third of our 2016 expenditures related to "nestboxes", following plans made by the Board. Such expenses include cedar and other supplies for building including jigs, cost of nestbox builder training, renting storage for over 1,000 nestboxes, and nestbox dispersal (for instance, registration fees for festival booths.)

Standards say that nonprofits should spend no more than 25 – 50 percent of contributions on fundraising. **Texas Bluebird Society spends 0.00% on fundraising.**

Our FUNdraiser items are obtained from donations by members, registrants, and purchases with earmarked dollars for "Auction Purchases". Thanks to over **\$400 in designated donations** at our 2016 Event, TBS had a jumpstart in collecting an exceptionally nice array of items for the 2017 FUNdraiser. 100% of the proceeds from the FUNdraiser purchase cedar for volunteer-built nestboxes.

It takes many hands to create a successful Season Kick-off event!



Volunteers do the work of the organization.

- The newsletter editor is a volunteer, as are the writers.
- Each member of the all-volunteer Board of Directors has at least one major responsibility. Each attends a monthly 2-hour Board Meeting via GoToMeeting.
- Several Board Members who rotated off the Board are continuing with their primary responsibility and serving on our new (non-voting) "Advisory Board."
- 4 Certified Nestbox Builders, with the help of local groups, constructed nestboxes to precise specifications.
- Festival Booth Anchors, assisted by others, give TBS a presence at several festivals each year. *Consider volunteering to help staff a booth.*
- Over two dozen Nestbox Distributors sell memberships and nestboxes. *See a map of network on our website.*

Lifetime Members

Sue Abernathy
 Sarah Andry
 Angela Austin
 Joe Beard
 Edra Bogucki
 Cathy Brown
 Mark Byrd
 Jeffie Cappadonna
 Sherry Conner
 Beverly Davis
 Kathy Denison
 Nancy Etheridge
 Cheryl Franklin
 Cathy Gero
 Greg Grant
 Beth Grijalva
 Diane & Eric Hale
 Annette Harbaugh
 Carey & Constance Hardesty
 Brian & Judy Hetherington
 Highland Shores Garden Club
 Bob Houck
 Dr. John & Mrs. Judy Hutka
 Charlene Johnston
 Bryan & Diane Jones
 David Kinneer
 Maxey Kirkley
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 Jimmy & Benni Konvicka
 Keith, Sandy & Shawn Kridler
 Ainsley Lewis
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 Donna Parker
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 Ronny Rolf
 Jason A. Seale
 Norman Shoemaker
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 Byron Stone
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 Susan Tracy
 Deborah Tugwell
 Jack Vick
 Barbara Vinson
 Ricky Walker
 Melinda Walker
 Kathy P. Weinhold
 Dr. Thomas M. Wheeler
 Marsha Winfield

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State of the Organization Report

Actually, **every member is a volunteer**, as we all work together to spread “Bluebirds Across Texas...one nestbox at a time.

You’ll be hearing more from this point forward from **Vice-President Lonnie Castleman**. Lonnie’s willingness to serve marks a major mile in the life of Texas Bluebird Society. No longer will the Executive Committee serve as VP, serving as backup to the President. .

We celebrated our **15th Birthday in September 2016**, and still our **household membership rate is \$15**. That’s incredible. Most have joined face-to-face, and we have given to them a free “starter” nestbox. Still, with donations (starting at \$5.00) and exceptional management by the Board, TBS comes out in the black each year. Again this year, we do not need to slow down giving away nestboxes, nor do we need to raise dues.

To very minimal administrative expenses, Texas Bluebird Society **contracts for professional web services and bookkeeping services** (at discounted rates.)



At this point in TBS history, we have **constructed over 14,000 “official” TBS nestboxes** and branded each with the TBS logo. Pair this quantity with the **10,000’s additional nestboxes** installed through the influence of Texas Bluebird Society since 2001. We are, indeed, **spreading “bluebirds (and other native cavity-nesting birds) across Texas...one nestbox at a time.”**

Texas Bluebird Society makes a difference in bluebird conservation. Our nestboxes result in the production of bluebirds, many in vicinities where bluebirds had not previously been observed. The most current Eastern Bluebirds range map in “Birds of North America” shows a wider range in Texas than 16 years ago.

Texas Bluebird Society makes a difference in citizen science. We have influenced Texans to participate in NestWatch.org, making nesting records available to scientists while keeping the records for individuals and providing detailed maps of nestings online. Of those responding to our Annual Survey, 25% report to NestWatch.

And, Texas Bluebird Society makes a difference in the quality of life for humans exposed to the object of our affection. Adding bluebirds in Texas is akin to spreading wildflower seeds, bringing joy to human hearts. As bluebirds are now a “species of least concern” (according to ornithologists), our species needs them more than their species needs us. What a difference our efforts make in the lives of humans.

Each of us has a bluebird story (even if, for you, it’s a photo on a website) **and a sphere of influence.** Even if you have no bluebirds, your support of this organization through your membership makes a difference in bluebird conservation and in the lives of those who see and experience bluebirds because of Texas Bluebird Society.

Thank you.

Peace, hope, and love —

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lonnie Castleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IS IN DANGER!

By Keith Schindler

Just today, I opened my email from American Bird Conservancy. Subject line? The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is Under Attack! (considering public land changes, new admin in EPA, possible repeal of ESA.)



We all know the importance of the Endangered Species Act and it's many contributions to preserving our endangered species. In the avian world alone there are four species in the top 15 most endangered birds in North America that reside in Texas. The Whooping Crane, Piping Plover, Red Cockaded Woodpecker, and Golden Checked Warbler. Just four good reasons to be aware of any new funding aid additions to the Endangered Species Act from our congress that will need our support.

There are, and have been, champions of our non-human friends. The authors of the Endangered Species Act, and its predecessor the Endangered Species Preservation Act are just such champions, as are the authors of the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, and the most recent Recovering America's Wildlife Act (US HB5650), introduced in the 2015-2016 legislature.

From www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5650

"This bill amends the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to direct the Department of the Treasury to transfer, beginning in FY2016, revenues from energy and mineral development on federal lands totaling \$1.3 billion to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Subaccount of the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Fund, to be available without further appropriation. The purpose of the subaccount is to **fund state wildlife conservation and restoration programs for managing fish and wildlife species** of the greatest conservation need as *determined by a state fish and wildlife agency."

(*These funds will be used as laid out in their existing, congressionally mandated Wildlife Action Plans.)

It's a shame that this bill died on December 31, 2016. I can only imagine all the money that it could have funneled into wildlife conservation and restoration programs. When Selena and I heard of HB5650's demise, I contacted Richard Heilbrun of TPWD and received the following:

"Hi Keith,

Thanks for keeping up with the initiative.

On Dec 31st, all bills introduced in the 2015-2016 session expired. HB 5650 was introduced as a conversation starter in last year's legislature and the bill sponsors (Rep. Don Young and Rep. Debbie Dingell) committed last summer to re-introduce the legislation during the 2017-2018 session this spring.

We will see a new piece of legislation in the next month or 2 or 3 with identical or similar language to fund wildlife species and habitats of concern. The True to Texas Wildlife Coalition (what we have been calling the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition) puts out a newsletter to keep everyone current.

Like to be added to that mailing list? Send info to www.teamingtxwildlife.com/index.php/join-the-coalition

I'm always happy to answer questions and provide updates!

Best,

Richard"

So, things are not as bad as they first seemed when we heard of HB5650 dying. We must applaud Rep. Don Young and Rep. Debbie Dingell for their initial actions in presenting HB5650, as well as their commitment to following up with new legislature. We need more government officials such as these.

Keep your eyes and ears open for news on the Endangered Species Act. Share your views with your elected officials in that regard. Also, if possible, be involved in the new legislator to be proposed by Young and Dingell. If you have the opportunity to share your views in your support of the new bill, please do so.

You can be assure that Selena and I will. We love our "Blues," but we support all species.

As information becomes available it will be shared in *TX Blues*, TBS Facebook page, and TBS website at txblues.org

Stay Tuned! Selena and I are following the reintroduction of this legislation and will keep you posted on the status and what actions you can take in support of this bill.

TO BE CONTINUED!



Meet Selena (the S in SnK) and Keith (the K in SnK) Schindler, TBS members, and the owners of the SnK Wildlife Reserve. Creating a wildlife habitat from overused and abused cattle grazing land was an arduous journey for wildlife advocates Selena and Keith. Meeting all of the certification criteria required by Texas Parks and Wildlife involved mountains of paperwork (of course) and hundreds of hours of plain ol' hard work outdoors. SnK Wildlife Reserve is already certified, but will always be a work in progress and a labor of love for the Schindlers.

How do you turn land that has endured overgrazing for years, containing invasive plant species, and lacking natural water into a wildlife habitat oasis? With a lot of hard physical labor all day long in the hot Texas sun!



The 408 acre SnK Wildlife Reserve is located at the junction of the Black Land Prairie, Post Oak Savanna and Coastal Prairie ecosystems, in DeWitt County, Texas. It has been family owned ranch land since 1936. Keith and Selena became the sole owners of the property, built a house using one acre of the land in 2006, and received a Wildlife Exemption in 2012.

Water is a major criterion for certification. Obviously no longer working, the old water trough had to go. The Schindler's installed a guzzler, a rainwater containment system, with plans for a second in the upcoming year. In addition, a well, a windmill, two troughs and a concrete in-ground water basin have been added.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Certification states "An effective wildlife habitat will provide all three basic needs for wildlife- food, shelter, and water in a way that they can readily use and easily access."

The next step is to plant native grasses and wildflowers to complete the restoration process. Then on to other sections of the reserve and start the process again in the upcoming year.

Selena and Keith work with several Texas agencies to determine best methods, and in some cases, use grants and other types of financial aid to facilitate the transition from overgrazed land to ideal wildlife habitat.

Removing invasive non-native plant species is another certification criteria. Utilizing Grassland Restoration grants, Selena and Keith have cleared 35 acres, with the intent of

reestablishing native grasses. An additional 35 acres will be



planted with wildflower seeds in hopes of providing greater resources for Monarch Butterflies. The Schindlers hope to perform prescribed burning as part of this process. The next step is to plant native grasses and wildflowers to complete the restoration

process. Then on to other sections of the reserve and start the process again.

Another type of grazing management would include cattle, but the Schindlers no longer lease property for that purpose. At one time they had as many as 19 horses helping keep the grass short. Now they only have two foster horses, which eat much less grass. Keith is rethinking how much help he would like to have to provide “mowing” for him.

After Selena’s Dad quit hunting, they converted one of his spin-cast deer feeders to throw birdseed. It draws birds, squirrels, turkey, and other ground feeders. They do allow a small number of authorized deer hunters. This hunting crew also puts in food plots, but the South Central Texas weather doesn’t always help them prosper. The hunters also maintain protein feeders, as well as corn during the hunting season. Selena maintains a deer count and harvest data each year to Texas Parks and Wildlife.

An integral part of maintaining wildlife habitat includes shelter. What better way to provide shelter than a bluebird trail! Selena and Keith have installed over 25 nestboxes so far, with plans to add many more. They have also added bat and Purple Martin housing.



Another concern is habitat for the great horned owl and the alarming reduction in population of the American Kestrel. Both cavity nesters that will benefit from a shelter assist by installing specifically designed nestboxes for each species.

Keith and Selena were invited to the Pollinators PowWow conference this year to provide attendees with information on the methods and practices they use to increase the pollinating insect population. There are over 400 insect species in decline. A major concern is the huge impact this is having on the food chain.

In conjunction with planting for pollinators, the Schindlers are participating in the Monarch



Enhancement Program, a conservation effort launched by the USDA. This grant, along with other grants from other state and local funding are calling for the restoration of habitat by planting natives specifically needed by Monarchs. The Schindlers have already procured the

appropriate seeds for the 30 acres they have dedicated for the Monarch Enhancement effort.

As conscientious wildlife advocates, the Schindlers always take the time to be conscientious citizen scientists, entering nesting data in Cornell’s NestWatch. Counting eggs, babies and fledglings keep Selena busy during nesting season.



Keith and Selena are keeping up with today’s technology and social media. Keith maintains a web presence, which includes a blog of activities occurring at the SnK, a list of organizations who focus on conservation (like TBS), a list of resources for your convenience to assist you in locating help from agencies and other information sources. Selena handles their Facebook page which also includes other conservation information and links.



Kudos to Selena and Keith for their extraordinary efforts and dedication to wildlife conservation.

BIRDING ON VACATION IS A MUST!



The famous "arch" of Antigua. Santa Catalina Arch.

Article and photos by Kate Moran

I spent the week of Christmas 2016 in the Central American country of Guatemala. I'm half Guatemalan even though most people think I'm joking when I say that due to people's biases on what a Latina should "look like" (I'm light skinned with blue eyes). Since childhood, I've either lived there for a few months or visited once or twice a year (during my school years in the states). But, since having my own child, I've only be able to visit my family there when kid and husband schedules allow for it. While I have always had an interest in birds, my passion for care and conservation (particularly for migratory/cavity nesting species) only developed in the past 4 years. I didn't realize how much I was missing out by not going on birding adventures until this most recent trip. And BOY was I missing out! It almost makes me mad that I didn't become an ornithologist after my experience in the mountains of Guatemala, but at least I had one of my most memorable moments there yet.



The old architecture of the main central square in Antigua

My family lives in Guatemala City, but we usually vacation in Antigua (a small, historic city outside of the capital) because it's pretty and we can rent out a big house for all 12 of my family members to be together to celebrate. It's a Moran Family tradition for one or more people to either get sick or injured on vacation. This year EVERYONE got sick. I had only planned on getting the typical "intestinal issues" due to flora changes, but sadly I got some virus that came with a runny nose, extreme coughing, and a high fever.

My original plan was to hike one of the volcanos (Agua or Fuego), horseback ride, zip-line, and go on a 6 hour nature expedition with an expert to find rare birds in the mountains. Of course, my hopes and dreams were dashed due to the annoyance of being ill. Luckily, I didn't get too upset because Guatemala is a routine-ish trip. BUT, this was the first time going where I had planned my non-family outings to revolve around hiking and birding. In any case, it's not in my nature to admit defeat. I told my dad that BY GOD I would hike and go birding even if I was on my death bed. And I did! I didn't end up doing the 6 hour guided hike as planned, but I researched another location that I could do on my own, at my own pace. The very last day, I had my dad drive me to and drop me off at the bottom of the mountainside in a town called San Cristobal del Bajo. I hiked on a gorgeous mountain path at Finca El Pilar.

It's world renowned for the variety of hummingbirds that visit there as well as TONS of other species that are endemic to Central America.



The mountain forests of Finca El Pilar.

Some of the birds I saw were (both wintering birds and native) Baltimore and Bar-Winged Orioles, Tennessee, Black Throated Green, Townsend's, Wilson's, and Prothonotary Warblers, Rufous Sabrewing, Magnificent, White Eared, Azure Crowned, Berylline, Blue Tailed, and Violet Sabrewing hummingbirds, Gray Breasted Wood Wren, Black Capped Swallows, Hutton's Vireo, Common Bush Tanager, Yellowish Flycatcher, Black and Mountain Thrush, Rufous Browed Wren, and Brushy Crested Jays. There were many MANY more that were reported in that area I was hiking, but I didn't personally see them with my The most amazing bird I found was a Mountain Trogon!



(stock photo from National Geographic)

Every year I go to Guatemala, I try to find a Resplendent Quetzal (they like the highlands). It's the national bird of Guatemala as well as the bird that continues to haunt me. We all have that bird we WISH we could find while bird watching that remains elusive, so elusive that it makes you jealous when other people say they've found one and post pictures of it online. I can't begin to describe my jealousy of those birders. But my Mountain Trogon find (since they're in the same family and have similar colors) was like Mother Nature's way of giving me a cookie for my efforts while encouraging me to never give up my search for the Quetzal.

What I find amazing about the relationship between birds and humans is the level of appreciation (or lack thereof) we have for each other. What I mean by that is, people tend to not appreciate what's normal or regular. If my Guatemalan family came to Texas and exclaimed "WOW what kind of bird is that?" (looking at a Mockingbird), I'd be less than thrilled to go into detail about that species. I would have that same feeling pointing out a European Starling to

someone who isn't used to seeing that species. I'd actually probably give a disgusted face while talking about. But, to an extent, I felt like Guatemalans reacted the same way to my "OH WOW" commentary from what I found. For example, bright orange colored orioles, all kinds of yellow warblers, and various sparrows like the White-Eared Ground Sparrow are so commonplace EVERYWHERE that people don't even notice them. Another example, there were so many Yellow Green Vireos that it was almost like I had to swat them away like mosquitos. [Side note: I've spent MANY winters in Guatemala, and this was the first winter where there was an extreme problem with mosquitos. Clearly, we're seeing the effects on global warming in many areas. But, that's a discussion for another article.] In any case, my point for mentioning the differences in appreciation levels is to remind us never to take any of our local birds/ birding experiences for granted.

Finally, what does all of this have to do with Texas Bluebird Society? What about our favorite cavity nesting birds? Well, as it turns out, I was surprised by another find during my Christmas vacation. There were TONS of Mountain Bluebirds wintering nearby Antigua.



TX photo by Jim Stevenson

It was one of those moments where I logically put together in my mind that the cavity nesting birds we love and monitor do in fact migrate to Latin America to winter, but there was nevertheless a slight disconnect to the point where I was still shocked to see them. It was so wonderful to find the familiar among an exotic location. All of these birds are truly amazing creatures. For most of us, it doesn't take a trip to feel that way. But, being on a trip where you're out of your routine does help you keep that sense of awe. No matter what state or country I end up in (vacationing or otherwise), I'll always try to make at least one birding adventure out of it. The only other bit of advice I have for any of you who go birding on vacation is to bring a GOOD camera with you in addition to your binoculars. This is something I haven't yet invested in but need to. Happy birding and happy 2017!

We are always interested in the stories and photos from our members! We hope this coming nesting season provides great memories and photo opportunities for you. Please consider sharing your adventures with us. Send your stories and or photos to editor@txblues.org

Texas Tree Foundation Creates A Cool School Project

The Texas Tree Foundation is a Dallas based organization committed to environmental stewardships, especially for children through educational outreach efforts.

The goal of the Texas Tree Foundation is a greener and healthier environment for 151 Dallas ISD elementary schools that will link indoor classrooms with outdoor learning for students and teachers. Ultimately, we intend to plant 15,000 or more new trees and shrubs to substantially increase the overall tree canopy in the City of Dallas.

Why is this effort so important for Dallas?

Did you know that school campuses in Dallas are some of the hottest and least shaded urban heat islands in North Texas?

Did you know that Dallas has one of the most challenging urban climates in the United States and is ranked 8th by the American Lung Association for the worst air quality in the nation for ozone and non attainment for the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Did you know that greater than 89,000 children in Dallas are affected by asthma?

Did you know that increasing the tree canopy on Dallas ISD campuses from an average of 7% to a minimum of 20% will address all three of these issues?

The Texas Tree Foundation's first two pilot projects were the campuses of Felix Botello Elementary and Onesimo Hernandez Elementary Schools. With the help of students, teachers, and volunteers, we successfully planted a total of 176 trees and created a curriculum-based landscape design for outdoor learning centers.



To enhance the learning experience, Marc Beaudoin, Project Coordinator/Urban Forester from the Texas Tree Foundation, solicited assistance from TBS to add bluebird nestboxes to the project. "Our goal is to get the students outside as much as possible and I believe blue bird nesting will be a wonderful opportunity for the students and their school," Marc stated. TBS member, Barb Ohlman, provided nestboxes and information/advice on bluebird habitat, nesting behavior, and the importance of monitoring for both educational purposes and providing data to NestWatch.

We all hope for a very successful nesting season!

Ellen Doyle Reporting Bluebirds In Her Area

We have 600 acres along US190 beginning at 2997. This is 5 miles west of Richland Springs, Texas. Last year, for the first time, we had a pair of bluebirds raise several families in a birdhouse on our camphouse. We put up more nesting boxes, and they raised again this year. Just thought you might like to know as it is not common to see bluebirds in this area.

Belton Parks Installs New Bluebird Trail

Judy Hutka reports "I was so excited that Belton Parks contacted me this summer and bought 3 nestboxes for a new park. The young man was excited about the possibility of putting up a small bluebird trail. He had read about our activities from our website, so yea, TBS website!"

Austin Country Club Adds TBS Signs To Nestbox Trail

We finally ordered and installed signs on our nest boxes. It also looks like we have some interest in setting up an "adopt a box" program with our women's golf association so that members can get involved with the monitoring of the boxes. I am looking forward to the spring and hopefully having another successful round of nesting!

Adriane Horne, Austin Country Club



(*Triadica sebifera*) **CHINESE TALLOW – DISGUISED IN BEAUTY WITH EVIL INTENT**

By Linda Crum, Texas Master Gardener/Texas Master Naturalist.



Not that one can assign evil intent to a tree, but the results of growing Chinese tallow certainly has had devastating results for our native landscape. Chinese tallow is a deciduous tree growing to 60 feet (18 m) in height and 3 feet (90 cm) in diameter, with oval-to rhomboid-shaped leaves.

Dangling yellowish spikes in spring yield small clusters of three-lobed fruit that split to reveal popcorn-like seeds in fall and winter. Dripping with mahogany-red leaves in late fall reveals the stunning fall color of this tree. “But it has such pretty fall color!” This is the reason people refuse to get rid of this invasive species. Yes, but so does that harlot your husband brought home, dressed in red, have such pretty color. How long do you think you, the mighty oak of the family, will last with her in the house? I actually had to use this illustration to get a woman at a garden club to see the danger of the Chinese tallow in her landscape.

Chinese tallow is native to China and Japan. Introduced into the United States in the 1776 by Ben Franklin in South Carolina. In order to establish a soap making industry, it was introduced across the south eastern USA. The spread of Chinese tallow is limited by frigid temperatures and/or arid conditions.



Chinese tallow poses an ecological threat. If not managed properly, it will transform native habitats into monospecific tallow forests, particularly in wetland areas. The tree alters light availability for other plant species. By outcompeting native plant species, Chinese tallow

reduce habitat for wildlife. The milky sap in both the leaves and the berries is poisonous to animals. However, the seeds are loved by many bird species, including bluebirds. But because of the ecological threat that Chinese tallow poses, they are not recommended as a food source for birds. There are many native species of trees and shrubs that provide berries for birds.

Much of the coastal prairies in Texas have been replaced by tallow woodland. Little bluestem and other prairie grasses have been displaced by tallow, thereby reducing habitat for Attwater’s prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*) which has been driven to near extinction.

Reproductive age is as little as three years when tallow begins to produce seeds. These seeds are dispersed widely by water and birds. A mature tree can produce 100,000 seed annually. Propagation is also by the root system. The trees remain productive for 100 years! Flowers typically mature April-June and fruit ripens in September-October. The nectar is prized by bee-keepers because of the delicious honey produced. However, the damage done by this species far outweighs any beautiful fall color and honey produced.



Control of Chinese tallow is difficult. Seedlings should be pulled by hand whenever they are found. Large land areas can be managed by mowing and use of controlled burns. Herbicide use is required to kill mature trees. After the

tree is cut down, apply a triclopyr herbicide directly to the stump. Rodeo herbicide is required for trees growing in water. Triclopyr binds to soil organic matter and clay particles, which limits its movement in the soil and prevents root uptake by non-target plants. Half the active ingredient is broken down by soil microorganisms and sunlight within 30–45 days following application. Rarely do I recommend use of herbicide, but this method is a localized application to a plant that is highly invasive to the point of eliminating native species and loss of wildlife habitat.



Please do not let Chinese tallow remain in your landscape because of pretty fall foliage. Drop-dead gorgeous fall color can be obtained by flowering dogwood or sassafras trees.

Photos from USDA-Forestry Service.

FROM FACEBOOK

"She started the nest in early February. She laid her first egg on Feb 9 and 5th egg on Feb 13. Today, right on schedule, babies!"

Reported by Linda Crum on TBS Facebook



Duane Noblick shares his unique mealworm feeder design.

Once I started feeding my backyard bluebirds mealworms, word got out and all the other species of birds started eating the mealworms. I have a ton of European Starlings in my area and they will empty the mealworm dish in minutes! so I designed and built a mealworm feeder to keep them out but allow birds that can access a 1 1/2" hole inside. After much testing I came up with 1 1/2" copper rings and soldered them together then built a wood box to keep the weather out and the mealworms protected.

It took some training to get the Bluebirds to use the feeder but they now go in and out with ease. Birds as large as a Northern Cardinal and Baltimore Oriole can also get inside the feeder but American Robins, Starlings and Bluejays can't. The smaller birds like Pine Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Carolina Chickadees, Carolina Wrens and Tufted Titmice use the feeder as well.

Caryn Brewer shared this photo



Beautiful Mom on her nest! Photo by Mike Western.



"When Nature made the bluebird, she wished to propitiate both the sky and the earth, so she gave him the color of one on his back and the hue of the other on his breast"

By John Burroughs.

All Citizen Scientists!

It is time to start collecting your nesting activity reports and submit your observations to Cornell's NestWatch.

Every count is important and provides data for research scientist around the world!

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Pauline Tom

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EventPlans Team
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tbs@txblues.org,
PO Box 40868
Austin, TX 78704
512-268-5678 (Pauline Tom)

Moved?

Send email/address
changes to
records@txblues.org



Volunteer Tonja Hamel is one of our many Nestbox Distributors.

Volunteers Are Appreciated!

Lonnie Castleman
Linda Crum
Kay Dansby
Shirley Hrobar
Brian Halsey
Luke Halsey
Harold Latham
Don Lawrence
Ellie Mosley

Debbie Park
John Park
Shannon Ramsey
Ava Russell
David Smith
Pauline Tom
Ron Tom
Vanessa Voisenett

There are MANY VOLUNTEERS working hard organizing and preparing for the Season Kickoff. Extra hands are always welcomed and appreciated! Call Pauline Tom at 512-268-5678 to volunteer today.

Thanks For Your Financial \$upport!

Joe Anne Betts
Maureen Bourgeois
Catherine Brown
Clyde Camp
Martha Carlson
Anne Cassidy
Nina Chambers
James Dolores Coleman
Kathryn Fagalde
Sally Gaines
Christie Gardner
Linda Gatewood
Heinz & Julie O Gaylord
Carol A Hagemeyer

Betty Hamon
Dale Haner
Jan Hartz
Robert & Carol Herber
Mary Ann Holland
Jimmy Jamail
Sarah Kilpatrick
Gaye or Mike Krueger
Sheryl Kuperman
R.L. Langley,
Judy Lano
Jamie Light
J. Hal Machat
Billy & Patricia McBride

Flora McCormick
Tanya Nielsen
Joey Orr
Leigh Peele
Donna Piercy
Brian Pinto
Marvin & Trudalise Rathke
Nancy Reeder
Milda Scott
Ted Shetzer
George Slavik
Geral Snapka
Richard & Vanessa Voisenet

Welcome New Members!

- Bill & Marcie Adams
- Donald Ambrose
- Larry Arnold
- Terry Atmar
- Angie Avery
- Jean & Dan Bagley
- Yolanda Berry
- Mary Lou Birkner
- Cathy Black
- Maureen Bourgeois
- Jim & Carolyn Boyle
- Joanne Bradbury
- Catherine Brown
- Pat Brown
- Kay and Bob Cage
- Donna Cannon
- Christy Castleman
- Nina Chambers
- Karren S Cline
- Debbie Cox
- Clyde Dexter
- Brad Ferson
- Emma Filips
- Nelda Flanagan
- Marjorie & Tony Gant
- Bob Garfield
- Linda Gatewood
- Katie Gian
- Lisa Gibson
- Shelby Griffin
- Teresa Gunlock
- Leah Hagemeyer
- Jan & Steve Hager
- Tonja Hamel
- Jan Hartz
- Robert & Carol Herber
- Gregg Hickman
- Patricia Horton
- Pattizo Humphries
- Bill Idell
- Carolyn Johnson
- Linda Jordan
- Josephine Kays
- Drue Keller
- Eric & Deborah Kolber
- Sheryl Kuperman

New members who give us print permission.

- Lori Lenberg
- Monette Littlepage
- Leon Macha
- Cary Majors
- Billy & Patricia McBride
- John McDowell
- Annette Moltz
- Marchia Mordecai
- Paul Nicholson
- Tanya Nielsen
- William Oloff
- Cheryl Pechal
- Dennie Pechal
- Terry Pike
- Brian Pinto
- Ted & Jan Pistole
- Nadine Pool
- A. David Reimhardt
- Ava Russell
- Judy Schmadeka
- Ed Schneider
- Helen Schoeck
- Milda Scott
- Mary K Shearer
- Jenny Shuffield
- Peggy Sims
- George Slavik
- Kent & Judith Spor
- Danny Stoffels
- Michael Szymanski
- Suzetteb Szymanski
- Eddie Thompson
- Beth Turk
- Chris Turner
- Megan & Steve Turner
- Don Vallie
- Diana Vasquez
- Donnell Vaughn
- John R Ward
- Suzanne Wheeler
- Carol Williams
- Carolyn Worsham
- Gerald Yarbrough

- EB, Kountze
- DC, Alvin
- MC, Houston
- NC, Montgomery
- DD, Hempsted
- DE, Whitesboro

- KF, Tennessee Colony
- AF, Austin
- JJ, West Point
- EM, Magnolia
- DM, Tomball
- BM, Elkhart

- RM, Bulverde
- BM, Trinity
- JN, Anna
- HP, Trinity
- LP, Collinsville
- YQ, Sadler

- JR, Moody
- KR, Wharton
- GS, Houston
- GS, San Antonio
- MS, The Woodlands
- MW, Cypress



There is still time - plan to join us!

**Bluebird Season Kick-off
March 25, 2017
Waco Convention Center**

Featured Speakers:

Keith Kridler, author and bluebird enthusiast extraordinaire

Alec Wyatt, ABA Young Birder 2014, *Birding 101*

David Kinneer, photographer, *Bluebird Photography*



David will share his photography tips on composition and other techniques to capture great moments like his photo above.

Registration Costs and Deadlines

Standard Advance Registration: \$20.00. Box Lunch and 2 Door Prize Tickets. Deadline: **March 11th**

At-the-door Registration: \$15.00. No meal and no Door Prize Tickets.

Lodging: Springhill Suites 200 Colonnade Parkway Woodway, TX 76712 (254) 732-7979

Details: 2017event.txblues.org

All native cavity-nesting birds are protected by federal law. Do not disturb birds or nest. Monitor and report activity to NestWatch.

Photo by Greg Lavaty



Need Nestboxes?

Go to www.txblues.org
Click **Nestbox Distributor**
tab for nearest location.



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Debbie Bradshaw Park, Editor
Send stories/photos to editor@txblues.org