

# The Prairie Horned Lark

## Newsletter of the Panhandle Bird Club

Vol. XI No. 1

January 10, 2010

### Panhandle Rare Bird Alert

**Connie Fordham (806 655-7034)**  
**cfbirder52@yahoo.com**

Please call or e-mail Connie, with information on any unusual birds or first seasonal arrivals you see in the Panhandle.

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Advisor:	Barrett Pierce	356-8033
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### Lake Meredith East Christmas Bird Count

December 31, 2009  
 Barrett Pierce

In spite of the snow storm we had a great CBC for the Lake Meredith East circle 31-DEC 2009.

We found a **Northern Shrike** at Chimney Hollow from the no longer submerged boat ramp area. There were two **Greater Scaup** in the stilling basin below the dam. From Fritch Fortress we had a **Golden Eagle** and on the crescent island I picked out a Herring Gull that I believe to be a first year **Vagae** (I am really out on a limb on this call and we did not record it in the count). At Harbor Bay in the brushy tree line on the south side we had three **American Tree Sparrows** and a **Short-eared Owl** flying over the south, up-river flats at 4:00 pm.

I recorded a respectable 63 species. I counted nearly 700 **Common Mergansers** and 54 **Common Goldeneyes**. Notably we did not see any Mourning Doves, Great-tailed Grackles or teal and very few House Sparrows and European Starlings.

### Lake Meredith West Christmas Bird Count

December 20, 2009  
 Michael Ryan

It was a great day for our Audubon Christmas Bird Count at Lake Meredith West. Participants were Jim Luce, Candy Myers and myself. The weather was cooperative, being warm enough to satisfy each of us. We began our day at McBride Canyon. Candy saw our first birds as we were driving towards the canyon. She identified a couple of American Goldfinches. When we arrived in the canyon, we saw recurrent small groups of American Robins flying overhead. There were so many it was difficult to keep up with them and do an accurate count. But then, we happened into a small meadow like area and saw a variety of different birds including a couple of Northern Cardinals and a Bewicks Wren. We soon returned to our car and drove towards the Canadian River until we came to



Joel Reese makes assignments for the Quitique count on a frigid Panhandle morning. Joe Cepeda and Susan Thompson can still smile.

a cleared area with a restroom where we were surprised by a group of eight Western Scrub-jays. Their colors showed off pleasing contrasts of soft blues and greys. After walking around this area and seeing some Spotted Towhees and Dark-eyed Juncos, we drove back and then north into the backcountry until we came to a marshy area where there was still a small amount of lake to be seen. With a scope, we saw three American Coots and a single Pied-billed Grebe; and, above ground, patrolling the area, a circling Northern Harrier Hawk.

Our next stop (after a long drive over the northern tip of Lake Meredith), was the Plum Creek Boat Ramp Area. We ate lunch there but saw no birds. However, on the drive on Plum Creek Road to get to the ramp area, we saw a Loggerhead Shrike sitting on a telephone wire and several scattered Mountain Bluebirds. With the later, we moved up from the soft blues of the scrub-jays to the iridescent blues of these bluebirds.

Our last stop was the Kritser Ranch. We first birded around the ranch house and then did a short loop drive through the ranch. Near the ranch house, Jim Luce spotted a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a White-breasted Nuthatch and Candy Myers helped me see a Carolina Chickadee which was a new bird for me. We all saw a variety of Northern Flickers - both red and yellow shafted. On our loop drive through the ranch, we stopped at a small lake that was only sparsely populated with two Ring-necked Ducks but nothing else. We then drove on and completed our drive seeing lots of Western Meadowlarks, a perched population of about 75 Red-winged Blackbirds and our last Red-tailed Hawk for the day. Back at the ranch house, we said thank you and then headed home.

Birds species identified: 35.

**Buffalo Lake Christmas Bird Count**  
December 26, 2009  
Led by Joseph Cepeda

**Participants:**  
Pam Allison  
Joseph Cepeda  
Judith Evans

**Amarillo Circle Christmas Count**  
December 19, 2009  
Led by Tom Johnson

**Participants:**  
Cathy Back  
Floyd Back  
Carolyn Boyd  
Steve Donaldson  
Connie Fordham  
Hap Hamous  
Mark Hassell  
Susan Johnson  
Thomas Johnson  
Holly Mitchell  
Barrett Pierce  
Joel Reese  
Ken Seyffert  
Robert Taylor  
Susan Thompson  
Peggy Trospen

**Quitique Christmas Bird Count**  
January 2  
Led by Joel Reese

**Participants:**  
Pam Allison  
Cathy Back  
Floyd Back  
Judith Evans  
Barrett Pierce  
Joel Reese  
Joe Cepeda  
Susan Thompson



Spotted Towhee

Jim Stevenson

## Five Christmas Bird Counts for the Amarillo Area

Species	Amarillo	Buffalo Lake	Lake Mere W	Quitique	Lake Mere E
Snow Goose	2				
Ross's Goose					1
Cackling Goose	3			1	500
Canada Goose	100	205		220	3195
Wood Duck	1				10
Gadwall	12				9
American Wigeon	13				
Mallard	24			4	48
Northern Shoveler	22			1	4
Green-winged Teal	9			1	
Canvasback	7				
Redhead	2				
Ring-necked Duck	22		2	5	
Greater Scaup					2
Lesser Scaup	12			22	2
Bufflehead	14				4
Common Goldeneye					55
Hooded Merganser				2	41
Common Merganser				2	687
Wild Turkey	34	73	20		
Northern Bobwhite	37	39			22
Common Loon					3
Pied-billed Grebe	29		1	5	7
Horned Grebe					9
Western Grebe	1				
Great Blue Heron (Blue form)	9			3	10
Bald Eagle	4				
Northern Harrier	7	4	3	10	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4				1
Cooper's Hawk	1				1
Red-tailed Hawk	18	7	6	5	4
Ferruginous Hawk	2	2		1	
Rough-legged Hawk	1	2			
Golden Eagle					1
American Kestrel	14	2	3	21	2
Merlin	1				
Prairie Falcon	1			1	
Virginia Rail					3
American Coot	32		3	2	93
Killdeer					1
Greater Yellowlegs					1
Wilson's Snipe	1				2
Ring-billed Gull	31				116
Herring Gull					36
Rock Pigeon	2	107			
Eurasian Collared-Dove	24	14		17	14
White-winged Dove	38			1	16
Mourning Dove	4		14	22	
Greater Roadrunner	3				1
Eastern Screech-Owl	1				
Great Horned Owl	2	2		2	
Short Eared Owl					1
Belted Kingfisher	3			3	
Red Headed Woodpecker				1	
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	31	1		11	
Red Bellied Woodpecker			2		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2				
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	6			8	6
Downy Woodpecker	1				1
Northern Flicker	16	7	21	17	10
Eastern Phoebe				1	

Say's Phoebe		1			
Loggerhead Shrike	1	2	1	1	1
Northern Shrike					1
Blue Jay	1			6	5
Western Scrub-Jay	1				
American Crow			3		
Chihuahuan Raven	4	1	3	3	
Common Raven		1		1	
Horned Lark	495	52		2	
Black-crested Titmouse	19			2	
Bushtit	6			2	
Brown Creeper	3				
Carolina Chickadee			2		
White-breasted Nuthatch			1		
Rock Wren	4				3
Canyon Wren	6				
Carolina Wren	1				
Bewick's Wren	8		1	1	
Marsh Wren	4			2	9
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3		1		3
Eastern Bluebird	15				
Mountain Bluebird	239	25	4	158	33
Hermit Thrush	3			2	
Townsend Solitaire			1		
American Robin	83		224	25	18
Gray Catbird	1				
Northern Mockingbird	1		1	3	
Brown Thrasher	3				
Curve-billed Thrasher	3			1	
European Starling	35	42	18	45	4
American Pipit	1				
Cedar Waxwing	67			62	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	3				
Spotted Towhee	24	4	7	4	2
Canyon Towhee	19				
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	11			1	
American Tree Sparrow				1	3
Chipping Sparrow	2			1	
Field Sparrow	1				
Lark Bunting		40	1		8
Savannah Sparrow	1			4	3
Song Sparrow	67		6	11	21
Lincoln's Sparrow	4		3	2	3
White-throated Sparrow	1				
White-crowned Sparrow	413	105	91	135	206
Dark-eyed Junco	423	22	71	163	197
McCown's Longspur	30			80	
Northern Cardinal	48	2	6	14	2
Red-winged Blackbird	8000	422	75	132	850
Eastern Meadowlark					58
Western Meadowlark	115	107	33	150	19
Great-tailed Grackle	59				
Brewer's Blackbird		48		8	
Brown-headed Cowbird		4			
House Finch	57	78		6	13
Pine Siskin	30	3			
American Goldfinch	49	72	2	48	33
House Sparrow	95	16		11	28
Participants	15	3	3	9	5
Species	92	34	31	61	63

Rare Bird Report by Connie Fordham  
December 2009

**Bald Eagle**

2 on 12/19/09, Greenbelt Lake, Donley Co., Irene Oatman

1 on 12/26/09, Cactus Lk, Moore Co., Carolyn Stallwitz

**Inca Dove**

3 on 12/17/09, Canyon, Randall Co., Monty Schoenhals

**Downy Woodpecker**

1 on 12/17/09, Canyon, Randall Co., Monty Schoenhals

**Hairy Woodpecker**

1 on 12/14/09, Amarillo, Potter Co., Don McColl

**Pyrrhuloxia**

1 on 12/17/09, Amarillo, Randall Co., Monty Schoenhals

**Reports from the Field**

**From:** Barrett Pierce]

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 06, 2010 5:27 PM

There was a Northern Shrike at Thompson Grove in Dallam County. I saw it early Jan 6 in the cedar trees west of the parking/picnic area near the Quail Unlimited watering tank. In the Rita Blanca National Grasslands at various cattle watering tanks with spillover onto the ground I found McCown's (300), Lapland (45) and Chestnut-collared Longspurs (6). Also in the grasslands, I found a nest which was empty but based on its size may be an eagle nest. Also at Rio Petroleum's office on West 15th Avenue there was an Orange Crowned Warbler on 5-JAN 2010.



Ferruginous Hawk

Jim Stevenson



Eastern Meadowlark

Jim Stevenson

**SAVE THE DATE!**

The Texas Master Naturalist Panhandle Chapter has a special event.

**Saturday, January 23, 2010**

**10:00 am-1:00 pm**

the Panhandle Bird Club will have a table at the

**Amarillo Southwest Branch Library**

to share information about the club and our nature activities with the public.

The local Master Naturalists have spearheaded this effort. Stop in to learn about nature-oriented activities in the area.

PBC will be exchanging newsletter by e-mail with the Midland Naturalists. Their newsletter, "The Phalarope" will be sent to PBC members. If you would prefer not to receive this email please contact Judith Evans.



Mountain Chickadee

Jim Stevenson

### **Chickadees: Winter Survivors**

Unlike many birds that make risky journeys of thousands of miles to winter in the tropics, chickadees take their chances right at home throughout the winter. Boreal Chickadees can survive temperatures of minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit! To ensure a food supply throughout winter, chickadees hide insects and seeds and can recover them a month later. To save energy at night, Black-capped Chickadees lower their body temperature by 18-22 degrees Fahrenheit. By choosing good roost holes and lowering their body temperatures, Carolina Chickadees can conserve 50% of their energy reserves and survive temperatures at night that would be lethal by day. To learn more about five species of chickadees, including how to identify all of them, visit the All About Birds chickadee and titmouse page. On the web at: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped\\_Chickadee/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped_Chickadee/id)



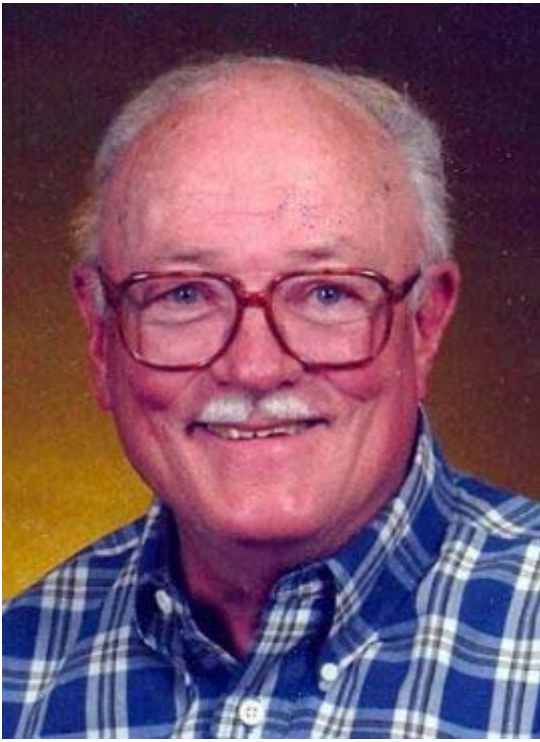
Cedar Waxwings

by Judith Evans



Chihuahuan Raven

Jim Stevenson



Bill McKinney  
1930-2009

Obituary (paraphrased from Amarillo Globe-News)

The Panhandle Bird Club lost a long time member, former TOS meeting chairman, and very good friend when Charles T. "Bill" McKinney, 79, of Amarillo died Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2009. He was born Jan. 12, 1930, in Putnam, Okla., during the Great Depression. He often talked fondly of his childhood days, growing up on a truck farm. He said his family always had plenty to eat, a roof over their heads and lots of farm animals and pets to tend. When they weren't doing chores, he and his brother, Nelson, would go fishing and hunting. They also enjoyed many family outings together.

Bill moved with his family in the early '40s to Amarillo, where he attended junior and senior high school. Bill was a fine baseball player and loved to sing in the choir. He married Nina Jones shortly after they graduated from Amarillo High School in 1948. Bill and Nina enjoyed 42 years of marriage together before her untimely death in 1990.

Bill worked for several large electrical companies, including General Electric and Westinghouse before going to work for Chaparral Electric Supply Corp., where he worked for 35 years before retiring in the '90s as a vice president.

Bill always was involved in family activities. He was a baseball and football coach for his sons and also a Boy Scout leader. He instilled an appreciation for nature and the outdoors in all his children and grandchildren. He often took his family hunting, fishing and camping. He was involved with the Republican Party, the YMCA, the NRA, the Texas Ornithological Society and the Panhandle Bird Club. He was a member of Coulter Street Baptist Church, where he was always ready to volunteer his time and energy to its many activities. He loved to read, watch old movies and go bird watching.



Purple Martins

The Prairie Horned Lark  
**Panhandle Bird Club**  
**1213 S Bryan St**  
**Amarillo, TX 79102**

Application for membership in the Panhandle Bird Club \$15.00. Annually September 1 to August 31  
Make checks payable to Panhandle Bird Club, Mail to: Connie Fordham, 2404 11<sup>th</sup> Ave., Canyon, TX 79015

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ New: \_\_\_\_\_ Renew: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Field Trip Calendar for Winter 2010**

I messed this up on the printed version. Candy

**16 JAN 2010 Thompson Grove and Rita Blanca Lake.** Meet at Southwest Branch, Amarillo Public library parking lot nearest to McDonald Lake at 6:20 a.m.. (Note early meeting time). The alternate meeting spot is McDonalds on Hwy 87 in Dalhart at 8:30 a.m. Bring Lunch. **Leader: Jody McKenzie.**

**20 Feb 2010 Buffalo Lake, Summerfield Playa (near Hereford) and Friona RV Park.** Meet at entrance to Buffalo Lake NWR at 8 a.m.. We will eat lunch at Rafter J's in Umbarger. **Leader: Peggy Trospen**

**28 Feb Lake Meredith and Etter Lake:** Meet at 7:20 a.m. at the east side of the Southwest Branch, Amarillo Public Library parking lot (nearest to McDonald Lake) Bring lunch. **Leader: Judith Evans**

**20 March 2010 Cactus Lake near Dumas and Palo Duro Lake by Spearman.** (Tentative) Meet at Southwest Library at 6:20 a.m. or at McDonalds in Dumas at 8:00 a.m. Take a lunch. **Leader: Carolyn Stallwitz.**

### Fieldtrip Leaders Needed

Please call Jim Luce at 353-2525 if you would like to lead a trip. All you need to do is keep the bird list and write a report for the newsletter. We will try to plan at least one trip a month or two if we can find leaders.



Thanks, Jim Luce