



# The Prairie Horned Lark

## Newsletter of the Panhandle Bird Club

Vol. XI No. 3

March 10, 2010

### Panhandle Rare Bird Alert

**Connie Fordham (806 655-7034)**

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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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### PBC Field Trip to Lake Meredith February 27, 2010

Participants: Leon and Georgia Swift, Billie Shalvey and Judith Evans, Leader

There wasn't much going on at Lake McDonald that morning (geese and gulls) so we loaded up and headed for Lake Meredith encountering the usual birds on a trip through the Texas Panhandle – lots of Western Meadowlarks, Mourning Doves, an American Crow and both Red-tailed and Ferruginous Hawks.

Passing through a residential section on our way to Harbor Bay we saw a good mix of yard birds – Northern Cardinals, White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and a Blue Jay. When we reached Harbor Bay the morning was still chilly and we shivered as we looked at a vast number of Northern Pintails on the lake. At first it looked like that was all there was – Pintails as far as the eye could see. However, close and patient inspection through the scope revealed other species mixed in with the Pintails – Mallards, Redheads, Common Mergansers and way over on the other side of the lake a big white object Billie spotted that turned out to be a lone White Pelican.

Our next stop was at the concrete boat ramp now closed to boat launching. The ramp is bounded on both sides with trees and tall grasses which hid more birds than we could see but we did identify a Rufous-crowned Sparrow and a Spotted Towhee there.

Proceeding on to the Fritch Fortress we began to see a number of American Kestrels on the wire and at the picnic area a beautiful pair of Ladderback Woodpeckers. As it was getting close to noon we then headed for the picnic area behind the Sanford Dam to eat our lunch and get out of the still chilling wind. On the way we saw a small flock of Brewer's



Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Judith Evans

Blackbirds. As we ate lunch we watched a few American Coots pick-picking their way around the lake. In the scope we discovered some Grebes across the lake which the Swifts investigated and declared to be Eared Grebes. After lunch Billie and I got a good look at some Pied-billed Grebes and a pair of Common Goldeneyes.

The Swifts had to return to Amarillo at this point but Billie and I decided to go back by way of McBride's Canyon with a stop in Fritch for dessert at the Dairy Queen. Who should we find there but Rudy Cadra! It was so good to see him and he decided to go on to McBride Canyon with us. At McBride Canyon we saw Mountain Bluebirds (so beautiful!), a Belted Kingfisher, a kettle of Red-tails, a Common Nighthawk, a huge flock of Cardinals and finally, a bunch of American Goldfinches hanging out in the ditches on our way back to the highway. There we parted from our friend Rudy and headed for home after a good day of birding.



Rudy Cadra and Billie Shalvey met by chance met by chance at the Dairy Queen by Judith Evans

- Eared Grebe
- American White Pelican
- Great Blue Heron
- Northern Harrier
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ferruginous Hawk
- American Kestrel
- American Coot
- Ring-billed Gull
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Greater Roadrunner
- Common Nighthawk
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Ladder-backed Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Chihuahuan Raven
- Mountain Bluebird
- American Robin
- European Starling
- Spotted Towhee
- Rufous-crowned Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Western Meadowlark
- Brewer's Blackbird
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch
- House Sparrow

Trip List: 42 species

- Cackling Goose
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- Redhead
- Common Goldeneye
- Common Merganser
- Pied-billed Grebe



Belted Kingfisher <http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia>

Field Trip to Buffalo Lake NWR,  
Friona RV Park, and Playas  
February 20, 2010

**Participants:** Laura Rodriguez, Jennifer Pryor, Valerie Baker, Glen McCain, Preston Ruland, Judith Evans, Billie Shalvey, Susan Thompson, Barrett Pierce, D.J. Harris, Kisaundra Harris, Robert King, Carrie King, Peggy Trosper (leader)



Barrett Pierce, Susan Thompson, and Peggy Trosper  
by Judith Evans

Fourteen birders met at the entrance to Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, including three WTAMU ornithology students. First stop was Redpoll Cove, which Susan informed us would soon have permanent water, due to the efforts of several people. Unfortunately, there was no water at the time we were there, and very few birds. We did see a Great Horned Owl moving silently through the trees. Although we looked carefully for a nest, none was to be found. Several Northern Flickers and Starlings were sounding off, but not much else. A bit farther down the campground road, after walking out into the dry lake bed, we found both White-crowned and Song Sparrows in abundance.

With birds being scarce in the campground area, we headed down the road to the dyke, hoping for some water and maybe a few water birds. There was some water, where we found Canada Geese, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, and a few Gadwall. I was hoping for some Tree Sparrows (no such luck), so we walked out onto the dyke to look for those. Instead, we found a feeding flock of sparrows,

mostly White-crowns and Songs, but we also found the birds of the day, a Swamp Sparrow and a couple of Chipping Sparrows. Although abundant in migration, Chipping Sparrows are rare in winter.

After a nice lunch at Rafter G's in Umberger, we headed to Friona and the infamous RV Park, hoping to find some of the rarities found there in late summer. Although we didn't see any rarities, we did find a Ringed Turtle Dove, which was nice. We also saw American Goldfinches, American Robins, and Northern Shovelers. A Great Blue Heron was not happy with our presence, and kept making some fly-bys. A large flock of Sandhill Cranes was heard and then seen overhead.

We took some back roads, looking for playas, and were rewarded with one playa loaded with birds. Mostly there were Pintails and Green-winged Teal, but a few American Wigeon, Northern Shovelers, and Gadwall were present as well.

Next stop was a large feedlot runoff playa near Summerfield. I have never been there when it was not full of birds, but of course on this day I would be humiliated by the scarcity of birds here, especially after I had told everybody how great it would be. Nothing new was added here.

We took the roads less traveled on our way back to Umberger. We did find another Great Horned Owl at Arney and a magnificent adult Bald Eagle flew over us near Buffalo Lake.

It was a lovely day with perfect weather, and enjoyed by all (I hope!)



Robert King, DJ Harris, and Kisaundra Harris  
By Judith Evans

Birds observed:  
Great Blue Heron  
Canada Goose

Green-winged Teal  
 Mallard  
 Northern Pintail  
 Northern Shoveler  
 Gadwall  
 American Wigeon  
 Bald Eagle  
 Northern Harrier  
 Red-tailed Hawk  
 Ferruginous Hawk  
 American Kestrel  
 Ring-necked Pheasant  
 Wild Turkey  
 Sandhill Crane  
 Mourning Dove  
 Eurasian Collared Dove  
 Ringed Turtle Dove  
 Great Horned Owl  
 Ladder-backed Woodpecker  
 Northern Flicker  
 Horned Lark  
 Mountain Bluebird  
 American Robin  
 Loggerhead Shrike  
Chipping Sparrow  
 Lark Bunting  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
 White-crowned Sparrow  
 Dark-eyed Junco  
 McCown's Longspur  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Western Meadowlark  
 Great-tailed Grackle  
 House Finch  
 American Goldfinch  
 House Sparrow



Cedar Waxwing



Look at the tongue on this Northern Shoveler  
 by Jim Stevenson

## Rare Bird Report February 2010

By Connie Fordham

### Greater White-fronted Goose

20n2/15/2010, Medi-Park, Potter Co., Billie Shalvey

### Common Merganser

45on2/15/2010, E.of Amarillo, Potter Co., B. Pierce

### Bald Eagle

18on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Northern Harrier

16on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Red-tailed Hawk

22 on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Ferruginous Hawk

23on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Rough-legged Hawk

2on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Golden Eagle

1on 2/12/2010, Fm 1714, Randall Co., Preston Ruland

### American Kestrel

5on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Merlin

1on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Prairie Falcon

1on2/13/2010, Moore Co., Shelly Burnett

### Glaucous Gull

1on2/15/2010, E.of Amarillo, Potter Co., B. Pierce

### Cedar Waxwing

200on2/23/2010, PaloDuroCanyon, Randall Co., Steven  
 300on2/27/2010, Timbercreek, Randall Co., C. Hinger



Glaucous Gull <http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia>

### **News about the Rare Bird Alert**

We are investigating different ways to distribute our Bird Alert quickly and surely. For the time being, please continue to send your sightings to Judith Evans at [judith.evans@suddenlink.net](mailto:judith.evans@suddenlink.net). If you are not receiving the Bird Alerts and want them email Judith. If you are receiving the Alerts and don't want them email Judith.

## Fourth Annual Mountain Plover Festival



- Friday Night for Two ~ \$50
- Saturday All Day (includes three meals, two day tours, evening entertainment) ~ \$120
- Saturday All Day for Two ~ \$200
- Sunday Morning (includes two meals and a morning tour) ~ \$70
- Sunday Morning for Two ~ \$120

[REGISTRATION FORM](#) go to

[karval.org/images/pdf/2010\\_plover\\_festival\\_reservation.pdf](http://karval.org/images/pdf/2010_plover_festival_reservation.pdf)

Please mail your registration to the Karval Community Alliance. For more information, contact [info@karval.org](mailto:info@karval.org) or call Carl and Cherry Stogsdill at (719) 446-5354.

- In Karval, Colorado!  
April 30 – May 2, 2010
- Meet local ranchers who are descendants of the original homesteaders.
- Birdwatch with wildlife enthusiasts from around Colorado.
- Learn for yourself that Colorado's Eastern Plains really aren't plain at all!

We provide

- Home cooked meals
- Full transportation to all tour sites
- Tour guides
- Country hometown hospitality

You provide

- An empty stomach
- Your enjoyment of nature
- Questions to keep us on our toes!
- A smile

Please register by April 15, 2010!

- Full Registration ~ \$200 (includes all tours and meals from Friday supper through Sunday lunch)
- Full Registration for Two ~ \$350 (includes all tours and meals for you and a friend)

A la carte Registration

- Friday Night (includes supper and evening program) ~ \$30



Cedar Waxwing <http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia>



Cedar Waxwing <http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia>

## Migration on the Texas Coast



Northern Waterthrush by Jim Stevenson

### **SPRING MEETING OF THE TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**April 15-18, 2010  
Rockport-Fulton**

The Spring T.O.S. meeting will be hosted by Aransas Bird and Nature Club on the shore of Aransas Bay. Field trips are scheduled to go to: Aransas NWR, Calhoun County, Choke Canyon, Corpus Christi Hot Spots (Rose Hill Cemetery, Blucher Park, Tule Lake, Robstown sod farm), Goose Island SP, Cavasso Creek, Newcomb Point, Guadalupe Delta WMA including Hynes Bay, Hazel Bazemore County Park, Indian Point, Sunset Lake, Live Oak Park, Lake Corpus Christi State Park, Wesley Seale Dam, Pernitas Point, Matagorda Island, Oso Bay & Packery Channel Area, Oso Bay & Packery Channel Area, Port Aransas Area (Paradise Pond, Birding Center, jetties, Charlie's Pasture), Refugio, Bayside & Bayside Marshes, San Patricio del Hibernia & Nueces Delta Preserve, Migration Gamble for Hot Birds, Fennessey Ranch, and Rookery Boat Trip.



Anna's Hummingbird by Jim Stevenson

## Nearby Spot for a Little Birding By Jim Luce

**Tucumcari Lake**, Tucumcari, NM  
N 35° 11' 09" W 103° 41' 34"

Close to Interstate 40 this shallow lake on the east side of Tucumcari is home for water birds in the winter, for waders such as Sora and bitterns, shorebirds and sparrows.

From the east take NM I-40 Exit 335 and drive west on Tucumcari Blvd (Business 40) Go only 0.4 miles and turn right on QR Am. Go one mile and turn left. Go 0.2 miles to the Ladd S. Gordon Wildlife Area where you may overlook the lake.

Scan the edge of the lake for waders. The center of the lake attracts ducks, gulls and terns in the winter. Least Bittern has been seen. Many sparrows live near the lake.

Resident (year round) birds reported for Tucumcari Lake include Wood Duck; Ring-necked Pheasant; Pied-billed Grebe; Ferruginous Hawk; Prairie Falcon; Eurasian Collared-Dove; Greater Roadrunner; Barn Owl; Belted Kingfisher; Ladder-backed and Downy Woodpeckers; Northern Flicker; Loggerhead Shrike; Western Scrub-Jay; Pinyon Jay; American Crow; Chihuahuan and Common Ravens; Horned Lark; Mountain Chickadee; Bushtit; Curve-billed Thrasher; Spotted Towhee; Western Meadowlark; Great-tailed Grackle; House Finch and Pine Siskin.

Summer birds are Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teals; Ruddy Duck; Least Bittern; Green Heron; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Turkey Vulture; Mississippi Kite; Black-necked Stilt; American Avocet; Spotted Sandpiper; Chimney Swift; Black-chinned Hummingbird; Say's Phoebe; Ash-throated Flycatcher; Western and Eastern Kingbirds; Violet-green, Northern Rough-winged, Cliff and Barn Swallows; Bendire's Thrasher; Common Yellowthroat; Yellow-breasted Chat; Western Tanager Cassin's, Lark and Grasshopper Sparrows; Blue Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting; Yellow-headed Blackbird; Common Grackle Orchard and Bullock's Orioles and Lesser Goldfinch.

Winter birds include Snow, Ross's and Canada Geese; Gadwall; American Wigeon; Northern Shoveler; Northern Pintail; Green-winged Teal; Redhead; Ring-necked Duck; Lesser Scaup; Bufflehead; Northern Harrier; Sharp-shinned and

Cooper's Hawks; Ring-billed Gull; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Brown Creeper; Marsh Wren; Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets; Townsend's Solitaire; Hermit Thrush; Savannah, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows; Dark-eyed Junco; Chestnut-collared Longspur; Brewer's Blackbird and American Goldfinch.



Brown Creeper <http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia>

Migratory birds that have been seen are American White Pelican; Double-crested Cormorant; Great and Snowy Egrets; White-faced Ibis; Peregrine Falcon; Virginia Rail; Sora; Black-bellied, Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers; Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs; Solitary and Upland Sandpipers; Marbled Godwit; Sanderling; Semipalmated, Western, Least, White-rumped, Baird's, Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers; Long-billed Dowitcher; Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes; Franklin's Gull; Forster's, Black and Arctic (rare) Terns; Barn Owl; Western Wood-Pewee; Least Flycatcher; Eastern Phoebe; Bank Swallow; Brown Thrasher; Orange-crowned, Yellow and Yellow-rumped Warblers; American Redstart; MacGillivray's Warbler; Clay-colored, Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows, Lark Bunting and Dickcissel.



White-crowned Sparrow by Jim Stevenson



Northern Cardinal by Jim Stevenson



Bushtit <http://www.fws.gov/digitalmedia>



Spotted Towhee By Jim Stevenson

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: Robert King, 4809 Journey, Amarillo, TX 79110

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

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

## Field Trip Calendar for Early Spring 2010

**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.**

**17 April 2010 Caprock Canyon and Cottonwood Lake.** Meet at Southwest Library at 7:20 a.m. or at 9:00 a.m. at entrance to Caprock Canyon State Park. Take a lunch. **Leader: Joel Reese.**

**23-25 April 2010 (Note changed date! Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge:** The Wichitas are located in SW Oklahoma and this NWR is one of the oldest in the nation. The largest breeding population of the federally endangered Black-capped Vireo occurs here. We will bird the refuge and also nearby Hackberry Flats. Onsite accommodations will include a tent-camping group campsite reserved exclusively for our trip participants with picnic area and shelter (shelter has electric) at a shared total cost of \$30 per night. Or you may choose a hotel in Lawton. (4 hotel options are: Baymont Inn, 1203 NW 40th - \$93 + tax - 580-353-5581; Hampton Inn & Suites, 2610 NW Cache Rd - \$124 + tax - 580-355-8200; Springhill Suites, 3 SE Interstate Dr - \$126 + tax - 580-248-8200; Holiday Inn Express, 209 SE Interstate Dr - \$126 + tax - 580-248-4446; All four hotels offer some of the following discounts: AARP, AAA, Seniors, and retired military.) Local birders Kurt and Sharon Meisenzahl will be our guides. **Leader: Billie Shalvey**

**15 May 2010 Hawk's Nest Ranch** Meet at SW Library at 6:20 a.m. It is about a 2 hour drive to the ranch in Collingsworth County. An alternative meeting spot is the Outpost in Clarendon at 7:20 a.m. Bring lunch. **Leader: Georgia Swift**