

The Prairie Horned Lark

Newsletter of the Panhandle Bird Club

Vol. X No. 10

October 10, 2009

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.

Officers of the Panhandle Bird Club

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Panhandle Bird Club **Annual Meeting**

6:30 PM October 15, 2009
Southwest Public Library
6801 SW 45th Avenue

Our speaker will be Trey Barron who will present a program entitled Tips and Tricks for Bird Photography.

Please plan to come to our only meeting of the year. We always have such good fellowship at these meetings and we have important business to conduct.

See the president's note below on a matter that is vital to the continued activity of our club.

At our annual meeting on October 15 we plan to spend a few minutes planning field trips for 2010. A summation of previous field trips has been prepared that gives the site of the trip, the name of the leader, the month of the trip and the number of species seen. Look these over and if you could lead a trip to the same site you led before or if you would be interested in leading a trip to a different site or a new site, record it on a recording sheet which I will collect and use to set up a schedule for 2010 trips. Thank you for your help in planning interesting and productive field trips. Jim Luce

Dues are Due!

Panhandle Bird Club dues of \$15 are due for the year September 2009-September 2010. Please make checks payable to Panhandle Bird Club and mail them to Connie Fordham, 2404 11th Ave., Canyon, TX 79015. Send her your name, telephone number, email address, and mailing address.

Black Mesa State Park (Oklahoma)

Sept. 5-7, 2009

This was an extended field trip to the far northwest tip of the Oklahoma Panhandle where five Panhandle Bird Club members joined a group of birders from Oklahoma to bird over the Labor Day weekend in this beautiful state park. The following report was posted to the OKBIRDS listserv by Jimmy Woodard, the trip leader.

A good sized group of birders covered the mesa country this weekend from Friday to Monday. Participants for all or part of the weekend were Steve Metz, Kim Wade, Frank Sandford, Dan Robinson, Jerry Vanbebber, Valerie Bradshaw, Ursula (?), Susan Thompson-TX, Jody McKenzie-TX, Judith Evans-TX, Bill Carrell, Doug Eide, Jimmy Woodard, and a couple from TX whose names I can't remember (Robert and Carrie King).

Brief highlights are as follows. Steve or others will hopefully post more details later on.

Broad-tailed Hummer.....2(1 subadult male with a few gorget feathers coming in at the base of the throat and one female/imm). Both were at the Mesa B&B all weekend.

Possible Baird's Sparrow or hybrid.....Steve and Dan had this one. They sent photos to a sparrow expert to look at. The bird responded to a Baird's playback but exhibited some non-Baird's features.

A Juniper Titmouse, Pinyon and Scrub Jays, and Bushtits were found at Camp Billy Joe. A female American Redstart was at Esther Israel's house.

In Keyes on Friday-4th. Several Western Tanagers and a Black-headed Grosbeak were found by Steve's group. They also had a Lazuli Bunting.

There were 16 Black-billed Magpies on the river near the Mesa B&B on Friday. A dozen or so were seen again there Monday morning.

Dan reported a flock of Mountain Plovers in a field NE of Boise late last week.

One Lewis' Woodpecker was seen at the Hoot Owl Ranch on Saturday-5th.

A MacGillivray's Warbler was seen at the state park on Sunday by Susan Thompson. There were 4-5 Brewer's Sparrows along a road NE of Boise on Friday.

A Virginia Rail was heard at Optima on Friday. There were two Osprey at Lake Etling on Saturday and one there on Sunday.

Expected birds such as Western Wood Pewee, Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, Lark Bunting(lots), Western Screech Owl, Yellow-headed Blackbird, ravens, Curve-billed and Sage Thrasher, Rock Wren, were reported by one or more groups.

Shorebirds were scarce even though there were several playas around. My group only found Least, Baird's, Solitary, Spotted, and Upland Sandpipers.

This is just a brief summary of birds from all the groups. Maybe others will post more details later. Bill is staying out there a few more days so maybe he can add a few more species later. My trip total was 107.

Jimmy Woodard

Mustang, Oklahoma

And from Susan Thompson:

A "Lifer" Owl near Black Mesa for the Texas
Panhandle Contingent
by Susan Thompson

The field trip to Cimarron County, Oklahoma was a fun one in a lot of ways, but for me, one part really stood out.

To set the stage, Jody, Judith, and I were back at the Black Mesa B&B after our 2nd day of birding, and we were just rocking in rocking chairs and swinging on the porch swing, watching the sun setting and the last wave of hummingbirds at the feeders tanking up for the night. Our leader, Jimmy Woodard of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society, had just chosen a nearby chair for himself when Jody said, "So, do you wanna go try for a Western Screech-Owl again?" (See, the previous night, Jimmy and Jerry had seen a western screech-owl mere moments before Jody, Judith, and I had caught up to them,

leading to one of those “Oh man, we missed what?!” moments that can and do happen when birding in groups.)



Western Screech Owl

Right. So. Jimmy, while good-naturedly letting it be known that he had “*just* sat down,” was persuaded to accompany us to the nearby bridge to give it a shot. And Jerry joined us, bringing a very powerful flashlight.

We walked back and forth along the bridge, initially playing an MP3 of a western screech-owl call. (I was feeling pretty happy with how well iBird was sounding on my iPhone.) We got nothing, no response, despite persistence... Then Jimmy started whistling his own impression of a western screech-owl and *bingo*, one started calling back immediately! Yep, Jimmy’s whistling was more convincing than an actual recording – someone explain that one to me! Anyway, hearing it was cool in and of itself. The Western sounds quite different from the Eastern, a kind of “bouncing ball” hoot, as opposed to the weird whinnying call of the Eastern. (The Eastern is the only one we get in the Texas Panhandle.) Jimmy kept up the whistling and *another* Western Screech-Owl joined in.

Jimmy told us that it was pretty likely we would be able to spotlight one – we just had to look carefully as Jerry shined his flashlight wherever it sounded like the calls were coming from. The owls kept calling back to Jimmy, and we kept on looking, and *finally*, the flashlight landed on one of those loud little shrimps. AND IT WAS EXTREMELY ADORABLE!!!! The head seemed to take up about half the whole bird, and the eyes seemed to take up about half the head – it looked basically like a cartoon caricature of how the cutest owl in the

world would look. As it called, its entire body appeared to shiver all over. If it had been in my power to reach out and hug/cuddle the owl I might have tried, although I bet it would have ripped me to shreds in the process. The magic continued as the second owl flew onto a prominent perch and we could see them both. Jimmy said they were probably a pair defending their territory from a perceived interloper, and he speculated that they might have been saying something to each other such as, “I dealt with this stuff last time, now it’s your turn!” “No, you’re closer!” And so on.

Anyway, it was very very neat to see this – a “lifer” for all three of the Texans on the trip.

AMARILLO SITES

Leader: Candy Myers

September 26, 2009

The City of Amarillo has a variety of sites which provides good birding with little travel. Judith Evans, Michael Ryan, Jim Luce and I met at Southwest Library and started by looking over McDonald Lake next to the library. We saw nine species including Shoveler and Wilson’s Phalarope. We drove south to the corner of Bell Street and Arden Road to scan the large prairie dog town located there. We were able to find seven Burrowing Owls. It reminded me of the site that used to be out near the dump where we would scan over the town with our scope saying, “there’s another one, I see one more, here’s another.” It was great seeing so many!



Burrowing Owl

Photo by Jim Stevenson

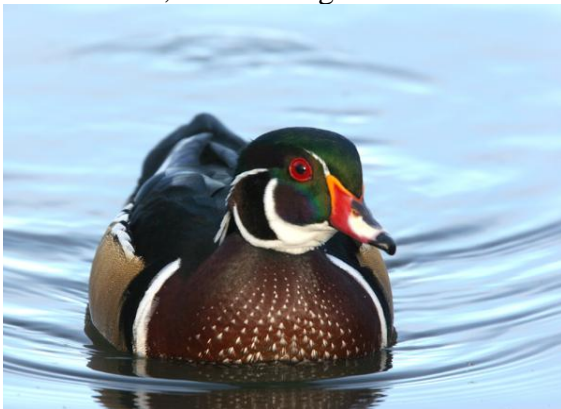
The next site was the playa on Tradewinds Road about a mile north of Hollywood Road. Due to little rain during the past month or so there was only a small pond at this usually productive location. We did see lots of both Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds there, along with a good number of Green-winged Teal.

From Tradewinds we drove to Southeast Park. It is difficult to walk behind the lake so we mainly birded the lake and the field north of the lake. We saw Double-crested Cormorant, Swainson's Hawk, American Kestrel and White-winged Dove. While there a flock of Yellow-headed Blackbirds thrilled us with a couple of brilliant aerial displays.



Yellow-headed Blackbird by Jim Stevenson

Our final stop was at Thompson Park and lakes. The Wood Ducks were everywhere! A family started feeding the ducks and we were all surprised to see the Wood Ducks come bounding in from all around to get their share. We also saw Ruddy Duck, American Wigeon, Snowy and Great Egret, Pied-billed Grebe, Belted Kingfisher and Green Heron.



Wood Duck Photo by Dave Herr

The Burrowing Owls and the Yellow-headed Blackbirds really 'made' my day! The weather was gorgeous and the company was charming. Who could ask for more?

We identified a total of 35 birds:

- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- American Wigeon
- Mallard
- Northern Shoveler
- Green-winged Teal
- Ring-necked Duck
- Ruddy Duck
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret
- Green Heron
- Turkey Vulture
- Northern Harrier
- Swainson's Hawk
- American Kestrel
- American Coot
- Killdeer
- Wilson's Phalarope
- Rock Pigeon
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- White-winged Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Burrowing Owl
- Chimney Swift
- Belted Kingfisher
- Blue Jay
- Vesper Sparrow
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Western Meadowlark
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Great-tailed Grackle
- House Sparrow

Vesper Sparrow
Photo by Jim Stevenson



Birds Sightings for the month of September, 2009

By Connie Fordham

Again thanks to Anthony Hewetson for all his Panhandle sightings!

Double-crested Cormorant

9/18/09, S.E. Park, Amarillo, Potter Co., Jan Elston

Great Egret

5on9/1/09, Pantex, Carson Co., Monty Schoenhals
1on 9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson
9/15/09, Fritch, Potter Co., Mark McKinney

Snowy Egret

7on9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson

Cattle Egret

9/1/09, Pantex, Carson Co., Monty Schoenhals

White-faced Ibis

5on9/1/09, Pantex, Carson Co., Monty Schoenhals
68 on9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro co., Anthony Hewetson
48on 9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson

Ross's Goose

2on 9/8/09, Dimmit, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson

Wood Duck

2 on 9/9/09, Amarillo, Potter Co., Don McColl

Green-winged Teal

9/2/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Jan Elston

Blue-winged Teal

9/2/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Jan Elston

Cinnamon Teal

4on 9/26/09, Bear Creek, Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson

Turkey Vulture

9/2/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Jan Elston

Osprey

1on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Mississippi Kite

1on9/26/09, Shamrock, Wheeler co., Anthony Hewetson

Cooper's Hawk

2on 9/8/209, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson

Broad-winged Hawk

1on9/26/09, Hwy 83, Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson

Swainson's Hawk

9/2/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Jan Elston

Sandhill Crane

4 on 9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson

Semipalmated Plover



1on9/8/09,

Hereford, Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson

Wilson's Snipe

1on 9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson

Upland Sandpiper

2on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson

Solitary Sandpiper

1on 9/8/09, Vega, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Wilson's Phalarope

2on 9/8/09, Vega, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Forster's Tern

3on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson

Common Poorwill

1 on9/20/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Dennis Palmitier
1on 9/27/09, Floydada, Floyd Co., Anthony Hewetson

Black-chinned Hummingbird

1 on9/1/09, Amarillo, Potter Co., Don McColl
1on9/1/09, Canyon, Randall Co., Monty Schoenhals
1 on9/15/09, Amarillo, Potter Co., Don McColl

Calliope Hummingbird

1on9/1/09, Canyon, Randall Co., Monty Schoenhals

Hairy Woodpecker

1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan, Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson

Western Wood-Pewee

1on 9/8/09, Hereford, Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson

Willow Flycatcher

1on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on 9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Least Flycatcher

1on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on 9/8/09, Hereford, Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on 9/26/09, Brisco Co., Anthony Hewetson



Least Flycatcher

Photo by Jim Stevenson

Eastern Kingbird

1on9/26/09, Hwy83, Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

9/19/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Jan Elston
many-9/26/09, Canyon, Randall co., Monty Schoenhals

Tree Swallow

2on 9/8/09, Vega,Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
4on 9/8/09, Dimmitt,Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on 9/26/09, White Deer,Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson

Bank Swallow

1 on9/8/09, Vega,Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Cliff Swallow

4on 9/26/09, Hwy 83, Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

2on 9/26/09, LkMcClellan,Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/26/09, Bear Creek,Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson
3 on9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/27/09, Armstrong co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Hwy83,Collingsworth Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Armstrong co., Anthony Hewetson

Carolina Wren

1on9/8/09, Hereford,Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson

Winter Wren

1 on9/16/09, Amarillo, Potter Co., Don McColl

Gray Catbird

1on 9/8/09, Hereford,Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan,Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Hwy83,Collingsworth Co., Anthony Hewetson

Sage Thrasher

1on9/8/09, CR1061,Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson

Blue-headed Vireo

1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan,Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on 9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, CR160,CollingsworthCo., Anthony Hewetson

Orange-crowned Warbler

1on9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/26/09, Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Hwy83,Collingsworth co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, CR160,Collingsworthco., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, CR130,CollingsworthCo., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/27/09, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Armstrong co., Anthony Hewetson



Orange-crowned Warbler by Jim Stevenson

Yellow Warbler

1on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
2 on9/8/09, Dimmitt,Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/8/09, CR1061,Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan,Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Armstrong co., Anthony Hewetson

Yellow-rumped Warbler

2on9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/27/09, CR130,CollingworthCo., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/27/09, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson
5on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson

Black-and-white Warbler

1on 9/8/09, Hereford,Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson

American Redstart

1on9/2/09, ThompsonPk, Potter Co., Robert/Carrie King

MacGillivray's Warbler

1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan,Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson

Common Yellowthroat



Sage Thrasher photo by Jim Stevenson

Brown Thrasher

1 on9/31/09, Amarillo,Potter Co., Don McColl

Swainson's Thrush

1on9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson

Hermit Thrush

1on9/26/09, Bear Creek,Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson
2on9/26/09, Shamrock,Wheeler co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson
1on9/27/09, CR130,CollingsworthCo., Anthony Hewetson

White-eyed Vireo

1on9/28/09, PaloDuroCanyon,Randall co., Kenneth Seyffert

Plumbeous Vireo

1on 9/26/09, Bear Creek,Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson

1on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on 9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on 9/26/09, Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan, Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, FM203, Collingsworth Co., Anthony Hewetson

Wilson's Warbler

3on9/8/09, Hereford, Deaf Smith Co., Anthony Hewetson
 3on 9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
 3on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson
 3 on9/8/09, Dimmitt, Castro Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on 9/26/09, Bear Creek, Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson
 2on9/26/09, Canyon, Randall co., Monty Schoenhals
 1on 9/26/09, Brisco Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan, Gray Co., Anthony Hewetson
 2on9/26/09, Shamrock, Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, CR160, Collingsworth Co., Anthony Hewetson
 3on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson

Western Tanager

1on 9/8/09, Vega, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/26/09, LkMcClellan, Gray co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Hwy83, Collingsworth Co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson

7on 9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson
 3on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson
 9/19/09, Pampa, Gray co., Jan Elston

Brewer's Sparrow

1on 9/8/09, Vega, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Field Sparrow

2on 9/26/09, Carson Co., Anthony Hewetson

Vesper Sparrow

5on 9/8/09, Vega, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Savannah Sparrow

9/2/09, Pampa, Gray Co., Jan Elston

White-crowned Sparrow

2on 9/27/09, FM203, Collingsworth Co., Anthony Hewetson

Black-headed Grosbeak

1on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Indigo Bunting

2on9/26/09, LkMcClellan, Gray co., Anthony Hewetson

Painted Bunting

1on9/1/09, Canyon, Randall Co., Monty Schoenhals
 1on 9/26/09, LkMcClellan, Gray co., Anthony Hewetson
 1on9/27/09, Donley Co., Anthony Hewetson

Yellow-headed Blackbird

9/18/2009, S.E. Park, Amarillo, Potter Co., Jan Elston
 5on9/21/09, Canyon, Randall Co., Steven Knadle
 5on9/26/09, Shamrock, Wheeler Co., Anthony Hewetson
 3 on9/26/09, Claude, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson
 20on9/27/09, Floydada, Floyd co., Anthony Hewetson



Western Tanager

Photo by Jim Stevenson

Green-tailed Towhee

1on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson

Spotted Towhee

1on9/27/09, Armstrong Co., Anthony Hewetson

Chipping Sparrow

4on9/8/09, CR1061, Potter Co., Anthony Hewetson

4on9/8/09, Oldham Co., Anthony Hewetson

Clay-colored Sparrow

And finally.....this marvelous photo of her family looking through the blind at Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge sent in by Connie Fordham!



Connie didn't even realize they looked like jail "birds" until she got the picture developed!

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 11th Ave., Canyon, TX 79015

Name: _____ New: _____ Renew: _____ Telephone: _____ email: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Field Trip Calendar for September and October, 2009

17 OCT Lake Tanglewood: Meet at 7:20 a.m. at the west side of the Southwest Branch Amarillo Public Library parking lot (nearest McDonald Lake). Alternate meeting spot will be at Lake Tanglewood front gate at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch. **Leader: Tom Johnson**

14 November, 2009. Kritser Ranch: Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the west side of the Southwest Branch, Amarillo Public Library parking lot (nearest McDonald Lake). An alternate meeting area will be at the ranch headquarters at about 8:30 a.m. Bring a lunch. The ranch entrance is on the right off US 287/878 about 20 miles north of Amarillo about 500 yards past the Canadian River crossing. **Leader: Michael Ryan.**

Mark your calendars now for a trip in-the-works for next year (2010) 30 APR through 2 MAY 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, and although they are most reliably seen beginning in mid-May, we may see some early arrivals on Elk Mountain Trail. In any case, the whole area is "plenty birdy." 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**

