



THE WOOD DUCK



Newsletter #239

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

January 2019

www.LowerTrinityValleyBirdClub.org

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PO Box 6051 Liberty, Texas 77575



January Meeting

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club

Thursday, January 10, 2019

6:30 pm

The FLNB Corner

1822 Sam Houston Avenue, Liberty

Directions: From Highway 90, turn north on Travis St., between Kentucky Fried Chicken and Whataburger, and cross over the railroad tracks. The FLNB Corner is at the intersection of Sam Houston Ave. and Travis St., across from First Liberty National Bank.

Be sure to come early for our “Birder’s Chat” time. If you have any questions, call President Gary Holmes at 281-576-0574, or e-mail him at geholmes52@gmail.com.

Our speaker for January will be Nancy Wilson. Her presentation will cover *the Gouldian Finches of Australia* and the *Save the Gouldian Fund!*

Nancy is an aviculturist and member of the Houston Canary and Finch Society. She will be speaking to us about her trips to Australia to work with Queensland Finch Society and Save the Gouldian Fund. Come learn about numbers in the wild, decreasing habitat, and nutrition advancements from Queensland Finch Society.



President’s Report	page 2
Meeting Minutes	page 7
Meeting Schedule	page 7
January Field Trip	page 6
Field Trip Schedule	page 6
Winter Weekend Trip	page 5

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club



Click here

It’s time to pay dues!

President's Report

By Gary Holmes

Hello Bird Club:

Hope you had a great Christmas and are ready for a fabulous New Year! On the few clear days after Christmas, Lisa and I have had some nice yard birds: **Blue-headed Vireo, Northern Flicker, Black and White Warbler, Pine Warblers, Cedar Waxwings** and flocks of **Sandhill Cranes** overhead. I hope you have had time to bird!

At our **December meeting**, we had excellent food and fellowship at the *nibbles* where we shared many delightful stories about our birding adventures with Ellen Picket. The club voted to make a **\$100.00 donation to the Liberty Public Library in memory of Ellen**. The December presentation was over the LTVBC Maine Trip- which included some wonderful images and accounts of our birding venture in New Hampshire and Maine. We appreciate all who the attended meeting and brought the food and drinks.

Due to scheduling conflicts, we have rescheduled the **Nacogdoches trip for Feb 1-3, 2019**. Details about the trip can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

We will have an **interesting presentation on January 10, 2019** over the *Gouldian Finches of Australia* (see articles in this newsletter). Nancy Wilson has taken several trips to Australia to participate in the annual Gouldian Finch census. Nancy will discuss her experiences in Australia and with the *Save the Gouldian Fund*. **We will take donations to help this effort- please bring check or cash** to support the conservation of this beautiful finch.

On January 19, 2019 we have two activities: an **early birding trip to the Anahuac NWR** and the **Trinity River NWR 25th Anniversary Dinner**. The field trip will have two starting times- 5 am for those looking for the Short-eared Owl and 7 am for ducks and winter birds. We will meet at both times at the Visitors Center. We plan to be through by noon, so we can rest for the 25th Anniversary Dinner at 6:00 pm.

I hope to see everyone at the **January 10th meeting**. We will have a great presentation and good friends ... Bring a guest!!

See you on Thursday,

Gary

Jan 19, 2019

LTVBC Anahuac Field Trip

5 am or 7 am

Ducks and winter birds

Through by noon so we can rest before the Appreciation Dinner and 25th Refuge Anniversary

Jan 19, 2019

**Trinity River Refuge
Volunteer/ FOTRR
Appreciation Dinner
and
25th Refuge Anniversary**

**6:00 pm
FLNB Corner**

***Please RSVP by Jan 11
Call 939-336-9786***

Saving Gouldian Finches—Common In Cages, But Almost Gone In The Wild

By Hugh Powell

July 15, 2012

Australia is like a pet shop with its doors thrown open. Strange marsupials, frilled lizards, and gaudy birds dot the countryside. And many of Australia's birds, from cockatoos to budgies, are pet shop staples. Until the mid-1980s, trappers collected 11 species of finches from the grasslands of northern Australia, earning up to \$11 per bird in the pet trade.



The most valuable of these was the Gouldian Finch, a tiny, outrageously colorful bird that is now one of the most popular cage birds in the world. “I’m always amazed wherever I go; I walk into a pet shop and Gouldians are there,” said Sarah Pryke, a biologist at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, who has worked on the finches since 2005. She studies them because, despite their ubiquity behind bars, Gouldian Finches are nearing extinction in the wild—a sad paradox that afflicts other beloved cage birds, including the Java Sparrow and South America’s Red Siskin. Learning how to bring back wild populations and discovering the ways in which their caged counterparts can and cannot help, is an ongoing puzzle. Fortunately for Gouldians, recent focus on the birds’ unusual nesting sites may help turn the tide.

Hundreds of thousands of Gouldian Finches used to live in Australia’s tropical savannas, but by the 1980s their numbers had crashed to 2,500 or fewer. The pet trade was not so much to blame as the bird’s fussiness and naïveté, Pryke said. Gouldian Finches eat the seeds of only about a dozen species of grasses; they nest only in deep, hollow branches of two species of eucalyptus trees; and if they are bred in captivity, they emerge into the wild clueless about predators.

Brad Congdon, of James Cook University, was part of an early project to release captive-bred birds from an aviary at the Jabiru Safari Lodge in northern Queensland. When they first opened the doors, the birds didn’t even wake up. When they did leave, “they were like lollipops for raptors,” Congdon said. “They just did not know what to do when any predators came around.”



Captive-bred birds can have problems in the wild, said Eduardo Iñigo-Elias, who leads the Cornell Lab’s Neotropical Conservation Initiative. For example, endangered Puerto Rican Parrots were raised using Hispaniolan Parrots as surrogate parents. The chicks developed just fine, but they only learned the dialects of their foster parents and failed to recognize their own species once released.

So even though Gouldian Finches breed well in captivity, issues with genetics, behavior, and disease mean they can't be used to restock the wild population. Instead, Pryke studies captive birds to learn about wild ones. A breakthrough came when her team focused on nest sites, which for years hadn't been studied because tree holes seemed plentiful on the Australian savanna. But it turns out they weren't the right kind of tree holes.



"Gouldians are really fussy about what they'll use," Pryke said. "They like a very small entrance, and they like a very deep, long entrance, and they pretty much won't breed in anything else." So Pryke and her colleagues invented a nest box that looks like a cross between a bluebird box and a didgeridoo. "They love it really, really dark, and they love to run down this sort of tunnel into their box," Pryke said.

The first few years of results have been promising. In places where just 40 percent of adults nested each year, the addition of nest boxes pushed the nesting rate to 90 percent, and also reduced predation and increased brood sizes, Pryke said.



Using teams of graduate students and volunteers, Pryke has now built more than 3,000 of these boxes, and Gouldian Finch populations in her study areas have tripled. "It suggests that if we can get the environment right, [nest boxes] could probably help to increase these birds back to good numbers," she said.



http://savethegouldian.net/?page_id=54

Additional Reading

Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gouldian_finch

Gouldian color variation <https://www.calacademy.org/explore-science/gouldian-finch>

Australian Wildlife Conservancy <http://www.australianwildlife.org/wildlife/gouldian-finch.aspx>

Save the Gouldian Fund http://savethegouldian.net/?page_id=54



Nacogdoches Area Winter Field Trip

Our weekend trip this year will be February 1-3, 2019 to the **Nacogdoches area** in search of winter birds. We are still working to get permission to bird the Nacogdoches airport on Saturday morning in search of Sprague's pipit and Henslow's sparrow. We will have a local guide for the airport portion of the trip. Other locations under consideration for birding are Alazan Bayou Wildlife Management Area, SFA Experimental Forest, Saint's Rest Road, and the Nacogdoches Water Treatment plant. We will have a weekend packed with birding.

Hotel rooms have been reserved at the Hampton Inn & Suites.



Check-in will be on Friday, Feb. 1 for 2 nights, with check-out on Sunday.

The room rate is \$109.00 + 13% tax per night.

To reserve your room, please call the hotel directly at 936-560-9901

To get the special rate use **group code: LTVBC**

The rooms can be canceled up to 1 week before the check-in without penalty.

The block of **rooms will be held until January 20th.**

Please let Shelli Ellerbe know when you reserve your room by emailing her at shellerbe@gmail.com

We must know how many participants there will be on the field trip. The airport requires that we have orange vests and they must be ordered. Please reserve your place as soon as possible.

Old River [Christmas Bird Count](#)

Dec 29, 2018

The Trinity River Christmas Bird Count was canceled due to the U.S. Government Budget Shutdown; nevertheless a few days later, the **Old River Christmas Bird Count** was completed on a cold and damp Saturday with **146 species** identified in the circle.



In section 5, **Lisa Holmes, Shelli Ellerbe, David Knutson, Dennis Outlaw** and **Gary Holmes** identified 54 species with the first **Crested Caracara** (2) ever in the section 5. We were somewhat limited by the river flooding and closure of Champion Lake but still had an enjoyable day. Our group was the only group to find **Red-Headed Woodpecker** (3), **Hermit Thrush** (2) and **Black-chinned Hummingbird** (1).

Our best birding spot was David's Backyard with over 15 species including: **Hermit Thrush, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** and **Black-chinned Hummingbird**. Surprisingly, we saw no American Robins the entire day.

Other LTVBC members participating in the count were **Stuart Marcus** and **Carlton Collier**.

LTVBC January Field Trip

Saturday, January 19, 2019

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/anahuac/information.html>

Bring spotting scopes, flashlights, mosquito repellent, water, and lunch.

Directions from Houston: Take I-10 East to Exit #812 (TX 61 or Anahuac/Hankamer exit). Head south on TX 61 for approximately four miles to stop sign. Continue straight through stop sign, the road becomes Hwy 562. Continue on Hwy 562 for approximately eight and a half miles to the fork in the road. At the fork turn left onto FM 1985 and continue straight for an additional four miles to the main refuge entrance.



Schedule:

5:00 am Meet at the Visitor's Center for pre-dawn birding on the refuge roads. Target Bird: Short-Eared Owl

7:00 am Meet at the Visitor's Center for ducks and winter birds. Target Bird: Groove-billed Ani

11:00 am Early Lunch at visitor's center

Through by noon so we can rest before the Trinity River Refuge Appreciation Dinner and 25th Refugee Anniversary at 6 pm in Liberty.

2018-19 Field Trip Schedule	
<i>3rd Saturday</i>	
<i>Day/Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
Saturday, January 19, 2019	Anahuac NWR (Morning trip)
February 1-3, 2019	Nacogdoches Trip (3 days)
Saturday, March 16, 2019	Brazos Bend State Park
Saturday, April 13, 2019	Sam Houston National Forest
Saturday, April 20, 2019	High Island, Bolivar, Anahuac
Saturday, April 27, 2019	Colette & Paul's Home
May	Global Big Day
Saturday, May 18, 2019	The Big Thicket/Roy Larson's

Meeting Minutes December 13, 2018



The Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club met Thursday, December 13, 2018, at the First Liberty National Bank Corner in Liberty, Texas. President Gary Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. Seventeen members and two guests were present. Stuart Marcus made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2018, meeting as published in the December 2018 Wood Duck #238. Shelli Ellerbe seconded, all agreed and the motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report: Current checking account balance is \$1,823.90. Since the November meeting, we had expenses of \$54.00 for P. O. Box rental and \$168.00 for the website. There were receipts of \$190.00 for dues. The David Dauphin Memorial account received \$0.24 in interest. The current balance in this account is \$1,172.41.

Old Business:

- The Field Trip this month will be participation in the Christmas Bird Counts.
- The date of the weekend trip to Nacogdoches has changed. It is now scheduled for February 1- 3, 2019.

New Business:

- The field trip for January will be to the Anahuac NWR (morning trip) on January 19, 2019.
- Margo Taylor made a motion to give \$50.00 as a speaker fee. Joe Hall seconded, all agreed and the motion was approved.
- Carlton Collier made a motion to make a \$100.00 donation to the Liberty Public Library in memory of Ellen Pickett. Denise Barkis seconded, all agreed and the motion was approved.

Speaker Presentation: Gary Holmes gave a wonderful presentation of the Bird Club's trip to Maine.

Door prizes were given by Lisa Holmes and won by Ceal Stirling and Mindee Poldrack.

Since there was no more new or old business to discuss, Stuart Marcus made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carl Poldrack seconded, all agreed and the meeting was adjourned.

Renie O'Connor, Secretary

2018-19 Meeting Schedule		
<i>Second Thursday at 6:30</i>		
<i>Day/Date</i>	<i>PM Speakers</i>	<i>Events</i>
Thursday, January 10, 2019	Nancy Wilson, Saving the Gouldian Finches	
Thursday, February 14, 2019	TBD	Great Backyard Bird Count
Thursday, March 14, 2019	Paul Fagala, Attracting Birds to Your Backyard	
NO Thursday meeting in April	"LTVBC Big Day"	
NO Thursday meeting in May	Picnic	



LOWER TRINITY VALLEY BIRD CLUB

Membership Information

[Check us out on Facebook!](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/98618981435/>

Would you like to get your
 newsletter by email?
 Let us know at:
geholmes52@gmail.com
 You'll get full color pictures and live links.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

New Member Renewing Member

Donation \$ _____

Donation to D. Dauphin Memorial Fund

\$ _____

Update my information

Send newsletter by email or mail

**It's time to pay
 dues for 2018-19.
 Please make checks
 payable to LTVBC.**

Student Membership \$10.00

Individual Membership \$20.00

Family Membership \$35.00

Sponsor Membership \$50.00

Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club
 P.O. Box 6051
 Liberty, TX 77575