

# Wichita Audubon



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## Tall Tales from Chaplin Nature Center

This story is true; names have been changed to protect the innocent. Sometimes animals are not the only ones to behave in odd ways. A naturalist at an unnamed location was asleep in bed with his wife when he was awakened by the sound of an animal scratching in the leaves outside the bedroom window. Late night intrusions into this person's sleep are a common occurrence, as small mammals pass by this window regularly.

What was different about this night was that the animal had found a cache of acorns and was happily crunching them at a leisurely pace. The scratching itself was not annoying but the crunching of acorns, although amusing at first, soon became seriously irritating. Teeth grinding against the hard shells of the acorns was akin to someone running fingernails across a blackboard over and over again. To quiet the gnashing  
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For more information about any Chaplin Nature Center programs call Shawn Silliman at 620-442-4133, or e-mail [cnc@wichitaaudubon.org](mailto:cnc@wichitaaudubon.org).



## June Picnic

The annual WAS picnic will held on Tuesday, June 18, 6:00 pm at the Sim Park Shelter house. The shelter house is located south of the Sim Park Municipal Golf Course. It is on Sim Park Drive, past the Old Cowtown Museum.

Bring your own service and a covered dish or dessert to share. Iced tea will be served to help cool off the summer evening, or bring your own beverage.

## New Officers Elected

The following officers were elected at the May meeting to serve beginning July 1:

Vice-president: Kevin Groeneweg  
Treasurer: Duane Delong  
Secretary: Sharon Bolin  
Director (3 yr term): Bill Beard  
Director (3 yr term): Mary Engleman Kemmer.

## Wallace Champeny Honored

The recipient of the 2002 Meritorious Service Award is Wallace Champeny. Wally has been an active and supportive member since at 1964.

He has supplied bird seed at bargain prices for our bird seed sales for more than 15 years, and delivers it to Wichita for us. John Wherry said "He often arrived at our house after 8:00 PM with a truck load of bird feed to unload in our garage."

## Coming Events

### June 8

Walk With Wildlife at the Great Plains Nature Center, 9 am to 4 pm.

### June 15

Chautauqua County field trip. Meet at the Card Creek Campground shelter house on the northwest end of Elk City Lake at 7 am.

Leader: Ed Miller, 620-331-6820, [ejm916@yahoo.com](mailto:ejm916@yahoo.com)

### June 18

Annual picnic at the Sim Park shelter house, 6:00 pm.

Wally has led innumerable field trips over the years. For at least 30 years he has hosted a field trip at his Oxford Mill. Many of us have fond memories of riding around the Oxford countryside in the back of his farm truck, like a birding hayrack ride.

Besides leading trips he has always been a faithful supporter, attending most field trips every year,  
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## Meritorious Award, continued

participating in and acting as compiler for several Christmas Bird Counts, and always giving a hand to the less experienced.

He has served as a mentor for many a birder - from Kenn Kaufmann to Jack and Norma Dennett. Wally is always very patient and helpful with inexperienced birders to ensure that they see and identify each sighting.

Congratulations to a most deserving winner, Wallace Champeny.



## Tall Tales from Chaplin Nature Center, continued

of teeth a couple of loud pounds with the fist against the window should have sufficed, and it did, for a while.

Sleep had almost returned when the sound of crunching crept back into his half conscience mind. The thought of going out into the cold night was not appealing, so out came the flashlight. Possibly the light of one-million candlepower would be enough to deter this creature. Victory seemed to be at hand, and then, almost on the verge of sleep, the sound of footsteps was followed by the crunching of hard shells.

At this point sleep was slipping away into a distant memory; nothing left to do but go out and face the beast, man to wild animal. So out the door goes the naturalist, lover of nature, environmental educator and carrier

of a big stick. He stood in the light of the full moon, weary-eyed, sleep deprived, with the biting sting of the winter wind blowing, wearing only underwear, ready to do battle, oblivious to everything except the crunching sound and annoyed by the fact that his wife was still sound asleep.

The man and the great beast met, eyes locked, muscles tensed and the body arched in the glimmer of the moonlight and the chase began. The vile animal quickly scampered up a tree to avoid this half crazed lunatic. Feeling slighted vindicated, the other beast headed back into the house and hoped for peace. The identity of the midnight cruncher may never be known.

*Shawn Silliman*

### 2001-2002 WAS Officers

President	Patty Marlett	942-2164	pmarlett@mac.com
Vice-president	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@cox.net
Secretary	Julia Hoppes	682-2623	jhoppes@cox.net
Treasurer	Duane Delong	684-7456	dwdelong@earthlink.net

### Directors

Carol Cumberland	685-4867	ccumb@swbell.net
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Gary Straley	620-221-3664	garrob@hit.net

### Committee Chairs

Newsletter	Patty Marlett	942-2164	pmarlett@mac.com
CNC	Gary Straley	620-221-3664	garrob@hit.net
Programs	Kevin Groeneweg	687-4268	kgroeneweg@cox.net
Conservation	Jay Newton	316-322-9090	
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Naturalist	Shawn Silliman	620-442-4133	cnc@wichitaudubon.org

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## Thank You

On Friday, April 12, and Saturday, April 13, ten Audubon Society members did a cleanup of Chisholm Creek Park. On Friday, Sandra Tholen and Duane Delong spent an hour picking up trash. On Saturday Duane returned to help out the others. Patty Marlett, Rick Goodrick, Carol Cumberland, Anne Tarver, and Beverly DuGay cleaned the trails and roadsides on the east side of the park. Tom Gray, Becky Aldridge, Duane Delong and Paul Hobelman picked up around the parking lot on the west side.

Thanks to all who helped out!

*Paul Hobelman, Greenways chair*

# Big Bend Adventure

Fifteen people traveled to Texas for the extended field trip April 21-25. We stayed in Terlingua, TX, on the west edge of the park. The evening of our arrival we found some pretty good birds in the Terlingua ghost town: Green-tailed Towhee, Cassin's Sparrow, Pyrrhuloxia, and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher to name a few.

The first day we explored the west side. Our first stop was Blue Spring, where we met Cactus Wrens, Black-throated Sparrows, and a pair of Gray Vireos building a nest. On to the Sam Nail Ranch, where we viewed a Varied Bunting while being serenaded by a Yellow-breasted Chat. We lunched at the Cottonwood campground, where there was an abundance of Vermilion Flycatchers, along with an elusive Lucy's Warbler and raucous Golden-fronted Woodpeckers. We had a brief glimpse of a Gray Hawk as it glided over the tree tops. We visited Santa Elena Canyon and hiked out to the overlook. The canyon didn't have any exciting birds, but Laura spotted a gorgeous Townsend's Warbler by the bathrooms. The day ended with a flat tire from a rocky back road that caused considerable trouble for Sharon.

The next day we went to the Basin area. Ten members of the group were brave enough to climb mountains to find the Colima Warbler. Eight actually completed the whole hike: 9 1/2 miles and 9 1/2 hours. That may sound awfully slow, but remember that we were birding, not hiking; also, there was an awful lot of up in that distance, with about 2000 feet in elevation change. It was a great hike with perfect weather. Along with the Colima Warbler we saw Zone-tailed Hawks, a Broad-tailed Hummingbird

doing his display flight, Mexican Jays that would eat out of your hand, Hepatic Tanager, and many Bushtits. Those that didn't go on the whole hike birded around the Basin area and were rewarded with Scott's Orioles, more Varied Buntings, Indigo Buntings, and Acorn Woodpeckers.

The last full day we visited the Rio Grande Village on the east side of the park. We were greeted coming in by a small herd of javalina. It was terribly hot that day - 106 by the time we left. Despite the heat we enjoyed watching Roadrunners dashing around the campgrounds. We patiently watched the nest of a Common Black Hawk until the sitting female finally lifted her head and gave us a good look. Our only shorebirds and waterfowl were on the Rio Grande River. Flycatchers were abundant, with Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, and Ash-throated Flycatcher being common. One of our best finds was a Couch's Kingbird. The Rio Grande Village has a nice nature trail, with a boardwalk over a wetland area. The herp enthusiasts were really excited because they found several lifer species and subspecies: Rio Grande leopard frog, Big Bend slider, western painted turtle and blotched water snakes. We also saw the Big Bend mosquito fish, which exists no where else on earth.

That evening some of us traveled back to the Rio Grande Village for some owling. Despite a lot of wind, we got answering calls from a Western Screech Owl, and managed to hear two Elf Owls and spot one of them. It peered at us indignantly from a hole in a dead tree. Returning to our motel at night was always a treat because we were greeted by both Lesser Nighthawks and Mexican long-nosed bats swooping around the lights.

The last day the group split up. The Marletts and Groenewegs hiked the Window trail in the Basin area and succeeded in finding a Crissal Thrasher. Kevin and Laura went back to Blue Springs to find the Lucifer Hummingbird. The others went on to the Davis Mountains for Montezuma Quail and other mountain species.

We didn't find everything and not everyone saw all the birds we did find. We didn't find a Black-chinned Sparrow, Black-capped Vireo, or Painted Redstart. Guess we'll have to try again someday. Here is the list of 108 birds for the whole trip (Big Bend area only):

- Green Heron
- Mallard
- Northern Shoveler
- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture
- Cooper's Hawk
- Common Black Hawk
- Gray Hawk
- Swainson's Hawk
- Zone-tailed Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ferruginous Hawk
- Wild Turkey
- Scaled Quail
- Gambel's Quail
- Killdeer
- American Avocet
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Spotted Sandpiper
- White-winged Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Inca Dove
- Common Ground Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Greater Roadrunner
- W Screech Owl
- Elf Owl
- Lesser Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- White-throated Swift
- Lucifer Hummingbird
- Black-chinned Hummingbird
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird
- Acorn Woodpecker
- Golden-fronted Woodpecker
- Ladder-backed Woodpecker

**Return Service Requested**

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## **Big Bend Adventure, con't**

Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Black Phoebe  
Say's Phoebe  
Vermilion Flycatcher  
Ash-throated Flycatcher  
Couch's Kingbird  
Cassin's Kingbird  
Western Kingbird  
Violet-green Swallow  
N Rough-winged Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Western Scrub-Jay  
Mexican Jay  
Common Raven  
Tufted Titmouse  
Verdin  
Bushtit  
Cactus Wren  
Rock Wren  
Canyon Wren  
Bewick's Wren  
House Wren  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher  
Hermit Thrush

N Mockingbird  
Curve-billed Thrasher  
Crissal Thrasher  
American Pipit  
Phainopepla  
Bell's Vireo  
Gray Vireo  
Plumbeous Vireo  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Colima Warbler  
Lucy's Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Townsend's Warbler  
Black-and-White Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Wilson's Warbler  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Hepatic Tanager  
Summer Tanager  
Western Tanager  
N Cardinal  
Pyrrhuloxia  
Black-headed Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Varied Bunting  
Green-tailed Towhee

Spotted Towhee  
Canyon Towhee  
Cassin's Sparrow  
Rufous-crowned Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Black-throated Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Bobolink  
Western Meadowlark  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Great-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Orchard Oriole  
Scott's Oriole  
House Finch  
Lesser Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

### **Attendees:**

Sharon Bolin, Carol Cumberland, Duane & Maxine Delong, Kevin & Laura Groeneweg, Julia Hoppes, Jim, Patty & Chris Marlett, Cliff & Nadine Miller, Dale Randall, Eddie & Savilla Stegall.

Herps and Mammals:  
Desert Cottontail  
White-tailed Deer (Chisos Mountain subspecies)  
Javalina  
Burros  
Mexican Long-nosed Bats  
Black-tailed Jackrabbits

Baird's Rat Snake  
Plateau Whiptail  
Short-lined Skink  
Great Plains Skink  
E Fence Lizard  
Rio Grande Leopard Frog  
Big Bend Slider  
W Painted Turtle  
W Spiny Softshell Turtle