



THE FLYCATCHER

Summer 2023 Newsletter



Scissor-tailed flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

Warbler Week Coming August 14-18, 2023

Warbler Week offers participants the opportunity to discover more about the wonderful world of warblers! Our second annual week-long series of virtual seminars is curated to provide science-based knowledge, offer ID tips and techniques, and foster engaging discussions.

Speakers will present topics covering warbler identification techniques, current, compelling warbler research, projects and tips for attracting warblers to your yard, and more. This in-depth learning experience is not to be missed!

All virtual seminars will be recorded and made available for later viewing by participants. Seminars will have auto captions and a corrected transcript will be provided with recordings.

All-Access Pass: \$35 for the full week

Single-Access Pass: \$15 each day

To register today or find out more, visit:
wildlife.tamu.edu/birding/virtual

Event proceeds will support Rio Diablo Birding Youth Camp!



Tropical parula *Setophaga pitiayumi*

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep abreast of updates, access giveaways, and enjoy some lovely bird content of course!

Birding with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

[agrilife.birding](https://www.instagram.com/agrilife.birding)

All bird photography by Bryan Calk unless otherwise credited.



SEMINAR LINEUP

Live at 12:00 pm CST every day

MONDAY, AUGUST 14

How to Learn Bird Songs

Presented by Tom Stephenson, Co-creator of The Warbler Guide

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15

Avian response of priority songbirds to a shifting mosaic of forest management across multiple ownerships in West Virginia

Presented by Dr. Christopher Lituma, Associate Professor, WVU
Co-authored by Robert M. Ryan, PhD Student, WVU

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16

Personal Habitat: 30 Years of Wildlife Gardening

Presented by Julie Zickefoose, Creator of the WarblerFall

Short Bonus Session at 1:15 pm

Feeding Warblers in Your Yard

Presented by Michele Eder, Wild Birds Unlimited, Burleson, TX

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17

Warbler-ology: What warblers have taught us about evolution and the natural world

Presented by Ari Rice, PhD Student at TTU

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18

Do you know your female warblers?

Presented by Purbita Saha, Co-founder of The Galbatross Project and Editor for *Popular Science*

Rufous-capped warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*)

IN OTHER NEWS



Lucy's warbler *Oreothlypis luciae*

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS:

OCT 12-15, 2023: Texas Master Naturalists Annual Meeting

Come say hello at our booth! We will have information on upcoming events and a giveaway to enter.

NOV 3-5, 2023: Learn to Bird in Real County, TX

This birding crash course is designed to help new and beginning birders take their skills to the next level! Join us for a couple days of fantastic introductory birding led by a qualified guide, great volunteers, and AgriLife Extension staff. Details will be shared on our website and social media in late August.

NOV 8-12, 2023: Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival

Come say hello at our booth! We will have information on upcoming events and an item entered into RGVBF's silent auction.

DEC 2023: Virtual Birding Seminar

Speakers and topics for this event will be determined soon. All proceeds will go to support Rio Diablo Birding Camp '24! Details will be announced in the Oct. edition of the Flycatcher and on social media.

MAY 2-5, 2024: Birding the Border

Save the dates now, and we will see you in Del Rio, TX for another amazing event!



FEATURE BIRD
Black-capped vireo
Vireo atricapilla

Backyard Bird Tip: Native Plants

For the insectivores in your life, consider adding more native plants to your yard! Warblers, in particular, are experts at catching insects moving along on vegetation, with geometrid moth larvae (which you may have grown up identifying as inchworm caterpillars or measure worms) often comprising much of their diet during nesting season. Some Lepidoptera species that we identify by their larval stage as various tent caterpillars are well-known garden pests, and these birds manage the populations by collecting hundreds a day for themselves and their offspring.

Unfortunately, many exotic plant species introduced over the years as garden ornamentals contain toxins that our native caterpillars have not adapted to withstand. This can result in a dearth of caterpillars in patches of introduced vegetation, so warblers must look elsewhere to forage and nest. Check out online resources to find native plants that might be a good fit for both you and the birds. Additionally, one of our Warbler Week speakers will also be discussing gardening for warblers and other wildlife on August 16!



Birding the Border '23 at Devil's River SNA

Team Member Spotlight:

Liz Tidwell

Birding with Extension Program Coordinator

Liz is a Small Acreage Wildlife Specialist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Originally from Pennsylvania, she has a B.S. from the U. of Wyoming and an M.S. from Sul Ross State U., where she studied Montezuma quail in New Mexico. As a Program Specialist, she develops programs to help small acreage landowners manage the resources on their property. While Liz greatly enjoys birds, she also harbors a deep love for javelina, aka "potatoes", and will squeal like a little girl whenever she sees one!



Black-throated green warbler eating caterpillar
Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren, CC by 2.0. Flickr
This photo has been edited from the original.

Summer Birding Notes

With the intense heat waves we are already experiencing here in Texas, and a strong El Niño forecasted to continue bringing warm air in addition to increased rainfall later this year, it is more important than ever to stay cool and hydrated, for birds and people! This summer, spend some time birding around your nearest water source, whether a creek, river, lake, or ocean. During this past Rio Diablo Birding Camp, we actually birded while enjoying a swim in the Devil's River, and spotted green kingfishers and black phoebes flitting over our heads.

If you aren't a swimmer, wear some sturdy water shoes and wade in to your comfort level, or grab a camping chair and park yourself in the shade and shallows with your binoculars. Then, enjoy watching the birds taking advantage of the same resources. Always remember to check water conditions before entering the water.



Black-and-white warbler *Mniotilta varia*

Rio Diablo Birding Camp '23 at Dolan Falls



Program Recap: Rio Diablo Birding Camp '23

From June 11-17, the Birding with Extension team guided nine young birders from six states across the Edwards Plateau and Trans-Pecos ecoregions of Texas to see local birds, improve their birding skills, build community with their fellow campers, and experience some of the most beautiful public and private lands in the state. Additionally, the total count for the trip was 168 bird species! Multiple campers reached new birding milestones, and everyone gained at least a few new lifers as well as some truly unforgettable experiences.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's camp a success, including our guides, coordinators, volunteers, partners, & donors!



CUP CHAT

Check out Cup Chat on Wednesday mornings at 7:30am CST

Most Wednesday mornings, we host a casual but informative conversation with a variety of expert guest speakers. In the past we have discussed raptor ID, gardening for birds, new research, how migration works, and much more! Cup Chats are streamed live on the Birding with Extension Facebook page. You can find all our past videos on both Facebook and YouTube!

