



# FRIENDS OF HAGERMAN NWR

## FEATHERLESS FLYER

MARCH, 2020  
VOLUME 15, ISSUE 5

### It's Bluebird Season!

2020 marks the 9th year of the Bluebird Adopt-A-Nestbox program, and 20 nestboxes were adopted out to loving "families" this year on February 8. THANK YOU, to these adoptive sponsors! Your nestbox has been labeled with your name and you can look forward to receiving weekly email updates informing you about the activity in your box!

Thanks to these donations, the Bluebirds and many other species will benefit from all that Hagerman has to offer. And everyone who visits the Refuge gets to enjoy the sights and songs of Bluebirds, Chickadees, Sparrows and Wrens (just to name a few)!

Breeding season is just beginning, and FOH volunteers are cleaning out boxes, dealing with pest infestations and performing general updates and maintenance. Volunteers also keep the nestbox area

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By Claudia Dineen



### WHAT'S GOING ON??

See our **DETAILED, PRINTABLE Event Sheet, Bird Survey Results on Pages 6, 7 & 8!**



### Refuge Update:

**Texoma Water Level: [www.laketexoma.com/level](http://www.laketexoma.com/level)**  
**A Feral Hog Hunt will be March 6-8 & March 20-22. Meadow Pond, Haller's Haven and Raasch Trails will be closed on these days. Crow Hill and Harris Creek Trails will remain open.**

### The New Tram Has Arrived!

Thanks to many generous donations to the Friends of Hagerman, a new tram has been purchased and was delivered on February 14th. Providing guided tours of the refuge is essential in enabling the Friends of Hagerman to fulfill its mission to instill reverence, respect and conservation of our wild creatures and habitats through supporting environmental education, recreational activities, and programs of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge.



The naming competition generated 136 great submissions—it will take quite a while to decide among them! Though still unnamed, the new tram made its maiden voyage on Saturday, February 22nd. All of the tram drivers are being trained and familiarized on the new tram; we will be ready to meet the good spring weather with a by then christened tram. Now there is only one thing left to do...come take a tram tour with us!!

Guided tours are offered at 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, weather permitting. Seating is limited: please call (903)786-2826 between 9:00am and 4:00pm, Mon-Sat, for reservations. Standbys are accepted if space permits.

*Thank You to Our Supporters*

## Four-nerve Daisy - *Tetraneuris scaposa* (DC.) Greene var. *scaposa*

A bright yellow, cheery native with long-lasting flowers, the Four-nerve Daisy is a great choice for rock gardens, borders, and containers. It is deer resistant, thrives in dry, rocky, well-drained soils, and attracts bees and butterflies. This xeric perennial in the Aster Family is sometimes called *Hymenoxys*, Yellow Daisy, and Bitterweed. There are multiple look-alikes!

This particular variety is native to Texas and surrounding states, and mainly blooms March-June. It has been noted to bloom every month of the year in some locations. The best way to propagate is by seed.

*Tetraneuris* means "four-nerved." Close inspectors will note four purple veins, or "nerves," on each ray flower of this plant. (See photo by Jim Conrad.) The tip of each ray flower is three-toothed. Flowers rise on silky, slender, leafless stems from a woody base and a clump of silver-green, narrow leaved foliage. Flowerheads can be up to one inch in diameter.

Individual plants can be expected to grow up to one foot tall, with an equal spread. Dr. Rebecca Dickstein, University of North Texas, suggests using Four-nerve Daisy as a border instead of *Liriope*. The daisy has similar foliage, but more color.

The flowers have an unpleasant odor when picked, which could account for the Bitterweed nickname. There is some evidence that Zuni Indians soaked the entire plant in cold water to make an infusion for sore eyes and skin problems.



*Thank you  
Mary Grant*

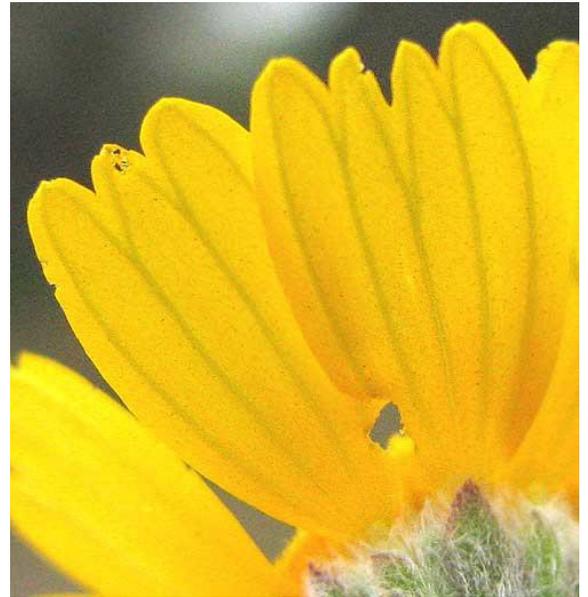


*Courtesy Pam Williams  
wildflower.org*

*Watch for  
Four-Nerve  
Daisy in the  
Butterfly  
Garden!*



*Courtesy Stephanie Brundage  
wildflower.org*



*Courtesy Jim Conrad  
Backyard Nature.net*

Second Saturday Program

March 14, 10:00 AM

Birding by Ear with Dr. Wayne Meyer



# It's Bluebird Season! By Claudia Dineen

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mowed and trimmed, and make sure each box is protected from predators throughout the season.

## The Timeline (Don't Blink!)

In February, the male Bluebird begins scouting nest sites. Bluebirds are picky about their nesting location. The Nestbox Committee has placed nestboxes in places that any Bluebird would love to call home! They prefer nesting near other Bluebirds, but not too close!

The neighborhood must have plenty of open space, easy access to water and good food sources.



### FOH TRIVIA

did you know...

- Nesting season is February through mid-August
- John VanBebber is the 2020 Project Coordinator
- There are currently 44 nest boxes and trail locations



Bluebirds like to nest in natural cavities, such as holes in trees or posts, so our nestboxes can be the perfect place to raise a family!

Once the site is selected, the male attracts a female. He carries nest materials in and out of the hole (we ladies love a hard-working guy), perches in flirtatious poses, and flutters his bright blue wings.

When that lucky female accepts his proposal, the pair doesn't waste any time! It takes her only 4-5 days to build a nest in the box! It's easy to identify bluebird nests in our area by their construction. Most are built of blades of dry grass or pine needles. Sometimes finer grasses or hair/feathers line the inside.

With a nest in place, things move quickly! The female lays 4 to 5 eggs, one per day. Babies hatch in 12 to 14 days, and young birds fledge (leave the nest) 16 to 18 days after that. So, in just about 2 months... a family has grown!

Both parents continue to feed and teach the youngsters after they nudge them out of the box. It will be another 3-4 weeks before the young birds start feeding themselves.

Bluebird families often stay close together until the next spring. The new generation will typically breed their first spring season.

The FOH Nestbox Committee have become experts in fledging healthy bluebirds over the last 10



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## It's Bluebird Season! By Claudia Dineen

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years! In 2019, the program fledged 147 Bluebirds at Hagerman (compared to 31 birds of other species). Look for nestboxes on the Harris Creek and Raasch Trails the next time you visit the Refuge!

### For More Information:

North American Bluebird Society  
<http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>

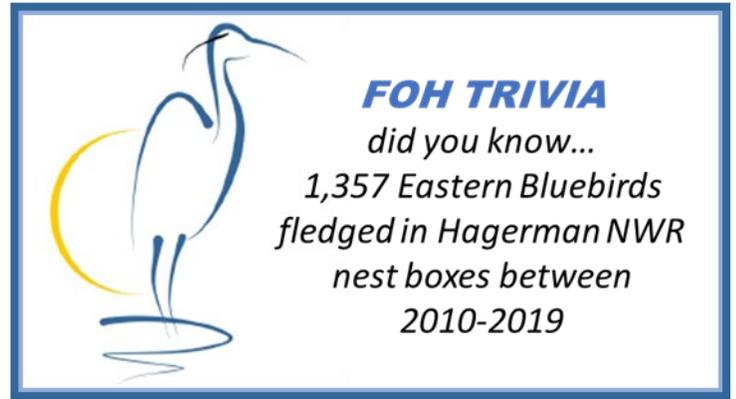
Texas Bluebird Society  
<http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org/>

Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern\\_Bluebird](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Bluebird)

Bluebird Nest Box Plans  
<https://texasbluebirdsociety.org/BuildingPlans.php>

Sialis: All About Eastern Bluebirds  
<http://www.sialis.org/eablbio.htm>

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## Check Out Hagerman NWR's New Intern Program!

By Renny Gehman

Did you know that Hagerman NWR and Austin College have a new partnership? Beginning in January the college's Environmental Studies program has provided interns to work at Hagerman, earning college credit for their service. This program is mutually beneficial, providing an opportunity for the students to get real world experience while fulfilling their degree requirements.

For example, during January, two students worked at the Refuge, fencing almost the entire boundary—a much needed task. This summer, Hagerman will also provide two slots for paid Interns, who will work full-time, and live on the Refuge.

Now, however, meet our current intern, Colton Baker, a senior at Austin majoring in biology and environmental science. Colton began his part-time assignment in February and so far has worked on signage for the boundary fences, done educational outreach with Biologist Courtney Anderson, manned the visitor center and learned woodworking skills to assist staff members. A graduate of Flower Mound's Marcus High School, Colton grew up in the Lewisville area, and has appreciated his opportunities to experience the variety of jobs available in his career field. He plans to use this experience to make informed career choices and maximize his job opportunities.

Make sure to say "Hi!" to Colton if you see him during these next few months, and thank him for his service!



# BIRDING WITH JACK

*Thank You, Jack Chiles*

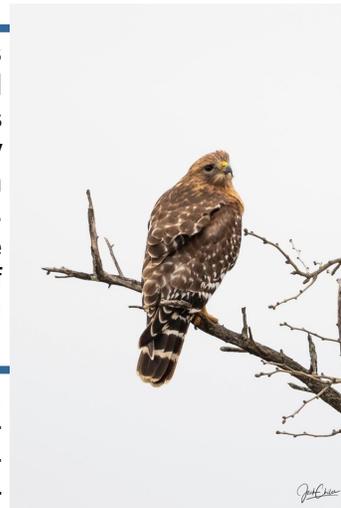
**Feb 25:** The day started out fairly calm with intermittent sunshine. We started the morning with a walk on the short loop of Harris Creek Trail and found a Spotted Towhee and an Eastern Towhee first thing near headquarters. Then we proceeded down Wildlife Drive and located a Lesser Black-backed Gull with some Ring-billed Gulls near the end of Tern Pad. We had a flyby Bald Eagle while on Wildlife Dr. The American Bittern is still hanging out in the same area where it has been seen a lot as of late, near the road in the Smart Weed across the road from the large field on Wildlife Dr. Short Road was productive with a pair of Greater Roadrunners and Field and Vesper Sparrows along with a large flock of Savannah Sparrows. We found 5 Cinnamon Teals in Mineral Marsh in the part that has a lot of vegetation. We saw a group of 5 Long-billed Dowitchers near the Harris Creek bridge. We finished the day with 81 species. Photo from today: a Cedar Waxwing.



**February 18:** After a couple of days of warm weather we had a return to more seasonable weather with northerly winds. Bird numbers are down which is not all that unusual for February. Today we did find the Cinnamon Teal that has been here for a couple of weeks but has been difficult to see because it often stays in the back of the marshes hidden by vegetation. We found Vesper Sparrows by the cow pens on Short Road. Ducks and Geese numbers are way down. We did see a Fox Sparrow near Meadow Pond, a species that has been very hard to find this winter. We saw 4 male Wild Turkeys just past Meadow Pond. We finished the day with 73 species. Today's photos is a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.



**Feb 11:** It was another dismal day with scattered showers and a brisk northern wind blowing. Birds were mostly found in sheltered areas. We were able to locate 13 duck species among which was a Greater Scaup on a pond on Terry Lane. Duck numbers continue down from counts earlier in the year. We saw very few white geese and raptor numbers were low. We found a Spotted Towhee near the entrance gate to the road to Meadow Pond. We did not see either of the resident Bald Eagles today. We finished the day with 70 species. Photo from today: Red Shouldered Hawk.



**Feb 4:**As we started out today it was rainy, windy and cold, but toward the end of the morning the rain let up and visibility improved. The road to Meadow Pond was good for sparrows because it is protected from the wind. Harris's Sparrows were abundant with a count of 65 for the day. At the entrance to Meadow Pond road we saw both species of Towhees, Spotted and Eastern. We had a total of 7 different species of woodpeckers including the evasive Hairy Woodpecker. We saw Cedar Waxwings feeding on berries at numerous locations. Duck numbers were down but we did see 86 Redheads. We didn't see many white geese today because they had not returned from the neighboring fields as we finished the day. We finished the day with 80 species, not bad, considering the conditions. Today's photo, male American Kestrel, North America's smallest falcon.

## **WHAT ELSE DID THEY SEE??**

See the most recent  
**Weekly Bird and  
Butterfly Census  
Results in their entirety  
on Page 6 or visit:**

**[www.friendsofhagerman.com/BirdSurvey](http://www.friendsofhagerman.com/BirdSurvey)**



# Bird Census Results

Each Tuesday a team of expert birders, led by Jack Chiles, take a refuge Bird census by recording the birds they encounter throughout the refuge. They report their findings to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, for use in research.

Visit [www.friendsofhagerman.com/BirdSurvey](http://www.friendsofhagerman.com/BirdSurvey) for the most recent Bird Census results!

**Thank you:** Jack Chiles, Jack Chiles, Mike Petrick, Terry Goode, Bob Adams, Carrie Steingruber, Bill Morgan, Enid Kaspar, Claudia Holt

**To find out how to join them, email:** [friendsofhagerman@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhagerman@gmail.com)

## Findings for Tuesday, February 25, 2020.

**81 species (+3 other taxa)**

Snow Goose 1	Great Blue Heron 5	Dark-eyed Junco 24
Ross's Goose 1	Great Egret 52	White-crowned Sparrow 1
Snow/Ross's Goose 1000	Black Vulture 10	Harris's Sparrow 17
Canada Goose 11	Turkey Vulture 9	White-throated Sparrow 9
Wood Duck 2	Northern Harrier 2	Vesper Sparrow 2
Blue-winged Teal 2	Bald Eagle 1	Savannah Sparrow 46
Cinnamon Teal 5 3 males and 2 females observed in Mineral Marsh.	Red-shouldered Hawk 6	Song Sparrow 6
Northern Shoveler 40	Red-tailed Hawk 1	Lincoln's Sparrow 4
Gadwall 31	Barred Owl 1	Spotted Towhee 1
American Wigeon 9	Red-headed Woodpecker 2	Eastern Towhee 6
Mallard 9	Red-bellied Woodpecker 4	Western Meadowlark 1
Northern Pintail 5	Downy Woodpecker 5	Eastern Meadowlark 1
Green-winged Teal 39	Pileated Woodpecker 1	Western/Eastern Meadowlark 196
Redhead 16	Northern Flicker 1	Red-winged Blackbird 81
Ring-necked Duck 18	American Kestrel 1	Common Yellowthroat 3
Bufflehead 2	Eastern Phoebe 5	Yellow-rumped Warbler 3
Ruddy Duck 6	Loggerhead Shrike 2	Northern Cardinal 13
Pied-billed Grebe 9	American Crow 18	
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1	Carolina Chickadee 6	
Mourning Dove 72	Tufted Titmouse 9	
Greater Roadrunner 2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3	
American Coot 35	Carolina Wren 5	
Killdeer 16	European Starling 3	
Long-billed Dowitcher 5	Northern Mockingbird 9	
Wilson's Snipe 50	Eastern Bluebird 10	
Greater Yellowlegs 6	American Robin 13	
Ring-billed Gull 300	Cedar Waxwing 12	
Lesser Black-backed Gull 1	House Sparrow 2	
Forster's Tern 1	American Pipit 6	
Neotropic Cormorant 2	House Finch 1	
Double-crested Cormorant 311	American Goldfinch 31	
cormorant sp. 66	Field Sparrow 7	
American White Pelican 27	Lark Sparrow 3	
American Bittern 1		

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[www.facebook.com/FOHNWR](http://www.facebook.com/FOHNWR)

**Thank You To Our Contributors:**  
**Jack Chiles, Mary Grant, Bert Garcia,**  
**Claudia Dineen, Renny Gehman**

**Refuge Manager: Kathy Whaley**  
**Refuge Liaison: Paul Balkenbush**  
**General Biologist: Courtney Anderson**



## EVENT SHEET

### **Calling All Gardeners: Volunteers Needed to help with Butterfly Garden**

Love to work in the garden? Come and help us add plants, weed and mulch our beautiful butterfly garden. Join our team that is on call for Wednesday morning gardening. Provide own tools and gloves. Minimum age 18, or 16 if accompanied by parent volunteer. Garden volunteers get first dibs on thinned plants as well as access to seeds and cuttings for propagation. Email for dates, times and details: [friendsofhagerman@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhagerman@gmail.com)

### **Spring Break at the Refuge! Tuesday and Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 10:00-11:30**

Stop by with your spring break kids and enjoy some fun come-and-go crafts! The youth will be able to choose between building a bird feeder, bird house or bee lodge to take home. Bring a picnic and spend the day at the refuge!

### **Outdoor Crew Tuesday, March 10th and Saturday March, 28th**

Do you enjoy working outside, mowing, sprucing up hiking trails, trimming and removing brush and general cleanup? Join the Outdoor Crew at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. The Outdoor Crew meets on the First Tuesday and Fourth Saturday of every month. Please email [friendsofhagerman@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhagerman@gmail.com) for details and to join our team. Scouts welcome!

### **Second Saturday: Birding by Ear by Dr. Wayne Meyer, Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am**

Birds can be hard to find, especially when the trees start leafing out in the spring. However, the birds become very vocal during the breeding season, so if you can recognize the sounds you hear, it will give you a hint where to look for that singing bird. This month's program will teach ways to learn bird songs emphasizing common local birds so you can get a head start on finding those pesky lurkers.

Wayne Meyer is Associate Professor and Chair of the Biology department at Austin College, where he has been teaching for 26 years. He started birding at 13 in Connecticut. In 1993 he finally achieved his life's dream of being paid to look at birds when he joined the faculty of Austin College. He has birded both coasts of the U.S. extensively and now has spent a quarter century

birding in Texas and Oklahoma. The proximity of Austin College to Hagerman NWR has made research on prairie birds easy and convenient and he has been studying song learning and singing in Painted Buntings for over a decade. Meyer is also a sought after speaker for Master Naturalist groups and a frequent speaker at the Friends of Hagerman NWR second Saturday programs.

### **Insects on the Refuge:**

#### **An Introduction to Entomology**

#### **Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 to 12:30, at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge**

In 2020 HNWR will continue to expand its natural science education effort through the collection of insects on the refuge. The insects will be added to an ongoing curation and exhibition program that will highlight the diversity of insect species found on the refuge.

For those interested in collecting insects for this project, a workshop detailing how to collect, prepare, and curate insects will be offered after the second Saturday presentation on March 14<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 –12:30.

Participants will begin collecting bugs in the field throughout the spring, summer, and early fall. The program will be sponsored by the Bluestem Master Naturalist Chapter, presented and coordinated by Texas Master Naturalist and Master Entomologist David Parsons

### **Landowner Education Programs Sponsored by the Bluestem Master Naturalist Chapter**

#### **March 13: Conservation Funding**

#### **May 15: Conservation Easements**

#### **July 17: Habitat Improvement**

The accelerating growth in Grayson County has resulted in rapid loss of open space and habitat for wildlife.

Landowners who are interested in ways of preserving open space are invited to attend the Landowner Education Series, sponsored by the Bluestem Chapter of Master Naturalist. The series brings together several agencies that offer tax exemptions, funding and technical expertise for preserving open space and wildlife habitat—all in one place.

On March 13th, Ragan White of Texas Parks and Wildlife will present funding options available for landowners who want to do conservation projects. There will also be a presentation on funding for farm and land restoration projects.

Classes will take place from 9:00 to 11:30am at the Eisenhower Room Texoma Council of Governments, 1117 Gallagher Drive, Sherman, Texas. The culmination of the Landowner Education Program will be a tour of the Austin College Sneed Prairie Restoration Project, conducted by Dr. Peter Schultz, date to be announce. This series is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. For more information, visit <https://txmn.org/bluestem/>, pre-register [here](#).



## EVENTS

*(Continued from page 7)*

### **The Refuge Rocks Children's Program: Playin' Possum, Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, Ages 5-10**

Come and learn about our common friend: the opossum. Sign up (child only) on the Friends of Hagerman Facebook page: go to the Refuge Rocks event and sign up there using Eventbrite.

### **Nature Photography Club meeting – Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> 1:00-2:30 PM**

Have you ever wondered what it takes to capture nature photographs that get published in Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Highways magazines? Join us for the Photo Club meeting with Russell Graves. Russell will share how he captures images with a story to tell. If you've read any Texas-based magazines over the past twenty-five years chances are you've seen some of Russell's photos or read some of his words. Since 1989, he's been traveling the state telling authentic Texas stories with his camera and his words - both written and spoken. Russell recently moved back to our area and is living in the country north of Dodd City where he grew up. The meeting is free and open to the public.

### **Annual Meeting - Friends of Hagerman NWR Sunday, March 29, 2020, 3:00pm – 4:30pm**

Members of the Friends of Hagerman, as well as anyone interested in the organization, is invited to the annual meeting. Hear reports for 2019 accomplishments and elect directors.

### **Butterfly Docent Meeting Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 - 11:15 am**

Do you love butterflies and native plants? Do you enjoy being outdoors and meeting new people? If so, then consider joining a group of volunteers who serve as docents in the Butterfly Garden at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. A meeting for new and returning docents will be held in the meeting room at the refuge. Contact the [friendsofhagerman@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhagerman@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Butterfly Garden Walk Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 – 2:00 pm**

Enjoy a stroll through the Butterfly Garden at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. Come on your own or bring the family. Garden docents will be on hand to help you identify the Texas native plants and the butterflies in the garden. Use our close-focus butterfly binoculars to get a really CLOSE look. Special activities for families available: scavenger hunts, meet the Metamorphosis Puppet and more. Garden walks are Come and Go or Come and Stay. The garden is free of charge and open to the public during Refuge hours.

### **Tram Tour: The New Tram is Up and Running!**

Enjoy a 60 – 90 minute tour along Wildlife Drive at the Refuge on our brand new Tram. Enjoy learning about the history of the displaced town of Hagerman while watching for wildlife. Lots of stops for bird-watching and photography. Free (donations accepted). Guided tours are offered at 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, weather permitting. Seating is limited: please call (903) 786-2826 between 9:00am and 4:00pm, Mon-Sat, for reservations. Standbys are accepted if space permits. Tours are recommended for age 6 - adult.