

CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE BALCONES CANYONLANDS NWR AREA

More than 270 species of birds have been recorded in or near Balcones Canyonlands NWR, a large number for a relatively small area. One reason for this diversity: The Refuge lies in the zone where the East meets the West. Such typical western birds as the Black-throated Sparrow reach the eastern edge of their ranges here, while many eastern birds such as the Red-bellied Woodpecker approach their western limits. For visiting birders, the most interesting species are two endangered songbirds, the Black-capped Vireo and the Golden-cheeked Warbler. With planning and a little luck, it's possible--though by no means guaranteed--to find both of them in a single morning (see pp. 11 and 12 for hints on seeing these species).

Area covered: A semicircle 16 miles in diameter centered on Lago Vista (including all of the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge but not the area south of Lake Travis). Included in this area are northwestern Travis County, southwestern Williamson county, and a part of southeastern Burnet County.

Seasons: Early Spring: March 10 - April 9
 Late Spring: April 10 - May 24
 Summer: May 25 - August 9
 Early Fall: August 10 - September 30
 Late Fall: October 1 - November 30
 Winter: December 1 - March 9

Detectability categories: C = Common (you'll always find this species *in appropriate habitat*, often with minimal searching)
F = Fairly common (should find it most of the time)
U = Uncommon (might find it)
R = Rare (probably won't find it)
I = Irregular (a species present some years, absent others)
X = Accidental (not expected to occur again)
? = Believed to occur at this season, but status uncertain
Hyp. = Hypothetical; reported, but with limited/no documentation

Note: These detectability categories apply to the *likelihood of finding (by sight or sound) a given species in appropriate habitat--not to the species' actual abundance*. For example, Wild Turkeys are rather easily detectable in spring when males are gobbling, but they're often harder to find the rest of the year (even though turkeys may actually be more numerous at other seasons). Consequently, Wild Turkey rates a "F" in Early and Late Spring but only a "U" at other seasons. Similarly, Bushtits, though more numerous than Red-tailed Hawks, are detected far less often. So Bushtit rates a "U" while Red-tailed Hawk gets an "F" or "C."

Note: If detectability varies significantly during the course of a season, two abundance categories are shown, separated by a hyphen. For example, American Kestrels are rare at the

start of Early Fall but become more numerous by that season's end. They're shown as "R-U."

Note: It's difficult to assign a single code to certain species. Some birds are detected more often in some years than in others; some species are unevenly distributed in the region; some species are easily found at feeders but are less frequently observed elsewhere. In such cases a range is given. Three examples: In some winters Golden-crowned Kinglets are seldom encountered, while in other winters they're seen fairly often. This species' winter code is shown as "R/F." American Crows are scarce in the western part of the region but easily found in the east. They rate a "U/C" throughout the year. And House Finches, common at bird feeders, are at best only fairly common elsewhere. They rate an "F/C" throughout the year. In all such cases, the more typical detectability code is given first.

Species known or suspected to breed in or near the Refuge area are marked with an asterisk (*).

Two introduced species--the Emu and the Ring-necked Pheasant--are not firmly established in the Refuge area. Their names are bracketed to indicate their doubtful status. A male Red Junglefowl--a rooster--was recently found on the Refuge but such an occurrence doesn't warrant listing the species here.

The distinctive "Harlan's" Hawk is listed separately, as are the "Myrtle" and "Audubon's" groups of the Yellow-rumped Warbler and the "Slate-colored" and "Oregon" groups of the Dark-eyed Junco (the "Pink-sided" Junco is included in the latter group). The "Traill's" Flycatcher group probably includes both the Willow and the Alder flycatchers, but so far only the Willow Flycatcher has been positively identified in the Refuge area.

We welcome comments on this checklist. Please send them to:

Refuge Manager
Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge
24518 FM 1431
Marble Falls, TX 78654
E-mail: fw2_rw_Balcones@fws.gov
Telephone: (512) 339-9432

Compiled by John Kelly and Chuck Sexton. Data from John Chenoweth, Marjorie Dearmont, Scot Edler, Rob Fergus, Roger Frost, Eddie Hertz, John Ingram, Harold Jobs, John Kelly, Bill Lybarger, Kathy McCormack, Kelly McDowell, Jeff Mundy, Jean Nance, Larry Narcisse, Nancy Ragland, Roy Reinartz, Bill Reiner Jr., Chuck Sexton, Paul Sunby, and visitors to Balcones Canyonlands NWR.

Updated: September 24, 2008.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Ratites						
[Emu*].....	?	?	?	?	?	?
Grebes						
Pied-billed Grebe*.....	U	R	R	R	U	U
Eared Grebe.....						R
Pelicans, Cormorants, and Darters						
American White Pelican.....	U	U/F			U/F	X
Neotropic Cormorant.....		?	?	?		
Double-crested Cormorant...	F	R/U			F	F
Anhinga.....		X				
Hérons, Egrets, and Spoonbills						
American Bittern.....	X				X	
Great Blue Heron*.....	F	F	F	F	F	F/U
Great Egret.....	R	R	R	U	R	R
Snowy Egret.....		R			R	
Little Blue Heron.....		R/U		R		
Cattle Egret.....	R	U	R	?		
Green Heron*.....	R	U	U	U	R	R
Roseate Spoonbill.....				X		
New World Vultures						
Black Vulture*.....	C	F	F	F	C	C
Turkey Vulture*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
Waterfowl						
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	X		X			X
Greater White-fronted Goose					R/U	
Snow Goose.....					U	X
Ross's Goose.....					X	
Canada Goose.....					R	
Wood Duck*.....	R	R	R	R	R	R
Gadwall.....	R	R			U	U/F
American Wigeon.....	R				U	F
Mallard.....	R	R	R		U	U
Blue-winged Teal.....	U	U		R	R	X
Northern Shoveler.....	R				?	R
Northern Pintail.....	?			X	R	U/R
Green-winged Teal.....	U	R		R	U	R/U
Canvasback.....	?				R	R/U
Redhead.....					R	R
Ring-necked Duck.....	U				U	F

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Lesser Scaup.....	?				?	U/F
White-winged Scoter.....					X	
Bufflehead.....					R	R
Hooded Merganser.....					R	R
Ruddy Duck.....						R
Osprey, Kites, Hawks, Eagles, and Falcons						
Osprey.....	U	R	X	R	R	U
White-tailed Kite.....					X	
Mississippi Kite.....	R	U/F		U/F		
Bald Eagle.....	X					X
Northern Harrier.....	U	R			U	R/F
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	U/F	U/F-R			U/C	R/U
Cooper's Hawk*.....	R	R	R	R	R/U	R/U
Red-shouldered Hawk*.....	R/U	R/U	R/U	R/U	R/U	R/U
Broad-winged Hawk.....	U	U		R-U	R	
Swainson's Hawk.....	R-U/F	U/F-R		U/F	U/C	
Zone-tailed Hawk.....	X	X		X		
Red-tailed Hawk*.....	F	F	F	F	F	C
"Harlan's" Hawk.....						X
Ferruginous Hawk.....		X			?	
Golden Eagle.....					X	
Crested Caracara*.....	R	R	R	R	R	R
American Kestrel.....	C-U	R		R-U	C	C
Merlin.....					R	R
Peregrine Falcon.....	X		X			R
Prairie Falcon.....						X
Gallinaceous Birds						
[Ring-necked Pheasant].....	?	?	?	?	?	?
Wild Turkey*.....	F	F	U	U	U	U
Northern Bobwhite*.....	U-F	F-C	C-F	U	U	U
Rails, Gallinules, Coots, and Cranes						
Sora.....		?	R	R	R	
Purple Gallinule.....		X				
American Coot.....	R/U	R	?	R	R	R/U
Sandhill Crane.....	F/U	R			F/U	R/U
Whooping Crane.....					X	
Shorebirds						
American Golden Plover.....		R				
Killdeer*.....	F	U/F	U	U	F	U/F
Greater Yellowlegs.....	R	R		R	R	R

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Lesser Yellowlegs.....	R	R/U		?		
Solitary Sandpiper.....	R	U	R	R		
Spotted Sandpiper.....	R	U		U	R	R
Upland Sandpiper.....	U	U	R	U/F		
Long-billed Curlew.....		R				
Western Sandpiper.....		R		?	R	
Least Sandpiper.....		R		?		
White-rumped Sandpiper.....		R				
Baird's Sandpiper.....		R		?		
Pectoral Sandpiper.....		R/U		R		
Wilson's Snipe.....	R	?			R	R/U
American Woodcock.....	R	X			R	U
Wilson's Phalarope.....		R				

Gulls and Terns

Franklin's Gull.....	U	U/F			?	
Ring-billed Gull.....	U	R			U	U
Herring Gull.....						R
Forster's Tern.....	?	?		?	R	R

Pigeons and Doves

Rock Pigeon*.....	U/F	U/F	U/F	U/F	U/F	U/F
Eurasian Collared-Dove.....	R	R	R	R	R	R
White-winged Dove*.....	F	F	F	F	F	F
Mourning Dove*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
Inca Dove*.....	U/F	U/F	U/F	U/F	U/F	U/F
Common Ground-Dove*.....	U	U	U	U	R	R

Parrots and Cuckoos

Monk Parakeet.....				X		
Black-billed Cuckoo.....		X				
Yellow-billed Cuckoo*.....		C	C	C-R		
Greater Roadrunner*.....	F	F	F	U	U	U

Owls

Barn Owl*.....	?	?	?	X	?	X
Eastern Screech-Owl*.....	F	F	F	F	F	F
Great Horned Owl*.....	U	U	U	U	U	U
Burrowing Owl.....					X	
Barred Owl*.....	?	?	?	?	?	?
Long-eared Owl.....					X	X
Short-eared Owl.....						X

Goatsuckers

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Common Nighthawk*.....		U/F	U	?		
Common Poorwill*.....	U	U	U	U	U	R
Chuck-will's-widow*.....		C	C	U		
Whip-poor-will.....	R	R				

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Swifts and Hummingbirds						
Chimney Swift*.....	U	F	F	F-C	?	
Green Violet-Ear.....			X			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird..	R	R	U	U+		
Black-chinned Hummingbird*	R-F	F/C	F/C	F/C-R	R	
Calliope Hummingbird.....					Hyp.	
Broad-tailed Hummingbird....						X
Rufous Hummingbird.....	R	R		R	R	R
Kingfishers and Woodpeckers						
Belted Kingfisher*.....	F	U	U	U	F	F
Green Kingfisher.....	R			R	R	R
Lewis's Woodpecker.....	X	X			X	X
Red-headed Woodpecker.....		X				
Golden-fronted Woodpecker*	R	R	R	R	R	U
Red-bellied Woodpecker*.....	R	R	R	R	R	U
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	?				R	U
Red-naped Sapsucker.....						X
Ladder-backed Woodpecker*..	F	F	F	F	F	F
Downy Woodpecker*.....	R	R	R	X	R	U
Northern Flicker.....	U			R	U	U
Tyrant Flycatchers						
Olive-sided Flycatcher.....		R	X	R		
Eastern Wood-Pewee*.....		U/F	U/F	U-R		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.....		U		?		
Acadian Flycatcher.....		R				
Willow Flycatcher.....		R		R		
“Traill's” Flycatcher.....		R		?		
Least Flycatcher.....		F/U	R	U		
<i>Empidonax</i> species.....		F	R	F		
Black Phoebe.....						X
Eastern Phoebe*.....	C	F/U	F/U	F/U	C	C
Say's Phoebe.....	R	R		X	?	R
Vermilion Flycatcher*.....	R-U	U	U	U	?	X
Ash-throated Flycatcher*.....	U-F	F	F	R		X
Great Crested Flycatcher*.....	F	F	F	U		
Brown-crested Flycatcher.....		Hyp.				
Western Kingbird*.....		U/F	U/F	U		
Eastern Kingbird.....		U	R	R		
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*.....	F	C	C	C	F	
Shrikes and Vireos						
Loggerhead Shrike*.....	U	R	R	R-U	F/C	F/C

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
White-eyed Vireo*.....	R-C	C	C	C		
Bell's Vireo*.....	R	U/F	U/F	R		
Black-capped Vireo*.....	F	F/C	F/C	F		
Yellow-throated Vireo*.....	R-U/F	U/F	U/F	?		
Blue-headed Vireo.....	?	R		R	R/U	R
Cassin's Vireo.....	Hyp.					
Hutton's Vireo.....						X
Warbling Vireo.....		R		R	X	
Philadelphia Vireo.....		R				
Red-eyed Vireo*.....		F	F	U-R		
Jays and Crows						
Blue Jay*.....	C-F	F/R	F/R	F/R	F/C	C
Western Scrub-Jay*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
American Crow*.....	C/U	C/U	C/U	C/U	C/U	C/U
Common Raven*.....	U	R	R	R	U	U/F
Swallows						
Purple Martin*.....	F	F	F	U-R		R
Tree Swallow.....		R				
N. Rough-winged Swallow*..	U	U/F	U/F	?		X
Bank Swallow.....	R	R		R		
Cliff Swallow*.....	C	C	C	C-U		
Cave Swallow*.....	R-U	C	C	C	U	R
Barn Swallow*.....	C	C	C	C-F	U-X	X
Chickadees and Titmice						
Carolina Chickadee*.....	F	F	F	F	F	F
Black-crested Titmouse*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
Verdin, Bushtit, Nuthatches, and Creepers						
Verdin*.....	?	?	?	?	R	R
Bushtit*.....	U	U	U	U	U	U
Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	I				?	I
Brown Creeper.....					R	R
Wrens						
Cactus Wren*.....	R	R	R	R	R	R
Rock Wren.....					X	X
Canyon Wren*.....	F	F	F	F	U	U
Carolina Wren*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
Bewick's Wren*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
House Wren.....	U	U		R	U/F	U/F
Winter Wren.....	R				R	R

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Sedge Wren.....	R/U	R			R	R/U
Marsh Wren.....				R	R	R

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Kinglets and Gnatcatchers						
Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	R/U				R/F	R/F
Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	C-F	F		R	F-C	C
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*.....	R-F	F	F	F/U	U-R	R
Thrushes						
Eastern Bluebird*.....	F	F/U	U/F	U/F	F/C	F/C
Western Bluebird.....						X
Mountain Bluebird.....						X
Townsend's Solitaire.....	I					?
Swainson's Thrush.....		R		?		
Hermit Thrush.....	R/U				R-U	U/F
American Robin*.....	C-R	R	R	R	R-C	C
Varied Thrush.....						X
Mimic Thrushes						
Gray Catbird.....	R	R			R	R
Northern Mockingbird*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
Sage Thrasher.....	R					R
Brown Thrasher.....	R	R			R	R
Long-billed Thrasher.....	R	R				?
Curve-billed Thrasher.....	R					R
Starlings, Pipits, and Waxwings						
European Starling*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
American Pipit.....	R	R			R	R/U
Sprague's Pipit.....	U				U	R
Cedar Waxwing.....	C	C/F-R			R-C	C
Wood Warblers						
Blue-winged Warbler.....		X		R		
Golden-winged Warbler.....		R				
Tennessee Warbler.....		R				
Orange-crowned Warbler.....	F	U/F		R	F	F/U
Nashville Warbler.....	R-C	C-R		F/U	U/F-R	
Northern Parula.....	R	R				
Yellow Warbler.....		F		F/C		
Chestnut-sided Warbler.....		R		?		
Magnolia Warbler.....		U		?		
"Myrtle" Warbler.....	F/U	R			F/U	F
"Audubon's" Warbler.....	R				?	R
Black-throated Gray Warbler..				X		
Black-throated Green Warbler	R	U		R/U	U-R	
Golden-cheeked Warbler*.....	C/F	C/F	F-R			

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Blackburnian Warbler.....		R			X	
Yellow-throated Warbler.....		Hyp.				
Pine Warbler.....					Hyp.	R
Prairie Warbler.....		X				
Palm Warbler.....	X					
Bay-breasted Warbler.....		R				
Black-and-white Warbler*....	F	F	F-U	?		
American Redstart.....		U	R	U		
Prothonotary Warbler		X				
Ovenbird.....	R	R		?		
Northern Waterthrush.....	R	R		?		
Louisiana Waterthrush*.....	R	R	R	R		
Mourning Warbler.....		U		U		
MacGillivray's Warbler.....		R				
Common Yellowthroat.....	R	U		R	U/F	
Hooded Warbler.....		X				
Wilson's Warbler.....		U		U		
Canada Warbler.....		R		?		
Yellow-breasted Chat*.....	U	C/F	C/F	F-R		
Tanagers						
Summer Tanager*.....	R	F	F	U		
Scarlet Tanager.....		X				
Western Tanager.....		X				
American Sparrows						
Spotted Towhee.....	C-F	U			F-C	C
Eastern Towhee.....	R					R
Canyon Towhee*.....	F/U	U/F	U	U	U	F/U
Cassin's Sparrow*.....		I	I	R		X
Rufous-crowned Sparrow*....	C	C	C	F	F	F
Chipping Sparrow*.....	C-F	F	U	U	C	C
Clay-colored Sparrow.....		U/C		?	U/F	R
Field Sparrow*.....	C	C	C	F	C	C
Vesper Sparrow.....	C	F-R		R	C	C
Lark Sparrow*.....	F	C	C	C/F	F/U	U/F
Black-throated Sparrow*....	U	U	U	R	R	R
Lark Bunting.....	I					I
Savannah Sparrow.....	C	F-R	X		C	C
Baird's Sparrow.....		X				
Henslow's Sparrow						Hyp.
Grasshopper Sparrow*.....	U/F	U/F	U/F	U	U	U
Le Conte's Sparrow.....	F	R			R-F	F
Fox Sparrow.....	?				R-U	F

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
Song Sparrow.....	F-R				F	F/C
Lincoln's Sparrow.....	F	F/U-R			F/C	F
Swamp Sparrow.....	R				R	R
White-throated Sparrow.....	U/F				U/F	U/F
Harris's Sparrow.....					R-U	F/C
White-crowned Sparrow.....	C-F	F-R			R-C	C
"Slate-colored" Junco.....					R-U	F
"Oregon"/"Pink-sided" Junco.					R-U	U/F
Chestnut-collared Longspur... I						I

Grosbeaks and Buntings

Northern Cardinal*.....	C	C	C	C	C	C
Pyrrhuloxia.....	I	I			I	I
Rose-breasted Grosbeak.....		R				
Black-headed Grosbeak.....		X				
Blue Grosbeak*.....		F/U	F/U	U/F	R	
Lazuli Bunting.....		R				
Indigo Bunting*.....		R/U	R	U	U	
Painted Bunting*.....		R-C	C	F-R		
Dickcissel*.....		F/C	I	F		

Blackbirds and Orioles

Red-winged Blackbird*.....	F/C	F/U	F/U	F/U	F	F/C
Eastern Meadowlark*.....	C-F	U	U	U	F-C	C
Western Meadowlark.....	F-R				F-C	C
Yellow-headed Blackbird.....		R		?		
Brewer's Blackbird.....	R	R			I	I
Common Grackle*.....	F	F	F	?	?	U
Great-tailed Grackle*.....	F/R	C/R	C/R	C/R	C/R-U	U
Bronzed Cowbird.....	?	R	?			
Brown-headed Cowbird*.....	C	C	C	F/C	F/C	F/C
Orchard Oriole*.....		U	U	U/F		
Baltimore Oriole.....		R		R/C		
Bullock's Oriole.....		R		R/U		
Scott's Oriole*.....	R	R	R	?		X

Finches

Purple Finch.....						X
House Finch*.....	F/C	F/C	F/C	F/C	F/C	F/C
Pine Siskin.....	I	I			I	I
Lesser Goldfinch*.....	F	F	F	F	R	R
American Goldfinch.....	C-F	F/U			R-F	C

Old World Sparrows

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>EARLY SPRING</u>	<u>LATE SPRING</u>	<u>SUMMER</u>	<u>EARLY FALL</u>	<u>LATE FALL</u>	<u>WINTER</u>
House Sparrow*.....	F/C	F/C	F/C	F/C	F/C	F/C

Finding the Black-capped Vireo: Best bet is the *Shin Oak Observation Deck* in the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge. From the intersection of Lohman's Ford Road and Ranch-to-Market Road (RM) 1431 in Lago Vista: go west on RM 1431 for 6.5 miles to Cow Creek Road. Turn right onto the narrow, winding, mostly unpaved (but scenic) Cow Creek Road and follow it for 8.7 miles to RM 1174. Turn right onto RM 1174 and follow it for 3.8 miles to RM 1869. Turn right onto RM 1869 and follow it for 1.5 miles to the Observation Deck, which will be on the right (the entrance to the Observation Deck area is marked with signs).

An alternative route follows paved roads all the way. The total driving time is about the same as that for the Cow Creek route. From the intersection of Lohman's Ford Road and RM 1431 in Lago Vista: go west on RM 1431 for 14.7 miles to the intersection with RM 1174. Turn right and follow RM 1174 for 7.2 miles to RM 1869. Turn right and follow RM 1869 for 1.5 miles to the Observation Deck, on the right.

During the nesting season, about four vireo territories surround the Observation Deck.

Note that the Shin Oak Observation Deck is closed for approximately the first three weeks of April to allow these endangered vireos time to establish their territories without being disturbed. It's also closed during the hunting season in late November and early December, as well as from sunset to sunrise year-round. For more information on closures, contact the Balcones Canyonlands NWR office at (512) 339-9432, extension 30 or 70.

Black-capped Vireos are most readily detected by the males' fast, angry-sounding songs. Males begin returning during the last week of March. They sing more-or-less consistently from then through July; some singing continues into mid-August. Time of day makes relatively little difference in song output, though the birds are often rather quiet in the early morning. Singing is depressed on windy days. Beware confusing the Black-capped Vireo's songs with those of the White-eyed Vireo, abundant in this shinnery. **Study recordings of the Black-capped Vireo's song beforehand. Using recordings to attract Black-capped Vireos is illegal under the Endangered Species Act.** During the singing season, *hearing* a Black-capped Vireo is almost guaranteed but actually *seeing* a bird can be difficult. Glimpses usually last no more than a few seconds. Almost all Black-capped Vireos depart for their wintering grounds by late September.

Finding the Golden-cheeked Warbler: Several possibilities exist, one of the best being *Travis Audubon Society's Wildlife Sanctuary*, east of Lago Vista. Call beforehand to secure permission to enter the Sanctuary and to obtain directions (512-219-8425; or 512-926-8751, extension 2). Another possibility is the *Warbler Vista* trail system in the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge. Warbler Vista is located west of Lago Vista on the north side of RM 1431. To get there from Lago Vista: starting at the intersection of RM 1431 and Lohman's Ford Road, drive west on RM 1431 for 1.5 miles and look for the signs on the right. The gate to Warbler Vista is locked at sunset.

A third possibility is the Refuge's *Doeskin Ranch*, where a few warblers nest atop Post Oak Ridge. To get to Doeskin Ranch, first drive to RM 1174 via Cow Creek Road (follow the

directions given in the Black-capped Vireo account). At the intersection of Cow Creek Road and RM 1174, turn right (north) onto RM 1174 and follow it for 1.3 miles to Doeskin Ranch. The entrance to Doeskin Ranch is on the right side of RM 1174; it's marked with signs. *An alternative route to Doeskin Ranch follows paved roads:* from Lago Vista, drive west on RM 1431 for 14.7 miles to the intersection with RM 1174. Turn right (north) onto RM 1174 and follow it for 4.7 miles to Doeskin Ranch. It's about 0.7 mile from the parking lot to the top of Post Oak Ridge; the trail is fairly steep in some stretches.

Note that some or all of the areas mentioned above may be closed during hunting season in November and December (times of year, of course, when the warbler is on its wintering grounds). For information on closures, contact the appropriate organization: Travis Audubon Society at either of the numbers given above or the Balcones Canyonlands NWR at 512-339-9432, extension 70.

The Golden-cheeked Warbler is most easily detected by the males' buzzy songs. Two song types are most often heard. Type A songs consist of a series of buzzes, each buzz at a slightly higher pitch than the one preceding it: *bz-bzz-bzzz-bzzz-up!* Type B songs, introduced by a buzz, have an up-and-down pattern; this song is often represented as "*bzz laay-zee daay-zee*" or "*please, Please your Tea-cher!*" Beware confusing the warbler's songs with the sometimes similar songs of Bewick's Wrens. Male warblers begin returning to the Lago Vista area around March 10. Females follow several days later. Until middle or late April, males sing throughout the day. From late April until late May, they sing mostly before sunrise and again between about 8:30 and 11 a.m. Singing ends in early to mid-June. Almost all Golden-cheeked Warblers depart for the tropics before the end of July, though a few stragglers may remain through the first week of August. **Using recordings to attract Golden-cheeked Warblers is illegal under the Endangered Species Act.**

Always respect private property! Trespassing is taken seriously here.