

The Birds of Love Creek Preserve

Love Creek Preserve is a unique ecological treasure in far western Bandera County, a region referred to as the Bandera Canyonlands. The Texas Nature Conservancy acquired 1400 acres in 2000 and was able to add an additional 636 contiguous acres, in two separate tracts, in early 2011. The preserve is home to a great diversity of plant and animal species including rare and endangered forbs, cacti, fish, amphibians, and birds.

The presence of endangered bird species, notably the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo, played an important role in both the acquisition of the property and the continued science of documenting species diversity and population. Bird populations and management of their environment will be the presentation topic at the November 21st meeting of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist.



Male Golden-Cheeked Warbler

Dr. Richard Kostecke will discuss the life history of those two species in particular, as he describes the history of bird surveys at Love Creek, especially the just-completed, comprehensive 2011 study. Over a period of three months in the spring and summer of 2011, systematic data were acquired from approximately 100 grid points covering the entire preserve – the purpose was to gather identification and population distributions of the avian community.

Rich will provide a perspective on the regional and global recovery goals for the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. He will also describe some of the surprising and serendipitous discoveries that emerged from the 2011 survey.

Finally, Rich will comment on opportunities for volunteers to help the Conservancy learn more about Love Creek's avifauna, and he will talk about the Conservancy's plans to make the Love Creek site a "platform" preserve.

Dr. Richard Kostecke is Director of Research and Planning for the Nature Conservancy of Texas; he is an avid birder who is also interested in butterflies, dragonflies and other critters. He began his educational career with a BS in Biology from the University of Kansas, continued on with an MS in zoology from North Dakota State University and a PhD in Wildlife Science from Texas Tech University in Lubbock. His work experience includes bird surveys in the Rio Grande National Forest, owl studies in California, and studies of various waterfowl along parts of the Missouri River. For six years, Rich has been involved in various aspects of surveys, policy and technical issues and outreach programs centered on the two primary endangered and migratory birds at Fort Hood – namely the BC vireo and the GC Warbler.

For the past two years, Dr. Kostecke has been the Program Director for The Nature Conservancy's research and adaptive management of endangered songbirds (Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler) and other migratory birds, and their habitats at Fort Hood Military Reservation.

The monthly meeting of the Master Naturalist is free and open to the public. Please join us on Monday, November 21st 2011 at the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, located at 125 Lehmann Drive in Kerrville, TX. Socializing begins at 6:30, with the program starting at 7 pm. For more information, please contact our V.P. of Programs, Bob McKinley [830-535-6211 or (713-503-3914 – cell) or email him at bobmac9827@gmail.com

The website for the Hill Country Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist is at <http://txmn.org/hillcountry>