



BIRDS & BREW - BIRDING & SOCIAL EVENT



Article & Photos by Tom Jones



Chimney Swift tower stop on uplands trail.

HCMNs attended the Westcave Preserve Birds & Brew, a birding and social event. This AT activity combined an evening Bird Walk with a social event. It was held Saturday May 5th at Westcave Preserve. I attended with my wife and HCMNs Chris & Mike Rambo. The weather was perfect. It was a clear cool evening after a much needed rain the previous day. First was the social, held in a pot-luck style and BYOB. As the sunset approached, we headed to the Uplands Trail under the guide of Paul Fushille.



Amber Gosselin & Paul Fushille

Amber Gosselin-Conservation Director
Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center

Paul Fushille is a Natural Resources Specialist, focusing on the natural resource and preserve management of Travis County's over 11,000 acres of Balcones Canyonlands Preserve as well as the County's numerous parks. He currently chairs the Westcave Conservation Committee and is a Commissioner on the Dripping Springs Parks and Recreation Committee. He also is a member of the Travis Audubon Sanctuary Committee focusing on Blair Woods Preserve. Paul has been an avid bird-watcher since a teenager.



At the bird feeders on the Uplands Trail

An expert birder, Paul was an excellent guide. He started identifying and finding birds immediately and continued non-stop for the next hour. Memorable stops included the Murphy Bird Blind, which was active with late evening birds, and listening to the baby owls inside the tree mounted box.



Tree mounted owl box

Back to the east patio of the Environmental Learning Center for a quick recharge of food and drink. We then took off down the Heinze Branch canyon trail. It was especially beautiful in the bright low sun angle. Very quickly Paul pointed out the location of the Golden-cheeked Warbler nest that was shown in the May newsletter. Some of the walkers were even treated views of the GCWA. A good time was reported by all. This is an innovative approach to bird walks and the next one is scheduled in the Fall. The most fun Advanced Training I have earned.



HCMN Mike & Chris Rambo and my wife Shellie taking in the social scene.



Canyon Trail at sunset

WESTCAVE BIRDS AND BREW - BIRD LIST

Golden-cheeked Warbler (including banded female tending to young)	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Yellow-throated Vireo	Indigo Bunting
Lesser Goldfinch	White-winged Dove	Turkey Vulture	Grey Catbird
Cedar Waxwing	Eastern Phoebe	Black Vulture	Northern Parula
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	Lark Sparrow	Summer Tanager	Black-and-white Warbler
Chimney Swift	Northern Cardinal	Red-eyed Vireo	Chuck-will's Widow
Bewick's Wren	Blue Grosbeak	Carolina Wren	Canyon Wren
Field Sparrow	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	Brown-headed Cowbird	
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Carolina Chickadee	Barred Owl (2 counterings!)	

ABOUT WESTCAVE PRESERVE

Founded in 1976 as Westcave Preserve, the mission of Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center is to inspire people to develop a lifelong practice of enjoying and protecting nature. We accomplish this through educational programs, collaborative alliances, and conservation of our beautiful 76-acre preserve.

While many places offer opportunities for self-led nature activities, Westcave has dedicated staff who partner with schools to teach 6,000 students annually. Students learn key scientific concepts in the best classroom of all: our 75-acre preserve in Southwest Travis County and our nationally renowned Warren Skaaren Environmental Learning Center.

At our preserve, you not only witness a place of extraordinary beauty, you observe a living laboratory. You walk through hundreds of thousands of years of geologic formations as you hike to the bottom of the canyon. And at the head of our canyon is a lush, wet grotto where you can see with your own eyes how the water cycle works.

Our preserve is located in Southwest Travis County, one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country. Protecting this beautiful land, which is home to the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and attracts birders from all over the world, has become more important than ever.

LINK TO WESTCAVE

<https://westcave.org/>