Principal Investigator: Dawn Romaine Houston
Research Project: Migratory songbird stopover ecology in Central Texas

Project summary: Migration ecology is a crucial period for migratory songbirds; however, gaps of knowledge still exist about key components of habitat quality, particularly in Central Texas. The goal of the research project seeks to investigate whether riparian or upland habitats are important stopover sites for migratory songbirds on the Edward's Plateau in Central Texas.

The purpose of the pilot study conducted in 2020 and 2021 was to locate feasible study sites within the Travis County portion of the BCP and Travis County Parks. I visited Lake Perspectives, Snowden, and Bunten tracts, and Milton Reimers Ranch Park and Hamilton Pool during migration periods to assess areas used by migratory birds as stopover sites. Surveys were conducted in the morning hours and all migratory birds were visually or aurally detected and observed. Although a single mist net was initially employed to determine capture rates at these sites, bird movements were better determined by observational surveys. Based on vegetation structure and migratory bird habitat use patterns, I will select the Lake Perspectives tract and Hamilton Pool Preserve to conduct research representing riparian habitats.