HICKS & COMPANY

1504 WEST 5TH STREET AUSTIN, TEXAS 78703 TEL: 512 / 478.0858 FAX: 512 / 474.1849

ENVIRONMENTAL
ARCHEOLOGICAL
AND PLANNING
CONSULTANTS

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

TO: **Rose Farmer, Natural Resources Program Manager**
Paul Fushille, Field Biologist
Travis County

FROM: **John Kuhl, Christine Hasselbeck & Jeff Allen**
Hicks & Company

DATE: **August 8, 2008**

RE: **Spring 2008 Avian Survey -- Pace Bend Park**

1.0 Introduction

Pace Bend Park is a 1,368 acre park on Lake Travis that is owned and operated by Travis County. Hicks & Company, working on behalf of Travis County, performed an avian survey focused upon the presence or absence of the golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) at the park during the spring of 2008. The purposes of the survey were to list all avian species encountered, determine whether the golden-cheeked warbler (hereafter referred to as GCWA) was present and, if so, delineate territories being utilized by the species.

2.0 Methodology and Survey Results

Prior to initiating the survey, it was agreed upon with county staff that this would most likely be a stratified sample wherein areas with higher quality habitat would be focused upon due to the large size of the land base at Pace Bend Park and the level of available effort this season. More focused attention was given to areas with greater than 50% canopy coverage; particularly where topographic relief was greatest such as in canyon heads and slopes. Given time constraints, only a total of three surveys were conducted during the spring 2008 breeding season. Surveys were performed by qualified biologists familiar with the species generally in accordance with protocols for territory mapping set in place by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Surveys were conducted by Christine Hasselbeck, John Kuhl, and Jeff Allen.

In this season's survey, only one area was found to be used by a single male golden-cheeked warbler. No evidence of breeding was documented and the results of this work should be viewed as somewhat preliminary in nature due to the low number of visits. Locations where the single male was observed were recorded using a combination of field mapping and GPS. Audio tapes were not used for this survey. All other avian species observed during the survey events were recorded as well.

A total of 43 bird species were observed during the surveys (see **Attachment A**). Field conditions and notes pertaining to each visit are found in **Table 1 below**. A map depicting the documented location for the male observed is found in **Attachment B**.

Table 1 Spring 2008 Avian Surveys at Pace Bend Park					
Survey # & Staff	**Date**	**Time**	**Weather**	**Findings**	**Additional Notes**
1 JK, JA & CH	April 11, 2008	7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	Temperature 50-60°F, cool and sunny	One GCWA male observed at the edge of an opening in the woods at the top of a hill	Bird was visually identified.
2 JK & CH	April 18, 2008	7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a. m.	Temperature of 40-60°F, skies sunny and clear, cool front & rain the previous night	One male observed singing in same location as previous visit; one male singing at top of mature Ashe juniper tree in woods on top of hill	Confirmed single GCWA male
3 JK, JA & PF	May 1, 2008	7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Temperature 60-75°F, clear to partly cloudy turning warm	One male was heard singing a muted A song.	GCWA song muted; bird heard briefly but not located visually. Highest avian diversity day.

JK= John Kuhl; JA = Jeff Allen; CH = Christine Hasselbeck; PF = Paul Fushille

3.0 Summary

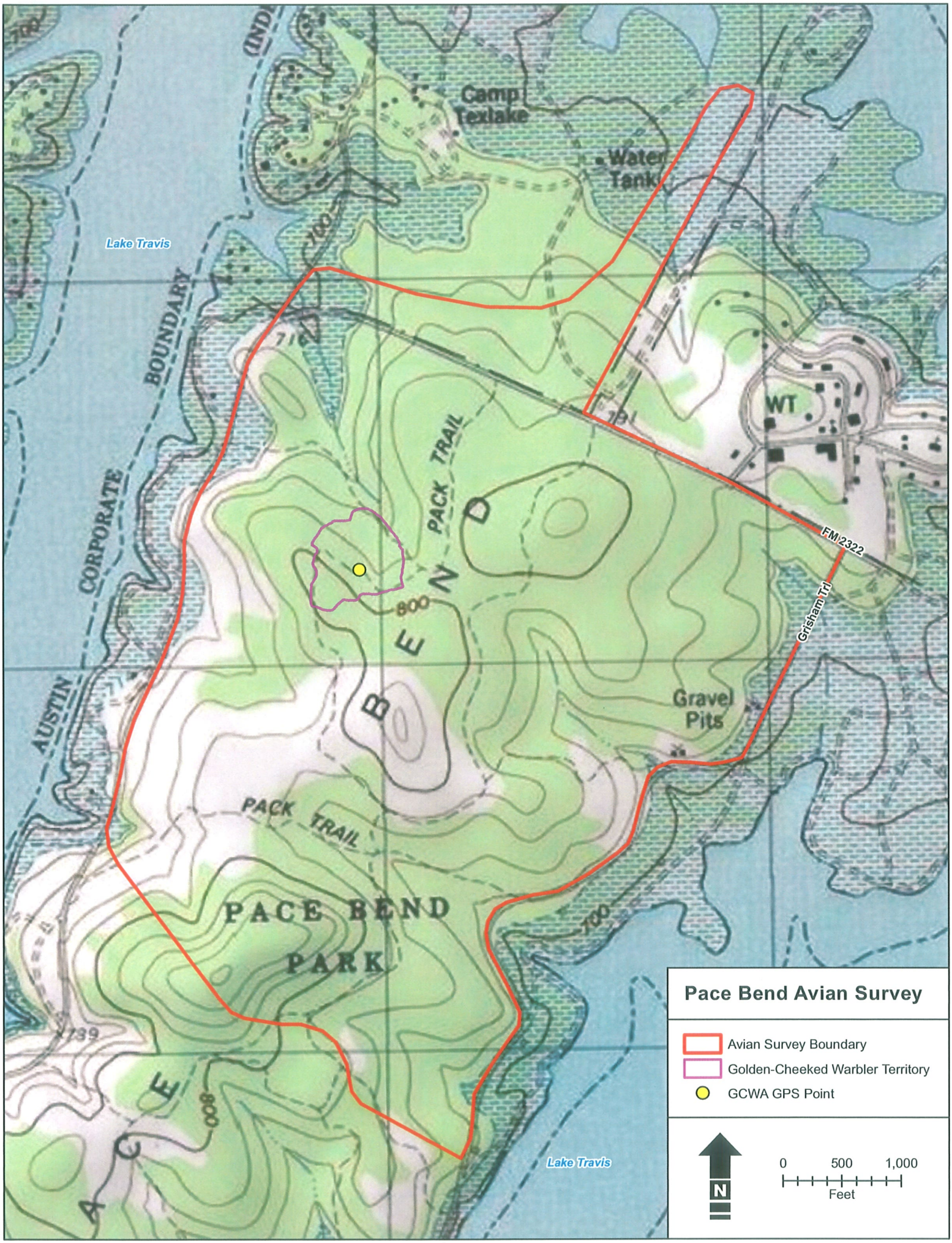
Overall, despite the reduced number of visits, a fair avian diversity (43 species) was documented at the park, primarily due to the spring migration in progress. The presence of the single male golden-cheeked warbler should be viewed as perhaps an indication that habitat conditions, at least in this part of the park are beginning to attain suitability to sustain a breeding population that should be further investigated in the seasons to come. As earlier indicated, no females were observed and no evidence of breeding documented. It is entirely possible that this was a first year male or a displaced male staking out a new location.

ATTACHMENT A – AVIAN SPECIES OBSERVED

Avian Species Identified During Spring 2008 Surveys at Pace Bend Park						
Species Identification				Date		
Family (Subfamily)	Scientific Name	Common Name	Code	4/11/08	4/18/08	5/1/08
Odontiphoridae	*Colinus virginianus*	Northern Bobwhite	NOBO	x		x
Ardeidae	*Ardea alba*	Great Egret	GREG			x
Cathartidae	*Coragyps altratus*	Black Vulture	BLVU		x	
Cathartidae	*Cathartes aura*	Turkey Vulture	TUVU	x	x	x
Accipitridae (Accipitrinae)	*Buteo swainsoni*	Swainson's Hawk	SWHA	x		
Scolopacidae (Scolopacinae)	*Bartramia longicauda*	Upland Sandpiper	UPSA		x	
Columbidae	*Xenaida asiatica*	White-winged Dove	WWDO	x		x
Columbidae	*Zenaida macroura*	Mourning Dove	MODO	x		x
Cuculidae (Neomorphinae)	*Geococcyx californianus*	Greater Roadrunner	GRRO		x	x
Apodidae (Chaeturinae)	*Chaetura pelagica*	Chimney Swift	CHSW		x	
Picidae (Picinae)	*Melanerpes aurifrons*	Golden-fronted Woodpecker	GFWO	x	x	x
Picidae (Picinae)	*Picoides scalaris*	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	LBWO	x		
Tyrannidae (Tyranninae)	*Myiarchus tuberculifer*	Great Crested Flycatcher	GCFL	x		
Tyrannidae (Tyranninae)	*Tyrannus forficatus*	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	STFL		x	x
Corvidae	*Aphelocoma californica*	Western Scrub Jay	WESJ	x	x	x
Corvidae	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*	American Crow	AMCR	x	x	
Corvidae	*Corvus cryptoleucus*	Chihuahuan Raven	CHRA	x	x	
Paridae	*Poecile carolinensis*	Carolina Chickadee	CACH	x	x	
Paridae	*Baeolophus bicolor*	Tufted Titmouse	TUTI	x	x	x
Troglodytidae	*Catherpes mexicanus*	Canyon Wren	CANW	x	x	
Troglodytidae	*Thryothorus ludovicianus*	Carolina Wren	CAWR		x	x
Troglodytidae	*Thryomanes bewickii*	Bewick's Wren	BEWR	x	x	x
Regulidae	*Regulus calendula*	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	RCKI	x	x	
Sylviidae (Polioptilinae)	*Polioptila caerulea*	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	BGGN	x	x	x
Mimidae	*Mimus polyglottus*	Northern Mockingbird	NOMO	x	x	x
Bombycillidae	*Bombycilla garrulus*	Cedar Waxwing	CEDW		x	
Parulidae	*Vermivora celata*	Orange-crowned Warbler	OCWA	x		
Parulidae	*Vermivora ruficapilla*	Nashville Warbler	NAWA	x	x	x
Parulidae	*Dendroica chrysoparia*	Golden-cheeked Warbler	GCWA	x	x	
Parulidae	*Dendroica virens*	Black-throated Green Warbler	BTNW	x	x	x
Parulidae	*Mniotilta varia*	Black-and-white-Warbler	BAWW		x	
Parulidae	*Oporornis formosus*	Mourning Warbler	MOWA			x
Emberizidae	*Spizella passerina*	Chipping Sparrow	CHSP	x	x	x
Emberizidae	*Spizella pallida*	Clay-colored Sparrow	CCSP			x
Emberizidae	*Spizella pusilla*	Field Sparrow	FISP			x
Emberizidae	*Chondestes grammacus*	Lark Sparrow	LASP	x		x
Cardinalidae	*Cardinalis cardinalis*	Northern Cardinal	NOCA	x	x	x
Cardinalidae	*Passerina caerulea*	Painted Bunting	PABU			x
Icteridae	*Quiscalus mexicanus*	Great-tailed Grackle	GTGR	x	x	
Icteridae	*Molothrus ater*	Brown-headed Cowbird	BHCO	x		x
Fringillidae (Carduelinae)	*Carpodacus mexicanus*	House Finch	HOFI	x		x
Fringillidae (Carduelinae)	*Carduelis psaltria*	Lesser Goldfinch	LEGO			x
Fringillidae (Carduelinae)	*Carduelis tristis*	American Goldfinch	AMGO			x

ATTACHMENT B – SURVEY LIMITS & GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER LOCATION MAPS


Lake Travis
FM 2322
Grisham Trl
Lake Travis
Pace Bend Avian Survey
Avian Survey Boundary
Golden-Cheeked Warbler Territory
GCWA GPS Point
N
0
500
1,000
Feet


Camp Texlake
Water Tank
Lake Travis
BOUNDARY
CORPORATE
AUSTIN
PACK TRAIL
BEND
PACK TRAIL
WT
FM 2322
Grisham Trl
Gravel Pits
PACE BEND PARK
PACE
Lake Travis
Pace Bend Avian Survey
Avian Survey Boundary
Golden-Cheeked Warbler Territory
GCWA GPS Point
N
0
500
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Feet