FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Noted Birding Educator and University Alumnus Gene Blacklock to Offer Extensive Line of Birding Courses for All Experience Levels

Courses offered through the Office of Community Outreach begin Saturday, April 16

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – The Office of Community Outreach at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi will offer an extensive line of affordable birding courses for all experience levels beginning on Saturday, April 16.

The classes will be taught by noted birding author, guide and educator Gene W. Blacklock, a 1968 alumnus of the University of Corpus Christi and the recipient of numerous honors including Padre Island National Seashore’s 2002 Bird Conservation Award. He is the co-author of “Birds of the Texas Coastal Bend” (Texas A&M University Press, 1985), and “Birds of Texas, A Field Guide” (Texas A&M University Press, 1994).

According to the Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend Chapter of the Audubon Society, the Corpus Christi area has more than 215 species of birds. Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving stopover habitat for all North American migratory birds, has awarded Corpus Christi with the title of “America’s Birdiest City,” for seven consecutive years.

Course offerings are:

- **Saturday, April 16:** The “Introduction to the World of Birds” recommended for beginners will start with an interactive, classroom lecture on Saturday, April 16, from 8:45-11:15 a.m. on the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi campus. Following a lunch break, students will take a field trip into the birds’ natural environment from 1-5 p.m. The class features the most appropriate and direct approach to bird identification. Cost: $45; $35 for senior citizens.

- **Friday, May 13, through Saturday, May 14:** The “Wading and Shorebird Identification in Alternate Plumage” class focuses on the identification of wading and shorebirds as
they occur in alternate plumage (breeding plumage) within the Coastal Bend of Texas and North America. A lecture will be held on Friday, May 13, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. with a field trip on Saturday, May 14, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students in this class may have already taken the “Introduction to the World of Birds” or have basic knowledge about the taxonomic approach to birds or about birding in general. Cost: $55; $45 for senior citizens.

- **Monday, Sept. 19, through Monday, Dec. 12:** “Birding 101” is a semester-long course that includes 10 Monday evening lectures and four Saturday field trips. The lectures will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. on Sept. 19 and 26; Oct. 3, 24 and 31; Nov. 7, 14 and 21; and Dec. 5 and 12. Field trip dates will be Oct. 15 and 29; Nov. 12; and Dec. 3. Cost: $215; $195 for senior citizens.

- **Friday, Nov. 11, through Saturday, Nov. 12:** “The Waterfowl Identification Course,” a detailed approach to the identification of ducks and other waterfowl, is for beginner and experienced birders. The course begins with a lecture on Friday, Nov. 11, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and continues with a field trip on Saturday, Nov. 12, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. The course features an interactive classroom lecture on the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi campus and an early morning guided trip into the natural environment of the Coastal Bend Waterfowl. Cost: $55, $45 for senior citizens.

- **Friday, Jan. 27, and Saturday, Jan. 28, 2012:** A “Sparrow and Finch Identification Course,” which highlights the 50 species of finches known to occur in appropriate habitats mainly during winter within the Texas Coastal Bend, begins on Friday, Jan. 27, with a lecture from 6:30-8 p.m. and continues with a field trip on Saturday, Jan. 28, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Several flat headed, short, sharp tailed species can be expected during the field trip. Cost: $55, $45 for senior citizens.

For more information call Joe Miller, director of Education and Youth Programs, at 361.825.5967; or e-mail joseph.miller@tamucc.edu; or for the latest news on birding courses, go to [http://outreach.tamucc.edu/birding/index.html](http://outreach.tamucc.edu/birding/index.html).