From December 2019 to March 2020, Stephen worked on the Borderlands Research Institute’s grassland birds project. This project seeks to understand grassland bird species that are in steep decline, monitoring them on their wintering grounds in the Chihuahuan Desert grasslands of West Texas. Researchers have surveyed three ranches in the region, identifying birds in both pristine grasslands as well as in heavily shrub-encroached areas. They have conducted three rounds of bird captures where they, with the help of volunteers, captured grassland birds in mist nets so they could band them and take measurements before releasing them. As part of the larger project, Stephen’s research project focuses on a subset of our bird survey data to see if the weather has any effect on the recorded bird detections in both the grassland and shrubland areas.

STUDENT PROFILE

Stephen’s interest in the outdoors and wildlife started at a very young age with reptiles and amphibians. However, his interest in birds, in particular, became more serious in early 2017. Since then, he has birded in nine countries and personally recorded 736 species of birds. Stephen is currently a sophomore at Sul Ross State University, studying biology, and aspires to dive into ornithological related work after he graduates.

PROJECT PROFILE

From December 2019 to March 2020, Stephen worked on the Borderlands Research Institute’s grassland birds project. This project seeks to understand grassland bird species that are in steep decline, monitoring them on their wintering grounds in the Chihuahuan Desert grasslands of West Texas. Researchers have surveyed three ranches in the region, identifying birds in both pristine grasslands as well as in heavily shrub-encroached areas. They have conducted three rounds of bird captures where they, with the help of volunteers, captured grassland birds in mist nets so they could band them and take measurements before releasing them. As part of the larger project, Stephen’s research project focuses on a subset of our bird survey data to see if the weather has any effect on the recorded bird detections in both the grassland and shrubland areas.