



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

Major Resources at Your Fingertips at bastropcountyaudubon.org:

Find in our menu on the Home Page, "Links to Other Sites." There, we have over sixty live links to others, under the headings Texas Audubon Chapters, Birds, Butterflies/Moths/Beetles, Bats, Flowers & Plants, International Organizations, National Organizations, Texas Organizations, Bastrop County Sites, Internet Birding, and Other Useful Links.

Did you know there are two certified dark skies-eligible Texas State Parks? Enchanted Rock and Copper Breaks State Parks. Big Bend is the National Park certified, giving us three parks in the state. Find out more at darksky.org, added to our links list since Astronomer Bill Wren's program for us in January.

We also recently added keepbastropcountybeautiful.org for local habitat conservation news, and waterdownstream.org, for the Lower Colorado River Basin Coalition, of which BCAS is a member, for water issues and developments.

Chapter News

BCAS' FaceBook Page is actively engaged again under the administration of Linda Salerno and Michelle Belden. Linda has added a number of intriguing bird videos, and Michelle is posting field trip videos and recent whooping crane photos. They reported on Feb. 17 that the number of Likes was gradually climbing.

Logo Tee Shirts—A new tee shirt in sky-blue with the Pileated Woodpecker logo emblazoned across the Bastrop County outline on the front was delivered in January. Mary Ellen Branan, Dru Gabrysch, and Steve Slyker worked out the design. Priced at \$15, which already includes the tax. A supply of the previous tee shirt designed by Margie Crisp is also still available. Both can be viewed on the web site.

Treasurer Alan Jaeger on Feb. 9, delivered a \$1,000 donation from Bastrop County Audubon Society to help with capital improvements at the 28-acre Colorado River Trail site, which is adjacent to the Colorado River Refuge property in Tahitian. A project of the Keep Bastrop County Beautiful organization and Master Naturalists, the property is owned by BCWD#2. The effort includes a canoe launch, paving and security improvements, and habitat restoration.

BCAS March Program

Photographer Jeff Parker Shares a Trip to Brazil

Wildlife and nature photographer Jeff Parker thoroughly enjoys helping other nature-lovers improve their photography techniques and showing them great places to do so. For his second appearance for Bastrop County Audubon Society, he brings his photo collection from a recent trip to Brazil. The program takes place at the meeting March 17, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the First National Bank in Bastrop.



Parker's photographs have appeared in many publications and websites and are anthologized in several books. He was an award-winner in the 2010 prestigious contest Images for Conservation Pro-Tour. He also took home his share of prize money from the 2007, 2009, and 2011 Coastal Bend Wildlife Contests.

A distinctive forte is creating tours for small groups of aspiring nature photographers. His trips in 2015 to Big Bend and Costa Rica are already sold out. Jeff's a member of the Nature Photography Association (NANPA), the Nature Conservancy, the Travis Audubon Society, and the Bastrop County Audubon Society. He's also a Corpus Christi Certified Wildlife Guide.

Jeff credits photography with bringing a deeper awareness to issues of conservation and says he was captivated by "nature's big screen" long before he developed a passion for capturing it with the camera. (Main source:

Refreshments? New Bank Meeting Room policies have cancelled food and drink for guest organizations which use the room. Thus some of us suffered withdrawal pangs when refreshments were suddenly missing from the February 17 meeting. The Board will be considering the issue for the future. Suggestions welcome.

Silent Auction—BCAS donated a tee shirt and the book *Essentials of Birding* by National Geographic for the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce silent auction at the Chamber's annual banquet on Feb. 14.

Birds of the Month: 2014 - 2015



Now we know them well.



Field Trip Reports

January 17, 2015, Granger Lake:

We left in a five-car convoy from the First National Bank at 7:30am. It was a beautiful clear and cool (39°F) morning. Our first stop was outside of Thrall in Williamson County looking for Sandhill and Whooping cranes. We then headed a bit north in search of the Striped Sparrow that had recently been spotted (the first reported in the US) but no luck for us there. On to Granger Lake for water fowl and then back over to CR 352 for another target bird, the Burrowing Owl, and finally back to CR 428/361 for another unsuccessful try at the Striped Sparrow. The 14 birders were Mary Ellen Branan, Michele Belden, Ron and Susan Martin, Barbara Carstens, Pamela Hohman, Linda Williams, Hugh Brown, Bernd Gravenstein, Carroll Moore, Steve and Denise Ligon, and Mike and Jan Goebel. Total 56 species.

Sandhill Crane	6	Mourning Dove	14
Gadwall	6	Great Horned Owl	1
Blue-winged Teal	1	Burrowing Owl	1
Cinnamon Teal	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Northern Shoveler	21	Red-bellied Woodpecker	3
Green-winged Teal	6	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Canvasback	1	Downy Woodpecker	2
Redhead	18	Crested Caracara	10
Ring-necked Duck	4	American Kestrel	6
American White Pelican	9	Loggerhead Shrike	4
Neotropic Cormorant	1	American Crow	1
Great Blue Heron	1	Carolina Chickadee	4
Great Egret	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Black Vulture	11	European Starling	4
Turkey Vulture	10	American Pipit	11
Northern Harrier	1	Common Yellowthroat	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Red-tailed Hawk	10	Vesper Sparrow	1
American Coot	16	Fox Sparrow	2
Killdeer	28	Song Sparrow	2
Ring-billed Gull	9	Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Forster's Tern	1	White-throated Sparrow	1
Rock Pigeon	8	Harris's Sparrow	12
		White-crowned Sparrow	10
		Dark-eyed Junco	4
		Northern Cardinal	14
		Red-winged Blackbird	3
		Meadow Lark sp.	52
		Red-winged Blackbird	3
		Meadow Lark sp.	52
		Brewer's Blackbird	12
		Great-tailed Grackle	1
		House Finch	1
		American Goldfinch	1
		House Sparrow	1

February 28, 2015, McKinney Roughs:

We braved the cold and damp on Saturday for our field trip to McKinney Roughs. It was an overcast morning with the temperature between 31-34 degrees. We birded trails from 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: Riverside to Valley View, returning on Ridge. We saw 35 species including the Bald Eagle at the Pine Ridge Overlook. Birders were Steve Pycszak, Mary Ellen Branan, and Jan and Mike Goebel, Field Trip Chair.

Gadwall (32), Great Blue Heron (1), Black Vulture (15), Turkey Vulture (2), Bald Eagle (1), Crested Caracara (1) American Kestrel (1), Killdeer (3), Eurasian Collared-Dove (2), Mourning Dove (4), Red-bellied Woodpecker (7), Pileated Woodpecker (2), Blue Jay (2), American Crow (13), Carolina Chickadee (6), Tufted Titmouse (8), Carolina Wren (3), Bewick's Wren (4), House Wren (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (10), Eastern Bluebird (4), Hermit Thrush (5), Northern Mockingbird (7), Yellow-rumped Warbler (24), Spotted Towhee (5), Field Sparrow (22), Song Sparrow (1) Lincoln's Sparrow (2), White-throated Great-tailed Grackle (4), House Sparrow (2).

Mike Goebel, Field Trip Chair
Jan Goebel, compiler

A Winter View: Audubon's Strategies re Global-Warming

The effects of climate change are already being seen, and they pose profound challenges to conservation. How our nation and other nations respond to the unfolding impacts of temperature rise coupled with our boundless appetite for energy will shape the legacy we leave for future generations.

Audubon's research has already revealed a disturbing trend among wintering birds, many of which are shifting their ranges north in response to rising temperatures. While some lucky species will discover suitable habitat in their new locations, others will find that the habitat and food sources they depend on have disappeared, leaving them no place to go.

Audubon is focused on **four** key strategies to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change and foster a clean energy future.

Traditional Energy: The location of transmission lines and drill rigs matters to birds and other wildlife. Audubon will build on its leading-edge science, which has steered 15 million acres of western oil and gas wells and two new eastern transmission lines away from critical bird habitat.

Green Energy: Alternative sources, like wind and solar, will help meet growing demands for energy with less environmental impact. Audubon can ensure that we get green energy right, by locating wind farms in places with a substantial human footprint, where they will have less impact on birds and wildlife.

Emissions Reduction: Sound public policy is fundamental; that's why we mobilize our network in the high-stakes fight on behalf of much-needed legislation to reduce emissions.

Adaptive Management: Innovative modeling using GPS information and data from our **Christmas Bird Count and Great Backyard Bird Count**, along with other studies is already being used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify specific bird habitats and species most at risk from climate change. By understanding potential impacts before they occur, Audubon can provide proactive solutions. (adapted from article at audubon.org)



Striped Sparrow —A mountain species from Mexico which ordinarily lives at 5-8,000 ft. hits the pavement just outside Thrall. Pam Hohman befriended another birder at the site who took this photo earlier on January 17 and shares it with us: Thank you, David McDonald of Friendswood.

Great Backyard Bird Count: 2015

Participants in Bastrop County filed 102 species in 88 checklists over the four days of the count, Feb. 13-16. The top four sites were Bastrop State Park, Bob Bryant Park, McKinney Roughs, and Lake Bastrop.

Texas as a whole counted 365 species. (Cape May, NJ, had 417). Bastrop County did pretty well in comparison with other counties. Hidalgo County led with 206, Nueces had 153, Harris was third with 184, Galveston counted 150, and Bexar 144. Louise Ridlon reported 550 Brewer's Black Birds. BCAS Field Trip Chair Mike Goebel was the most prolific in the number of checklists in Bastrop.

The GBBC is held each year on President's Day week end, sponsored by Cornell Ornithology Lab and the National Audubon Society. You can consult the fascinating results any time at gbbc.birdcount.org, including past years.

Volunteers needed for BCAS Community Outreach 3/27-28

BCAS will take part in the Friends of the Library (Bastrop) annual book sale March 27-28 at the Library, alongside the Bastrop Garden Club. While they offer plants and garden information, we talk birds, hand-out our excellent brochures and classroom materials, and demonstrate the use of binoculars, especially to young visitors, with our child-sized binoculars available. The hours are 10-6 on Friday and 10-4 on Saturday.

A major aspect of the BCAS public education and community outreach is participating at local events, especially but not exclusively nature and conservation events. Recently, for example, we enjoyed hosting the visitors on their evening walking the Holiday Trail of Lights at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop on December 19. We will be present at the Nature Fest in Bastrop in April and assist the Smithville Public Library with a program in July.

At present we need volunteers from the membership to man the booth for scheduled times during the March 27 and 28 dates. Be sure and sign up at our March 17 meeting or call Mary Ellen Branan at 512 303-2734 or Jackie Fisher at 512 985-6572 to commit to two or three hours of good times.

Bird Calls is published by Bastrop County Audubon Society six times a year. We invite letters, articles, news tips, event reviews, book reviews, poems, cartoons, and photos appropriate to our mission. The deadline for a pending issue is noon on the last day of the preceding month. Submit to editor@bastropcountyaudubon.org. Or by mail: 216 Schaefer Blvd., Bastrop TX 78602, ph. (512) 303-2734. Editor-in-chief, Mary Ellen Branan, PhD.

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Return Service Requested

March/April Calendar

March 17, Tuesday: 7:00 p.m. BCAS General Meeting, First National Bank Bldg., Bastrop.

March 27-28, Friday & Saturday: BCAS booth at Friends of the (Bastrop) Library Sale beginning at 10 a.m., 1100 Church Street, historic district.

April 2, Thursday: 6:30 p.m., BCAS Board Meeting, Bastrop Public Library.

April 18: Annual Bastrop Nature Fest, Fisherman's Park.

April 21, Tuesday: 7:00 p.m. BCAS General Meeting.

Birding Festivals

April 10-13: Feather Fest, Galveston, field trips, experts, etc.

April 12-13: Atwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, Eagle Lake vicinity. Feature: booming grounds.

April 17-19: Grand Isle, La., Migratory Birding festival.

April 24-27: Balcones Songbird Festival, Canyonlands NWR, Marble Falls. Field trips, lectures.

Linda Salerno removes last year's Chickadee nest from a BCAS box in Buescher S. P.



BCAS Mission: To promote the conservation, restoration, and enjoyment of natural resources and habitats for birds and other wildlife.