



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society



Party-Hearty: Gathered for a perfect October day under the pines.

November Program:

David Mitchell on Annual Bird Count Science & More

David Mitchell will present his view of "Birds of the Southwest." The expert Bastrop birder, who has headed up our Bastrop County Audubon Christmas Bird Count for decades, also will share statistics and trends revealed in the County's annual count at our BCAS meeting, Tuesday evening November 20 at 7:30 p.m..

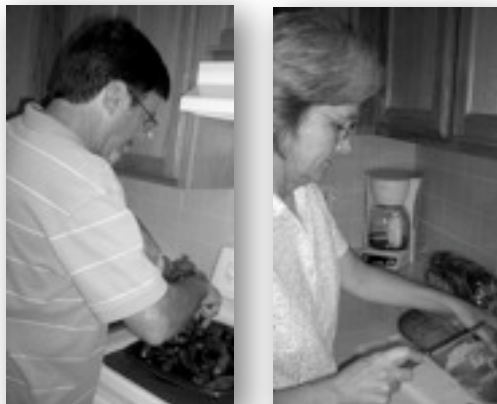
In Bastrop the Christmas Bird Count is done on New Year's Day.

While there is a specific methodology and geographical mapping in the Christmas Bird Count, everyone can participate! Your eyes are needed. If you want to participate in the count this year, including feeder-counting at your home, come out to the Texas Grill (Bastrop, Hwy. 71W) by 7:00 a.m..

The national Christmas Bird Count is the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world. For over a hundred years observers have created an incomparable pool of data for scientists and interested people the world over.

Ever one of our popular speakers, Mitchell has presented programs to us on birds in Antarctica, Central America, California, etc.

See you at the Training Room of the First National Bank in Bastrop (near HEB). As usual, Learners' Corner at 7 p.m. precedes the meeting.



Amiable Hosts: Steve and Denise Ligon planned it all.

Lost Pines Nature Fest:

River Thrills Bastrop Paddlers

A celebration at Bastrop's Fisherman's Park launched Texas Parks and Wildlife Department-sponsored El Camino Real Paddling Trail November 3rd.

The major achievement here is that the besmirched reputation of Bastrop's miles along the Colorado is restored. After a decade or more of some avoidance by swimmers and canoeists as dangerous, dirty, and lacking in convenient public access, this marks a new era of cleaner, safer water, and convenience.

BCAS joined other environmental organizations and nature-oriented vendors, lecturers, and performers, with its informational booth dedicated to conservation, bird life, and beetles.

The six-mile trip to Tahitian Village take-out takes about two to three hours. From Bob Bryant Park launch to Fisherman's Park takes one hour.



At Nature Fest: →



Gleaning in the Field

Data from **State air quality** reveals the current ozone non-attainment counties are Bexar, Brazoria, Chambers, Collin, Comal, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Fort Bend, Galveston, Guadalupe, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Johnson, Kaufman, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Parker, Rockwall and Tarrant.

Counties which would be in violation if the current standard is made more restrictive: are: Aransas, Atascosa, Austin, Bandera, **Bastrop**, Brewster, Caldwell, Calhoun, Cameron, Cherokee, Cooke, Delta, El Paso, Goliad, Gregg, Harrison, Hays, Henderson, Hidalgo, Hood, Hunt, Kendall, Kenedy, Kleberg, Matagorda, Medina, Nueces, Palo Pinto, Rusk, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Smith, Somervell, Travis, Upshur, Victoria, Walker, Waller, Webb, Willacy, Williamson, Wilson, and Wise. *Courtesy Bastrop Chamber of Commerce.*

Testimony: "Illegal border crossings, enforcement activities along the border, and the double-layer, reinforced wall authorized by the recently enacted Secure Fence Act all threaten to destroy or fragment many miles of refuge habitat, restrict access to refuges for tens of thousands of visitors, and block access to the Rio Grande River for wildlife. In short, the border wall gravely threatens the ecological integrity, biological diversity, and environmental health of refuges that is safeguarded by the Improvement Act." **Carol Browner, Chairman National Audubon, Washington D.C., 10/09/07.**

High Island Work Days: The damage was much worse for Houston Audubon's High Island sanctuaries than Rita's impact two years ago. This summer has been very wet, and Humberto brought an additional 6-8 inches of rain which loosened the soil. Trees on High Island don't have very deep roots due to a dense clay layer. The combination of rain and wind meant lots of downed trees. Volunteers are welcome and will continue working throughout the winter to clean up the sanctuaries and quickly replant shrubs and trees: Next days: December 8, January 12, February 9, and March 8. Winnie Burkett at **713-932-1639.**



September Field Trip

-----Four BCAS birders spent 3 hours at the Hornsby Bend Ponds and nearby areas in Travis County. The 30 species of birds observed were quite typical of those seen at this time of the year. Birds of interest included: American kestrel, Little blue heron, American Avocet, Blue- and Green-winged Teals, Eastern wood-pewee, and Blue-gray Gnat-catcher. In addition, we had good looks at two kinds of turtles: Smooth soft shells and red-eared sliders. Come with us on December, and see what you can find. Details will be forthcoming in early December. As ever, **Stan Wellso.**

Hornsby Bend Crisis Building: More off-limits areas, nearby housing development, deteriorating bird blind, fewer volunteers, etc., and we could lose Hornsby Bend as a future birding site. Concerned birders are meeting Saturday, November 10 at 11:30 a.m., after the monthly 8:00 a.m. bird count at the Center building to talk with Kevin Anderson. Free pizza lunch. Organized by John Kelly (jfkellyaustin53@hotmail.com).

Members Hard at Work:

Pam Hohman --

Pam Hohman emerged as a leader in efforts to oppose tapping of the unregulated part of the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer beneath hers and neighbors' properties near the Bastrop-Caldwell County lines, out Highway 304 near Delhi. Thirsty water authorities in Gonzales, for one, hope to pump out water for burgeoning **development** needs.

Hohman was liberally featured with a page 1 photo and quoted remarks in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Sunday, October 14. She is described as "a fourth generation rancher tired of legislative intrigue."

Linda Presto --

Linda Presto served as chief lecturer for a stream of Boy Scout troops from central Texas gathered to earn an ornithology badge. She held forth for three sessions on Saturday and Sunday October 20-21 at the BSA facility near Lake Bastrop.

After teaching about the parts of the bird and the use of binoculars and field guide, Presto led field trips along the lake. The boys sighted a life bird for all the troopers, the Osprey. Parents and Scout leaders were so pleased with the event, they are angling for Presto to come again in April.

Outreach Media Committee--

Sue Brubaker, Mary Ellen Branan, and Judy Ing are revising and designing much-needed updated materials, such as a rack card and a tri-fold brochure for BCAS. A "quick" version of the new tri-fold was given out at our booth at the Nature Fest, Nov. 3rd. In addition Branan and Ing spend many hours pursuing the legal right (at an affordable cost) to use the music behind the anniversary slide show in order to broadcast the slide show on Cable Channel 10, the Bastrop Community Access channel (BCAT). "This is hard work," said Ing.

The new
field guide,
Audubon
Calendars,
brochures,
and books
are in.



The Ing Sing

Letter from the President

Halloween is over but I'm still scared. Can we survive the coming decade? By we I mean, we the people. I think there is not room for all the people who are on the planet AND all the machines that are on the planet.

People everywhere have quit growing food, fuel for people, and are now growing fuel for cars. New electrical gadgets are being developed every day. Electrical gadgets that everybody wants, including me. Electrical gadgets that demand fuel to operate. Fuel created by power plants that use oil, gas or coal.

It'll be a close race for survival. Who will win, people and animals or cars, appliances, gadgets or doodads? Sounds like a science fiction story, but it's not fiction.

Okay, okay, I'll buy some squiggly lights, plant a tree, save for a hybrid car, even use the dang solar clothes drier, otherwise known as the clothesline. But will it be enough? Will it save the planet? I don't think so.

According to the Austin Sierran, the emissions from only one medium sized coal-fired power plant, in just 10 days of operation, will negate the effort of planting 300,000 trees. There are 151 new conventional coal-fired power plants in various stages of development in the U.S. today. Three are planned for Texas. That's not even counting China's coal usage. Can we change our ways, wake up and get rid of coal-fired conventional power plants? We could make a difference. Will we? Will congress? Will big business?

OMG!! I'm going to change from being an environmentalist and become a survivalist. I'm going to make a list of all the things I need to survive and start accumulating.

Let me see. A garden, a clothesline, maybe a generator. A generator will be like gold in the world of the future. The world we are leaving to our children and their children and their cars, and their 10,000 sq. ft. houses full of appliances, Ipods and gameboys.

Who will survive? We'll know a lot more about it in a decade, if we can make it that far.

Halloween's gone for the year but the world's getting scarier and scarier.
-- **Judy Ing**



Calendar

- Nov. 10, Saturday: Birder Crisis Meeting** at Hornsby Bend, 11:30 a.m. (free pizza).
- Nov. 18, Sunday: Board meets** 4 pm, 211 Cattle mens, Bastrop, S. Finlay, 303 3369.
- Nov. 20, Tuesday: General Meeting**, 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 28, Wednesday: Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership**, Hornsby Bend, 10:00 a.m. to Noon.

Refreshments provided by:

- September - Vera Jaeger and Sue Brubaker
- October - Judy Ing and Priscilla Jarvis
- November- Margie & Norman Sachnik, Kathee Mazac, and Kathleen Ellisor



Join or Renew Membership in BCAS

Benefits include Bird Calls, field trips, social events, continuing education, and more clout. Membership Chair: Priscilla Jarvis at (512) 281-2762. Dues are used to support local conservation and education. You may join at our web site www.bastropcountyaudubon.org or use the form herein.

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Editorial office: 216 Schaefer, Blvd, Bastrop 78602 (512) 303-2734. Email: mbranan@austin.rr.com.

Learners' Corner

Sharon Finlay leads a lesson on "Identifying Ducks We Encounter at Hornsby Bend or Lake Bastrop." 7:00 p.m., November Meeting.



December Party

Annual tradition: Start thinking about your wrapped surprise gift from nature. Also you might want to rehearse a performance: a poem, a song, a skit, a recitation, or tango. Details forthcoming.

BCAS Membership Application

- Individual \$20
- Family \$35
- Supporting \$75

Name _____

Street _____

City, State Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:
Bastrop County Audubon Society

Send to:

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

