



# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

January Program

## The Board of Bastrop County Audubon Society

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<i>Editor</i>	<i>Mary Ellen Branam</i>
<i>Directors:</i>	<i>Maggie Lambert, Margie and Stan Sachnik, and Linda Presto</i>

## Another Beautiful World to See: Dragonflies & Damselflies

**Dr. John Abbott** will speak to us at the January meeting of the Bastrop County Audubon Society on "An Introduction to Dragonflies and Damselflies."

Abbott is a senior lecturer at the University of Texas Integrative Biology division and the Curator of Entomology for the Texas Natural Science Center housed at the Texas Memorial Museum on the UT campus in Austin.

Abbott has noted that "the popularity of these insects has exploded since 2000. Popularity has gone from birds to butterflies to dragonflies due to the plethora of field guides about these interesting insects. They are very much the aerial acrobats, beautiful, and readily seen."



Join us for this rare presentation at 7:30 on Tuesday evening, January 19th at the First National Bank building, second floor, at Hwy 71W and Hasler Blvd. in Bastrop.

The presentation is free to the public with refreshments to follow.

Members are invited to join the speaker for dinner at the Mediterranean Grill at 6:00 p.m..

## Thanks for Another Successful Christmas Bird Count

Smaller teams than last year's crowd did manage to cover the maps and report about 100 species on a crisp, clear New Year's Day. Details on the local Bastrop County Christmas Bird Count will be forthcoming after David and Josh Mitchell compile the data. BCAS sponsors the event by contributing fees for each participant and providing the luncheon.

The following members especially helped with the luncheon for birders held this year at Judy Ing's house: Judy, Sue Brubaker, Mary Ellen Branam, Sharon Finlay, and Margie Crisp. Bill Montgomery provided the boat for Lake Bastrop.

## Learners' Corner:



**What's It All About?** Sharon Finlay will take us on-line to review how to report observations for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count which is coming up February 13-16.

Meet at 7:00 p.m., before the general meeting.



# Field Report

November 14--

The following is a summary of the birds observed between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. It was a perfect cool and cloudy morning to be in the field to observe birds and note the changing colors of autumn.

Areas visited were Camino Real, Tahitian Village, north shore Lake Bastrop, and Steiner Ranch.

Double crested Cormorant	8
American Egret	2
Gadwall	8
Redhead	1
American Coot	35
Red-tailed Hawk	2
Cooper's Hawk	1
Crested Caracara	8
Black Vulture	55
Turkey Vulture	27
American Kestrel	15
Great Egret	1
Greater Yellowlegs	1
Mourning Dove	7
Eurasian Collared-Dove	9
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2
Northern Flicker	2
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Eastern Phoebe	3
Couch's Kingbird	1
Blue Jay	2
American Crow	45
Carolina Chickadee	3
Carolina Wren	2
Eastern Bluebird	13
Northern Mockingbird	16
American Pipit	21
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	11
Orange crowned Warbler	1
European Starling	9
Great-tailed Grackle	25
House Sparrow	16
Northern Cardinal	20
Savannah Sparrow	6
Field Sparrow	4
Vesper Sparrow	3
Lincoln's Sparrow	9
Western Meadowlark	2
Meadowlarks	20
Brewer's Blackbird	6

The most unusual bird we noted was the Couch's Kingbird via El Camino Real.

--Stan Wellso, Field Trips



The Kirtland's Warbler has been restored to Protection. *Photo by Ron Austing, fw.fed.us*

## Endangered Species Act Back on Strong Footing

Responding to urging from thousands of Audubon activists, the Obama administration revoked a controversial last-minute rule change imposed by the Bush administration, which effectively gutted critical protections offered by the Endangered Species Act for threatened and endangered wildlife on the brink of extinction.

## Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Update

This little bill packs a big wallop for migratory songbird conservation by tripling funding for projects in South America, the Caribbean, and Canada. Responding to the call of thousands of Audubon activists, the Senate has acted on this \$20 million package for bird conservation and the House Natural Resources Committee passed a similar bill with a \$15 million funding level. We expect to get it to the President's desk in the next session of Congress. Final passage will be good news for the more than 125 neotropical species in decline from habitat loss and other threats.

## State News

### Not Simply the Drought? Whooping Cranes' Sad News

From the aransasproject.org web site:

"An environmental coalition in Rockport, Texas, has filed a notice of intent to sue officials from a state agency over the deaths of 23 whooping cranes that migrated there for winter 2008-09. The Aransas Project alleges birds starved to death because of diversions for industrial and municipal water use from the Guadalupe River, allowed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.



"The group says those diversions raised the salinity in the bays and estuaries around the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge--the whooping cranes' only winter feeding grounds. As a result, two critical components in the cranes' diet--blue crabs and wolfberries--are less common, a release from the organization said. "About 270 of the birds arrived in Texas in the fall of 2008, but only 247 were seen heading back to Canada in the spring. Normally just one or two birds are lost during the winter season.

(Note: Tom Stehn counted 244 at Aransas on December 18, 2009.)

## County News

### First Bastrop County Park Opens

"With Bastrop County growing as fast as it has over the last few years, it was only logical that we embrace a park for our growing population," said County Judge Ronnie McDonald recently (in the *Bastrop Advertiser*).

Cedar Creek Park opened in November as the first county park. The county has also hired a director for park maintenance and scheduling.

BISD gave the land and TPW and LCRA matched the donation.

A report in November to the county commissioners called "Greenprint" said the need for parks in the county was critical.

*For landscape enthusiasts*

## Nature Photography Contest for 2011 Calendar Announced

BCAS is planning to publish a full-sized monthly calendar for next year illustrated with great nature scenes of Bastrop County. In order to select the cover and the twelve months of photos, BCAS will hold a contest and appoint a professional photographer or two as judges.

While details have not yet been decided, we do know a deadline would have to be sometime in September to have time for the judging, production, and distribution in time for shoppers.

You will want to be taking your photos throughout the year, beginning now, to insure a seasonal feel.

We will publicize in the newspapers in the fall regarding the winning photographers.

The idea as announced at the November and December BCAS meetings was warmly received, and we recall no previous such calendar in our County. A small market test was undertaken by Mary Ellen Branan and Judy Ing, when they published and ordered a set of 2010 calendars in November at Lulu.com. You can still order your own 2010 calendar titled "Landscapes of Bastrop County" at that web site.

A number of the 2010 calendars were sold at the Book Basket, Main Street, Bastrop, and at the Bastrop Visitors' Center.

### BCAS DVD Productions Available

You can obtain your own copy of the 18-minute "Year Book" shown initially in June, 2009 at the Annual Meeting and shown again at the Solstice Party on December 15 for a modest donation to BCAS. You may email, telephone or speak to Mary Ellen Branan, editor, to obtain a copy.

The "Year Book" features the events and contributions which occurred during our fiscal year July to July 2008-09. For example, this was the year of Hurricane Ike, when BCAS made significant donations to coastal sanctuary rebuilding.

In the audio, Norman and Margie sing Branan's conservation-oriented song "For the Warblers" or "I'll Love You Forever,"

Also available by custom order is "Making a Difference," the 15-minute production commemorating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including county landscapes, recent and historic photos, and included in the audio the original song "The Gull's Song" sung by Linda Presto, composed by Branan.

## Calendar

**January 9:** Monthly Survey at Hornsby Bend. Meet at 7:00 a.m. and/or 4:00 p.m. All levels welcome.

**January 14:** Friends of Lost Pines S. Ps. meeting, 7:00 p.m., Bastrop S.P. refectory. John Cobb.

**January 16:** BCAS Field Trip. Parking Lot of 1<sup>st</sup> Nat'l Bank, Bastrop, 7:30 a.m. Visit Cedar Creek Co. park. 321-0122, with Stan Wellso, leader.

**January 16:** Kayakers meet Allan Kugler for river monitoring, birding & more. Email him at joallakug@hotmail.com

**January 17:** Board Meeting, 417 Akaloa, 4-7:00 p.m., includes pot luck supper.

**January 18:** Lost Pines Master Naturalists, 6:30 p.m., Red Rock Community Center. 281-5516.

**January 19:** General Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> Nat'l Bank, Hasler Blvd. @ H 71W. Doors open 7:00 p.m.

**January 27:** Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership meets 10-12 Noon at Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Research. Open to anyone interested in our river.

**January 30:** Trail Upkeep @ Hornsby Bend: 3 hours work, then 1 hour ecology class. Wear work clothes.

**February 6:** BCAS Field Trip to Eagle Lake/LCRA. (Feb. 13 weather back up date.) Meet at Bank 7:00 a.m. for early start. 321-0122



**The Three Rs:**

**Reduce. Reuse. Recycle**

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### Join or Renew Annual Membership

Benefits include Bird Calls, field trips, social events, continuing education, public influence, good feelings and fun. Membership Chair: Priscilla Jarvis at (512) 281-2762. Dues are used to support local conservation and education concerning bird and other wild life, habitats, and ecology. You may join at our web site or at any meeting. Please consider the Supporting Membership category. [www.bastropcountyaudubon.org](http://www.bastropcountyaudubon.org)

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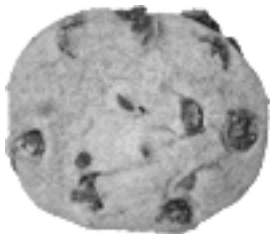


Osprey

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November  
 Refreshments by:  
 Margie Sachnik,  
 Kathee Mazac, &  
 Kathleen Ellisor



January  
 Refreshments by:  
 Susan Leslie & Russell Cole



**Younger Set cavorts at BCAS solstice party  
 Casey Ferrell, Russell Cole, Anna Ramsey---**

Hospitality Chair Judy Walker created the ambience and the distinctive bird house centerpieces for the tables. The houses became door prizes during the festive evening. Great food and beverages, a slide show, and the traditional nature gift exchange rounded out the occasion on December 15.