



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

March 2003

Aquatic Fauna & Flora: 'Water, Water Everywhere, But Not A Drop to Drink'

Stan Wellso

**Tuesday
March 18, 2003
7:30 PM**



Longtime Bastrop Audubon Science Committee member Stan Wellso returns as our March 18 speaker to present "Aquatic Fauna & Flora: 'Water, Water Everywhere, But Not A Drop to Drink,'" - especially appropriate with all the extra water El Nino has bestowed upon Bastrop County and environs recently!

Stan will share his experiences and observations on the teeming life supported by different aquatic environments, especially snow, fresh water, and salt water.

Dr. Wellso has been a naturalist and birdwatcher for 64 years. His droll humor and unique perspectives make him a favorite BCAS speaker. The retired professor of entomology is also a proud Texas Aggie. He received his Masters and Ph.D. from Texas A&M following his B.S. from the University of Wisconsin. After a distinguished career that included work at Colorado State, Michigan State, and Perdue University, Stan now makes Bastrop his home base as he continues to travel around the world, often to exotic locations featured in the slides with which he illustrates his programs.

As always, you are also welcome to join Dr. Wellso and the BCAS Board for dinner at Jalisco's in the HEB parking lot, 6pm, before our meeting.

Article written by Program Chair MaryBeth Gradziel

The March chapter meeting will be held the third Tuesday of the month on March 18th at 7:30pm in the Cecil Long Community Room of the First National Bank of Bastrop. The civic room is next to the bank on Main Street. Everyone is invited to stay for refreshments after the program.

BCAS CALENDAR



MARCH

March 16 – Board Meeting at the home of Dorothy Wells & Gary Grief, 303-2372
March 18 – Chapter Meeting: Stan Wellso, Aquatic Flora & Fauna.
March 21-22 FIELD TRIP to Matagorda Island. Contact Loretta Hennard (321-3818) for more information.

APRIL

April 6 – Field & Forest Day, Joan Russell's home. See article for more information
April 13 – Board Meeting at the home of Barbara Harp, 581-0835
April 15 – Chapter Meeting: Kathryn Nichols, Community Planner with the U.S. Dept. of the Interior National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program will present a brief overview of her Program followed by an interactive question and answer hour with practical advice and referral information.
April 26–FIELD TRIP to Palmetto State Park. Contact Loretta Hennard (321-3818) for more information.

MAY

May 2-4 3rd Annual Texas Songbird Festival, Lago Vista. for more information contact Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce 1-888-328-5246.
May 18 – Board Meeting at the home of Bill Montgomery & Margie Crisp, 281-5667
May 20 – Chapter Meeting: John Flowers of Austin's Useful Wild Plants/WildFeed will enlighten us about this very popular project to make us all more aware of the bounty Mother Nature provides in our backyards, fields and forests.
May TBA FIELD TRIP to Peckerwood Gardens near Hempstead

JUNE

June 15 – Board Meeting. Place TBA
June 17 – Chapter Meeting: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory will present a program on their prairie restoration near Houston and Project Prairie Bird, the Citizen Science Project for Grassland Birds, a partnership of government agencies, environmental groups, business and private citizens.

JULY & AUGUST No meetings

Visit our Web site for updates and additional information on field trips and events.
www.bastropcountyaudubon.org

FIELD TRIPS For the Birds

Matagorda Island Field Trip Friday & Saturday March 21-22, 2003

Matagorda Island, that rare, unspoiled barrier island off the Gulf Coast, where nineteen (19) endangered and threatened species of wildlife, including the famous whooping crane, reside. In Vera and Bob Thornton's book, *Chasing Warblers*, they described the island as "...an important migratory stopover and/or wintering home for a large number of North American shorebirds and waterfowl."

Reserve your room at the Sand Dollar Motel [(361) 983-2342] in Port O'Connor **ASAP**. Each of the 14 rooms contains 2 double beds. (\$53/night, including taxes) Since they do not take credit cards, you are required to send a check in the amount of \$53 for the first night to Sand Dollar Motel, PO Box 293, Port O'Connor, TX 77982.

Saturday morning, we have reservations on the ferry. Meet at the dock at 7:30 a.m. (for an 8:00 a.m. departure), arriving on Matagorda by 9:00 for a day of birding, shelling, hiking, etc. We're scheduled to leave the island at 4:00 p.m. The charge for the ferry is \$10/person.

Although ice and drinks are available on the ferry, we must bring our own drinking water and lunches. There is no drinking water on the island, so bring plenty to drink. We may store our ice chests at the check-in station, where we'll obtain trail maps.

Besides water and food, bring insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, binoculars, field guides, sturdy walking shoes, and to be safe, a light raincoat. If you're a shell collector, start saving the plastic bags that newspapers come in to stuff into your pockets or backpack. One other preparation suggestion: Read the history of this treasured place—fascinating.

For more information (including directions) call me at 321-3818.

On April 26, we're making another attempt to visit Palmetto State Park near Gonzales. And in May, we plan to visit Peckerwood Gardens near Hempstead. Check here for more details later—

Loretta Hennard, Field Trip Chair

Bird Calls is published 6 or more times a year by Bastrop County Audubon Society. Contributors: Joan Russell, Mary Ellen Branan, Mary Beth Gradziel, & Loretta Hennard. Deadline for April postcard: March 23rd PO Box 656, Elgin, TX 78621 Margie (512) 281-5667; e-mail: Tiliqua2@earthlink.net

AUDUBON'S FIELD AND FOREST DAY

Sunday April 6, 4 - 7 PM

Joan & Horace Russell's home in the Lost Pines



The Bastrop County Audubon Society is hosting a Field and Forest Day on Sunday April 6 from 4-7 pm for guests to learn about various techniques for woods and prairie management and to observe a site in stages of management and restoration. This event is being held at the home of Joan and Horace Russell who live on 7 acres in the Lost Pines near Bastrop.

Nonprofit environmental groups and government agencies will highlight their approaches to forest health, wildfire prevention and plant and wildlife diversity on the same piece of property at the same time for this event.

The **Circle D Volunteer Fire Department** will have information about lowering the risk of a damaging wildfire, prescribed burning to clear a forest of litter fuel and how to burn a brush pile safely.

Natural Texas Forest and Land Management, owned by Carl Brockman, Certified Arborist and Sam McClam, Biologist will be on the site. They will have a demonstration plot of invasive and volatile brush that has been cleared and mulched by the forestry mulching mower to allow in light and air and to let native forbs and grasses re-establish.

Jan Fulkerson, Urban/Wildland Interface Specialist with the **Texas Forest Service** will answer questions about how to reduce the risk of destructive wildfire and how to protect structures in a wildland home.

Texas Master Naturalists will identify native species of trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers growing on the site. Len Polasek, **Texas Parks and Wildlife** Biologist will answer questions about prescribed burning, and food and forage plants for deer. Kelly Bender, Urban Biologist with **Texas Parks and Wildlife** will have life-sized bird models that sing that bird's song and talk about providing habitat for birds and wildlife.

The Russell property is in the critical habitat for the endangered Houston toad and a toad pond is being constructed for habitat enhancement. Karianne Sokulsky, a consultant working with **Bastrop County** will be available to talk about the county's conservation plan and how interested land-

owners living in toad habitat can help. A biologist from **U. S. Fish & Wildlife** will also be on hand to answer questions about the toad's life cycle and habitat requirements.

Pines and Prairies Land Trust members and **Lost Pines Forest Landowners Association** members will have information about the activities of these two groups and how they work to preserve the natural areas of the Lost Pines and central Texas.

Maron Finlay, **Texas Cooperative Extension** agent will have information about chemical brush control of invasive species including yaupon, cedar and mesquite. Attendance will count toward Continuing Education Units.

This event is being planned and hosted by the **Bastrop County Audubon Society** as a service to all residents interested in preserving the beautiful forests and fields of Texas. Various stages of forest health from choked, with very little diversity of plants, poor wildlife habitat and at high risk for fire to almost completed restoration will be on the site for observation. Plant lists for wildlife habitat, food and forage plants and FireWise landscaping will be available.

Bastrop County Audubon is grateful to all the non-profits and government agencies participating in this Field and Forest Day. As far as we know this has not been done in Bastrop County before. Plan to come. There will be no charge.

Directions to the Russell house: 348 Old Firetower Rd., Bastrop, 321-2718.

From 290: take Hwy 95 to Bastrop, left at FR 1441, drive 4 miles, past Circle D Firehouse on the left, left at Oak Leaf Dr. drive to the Y, right onto Old Firetower Rd. House on left at top of hill.

From Bastrop: Take Hwy 21 east, left at FR 1441, to Pine Path, turn right, turn left immediately onto Old Firetower Rd. House on right at top of hill.



THE LEARNERS' CORNER

Board Member Linda Lenoach has transformed her backyard into a true bird sanctuary. She will tell us who, what, when, where, and how to feed and care for our backyard birds to help them be healthy and happy, including first aid steps for injured birds.

The Learners' Corner meets at 7:00 PM before the general meeting.



A NATIONAL PRAIRIE COALITION has been formed which keeps a list of volunteer contacts and e-mails them alerts about legislation and government activities relating to prairie conservation. Coalition members are provided brief descriptions of the issue and asked to e-mail or fax the pertinent agency or their Congresspeople. The first prairie alert was sent out in February of this year to 80 contacts across the nation.

If you would like to be on the list, please email Lee Stone at leeprairie@austin.rr.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Join the National Audubon Society or become a Friend of Bastrop County Audubon through the BCAS Web site bastropcountyaudubon.org
Or contact Priscilla Jarvis at 512-281-2762 for more information.

MARCH REFRESHMENTS:

**Dotty Pledge
& Barbara Harp**

RARE BIRD

A dove that Linda Presto-Lenoach took in for rehabilitation looks to be an extremely rare bird. Experts believe "Sandy" is a hybrid between a Common Ground Dove and a Mourning Dove. If Sandy is confirmed as a hybrid by the scientists, he will be added to the list of doves. Possible names for the new listing? Why Linda's Dove of course.



Bastrop County Audubon Society
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Return Service Requested