



# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

**Eared Grebe: See  
Field Report**



Image by Daniel S. Kilby

## Bastrop City Hall Goes Green

The City of Bastrop has launched a "green" program from its Water Department. In February, 2009, the City began offering an "Eco Kit" to save each user "hundreds of gallons of water each month," lower water/sewer bills, and appreciably conserve the City's water supply.

The Eco Kit costs only \$20 and provides seven simply installed and used devices for the homeowner. For example, a nine-setting shower head, a toilet fill cycle diverter, a sink aerator with on/off lever, a conservation information wheel, and toilet leak detector, etc. A second shower head can be purchased for \$6.

Even if you are not a Bastrop City Water customer, they will sell one to any purchaser who comes to the Utility Office on Main Street in Bastrop or the Water Department Office on Water Street.

During this two-year drouth, especially, the water usage levels has been of grave concern. While the City did not as yet institute mandatory restrictions for water, the Department, headed by James Miller and assisted by Kimberly McClain, will soon be proposing a stricter contingency plan for conserving when water levels get low. **M.E.B.**

October Program

## Planning Your own Backyard Sanctuary & Conserving Water

Kelly Bender, urban wildlife biologist at Texas Parks and Wildlife, will speak to Bastrop County Audubon Society on October 20th at 7:30 p. m. at the First National Bank Building in Bastrop on Hasler and Hwy 71.



**Bender**

Kelly recently has co-authored a book, "Texas Wildscapes, Gardening for Wildlife", with Noreen Damude. She will tell us how to certify our landscapes as Best of Texas Backyard Habitat official sites and how to invite birds, butterflies and other interesting critters into our yards.

If you want to integrate ecological principles into your landscaping practices, don't miss this opportunity. We will leave plenty of time for questions.

The meeting is free and open to the public as always. Refreshments served after the meeting.

## Board Elects New Vice President

At the BCAS Board meeting September 15, the Board elected Margie Crisp as vice president to fill the vacancy existing since Sue Brubaker was elected president. Crisp is a long time member of the chapter, former board member, former editor of Bird Calls, which won a NAS excellence prize under her editorship, and designer of several of our tee shirts. Last year, the chapter awarded her a silver pin as an "angel" of BCAS.

Crisp, an accomplished artist, at present is residing in Ft. Davis, Texas, as a writer-in-residence of the Thinking Like a Mountain Foundation (TLMF). For the last two years she has been researching, kayaking, writing, and painting for a book to be titled *The Colorado River of Texas*. The publisher is to be Texas A&M University Press. TLMF was founded in 2008 to foster a conservation ethic.

"Ft. Davis is wonderful with lots of friendly and interesting people and I'm getting lots of work done." She plans to come home to Elgin, husband Bill Montgomery, and BCAS by the end of October.



# Field Report

Fall is an exciting time of the year for birdwatchers. In this area a major transition of species is occurring now.

Birds in this area can be listed in several categories: Those underlined were seen on our field trip to Hornsby Bend and Webberville Park. Do you know them and have you seen them recently?

**Permanent Residents:** includes birds who are here throughout the year: i.e., Great-blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Crested Caracara, Killdeer, Screech Owl, Barred Owl, Great-horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Loggerhead Shrike, Carolina Wren, White-eyed Vireo, Pine Warbler, Great-tailed Grackle, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, House Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird, etc. These may be seen on field trips throughout the year.

**Spring and Fall Migrants:** includes birds who pass through the area, but do not breed or over winter here: i.e., Sandhill Crane, American Avocet, Western Sandpiper, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, etc.

**Winter Visitors:** birds that are not residents, but over winter and are seen on our annual Christmas Count of about 115 species: i.e., Double-crested Cormorant, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Wilson's Snipe, Eastern Phoebe, Chipping Sparrow, Eared Grebe, White-crowned Sparrow, etc.

**Summer Residents:** birds here only in the summer and breed here: i.e., Mississippi Kite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Prothonotary Warbler, Summer Tanager, Orchard Oriole, and Painted Bunting, etc. Most of these birds have already departed from here and are now South of our area.

**Rare and Occasional Birds:** i.e., White-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Mountain Bluebird, etc.

On our field trip, we probably have already said goodbye this year to Barn Swallows and Scissor tailed Flycatchers, and hello to the Cooper's Hawk. Almost daily, hawks are migrating over our area. Look for them on cloudy days with a wind blowing from North to South. Good birding!

--Stan Wellso

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## *Gleaning in the Field*

"President Obama has taken a crucial step toward saving Louisiana's nationally important coastal wetlands that provide natural hurricane protection, essential economic benefits and vital habitat for birds and other wildlife," says Dr. Paul Kemp, vice president of the National Audubon Society's Louisiana Coastal Initiative.

Conservation groups have called for White House intervention in what is widely viewed as a stagnant process, now overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The groups say more must be done to restore coastal wetlands and other rapidly disappearing natural storm defenses.

National and regional conservation groups are urging that the Mississippi River be reconnected to its delta in Louisiana. They say this would allow sediment and freshwater to maintain and rebuild coastal marshes that help lessen storm surges, provide critical wildlife habitat, protect oil and gas infrastructure, and serve as nurseries for shrimp and other valuable seafood species.

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**"The idea that birds can be emissaries** to a battered world — like the dove and raven sent out by Noah — motivated Israel's decision to adopt a national bird as part of its commemoration of 60 years of statehood. In Hebrew the name of the bird is duchifat. In Arabic it is hud hud.



And in English **hoopoe** is a word that sounds, as Emily Dickinson noted about all feathered creatures, strangely like hope."--Jonathan Rosen, *NY Times*, 6/10/08

## Calendar

**October 8-11: Thursday to Sunday, Hornsby Bend 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary anniversary events** at the Center for Environmental Research, FM 957.

**October 16: Friday, Pines & Prairies Land Trust Benefit Concert** at The Bugle Boy venue, LaGrange, 8:00 p.m. See story.

**October 17: Saturday, Field Trip with Stan Wellso, 8:00 a.m.** Meet in Bank parking lot, Hasler Blvd to tour Steiner Ranch, etc..

**October 18: Board Meeting, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**, Priscilla Jarvis's home, 783 Lower Elgin Rd., with pot-luck supper.

**October 20: General Meeting/ Program**, Doors open 7:00 p.m., 1st Natl Bank, Hasler @ 71W, in Bastrop.

**October 24: Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Nature Fest, Fisherman's Park in Bastrop**, featuring kayaking on the river, music, food, booths, etc. 9:00-4:00.

Hornsby Bend**Top Birding Site Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary October 8-11**

Hornsby Bend, more formally known as the Austin Water Utility Center for Environmental Research, is celebrating 50 years of birding at the site October 8-11. The celebration is sponsored by the CER and Travis Audubon, both of which have provided regular programs for education and field work for a number of years.

The site was first "discovered" by an avid birder, G. Frank "Pancho" Oatman, in 1959. Covering several types of habitat, it includes water treatment ponds on the banks of the sharp bend in the Colorado named after the original pioneer resident Hornsby. Hornsby Bend is a destination for Bastrop County birders as it is only about 20 miles distant and typically provides rare sightings, large numbers of species, water birds, and ducks of all sorts in winter.

Programs during the celebration include owl workshops by Rob Fergus 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday evenings (\$60 includes book and food). At no cost (donations accepted) are the all day Saturday events: survey, field trip, displays, silent auction, and presentations on bird monitoring and photography.

H. B. is only 20 or so miles from Bastrop or Elgin. And you can buy the tee-shirt! a stunner with full-color print by Margie Crisp.



**Donation: Bastrop County Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges** the gift of \$333 recently given in memory of Margaret Campbell Bamberger.

**Learners' Corner**

**Migration Mysteries:** Mary Ellen Branan has dusted off the slide show on bird migration she presented at the September, 2007, Learners' Corner. Revised, rearranged, enlarged, etc., for a decently informative show.

--Linda Presto, L.C. Chair

Friday, October 17**Great Venue in LaGrange for  
PPLT Benefit Concert**

Pines and Prairies Land Trust and the Bugle Boy Foundation announce a special concert featuring popular Nashville artists Stacey Earle and Mark Stuart. The two area non-profits are pleased to join together to bring the husband and wife duo to the Bugle Boy stage for one show on Friday, October 16.

All proceeds from ticket sales benefit Pines and Prairies Land Trust and the Bugle Boy Foundation, both 501(c)3 public charities. Pines and Prairies Land Trust is a non-profit organization that works to preserve land and wildlife habitat through conservation easements in Fayette, Caldwell, Lee and Bastrop Counties. The Bugle Boy Foundation supports and provides a world-class venue for live performance of original music by independent artists from Texas, the U.S.A., and around the world.

The clever acoustic guitar interplay, autobiographical songwriting, lovely Everly Brothers-like harmonies, and humorous storytelling will make this a show not to be missed.

Tickets: \$18. Showtime: 8:00 PM. Doors open: 7:00. 979-968-9944. For tickets call 800-838-3006 or visit online [thebugleboy.org](http://thebugleboy.org).

The Bugle Boy, located at 1051 N. Jefferson (U.S. 77N) in La Grange, is regarded as one of the finest listening rooms in the country. The Bugle Boy is non-smoking and serves fine wines, quality beers, great coffee, and milkshakes. --from P&PLT publicity



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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)

B.C.A.S  
 c/o Priscilla Jarvis  
 783 Lower Elgin Road  
 Elgin TX 78621

Major Local Conservation Event

## Third Annual Nature Fest Along the River

Music, nature walks, kayaking instruction, conservation-related exhibits and booths abound at this celebration of the paddling trails along Bastrop County sections of the Colorado River on Saturday, October 24, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

“This event has grown every year, is well attended, and is a lot of fun,” says Steve Ligon, Special Events Co-chair. “BCAS will have a booth again this year.”

### BCAS Volunteers Needed For Nature Fest

Denise and Steve Ligon will set up and remain onsite for the entire period, but they will need additional help throughout the day until approximately 4:30 p.m. If you are able to assist for any period of time, please contact the Lignons at 321-2099.

October

Refreshments

Judy Ing



Priscilla Jarvis

The planned kayak/canoe trip is a six-mile paddle from the park to a take-out point in Tahitian, with shuttle service back to Fisherman’s Park. Free and designed especially for kids is Newbie’s Canoe and Kayak Orientation sessions at the launch site re safety and paddling techniques.

Music? Bill Oliver and the Otter Space Band and the Nature Fest River Choir will perform.

Also free are the “Last Chance Forever” Raptor Show and nature walks with Master Naturalists and Audubon birders.

Among the sponsors: Texas Parks & Wildlife, Roscoe State Bank, Classic Bank, Hyatt Lost Pines Resort, Aqua Water, Austin Canoe & Kayak, AT&T, Camp Wilderness Ridge, Blue Bell Creameries, LCRA, KGSR Radio, Time Warner Cable, Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI), and ABC Pest & Lawn.