



# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

November 2003

## TEXAS NATURE TRACKERS

*Marsha Reimer*  
Wildlife Diversity Branch, TPWD

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

Join us and learn about this innovative Texas Parks & Wildlife program. *Texas Nature Trackers* is offering Texans the opportunity to learn about Texas wildlife while making valuable contributions to the conservation of plant and animal species in the state. The *TNT* projects involve general skills of observation and note taking — you don't have to be a scientist to do them. Through *Texas Nature Trackers* projects such as Texas Amphibian Watch and Texas Monarch Watch, Texans learn how to gather data about various species found on public lands or on their own property. Then, the data is sent to biologists who use the information to give us a better understanding about the trends and management needs of various species in the state.

*Texas Nature Trackers*, associated with the Texas Master Naturalist Program, is a citizen science monitoring effort designed to involve volunteers of all ages and interest levels in gathering scientific data on species of concern in Texas through experiential learning. The goal of the program is to enable long-term conservation of these species and appreciation among Texas citizens.

Marsha Reimer has been with the TNT program for three years and works specifically with the Texas Amphibian Watch and Texas Mussel Watch. She promotes all the TNT programs which include the Hummingbird Roundup, Project Prairie Birds, Texas Horned Lizard Watch, Texas Monarch Watch and Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey. She received her Masters degree in Aquatic Biology from Texas State University and her undergraduate degree in Wildlife Science from Texas A&M University. A long-standing member of Audubon, she has been an enthusiastic birder for over twenty years. In addition to her work with TPWD, she also coordinates other activities such as the Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve Bird Counts.

Everyone is invited to join the speaker and BCAS board members for dinner before the meeting. Six PM at Jalisco's Mexican Restaurant (on Hwy 71, near Tractor Supply).

**Bastrop County Audubon Society chapter meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month (except July, August & December) at 7:30 PM in the Long Community Room of the First National Bank of Bastrop, 1028 Main Street, Bastrop. Everyone is invited to stay for refreshments after the program.**



# BCAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## NOVEMBER 2003

**November 15 – Field trip to Hornsby Bend.** With Travis Audubon. Contact Gary Grief 303-2372

**November 16 – Board Meeting** at Dorothy Wells & Gary Grief's home. 303-2372

**November 18 – Chapter Meeting: Endangered Species Watches;** Marsha Reimer, Texas Nature Trackers, Wildlife Diversity Branch, TPWD

## DECEMBER 2003

**December 14 Solstice Party!** 5 PM Nature gift exchange (no \$ spent) and potluck. Loretta & Wayne Hennard's home in Bastrop. Don't miss the best party of the year.

**December 28 – Bastrop-Buescher State Parks Christmas Bird Count.** Meet 6:30 AM at the Texas Grill, Hwy 71 & Perkins St., Bastrop

## JANUARY 2004

**January 18 – Board Meeting**

**January 20 – Chapter Meeting: Birds of the Antarctic,** Greg Lasley, birder, photographer, tour guide.

**January 31 – Field Trip to Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR**

## FEBRUARY 2004

**February 15 – Board Meeting**

**February 17 – Chapter Meeting**

**February 20-22 – Field Trip to Aransas NWR**

## MARCH 2004

**March 14 – Board Meeting**

**March 16 – Chapter Meeting**

**March 20 – Field Trip to Barton Creek Habitat Preserve**

## APRIL 2004

**April 18 – Board Meeting**

**April 20 – Chapter Meeting:**

**April 24 – Field Trip to Lake Somerville**

## MAY 2004

**May 16 – Board Meeting**

**May 18 – Chapter Meeting**

**May 22 – Field Trip to Pedernales Falls**

## BECOME A FRIEND OF BASTROP COUNTY

**AUDUBON** and all of your dues will be put to use supporting local conservation and education. You may also join both Bastrop County Audubon and the National Audubon Society through the BCAS Web site <[www.bastropcountyaudubon.org](http://www.bastropcountyaudubon.org)>. As a member of National Audubon, you enjoy BCAS chapter membership, receive the *Audubon* magazine, and a portion of your dues supports national programs. For more information contact Priscilla Jarvis at 281-2762.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Friend of Bastrop County Audubon \$20**

Includes membership in BCAS, a subscription to the newsletter, *Bird Calls*, and invitations to all BCAS programs, events, and field trips.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

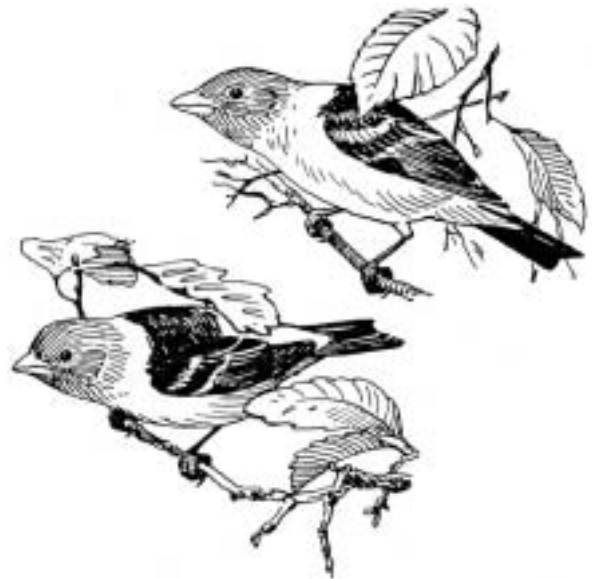
*Please make checks payable to :*

**Bastrop County Audubon Society**

*Send to:* Alan Jaeger, Treasurer

117 Kaelepulu Dr

Bastrop 78602



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 • *Bird Calls* is published by the Bastrop County Audubon  
 • Society. It is edited and produced by Margie Crisp,  
 • Maggie Lambert & Priscilla Jarvis. Contributors for  
 • this issue include Alan Jaeger, Mary Ellen Branan,  
 • Loretta Hennard, & Priscilla Jarvis.  
 • Deadline for next issue: **December 31st**  
 • PO Box 656, Elgin, TX 78621  
 • Margie (512) 281-5667 or Maggie (512) 321- 2569  
 • e-mail: [Tiliqua2@earthlink.net](mailto:Tiliqua2@earthlink.net)  
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# Bastrop-Buescher State Parks Christmas Bird Count

*Sunday December 28, 2003*



The National Audubon Society calls upon volunteers everywhere to join with birders and participate in Audubon's longest-running winter-time tradition, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year, nearly 2,000 individual counts are scheduled to take place throughout the Americas from December 14, 2003 to January 5, 2004.

The data, 100% volunteer generated, have become a crucial

part of the U.S. Government's natural history monitoring database. Articles published in the 103rd CBC issue of *American Birds* helped ornithologists better understand the effects of West Nile virus on regional bird populations.

CBC began over a century ago when 27 conservationists in 25 localities, led by scientist Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. On Christmas Day 1900, the small group of conservationists posed an alternative to the "side hunt," a Christmas day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead, Chapman proposed to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, founding what is now considered to be the most significant citizen-based conservation effort and a more than century-old institution.

"Backed with over a century of participation and collected data, the Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running, volunteer-based bird census, spanning three human generations," said Geoff LeBaron, Director of Christmas Bird Count. "The CBC has evolved into a powerful and important tool, one probably inconceivable to any of the 27 participants on the first Christmas Bird Count. With continually growing environmental pressures, it seems likely that today's participants cannot possibly fathom the value of their efforts now and in the next century."

Last year 20 volunteers participated in the Bastrop-Buescher State Parks Bird Count. They saw a total of 110 species and counted 20,206 individual birds. Participants hiked, drove, canoed and watched feeders for a cumulative total of 70 hours.

Were all the volunteers expert birders? No! Have a great time and a chance to learn from more experienced birders.

CBC VOLUNTEERS, will meet at 6:30 AM at the Texas Grill on Hwy 71 at Perkins St.

*Audubon Newswire, vol. 1, no. 5; BCAS web site; & D. Mitchell*

## FIELD TRIPS For the Birds

In September, we went to see the egrets, herons, and ibises coming in to roost on that unnamed island in Town Lake; and, instead, we saw—up close and personal—an entire family of swans: mama, papa, and four youngsters. Awesome! Next time, though, we'll rent a boat to get to the other side of the island for a really good view of the big birds.

Please join Gary Grief and Travis Audubon on November 15, at 7:30 a.m., to explore Hornsby Bend. Meet in the parking lot behind Jalisco's by 6:45 to carpool. This is reportedly one of the best times of the year to visit Hornsby Bend. Call Gary @ 303-2372 for more info.

Thanks to all who returned our survey, you may look forward to some special birding trips after the first of the year. (You spoke; we listened.)

- ◆ **January 31: Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR**
- ◆ **February 20-22: Aransas NWR**
- ◆ **March 20: Barton Creek Habitat Preserve**
- ◆ **April 24: Lake Somerville**
- ◆ **May 22: Pedernales Falls**

*Loretta Hennard, Field Trip Chair*

### [www.BastropCountyAudubon.org](http://www.BastropCountyAudubon.org)

BCAS would like to notify you of updates to our web site. We would also like to share information about birds, birding and other nature-related topics that we receive with you. Please visit our web site and follow the links to the Email Subscription form to be added to our distribution list.

A recent addition to our web site is the Calender of Events for other organizations. Announcements from other chapters of the National Audubon Society and known local or national conservation organizations are listed.



Earth Share of Texas represents the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll deduction plans for charitable giving. For information, email [estx@earthsharetexas.org](mailto:estx@earthsharetexas.org) or call 1-800-GREENTX

# Effort to Halt Drilling on Padre Island National Seashore

Article by Alan Jaeger with additional information from the Texas Sierra Club web site.

At BCAS's October meeting the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club presented a short program on their efforts to halt the drilling of natural gas wells in the Padre Island National Seashore by BNP Petroleum.

Padre Island is home to 17 endangered or threatened species including the critically endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle.

It is one of the most visited recreation areas in Texas, drawing 800,000 visitors a year on average. Padre Island is the

longest unbroken barrier beach in the U.S., and the longest undeveloped barrier beach in the world. The park is a magnet for ecotourism in South Texas and one of our great national seashores.

BNP Petroleum has launched what it calls an "aggressive drilling campaign" on the national seashore. They've received permits from

the National Park Service (NPS) to drill two sets of wells and they've completed the first. NPS and BNP estimate that approximately 20 wells will be drilled on the seashore over the next 30 years.

Support a Federal buyout of the mineral rights at Padre Island. A buyout is the only way we can ever guarantee that the drilling will be stopped once and for all, and that the park will be returned to the creatures that live there and the people who love it.

Visit the Sierra Club web site for more information or to print, sign and send a petition supporting a Federal buyout of the mineral rights at Padre Island.

<http://texas.sierraclub.org/padre.asp>

## FUNDRAISING NEWS

THANKS to all the volunteers who helped make our booth at Hogeve Festival a success. BCAS was represented by a cheerful group of enthusiastic folks. Many membership forms were distributed and we raised over \$200 through the sale of crafts, feeders and calendars.



# BIRDING IN THE UNITED STATES

From Audubon Newswire, vol. 1, no. 5

A new federal economic report found that 46 million birdwatchers across America spent \$32 billion in 2001 pursuing one of the Nation's most popular outdoor activities according to a report from the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The report, Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, is the first of its kind analyzing data from the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

"Nearly one in five Americans is a bird watcher," said Service Director Steve Williams. "This report recognizes what we always thought to be true. Birdwatching is very popular and contributes greatly to our economy, so it is important that we continue to work with our partners to restore and protect habitat to ensure healthy bird populations."

Birders spent \$32 billion on gear such as binoculars, travel, food and big ticket items such as canoes, cabins and off-road vehicles. This spending generated \$85 billion in overall economic output and \$13 billion in federal and state income taxes, and supported more than 863,000 jobs.

To be considered a birdwatcher, an individual must take a trip a mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds or must closely observe or try to identify birds around the home. Those who notice birds while mowing the lawn or picnicking at the beach were not counted as birders. Watching birds around the home is the most common form of bird-watching. Taking trips away from home counted for 40 percent (18 million) of birders.

For the full report visit: <http://federalaid.fws.gov>



## It's that time of year again!

This year's SOLSTICE PARTY will be held Sunday, December 14th at the

home of Loretta & Wayne Hennard in Bastrop. The party starts at 5PM with a gift from nature exchange (no \$ spent), a potluck dinner and loads of good cheer. We'll send out a postcard with directions to the Hennard's in early December. See you there!



# 'TAKE BACK AUDUBON' Grass Roots Movement Springs Up

*This information provided as a service to our members. The Board of Directors of the Bastrop County Audubon Society, while concerned about the direction of National Audubon's policies, has not publically endorsed Take Back Audubon at this time. We leave the choice to our members.*

As many Auduboners are aware, the National Audubon Society has made changes in its relationship with local Chapters that have significantly impacted Chapter finances, and the role of the Audubon grassroots in our organization.

In 2000, the NAS Board of Directors changed the long-standing policy of sharing membership dues with Chapters. Under the new policy that will be fully implemented next year, the dues share will drop to near zero for most Chapters. This loss of revenue has forced Chapters to cut back on newsletters and to reduce their conservation and education activities—the most effective activism in all of Audubon.

In 2001, the NAS Board enacted a new Chapter Policy over the written objections of 74 Chapters and over 88 Chapter leaders who signed on to a letter urging the Board to reconsider this policy. The letter asked NAS to engage in a true dialogue over this document and to seek a policy “that meets the needs of ALL of Audubon, including Chapters”.

At the 2002 Annual Meeting, the NAS leadership voted down resolutions brought by Chapter members to reform the governance of NAS by providing for access to information, competitive elections, and a greater voice for Audubon members and Chapters.

In addition, National Audubon has embarked on a major effort to establish hundreds of Audubon Centers, which many Chapter leaders fear will ultimately replace Chapters by draining funds and volunteers from local conservation work. A number of Chapters have already had serious conflicts with NAS over this issue.

In response to these actions by NAS, a grassroots organization, 'Take Back Audubon' (TBA) has sprung up, whose mission is “to restore a true partnership between the independent Chapters and the National Audubon Society through a real voice in the NAS organization and in all

decisions that affect Chapters”. To date, 37 Audubon Chapters and over 100 Chapter leaders have endorsed Take Back Audubon.

Presently, TBA is engaged in an effort to elect an alternate slate of candidates to the NAS Board of Directors at this year's Annual Meeting on Dec. 6, 2003. They are seeking proxies from Audubon members to bring to the meeting to vote for this slate, and to support resolutions that will be presented to democratize Audubon and to restore the Chapter dues share.

Biographies of the candidates, copies of the proposed resolutions, and background information on Take Back Audubon can be found at [www.smbas.org/tba](http://www.smbas.org/tba).

To support this Audubon Chapter effort, complete the proxy form below and return to the address listed by **November 30, 2003**. Members are also asked to *not* return the NAS proxy that will be arriving in a few weeks. You must be a NAS member to submit a valid proxy. You are a NAS member if you receive *Audubon* magazine.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING PROXY

1. Insert date of signing.
2. Print name exactly as membership is carried and shown on your magazine label. You must be a National Audubon Soc. member in good standing, as of Oct. 17, 2003 in order to vote.
3. Proxy to be signed by person in whose name membership is carried. If carried in two names or as Mr. & Mrs., either party can sign.
4. Show current address and zip code.
5. SIGN ONLY ONE PROXY FORM. Do not sign any other proxy form you might receive. However, if you have already signed a proxy form, this form will supersede any earlier form.
6. Return signed proxy form by NOVEMBER 30 to: John F. Gallagher, 121 Larchmont Road, Springfield, Ohio 45503.

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS, that I, the undersigned, a member of NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC., do hereby constitute and appoint Marsha Cannon, John F. Gallagher, Andrew L. Mason, and Darrel K. Whipple, and each of them, with full power of substitution, my attorneys and agents for me and in my name, place and stead, to vote as my proxy the number of votes I should be able to cast if then personally present at the Annual Meeting of NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC., to be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Saturday, December 6, 2003, or at such other place and time as said Annual Meeting may be held, and at any adjourned meeting thereof as follows:

- (a.) For the election of directors for the terms expiring in 2006, or until their successors are elected; and
- (b.) In their discretion, for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ Two Thousand and Three.

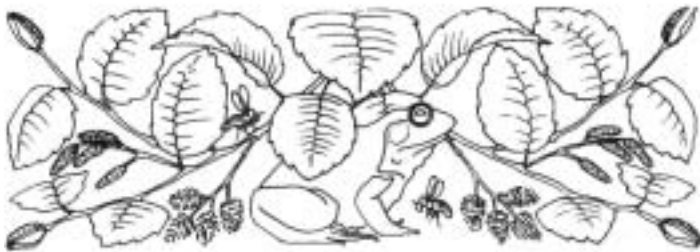
Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(must be signed to be valid)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print name)

# THE LEARNERS CORNER

Sharon Finlay again brings her excellent laptop presentation on Hawks of Central Texas. Bring your questions and problems with identifying members of this difficult group of birds.

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



R. G. Bell



Printed on recycled paper

## WHEN FIRE ANTS GET IN YOUR UNDERWEAR

by Priscilla Jarvis

It isn't right and it isn't fair  
That fire ants are in my underwear.  
Those fire ants are extremely rude  
They're in my car and in my food.  
Oh me oh my what can I do  
Now they're in my laundry too.  
It torments me by night and day  
That fire ants are in my lingerie.  
But we must learn to live with ants  
Yet keep them out of our underpants.  
For fire ants have been known to please  
By eating fly eggs, ticks and fleas.  
I just want them to know their place  
And stay outta my home and outta my face.  
Thus ends my tale of pain and woe  
So I'll just take my ants and go.

(Written after fire ants invaded her home and destroyed certain personal articles of clothing. — ed.)

*Thank You*

to **Powell's Printery** in Elgin for their support.



R. G. Bell

**Bastrop County Audubon Society**  
c/o Jarvis  
783 Lower Elgin Rd.  
Elgin, TX 78621

**Return Service Requested**

If checked, your membership is due! Thank you for supporting BCAS.