



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

November Program

Kelly Conrad Simon— Wildlife Biologist,
Central Texas - TPWD



Kelly Conrad Simon will be our presenter at our meeting on Tuesday, November 2nd. She will be bringing us a presentation on night-time lighting and bird behavior.

As the Urban Wildlife Biologist for Central Texas at Texas Parks and Wildlife, Kelly engages in projects with cities, corporations, private landowners, and community groups to ensure the health and vitality of wild spaces, even in urban areas. Whether discussing landscaping with native plants or federal environmental legislation, Kelly engages urban students of all ages and backgrounds in the study of nature. She's a co-author of the Carroll Abbott Memorial Award-winning Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife and founding Chair of the Capital Area Texas Master Naturalists. Her MS in Zoology was earned at Emporia State University (Emporia, Kansas) and her BA in Animal Behavior

and Biology was earned at Southwestern University (Georgetown, Texas).

Meeting Details

Due to concerns about the Covid-19, and in particular the virulence of the Delta variant, the BCAS Board voted to conduct the remaining meetings for this year (November and December) and January 4th 2022 by ZOOM.

As a member you should have received a prior email detailing how to join the meeting. If you did not or require a “refresher” please [contact us](#).

The President's Perch

November makes me smile, because in Bastrop County November means DUCKS! Redheads, Widgeon, Canvasback, Teal, Ruddy Duck, Mergansers and more. Sometimes, I think ducks are what makes winter bearable. They are beautiful, and best of all they just sit there on the water for you to look at. How perfect is that? The best times to watch ducks are typically sunrise to midmorning, and then midafternoon to dusk. They are most active then, and not as likely to be napping in the tall grass. They are very observant of movement and will swim as far away from you as they can. So, pick your observation spot, come in slow and quiet, and move as little as possible. Perhaps you will get lucky and spot a stunning Cinnamon Teal.

Earhardt Road off FM 969 already has water in the shallow seasonal ponds, and White-faced Ibis, Blue-winged Teal and Long-billed Dowitcher have been spotted. Lake Bastrop can have some waterfowl, but it has not been too productive the last few years. Small local lakes and ponds can be fun especially places like the ponds behind the Volunteer Fire

Our Mission: To promote the conservation, restoration and enjoyment of natural resources and habitats for birds and other wildlife

Department on FM 1441, north of Lake Bastrop. If you are up for a little drive, the Fayette County Reservoir, Granger Lake, and Lake Somerville all feature diverse winter species, have multiple spots to bird from, and feature hiking trails to search for other winter species such as sparrow, Hermit Thrush and Spotted towhee.

With study and practice, identifying male waterfowl is fairly straightforward. But, what about the females and immature birds? Yep, a little tougher. A common occurrence is a mixed flock of Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. Males no problem, but what are all those little brown ducks swimming around? They all look the same. Well fortunately they are not exactly the same. Male Blue-winged Teal have a strong white vertical bar on their face, diagnostic at long distances. It turns out that female and immature Blue-winged teal have a pale area just behind their bill that Green-winged Teal do not have, there is also a thin black eye stripe and a broken white eye-ring that Green-winged Teal also do not feature. Green-winged Teal females also have a pale to cream colored stripe under their tails, similar but smaller than the large buffy stripe that males sport. Blue-winged Teal females and immatures do not have this feather detail. So, with a little work we can decipher these puzzles, it's part of the enjoyment of birding.

Good news for our Gulf Coast birds. Audubon is receiving a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to study the impact of coastal stewardship on protecting birds from human disturbance. Coastal breeding birds have experienced dramatic population declines over the last 50 years, due in part to habitat loss and increased human presence on Gulf coast beaches. Two recent Audubon-led studies showed that this strategy is working, coastal bird populations grew 2-34 times faster where stewardship occurred than at other protected areas. However, many uncertainties remain about how to most efficiently and effectively implement stewardship and management to protect coastal birds. It's an interesting read, and has made me more aware of disturbing birds on our beaches, especially during breeding season. To read the full article, follow this link...

<https://www.audubon.org/news/new-funding-help-gulf-coast-beachgoers-share-shore-birds>

That's all for this month – stay birdy,

Mike Goebel

President Bastrop County Audubon Society.



BCAS Field Trip Report

Hornsby Bend - October 16th.

The day dawned crisp and clear—a perfect October morning for birding. Nine BCAS birders (Mike and Jan Goebel, Ian and Cindy Layton, Louise Ridlon, Susan Schroeder, Luke Thompson, Linda Williams and her friend Elaine) gathered at the CER at Hornsby Bend for our first post-pandemic field trip! Starting out along Pond 1 and the drying beds, coots, Least Sandpipers, several species of ducks, and a very striking young American Avocet offered great views. Although the Red-necked Phalarope reported on eBird didn't show, we enjoyed scoping out teal, shovelers, gadwall, and an American wigeon. Several raptors, including an Osprey, soared overhead on the increasingly-gusty wind. From the birding shelter, the group headed for the Upper Island Overlook Trail to get respite from the wind. We encountered an active mixed flock of Orange-crowned, Nashville, and Yellow-rumped Warblers—new fall arrivals! The Carolina wrens were conspicuous in their absence until we were headed back to the cars, when a group of three called back and forth. We were very pleased with our morning's tally of 43 species, but a final stop at the CER added

Eastern Bluebird and Blue Jay. Everyone agreed it was great to bird together again.

With the holiday season and Christmas Bird Counts approaching, our next official field trip will probably be in January, but plan to join us at one of the monthly Bird City Big Sits and Little Hikes.

Bird on!

Louise Ridlon

Field Trip Chair



A good turnout!!!



American Avocet



Scoping the drying beds, looking for peeps!



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

[eBird Checklist](#)

Hornsby Bend (HOTE 037), Travis, Texas, US

Oct 16, 2021 8:41 AM - 12:04 PM

Protocol: Traveling

3.582 mile(s)

44 species (+1 other taxa)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck 11

Blue-winged Teal 1

Northern Shoveler 56

Gadwall 4

American Wigeon 1

Green-winged Teal	4
Ruddy Duck	9
American Coot	35
American Avocet	2
Killdeer	17
Least Sandpiper	80
Spotted Sandpiper	1
Great Egret	2
Black Vulture	12
Turkey Vulture	1
Osprey	1
Cooper's Hawk	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1
Downy Woodpecker	1
Crested Caracara	1
American Kestrel	3
Eastern Phoebe	3
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	2
Loggerhead Shrike	1
Blue Jay	1
Carolina Chickadee	2
Tufted x Black-crested Titmouse (hybrid)	2
Barn Swallow	3
Carolina Wren	3
Bewick's Wren	1
European Starling	1
Eastern Bluebird	1
American Robin	1
House Sparrow	2
Savannah Sparrow	1
Eastern Meadowlark	2
Red-winged Blackbird	4
Common Grackle	4
Great-tailed Grackle	2
Orange-crowned Warbler	1
Nashville Warbler	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
Northern Cardinal	2

Conservation Minute

Some interesting facts about Hummingbirds!



Kent Bohls

(Visit WWW.nwf.org for more worthwhile suggestions)

This is YOUR Newsletter!

If you have enjoyed a recent trip that including birding, we would love to publish a report of your trip. Please make submissions to the newsletter through BCAS email address published at the end of this newsletter. We are also always on the lookout for pictures of birds that have been taken in Bastrop County, especially rarities or "lifers".

Title your email "Newsletter Submission".

Upcoming Events

Nov 2nd, Tue, 7:00pm: - BCAS meeting - ZOOM.

Nov 12th, Fri, 8:30am: - Bird City Bastrop Little Hike, Buescher State Park, **\$5 park entrance for each person for just this month.

**

Nov 20th, Sat, 8:30 am: – Bird City Bastrop BIG SIT – Fisherman's Park

Bird Calls is published online and in paper copy by Bastrop County Audubon Society monthly except during July and August. We invite letters, articles, news tips, reviews of books and events, poems, cartoons and photos appropriate to the mission. Material should be submitted to the Editor at Bastropcountyaudubon@gmail.com