



# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

## November Program

### David Mitchell

Recent news indicate that the abundance of North American avifauna has declined by nearly one-third with a net loss approaching 3 billion birds, or 29% of 1970 abundance (Decline of the North American avifauna, *Science*, 366, 120-124). Much of the data used in this important study came from the National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count database, to which the Bastrop-Buescher State Parks Christmas Bird Count (BBSPCBC) has been contributing since 1977. In the November meeting, retired Professor David Mitchell will present a program on the BBSPCBC, which he has organized or participated in since 1981. Dr. Mitchell will show detailed diagrams of the populations of individual birds and groups of birds that have occurred over the life of the count. From these diagrams, observations can be made, and conclusions drawn regarding changes in populations here in Bastrop. Our data are fairly consistent with those from the October Science paper with a similar decline in total bird numbers. A detailed look at the individual birds we know and love show gains and losses and many times we can associated such a change with changes in habitat and habitat access (e.g., Bastrop fire). Using a user-friendly statistical approach to some of the data, David shows patterns emerging in species and groups of birds and the significance of these patterns for future populations of individual birds. If you want to know what is going on with Bastrop's birds, please attend.

### Scout Merit Badge – Fall 2019

As you may remember the local BSA Council requested our help with volunteers to help with Ornithology Merit Badge instruction at the BSA

Camp at Lost Pines (on Lake Bastrop). The counselor, Sharon Richardson sent the following:

"To awesome volunteers from this weekend and weekends in the past,

Many, many thanks to the Saturday and Sunday volunteers that made this a very successful merit badge weekend. We had 14 scouts on Saturday and 17 scouts on Sunday participating, as well as a few parents. I am so pleased to state that every scout earned the badge. In the past, I required all of the scouts to write out details on every activity, but after a great conversation with Jessica Snyder, the Director of STEM scout activities, I took her suggestions to make most of the activities a group discussion and only require that they draw and ID the bird parts and wing parts and keep the detailed list of the 20 birds encountered or studied. In the past, volunteers can attest that it became a bit stressful as noon approached to heavily encourage and assist the scouts to finish every section. The group discussions this weekend were lively and meaningful. One of my favorite comments was when asked how birds have economic impact, was "around Thanksgiving, many people buy Turkeys"! I have never had two groups in an entire weekend where everyone was on board, engaged, and with zero behavioral issues. Do you think having girls participating made the boys act less goofy? Every single one of you filled essential niches: expert advice on binoculars scopes and finding birds, insightful instruction on range maps and migration, helpful tips on which birds eat birdseed, and general corraling and being positive and encouraging.

We had a few challenges but nothing that was a deal-breaker. The weather patterns were such that it was super quiet for birds on Saturday and it seemed like

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

Sunday would follow that pattern. After getting an excellent tip from Mike to play an Eastern Screech Owl, followed by a scolding Titmouse call, I used that technique on Sunday's field trip in a more tucked in and woody location to attract a fun mix of chickadees, titmouse, cardinals, bluejays, mocking birds as well as a few Pine Warblers, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Blue-headed Vireo and 2 Black-throated Green Warblers all at once. Saturday's groups had more numerous vulture kettles, while Sunday had a few more species. I am only including this to let everyone know the potential for bird species at the camp this time of the year. I am sure after the big rain last night, things could be quite different today.

I hope that you will all consider joining the fun next spring. I will let you all know the date of the spring Hornaday weekend as soon as I get that information."

ED: Thanks to Joan Bohls for reporting this to us!

### Field Trip Opportunities

With the holiday season upon us, there are limited opportunities for field trips. Fortunately, however, we have three fantastic birding events already on the calendar. Happy birding!

**When:** November 23, Saturday, 7AM-7PM

**Where:** Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory

This event, jointly sponsored by Travis Audubon and Austin Water, is a celebration of 60 years of birding at Hornsby Bend. There will be multiple bird walks throughout the day, a two part all day super survey, information tables, merchandise, snacks, and presentations on photography and Hornsby Bend. No reservations required unless you plan to stay for the dinner, \$8 per person. More information at:

[bit.ly/HornsbyCelebration](http://bit.ly/HornsbyCelebration)

In connection with this event, Dr. Kevin Anderson will be the Travis Audubon program speaker Nov. 21, "60 Years of Birds, Birding & More". This will be your first chance to score the soon to be legendary limited-edition Hornsby Bend Shirt. Further details at:

[bit.ly/Hornsby60](http://bit.ly/Hornsby60)

**When:** Dec. 28, Saturday, 6AM-6PM

**Where:** McKinney Roughs Nature Park

This event, sponsored by LCRA, is the Lost Pines Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The count will start and finish at the McKinney Roughs main office, and there is no cost. This is an all-day count with a break for lunch. But you can also bird just half a day if you wish. Tell the CBC leader so they can plan for that when assembling the teams. Generally, there is coffee and breakfast tacos in the morning, and pizza for the evening count down. Plan to bring a lunch unless your zone leader tells you there will be a stop at a local eatery. Registration not required, but if you can, please-please do so. This helps with planning for the birding teams and food. Also, this is one of the very few CBCs that offer a free tee shirt to participants. Get more details at;

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/LostPinesCBC/events/>

or

<https://www.lcra.org/parks/Pages/mckinney-roughs-nature-park.aspx>

Click "Get Tickets" to register for free. If you don't have a LCRA account, it will take a minute to set it up. Too clunky, call or email LCRA outdoor programs at:

[outdoorprograms@lcra.org](mailto:outdoorprograms@lcra.org)

512-303-5073

**When:** Jan. 1, Wednesday, 6AM-6 PM

**Where:** Bastrop Christmas Bird Count

Held the first day of 2020, it is actually the 2019 Bastrop CBC. This is another all-day count, which can be a half day count by prior arrangement with your zone leader and, once again, is free. There will be a break for lunch. This count circle includes the city of Bastrop, Bastrop and Buescher State Parks, as well as Lake Bastrop north and south shores. With a wide range of habitats, the Bastrop CBC normally finds 110-130 species. To participate in the Bastrop CBC, you will need to register. The simple reason is that the count does not launch from a central location, so arrive having eaten or bearing breakfast. Once registered you will be assigned to a zone and zone

leader, unless you have a zone/leader preference. The zone leader will contact you with the starting time and location, as well as lunch arrangements. Some zones lunch in the field (authentic but chilly), some grab a quick bite at a zone restaurant (a resourceful option with warm food and facilities).

In the count circle and just want to count birds at your bird feeder holding a cup of hot coffee, can do! Just contact the count compiler Shelia Hargis for the rules and data forms.

The current plan is for a countdown dinner at Morelia Mexican Grill, located at 696 Hwy 71, approximate time 6PM. For more information check out the CBC website:

<http://www.bastropcbc.com/>

To register, contact count leader Shelia Hargis at:  
[bastroptxcbc@gmail.com](mailto:bastroptxcbc@gmail.com)

The Perfect Christmas Gift! 🎄 🧑🏻 🐦



Our new Woodpecker tee-shirts are here and ready for the upcoming holidays. They will be available during the Nov 19 meeting and hereafter until they are sold out!

The shirts are 100% cotton with a graphic screen print of Margie Crisp's, Pileated Woodpecker - a stunner for sure. They are available in unisex and ladies sizes S-XL.

The cost for each shirt is \$15 and includes tax.

### Your Bastrop County Audubon Membership for 2020 - Due January 1

This birding year has flown by and it's time to renew your BCAS annual membership for 2020.

You may renew on our website  
[bastropcountyaudubon.org/join-us](http://bastropcountyaudubon.org/join-us)

or pay by check via U.S. mail (address below) or pay directly at one of our monthly meetings with cash, check or credit card.

Our annual dues structure remains the same as years past:

Individual	\$20
Family	\$35
Youth	\$5
Sponsor	\$75

Thank you for your support of Audubon and the programs, education and conservation projects we bring to Bastrop County about birds and other wildlife.

### 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 19, Tuesday: -

5:00pm Pre-meeting dinner. Cedar's Mediterranean Grill.

7:00pm BCAS meeting and program. First National Bank, Bastrop, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room – doors open 6:30pm.

Nov 23, Saturday – 7am-7pm – Hornsby Bend @ 60 Celebration (see article for details)

Dec 5, 2019 – BCAS Committee meeting. Bastrop Library. 6:00pm

Dec 17, Tues – Holiday Party (details to follow)

Dec 28, Saturday – Lost Pines CBC

January 1, Wednesday – Bastrop CBC (see article)

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