



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

Highlights of ABC's Report on the Endangered Species Act

The American Bird Conservancy released a report in July on the effects of the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The ABA notes the ESA "is perhaps the **most important piece of environmental legislation ever passed in the United States**. The Act sets a high standard for the protection of threatened species that can be emulated around the world, and it can be credited with numerous success stories over its 30-plus year history."

If you add up the counts in the categories of stable, increasing and delisted, 78% percent of the birds previously listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have improved in numbers. You can read the entire report online (abcbirds.org).

"The recovery of the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, and growing or stable populations of many other listed species, such as the Whooping Crane, are living examples of the Act's success."

Three species of Texas interest in the increased population category are the Bald Eagle, the

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October Program

David Mitchell is sorting through hundreds of photos to share his travels at the meeting October 18: "Flora and Fauna of Borneo."

Mission

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

September Program



Stunning Bird Photos

Melody Lytle, long-time birder and wildlife photographer, brings a stunning selection of her photographs for the BCAS September program.

BCAS resumes its "third Tuesday" meetings after a two-month summer hiatus on Tuesday, **September 20** at the First National Bank meeting room in Bastrop, 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:30.

Lytle will talk about "great birds I have seen, how Texas birds can look different in different locations, and how birders taking casual photos on a birding trip can take better shots."

She is a retired biologist for the City of Austin's Balcones Canyonlands Preserve program, which manages a tract of 13,608 acres. She began shooting photos in connection with her job, and "I've never stopped." She and her husband now travel extensively, anywhere from San Marcos to Antarctica.

In addition to the digital slide show, Lytle will bring some prints to supplement the experience of the images on the screen.

The City of Austin preserve is one in a system of preserves in a multi-agency effort to support a number of endangered species and species of concern, most famously the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo.



Field Trip

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Two-hour, 50 minute, traveling, to four locations: Old Sayers Road, Lake Bastrop North Shore, Bastrop State Park, and Buescher State Park. Overall, for the Cornell Lab Global Big Day field trip, 51 species of birds with 667 total birds in the four locations. Overcast conditions.

Birders: Sandy Simon, Mary Ellen Branan, Steve Pyrczak, and Mike Goebel.

We had some good birds for Bastrop such as Franklin's Gull, Indigo Bunting, Northern Parula, and Blue-headed Vireo.

Mike Goebel, Field Trip Chair

Individual Species Counted:

Blue-winged Teal	2
Double-crested Cormorant	7
Great Egret	1
Snowy Egret	2
Cattle Egret	383
Black Vulture	21
Turkey Vulture	11
Red-shouldered Hawk	5
Broad-winged Hawk	1
Killdeer	2
Spotted Sandpiper	1
Franklin's Gull	1
White-winged Dove	2
Mourning Dove	7
Great Roadrunner	11
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4
Red-bellied Woodpecker	10
Downy Woodpecker	4
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Crested Caracara	2
Eastern Phoebe	1
Great-crested Flycatcher	1
Western Kingbird	1
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	15
White-eyed Vireo	16
Blue-headed Vireo	1
Blue Jay	2
American Crow	14
Purple Martin	4
Barn Swallow	10
Cave Swallow	4
Carolina Chickadee	11
Tufted x Black-crested Titmouse, hybrid	5
Carolina Wren	2
Eastern Bluebird	7
European Starling	2



June 21 Program— A Good showing of visitors and kids came to Jake Stush's presentation, which demonstrated how to make the subject memorable to K -7th graders on details of birdlife and habitat. Here he's using kitchen utensils and various strange props to emphasize the importance of wetlands. Shush is Education Director at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center in San Antonio.



*The BCAS Web Site at
bastropcountyaudubon.org
has been updated!*



Franklin's Gull, an inland gull species

Northern Mockingbird	15
Cedar Waxwing	15
Northern Parula	2
Yellow Warbler	2
Lark Sparrow	2
Northern Cardinal	36
Indigo Bunting	1
Painted Bunting	10
Dickcissel	2
Red-winged Blackbird	2
Common Grackle	4
Great-tailed Grackle	6
Brown-headed Cowbird	3
House Sparrow	2

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Aplomado Falcon, and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Recovering to about 16,000 individuals at present in the lower 48 from a low of 800, the Bald Eagle is being proposed for delisting. The Aplomado Falcon is increasing, though yet of small population of a few hundred. Extirpated from the U.S. by the 1950's, The Aplomado was reintroduced a few years ago, chiefly at Laguna Atascosa, Matagorda Island and Aransas NWR.



Recently declared extinct is the Seaside Sparrow, dusky subspecies. "A denizen of the saltwater marshes of Brevard County, Florida, this once common subspecies became extinct as a result of mosquito control efforts that included the flooding of Merritt Island, the draining of marshes along the St. John's River, and the application of pesticides. The only remaining birds (all males) were brought into captivity in 1979. The last bird died at Disney World in 1987."

Three species of particular Texas concern in the decrease category are the Black-capped Vireo, the Golden-cheeked Warbler, and Attwater's Greater Prairie Chicken. The Black-capped Vireo, protected since 1987, "is threatened by habitat loss, fire suppression, and Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism. A localized increase has occurred at Fort Hood." The Golden-cheeked Warbler, protected since 1990, has also declined except where improving locally at Fort Hood with its program.

The Greater Prairie-chicken, "Attwater's" subspecies, protected since 1973, used to number



"approximately one million birds and ranged across some six million acres of southern coastal prairie at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, fewer than 60 individuals are restricted to just two protected locations. Captive-breeding is underway, but the subspecies is on the verge of extinction in the wild due to development and the spread of invasive plants."

Under "Undetermined", ABA lists the Ivory-billed Woodpecker: "The exciting 2004 record of a single Ivory-bill in the "Big Woods" area of Arkansas was the first evidence of this species' continued existence in 60 years. A small population may have persisted in this area, but due to lack of data, no trend can currently be inferred."

Letter from the President

Flamingos, egrets, herons, and Roseate Spoonbills are some of America's most beautiful birds. Jan and I feel a day in the field birding Bastrop county is never complete until we have spotted at least one Great Blue Heron. But one hundred years ago, these species and a many more, were on the verge of extinction. Rapacious market hunting, and the plume trade, had decimated the vast flocks of birds that had greeted settlers several hundred years earlier in America. At one point in the late 1800's an ounce of plumes from a Snowy Egret or Roseate Spoonbill was worth more than an ounce of gold. By the early 1900's, only a few dozen nesting spoonbill pairs remained, hidden in the Florida Everglades.

Following earlier conservation efforts, the United States and Canada signed the first Migratory Bird Treaty on August 16, 1916. Followed two years later by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the provisions of that treaty were expanded. Followed two years later by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the provisions of that treaty were expanded and made the law of the land.

Stern measures, but one hundred years later as we celebrate the Centennial Birthday of this visionary treaty. The results are manifest and on display each time we step outside to enjoy nature and "our birds."

So, Fall migration is underway. Upland Sandpipers have been passing through for several weeks, and the Purple Martins are mostly gone. Scissortail Flycatchers and swallows seem to be leaving a bit early for some reason. You never know what the storms may bring down. Check short mown fields, small ponds, and even temporary puddles for migrants. The water levels are up again on Earhart Road, and a few days back, we had numerous Little Blue Herons, one immature White Ibis, and two immature White-faced Ibis.

As Ken Kaufman says in his book *Kingbird Highway* while contemplating a day of birding, "Any day might be a special one, you just have to get outside and see if it is." **Mike Goebel, President, BCAS**

Bird Calls is published by Bastrop County Audubon Society monthly except during the summer. We invite letters, articles, news tips, event reviews, book reviews, poems, cartoons, and photos appropriate to the mission. The deadline for the next issue is noon on the last day of the preceding month. Submit material at Contact, www.bastropcountyaudubon.org. Or send by mail Editor, 216 Schaefer Blvd., Bastrop TX 78602, ph. (512) 303-2734. Editor, Mary Ellen Branan, PhD.

BCAS
c/o Dru Gabrysch
206 Lois Lane
Paige TX 78659

Return Service Requested

Fall Calendar

September 1, Thursday: BCAS Board Meeting, Bastrop Public Library, 6:00 p.m.

September 4, Sunday, Event marking the 5th anniversary of the Labor Day Forest Fires Complex in 2011, at Bastrop Convention Center. Noon-3:00. Food, music, artist. Free.

September 15-18 28th Annual Hummingbird Festival. rockport-fulton.org

September 20, Tuesday: BCAS General Meeting, First Nat'l Bank, Bastrop, Hasler Blvd @ H71W. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Dinner together at Cedar's Mediterranean, 5:00, RSVP ssimon1221@yahoo.com

October 6, Thursday: BCAS Board Meeting

October 18, Tuesday, BCAS General Meeting

November 2-6, 23rd Annual Rio Grande Valley Birding Fest. Sign up NOW (began in August) for coveted field trips online, RGVBF.org.

BCAS Introduce 25 Youth to Birding

On a very hot day in early July, an educational team from BCAS took youngsters in the Smithville Parks and Recreation Department's summer program on a birding walk in River Bend Park. Education Chair David Mitchell, former Education Chair Jackie Fisher, and Sandy Simon in two episodes instructed teams of 12, ages 8 to 14, in fast intros to using binoculars and bird-watching on July 7.

Fisher noted some of these kids were "very clever." Along the walk, she questioned about flora and fauna along the way and awarded correct answerers with a rock from her collection. The best sighting was the summer tanager.

While their team was birding, Nicholas Cowey of LCRA McKinney Roughs was instructing the other half in tracking. On June 30, the previous Thursday, the participants enjoyed kayaking at Buscher State Park and instruction in nature photographer, with kayaks and throwaway cameras provided. Fisher helped with the kayaking.