



Bird Calls

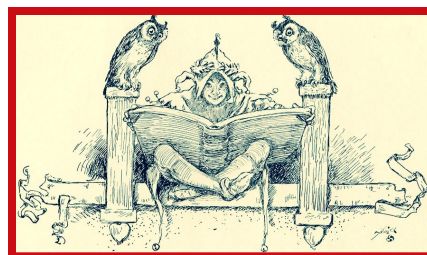
Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

Local Christmas Bird Counts:

The Bastrop/State Parks CBC will be held on January 1, 2017. This count, which began in 1977, covers the state parks, Smithville areas, out 304, 95, downtown Bastrop, and more.. Contact **Shelia Hargis** at [bastropxcbc@gmail.com](mailto:bastroptxcbc@gmail.com). After you sign up, you will receive your group assignment and instructions by email.



When the day is done, participants will gather at **Southside Market and Barbeque at 534 Hwy 71W in Bastrop** at approx. 6:00 p.m. for the collation of the sightings. Coming from Hwy 71, take the Hwy 304 exit. Go east on the frontage road to access the restaurant.



An Evening to Celebrate

In the tradition of our chapter for many years, we've planned a festive occasion for the December meeting, including refreshments (yes, food and drink) and gifts from nature in the form of the extravagant "raffle" of door prizes.

The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m., doors open at 6:30 p.m., at the First National Bank Building 2nd floor, Hasler Blvd., in Bastrop, on Tuesday, December 20.

Some members signed up at the November meeting to bring "pot-luck" finger foods, as organized by Sandy Simon. If you wish to sign up to bring a favorite snack, email ssimon1221@yahoo.com. Jackie Fisher will chair the door prize drawing. Please bring a gift to add to the table of door prizes, if you wish.

Program: The meeting will include an expert educational program, another tradition of BCAS through the years! The speaker was not confirmed by press time.

The Lost Pines CBC Launches from McKinney Roughs Nature Park

on Saturday, December 17, 2016, at 6:00 a.m. and closes at 5:00 p.m.

Prior Online Registration: Go to bastropcountyaudubon.org, the Home/News page, and click on the spot there to register online. You will have to do a sign-in with a password, then the rest is easy. Your trouble insures accurate participant information, skill level, and tee-shirt size.

Check-in: On Saturday, Dec. 17 at 5:30 a.m., gather to check-in and receive group assignments. Complimentary breakfast tacos and coffee. LCRA Parks, Bastrop County Audubon Society, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Lost Pines Master Naturalists are hosts. "While we owe a debt of gratitude to the previous partner Hyatt Lost Pines and especially Amanda Fier for helping to build public recognition for this count circle over the last five years, they are not partnering this

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We're Hosting:

Strollers will be welcomed to the annual Trail of Lights at Fisherman's Park in downtown Bastrop December 14 from dark to 8:00 p.m.

BCAS bird enthusiasts will offer information and refreshments.

CBC continued from p. 1:

year. Consequently, there will be no workshops or check-in at the Hyatt.” The address is 1884 State Hwy 71 West, Cedar Creek, TX 78612. [Google Maps reference.](#)

Please be prompt! Birding groups will depart for the field no later than 6 a.m., and you will be unable to join your group after that time. Half days may be arranged at the outset.

Meals/Attire/Weather: Plan to bring your own lunch, beverages and snacks. You will likely stay in the field with your group for lunch. The Lost Pines CBC will take place rain or shine. Dress comfortably and wear suitable footwear for your land or river zone.

“Please call us at [512-303-5073](tel:512-303-5073) if you have further questions. If you have friends who would like to participate in the count, please share this info with them--the more the merrier. In closing, we look forward to spending time with you, and we thank you in advance for your participation! Your time and effort counting within our circle contributes vital citizen science data to important bird conservation research.”

Reported by:

The Lost Pines Christmas Bird Count Team

Nicholas Cowey and Erin Holley



Field Report

September 15, 2016, Trip to Commons Ford Municipal Park, Austin, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.:

Participants: Mike and Jan Goebel, Priscilla Jarvis, Mary Ellen Branan, Anna Stalcup, Steve Pyrczak, Jackie Fisher, and Sandy Simon.

We car-pooled to Commons Ford and birded the woods, fields, and river. We did not see lots of birds but did mine out 31 species in the three hours. Most of us went on for lunch at The Oasis and enjoyed Lake Travis full once again.

Great Blue Heron 1
Black vulture 20
Turkey vulture 5
Wood Duck 1
Osprey 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 2
Killdeer 3
Rock Pigeon 12
Mourning Dove 10
Eastern Screech-Owl 1
Ladder-backed Woodpecker 1
Eastern Phoebe 3
Empidonax Flycatcher sp. 1
White eyed vireo 2
American Crow 3
Carolina Chickadee 1
Black-crested Titmouse 4
Carolina Wren 1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 4
Eastern Bluebird 1
Northern Mockingbird 2
European Starling 16
Nashville Warbler 3
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler 6
Summer Tanager 2
Northern Cardinal 6
Common Grackle 1
Orchard Oriole 1
Baltimore Oriole 1
Lesser Goldfinch 5
House Finch 1



BCAS Receives 2017 Project Grant

BCAS' grant proposal "Posters for Birds" requesting \$1000 was granted recently via Audubon Foundation of Texas.

The project will produce 100 tabloid size posters (11"x17") featuring birds of Bastrop County using photos by members. Volunteers will distribute about seven different laminated poster versions to all sorts of venues in the County, commercial, non-profit, governmental, etc. The venues could include restaurants, store fronts, churches, banks, and museums, reaching diverse populations, to publicize the BCAS mission, meetings, web site, county birds, and 35th anniversary. We will feature a button for "likes" at the Facebook site.

An ad hoc committee will meet in January to plan for logistics of distribution, to shop for supplies for hanging, and to finalize poster designs, chaired by Mary Ellen Branan. To join the committee call her at 512-303-2734 or email: mbranana@austin.rr.com.

BCAS Mission

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

President's Perch

December is always a special month, some feel "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." It's our holiday season, a time of thanksgiving, a time for family, and, yes, a time for birds.

Since the first Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) led by ornithologist Frank Chapman on Christmas Day, 1900, birders, lovers of nature, supporters of conservation, and individuals wondering "what it's all about," have gathered in December to find and count birds rather than hunt them.

That first count in 1900 was intended to provide an alternative to the holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." The Side Hunt consisted of "choosing up sides", and whichever side brought in the largest pile of feathered and furred game was the winner.

Keep in mind, this first count was prior to the 1905 formation of the National Audubon Society. In 1900, the few Audubon Societies that existed were state-level grass roots organizations, the first being the Massachusetts Audubon Society founded in 1896.

So, that cold Christmas Day, in the final days of the 19th century, 27 dedicated birders participated in 25 Christmas Bird Counts, from Toronto to Pacific Grove, California. The total number of species found that day was 90. A low number by modern standards, where big U.S. counts can top 220 species, and places like Ecuador had 529 species in 2015. But in 1900 field guides did not exist, there were no "birding apps" for your phone (heck, there weren't any phones), and other than ornithologists, "birders" were a rare species.

Living in Bastrop County we are fortunate to have two Christmas Bird Counts, the Lost Pines CBC on December 17th, and the Bastrop CBC on January 1st. I invite you to participate in one . . . or both. You will be immersed in nature, and you will visit parts of beautiful Bastrop County that few people ever see. We will see birds, we will learn about birds, we will contribute to a citizen science project that had its beginnings in 1900, and we will have fun.

Mike Goebel, BCAS President

Re: The Traditional Carol "Twelve Days of Christmas":

The 12 days of Christmas last from Dec. 26 to Jan. 6, the day that commemorates the gifts of the Wise Men. The "pear tree" probably comes from the French word "perdrix" meaning "partridge," and the "five golden rings" may have originally been "five gold spinks" or goldfinches. The first seven days all represent bird-related gifts.

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 penultimate day of the preceding month. Material submittable 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.



Steve Pyrczak has been removing and repairing BCAS' blue-bird boxes throughout the former golf course at Bastrop State Park. The weeds, now shoulder-high and more, preclude the habitat, after 16 years of our project.

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

Return Service Requested

Winter Calendar

December 14, Wednesday, BCAS hosts the ginger bread house at Bastrop's Trail of Lights. Dark - 8:00

December 17, Saturday, Lost Pines CBC, 5:30 a.m. check in, McKinney Roughs Nature Park. See p. 1.

December 20, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., General Meeting, First National Bank Bldg., Bastrop, Hasler Blvd.. See p. 1.

January 1, 2017, Sunday, Bastrop/State Parks CBC, all day, ending at dark. See p. 1.

January 21, Saturday, 8 - 12 noon, Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, "Going Beyond Birding Basics." Principles and pitfalls in bird identification.

February 17 - 20, Friday thru Monday, Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). National Audubon & Cornell Lab of Ornithology. birdcount.org

February 21-26, Tuesday thru Sunday, Whooping Crane Festival, Pt. Aransas. whoopingcranefestival.org

Audubon CEO Post-Election Message

National Audubon CEO David Yarnold dealt with the expected strategy shifts due to the new Presidential administration in a November 18 email to chapter leaders.

The primary approach to effectiveness especially in its science-based campaign to address climate-change will shift, but values and goals remain the same.

Yarnold stated, "It's clear that the incoming administration will have new conservation priorities and that most of the opportunity to make progress on climate change will shift to the states."

Yarnold believes we are a uniquely formed organization to meet the challenges: "We're a durable, respected, trusted conservation network and we're local everywhere. With 463 chapters and 22 state offices and a membership of one million that's almost evenly divided between D's and R's — we're authentic messengers for birds in every state in the U.S. — and that sets us apart from every other conservation non-profit."