



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

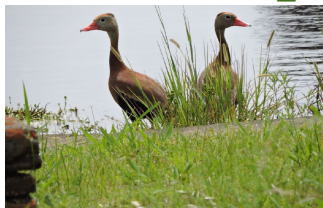
February Meeting and Program

Posters Progress: See page 2

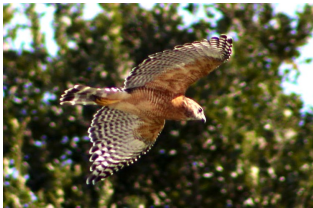
Birds of Bastrop



Barn Swallows



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks



Red-shouldered Hawk



Sponsored by:



Indigo Bunting

Bastrop County Audubon Society

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

Visit BastropCountyAudubon.org

2017

Visit the Web Site Anytime

Yours Truly and Dru Gabrysch periodically post to BastropCountyAudubon.org to keep it current and fresh, so it's always worth your while to check in.

David Mitchell has added some beautiful and moody photos in the Member Photo Gallery. Rita Clements and Kendra Mueller have now joined the Photo Gallery members with some great photos.. Navigate to the Gallery under "Visual Resources."

As always current news of BCAS activities appears on the Home Page and the latest Bird Calls on the Newsletter Page. At What We Do, we've added the photo of Nicholas Cowey's December, 2016 program on butterflies. Enjoy. *The Editor*

A Birds' Eye View: How Do Birds See So Well?

How do bird eyes work? Do all bird species see equally well? How does their vision differ from mammal vision?

At the meeting on Tuesday, February 21, Board Member Susan Leslie will provide an expert layman's overview of birds' eyes and examples of these eyes at work. If you ever wanted to sneak closer to a bird, this program is for you!

Susan became interested in visual processing while doing research on dyslexia in the 1970s, in Alaska and at UT-Austin. Cross-species and cross-cultural studies in visual perception were in the early stages then, and it was an exciting subject for psychologists.

Susan joined BCAS when it was first organized, and is a 38 year resident of Bastrop County.

Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. Have dinner with the speaker at Cedar's Mediterranean Grill at 5:00. RSVP Sandy Simon: Ssimon1221@yahoo.com. dinner.

GBBC

Great Backyard Bird Count

Feb. 17-20

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

In 2016, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 130 countries counted 5,689 species of birds on more than 162,000 checklists!

Wherever you are, one or all of the days, with 15 minutes or an hour, you can count the numbers and species and enter the data at gbbc.birdcount.org.

There's full information and instructions on how to enter your data at gbbc.birdcount.org. See also "President's Perch," page 3.

"Posters for Birds"

By late January, nine designs for colorful tabloid-sized posters were being finalized for reproduction at G&C Printing in Rockne. Project Chair Mary Ellen Branan, Conservation Chair Jan Goebel, and members George Landry and Judy Turner met together to review preliminary versions earlier in January.

The posters feature photos by 11 photographers who are current and/or former members of BCAS, per policy. All the bird photos are taken within the County, ensuring that all are, whether resident, migratory, or rare, "Bastrop birds."

Altogether we plan to publish and distribute 100 posters, according to the grant proposal we made in September to Audubon Foundation of Texas (AFT). We subsequently received \$1,000 for the successful proposal.

Some of the selected photos are on the BCAS web site, and elsewhere in Branan's digital archives, those taken by Dru Gabrysch, Pamela Hohman, Steve Pyrczak, Steve Kazianis, Alan Jaeger, Michelle Belden, and Roy Smallwood. Since the project was announced, Judy Turner, David Mitchell, Rita Clements, and Kendra Mueller have sent photos. If you have a photo you want considered for additional poster use, email it along to mbranan@austin.rr.com. All photographers will receive a poster for themselves.

The next stage of the project will involve volunteers to hang posters in Bastrop, Smithville, and Elgin, and along the way. According to the plan, teams of two or three will have about 10 posters each to hang. A variety of venues will reach a wide demographic of Bastrop County folks at visitor centers, museums, churches, other civic sites, commercial sites, such as store fronts, banks, and restaurants. Call or email Branan at 512-303-2734 or mbranan@austin.rr.com to sign on for the distribution phase.

BCAS has never before tried this medium of exposure, hanging posters in ordinary public places. More people hopefully will recognize BCAS and develop more appreciation of the County for its birds and nature.

Bird Calls. as four-page newsletter or post card, is published 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. 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.

Christmas Bird Counts: Part of the 117th CBC for National Audubon

The Seventh Annual **Lost Pines CBC** was conducted on Saturday, December 17. Nicholas Cowey from LCRA was our lead compiler. Thanks to McKinney Roughs for hosting the early kick off of 30+ birders that morning as well as the countdown tally later in the afternoon. The skies were overcast most of the day but the temperature was moderate for the season. The total count was 114 species. Highlight birds were the Least Grebe, Wilson's Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia and

Continued on page 3

The December Celebration

The December meeting and program were a great success: good people, exciting



N. Cowey

presentation, and good food. Jackie Fisher organized gifts for all and awarded two of her art quilts to speaker Nicholas Cowey and to a lucky ticket holder.

Cowey of LCRA's McKinney Roughs Nature Center reported with numerous photographs on a record number of butterflies, and first time and rare butterflies that fluttered into Bastrop County this fall.

Sarkozi: January Speaker

A good crowd appeared to hear birder David Sarkozi's stories and photos of his Big Year in 2015 and his current pursuit for 2017 to surpass the new Texas Big Year record of 522. He made 496 by midnight of December 31st in 2015 when hoping for a record 500.

Sarkozi runs Texbirds and is a former president of the Texas Ornithological Society.

In only seven hours on January 1, 2017, he logged 95 species. His blog page on January 29 reported 282, with four review species, and 5,500 miles traveled.

BCAS' Facebook site features more on David Sarkozi.

BCAS Mission

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

Christmas Bird Counts, continued

Gray Catbird. Unfortunately that rare bird, the Greater Roadrunner, eluded our list again this year. There was a record nine sightings of the Bald Eagle for the day which means no more rare bird reports for them again!



Photo: Alan Jaeger

The **Bastrop CBC** took place New Year's Day 2017 as it has for the past 39 years. The weather that Sunday was perfect for tromping the Circle that includes Bastrop & Buescher State Parks and Lake Bastrop. Some 35+ birders were split into groups by lead Compiler Shelia Hargis. We gathered at Southside Barbeque for the Countdown.



James J. Audubon's painting of Common Goldeneye Duck, male & female

Total species for the day was 119. Highlights included the Common Goldeneye (rare bird report), Brown Creeper, Sandhill Crane, more than ever Red-headed Woodpeckers, hundreds of Cedar Waxwings, and thousands of American Robins.

Jan Goebel, Conservation Chair

Educational Outreach in Smithville

Jackie Fisher fascinated eight teens on January 17 with her lecture on "Flight." This was another of the events organized in cooperation with Judy Bergeron of the Smithville Public Library and the Parks & Recreation Department. Fisher distributed illustrations and educational material on bird wings and the mechanics of flight. An outdoors event is forthcoming this spring with as many as 100 high schoolers involved.

The President's Perch

With the January Christmas Bird Counts behind us, February ushers in a new season of birding events and festivals. First up is the 20th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) sponsored by Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology and our own National Audubon Society. The dates for the 2017 GBBC are February 17-20, and anyone can participate. Head on over to gbbc.birdcount.org for all the details. You can bird in your yard, you can bird in a park, you can bird anywhere, as long as you bird for at least fifteen minutes. This is grassroots citizen science at its best, and your observations do count and do make a difference. GBBC data, plus Christmas Bird count observations, and Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) comprise the majority of the data used for Audubon's "Birds and Climate Change Report" and many other scholarly researches on birds. Find this ground breaking study at climate.audubon.org, it's well worth your time.

February also kicks off our birding festival calendar for 2017. First up is the Sparrow Fest in Marble Falls February 4th. A new event for 2017 is the Matagorda Bay Birdfest February 18-19 in Palacios. Coastal habitat promises plenty of birds, and there are events for every member of the family. A perennial favorite is the Whooping Crane Festival at Port Aransas, February 23-25th. Boat trips to see the whoopers, field trips to the King Ranch and local birding hot spots, and a strong lineup of speakers talking about our favorite thing, birds, make this a great event. We take a breather in March, but April is full with the Galveston Featherfest April 6th. A new event for 2017 is the Corpus Christi Birdiest Festival in America April 20-23. The Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival April 28-30th completes the month. Consider attending at least one of these events. They are a great way for the whole family to see and learn more about birds, while having fun and enjoying nature. It doesn't get much better than that!

Mike Goebel

President Bastrop County Audubon Society



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Return Service Requested

February-Spring Calendar

February 2: Thursday, 6:00 p.m., BCAS Board Meeting, Bastrop City Library.

February 4: Saturday, 12:30 p.m., BCAS members register to plant pine seedlings at Bastrop State Park.

February 17-20, President's Day weekend: Great Backyard Bird Count.

February 18: Saturday, 7:30-11:00 a.m. Travis Audubon/Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Research, Free Monthly Field trip for all levels of birders. Easy walking and learning.

February 21: Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., BCAS General Meeting & Program. First National Bank Bldg., Bastrop. Doors open at 6:30. Story p. 1.

February 23-26: Whooping Crane Festival, Port Aransas. Register: WhoopingCraneFestival.org.

April 6-9 Week end: Galveston Feather Fest. Over 100 field trips, workshops, evening events. Register now at [Galveston FeatherFest.com](http://GalvestonFeatherFest.com).

For other birding festivals this spring, see "President's Perch," page 3.