



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society



Dining/Meeting Hall Photo LCRA, w/ permission

State Audubon Chapter Assembly Coming Soon

Members from the 25 Audubon chapters in the state will assemble on Friday and Saturday, April 1 and 2, 2016, at McKinney Roughs Nature Center (LCRA). Texas Audubon has designed the assembly “specifically for Audubon’s amazing network of dedicated chapters and partners.”

Again, as two years ago, BCAS co-hosts the event along with Travis Audubon. The event “includes a day-and-a-half of exciting field trips, inspiring speakers, in-depth hands-on workshops and the camaraderie only Audubon can provide.”

First in the schedule is a field trip on Friday, April 1, 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Research, a mecca of birding (337 species recorded) on FM 973 just northeast of Austin-Bergstrom Airport. Jane Tillman for Travis Audubon and Mike Goebel for Bastrop County Audubon will lead the field trip. Early birders on Saturday morning can join up for a McKinney Roughs trail hike, 7:00-8:30. a.m.

Saturday, April 2, is a long day with breakfast at 8:30, then featuring speakers and breakout sessions on varied topics from national scope to local chapter-

March Program

Bastrop County Government in Conservation

The speaker for our March 15 meeting is Colton Stebano, Administrator for the Houston Toad program and other conservation responsibilities.

In April of 2008, Bastrop County was issued a Section 10 Incidental take permit for an Endangered Species (Houston Toad), launching the Lost Pines Habitat Conservation Plan (LPHCP) for Bastrop County.

Colton will explain this plan, update us on recent activities post fire and other conservation activities planned for public and private lands in the county.

Colton has worked for Bastrop County since 2012. He is a member of the Lost Pines Recovery Team (from the fires) and the County Drought Management Task Force. He is currently serving on the Lower Colorado River Mid basin Regional Council which is a link between LCRA and the regional communities for public services and stewardship of our natural resources.

Colton is getting married in April to his Rockne bride. Congratulations!

We meet at the First National Bank in Bastrop at Hasler Blvd. Doors open at 6:30. Dine with us beforehand at 5:00 p.m. at Cedars Mediterranean.

maintenance concerns. The day ends with dinner and a “controversial issues briefing” by Executive Director Brian Trusty, Iliana Pena, and others of Audubon Texas.

The over-all registration charge of \$50 covers the three “upscale” meals (no bag lunches), interim refreshments, speakers, and attendance at all events. Registration is now available online at tx.audubon.org, where any schedule changes and information will be kept up-to-date until April 1. From tx.audubon.org, select Chapters & Centers and find Chapter Assembly for full information and the Register now button.

In Memoriam



BCAS Founder Maggie Lambert passed away in Elgin on January 7, 2016, just shy of her 92nd birthday. In the archives of Bird Calls, we have the special Silver Anniversary edition, celebrating BCAS' 25th birthday. In that issue, Maggie Lambert was profiled by Priscilla Jarvis as a long-time BCAS leader and a founder of the chapter. Maggie proved shy and somewhat reticent about discussing herself in the interview, despite her admirable accomplishments. The Obituary published in the Elgin Courier January 12 reveals she grew up in High Wycombe, England. She tracked German bombers during the war for the RAF. After the war she immigrated to Canada, met and married Jerry Lambert. She was a founder of the natural food Wheatsville Coop in Austin. Here is the Jarvis article on Maggie Lambert, published in 2007, which does reveal her devotion to conservation values and to Bastrop County Audubon Society:

Maggie Lambert has loved nature all her life. She moved to Bastrop County in 1975 and soon founded with others the Lignite Watch group to oppose the strip mining of 7,000 acres in the Camp Swift area.

In 1981, Maggie read in the local newspaper that a bird watching group was being formed. She went to the initial meeting. She felt such a group offered her a chance to get out in the county and go to places she wouldn't ordinarily go. And she wanted to help raise local consciousness of conservation needs.

BCAS was not yet a chapter when they made the first field trip through Bastrop State Park to the dam in Buescher State Park, where Judy Mitchell was waiting on a blanket with her two-month old son, Josh. She went on the first BCAS trip to High Island for the spring migration in the early 1980's.

A founding member, she has served the chapter as treasurer (for years), secretary, membership chair, and newsletter editor. She continues on the board as an emeritus director. She helped produce the first brochure about BCAS and recalls the Bastrop H. S. Science

Fair when she and David Carson, and other BCAS members were the judges.

She's the one with the English accent. She worked many years at KLRU. She still cuts her own grass with a push electric mower. She's a treasure! —Priscilla Jarvis, June, 2007

A message we received January 16 after the BCAS news bulletin about Maggie's passing: "We at Friends of the Lost Pines State Parks are very sorry to hear that. She was a dynamic, energetic person. She will be missed."

—The Editor

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



Field Trip Report

Bastrop State Park, Golf Course area

January 27, 2016,

Five hardy individuals arrived at Bastrop State Park in 40°F weather to clean and perform the annual survey of the Bluebird boxes maintained there by Bastrop County Audubon Society. We combined that effort with an official field trip for BCAS, the first this winter since several were rained out until now. Two members of the Lost Pines Master Naturalists participated, Wesley Smith and Jeanne McConnell, joining Mary Ellen Branan, Judy Turner and **Field Trip Chair Mike Goebel**.

The construction of the fifteen pole-mounted nest boxes was the donation of Lost Pines Master Naturalists members two years ago as a joint project with BCAS. With the golf course now permanently closed there were no golf carts available, so we tracked down each box on foot. It was a lovely day, and there were birds, and we were finished before noon.

Of the Bluebird boxes, we found all but one, and three nests already had eggs. A number of boxes need some repair, mostly loose lids due to rusting of the hinge screws. Notes were taken, and we will return to repair those boxes.

The birding was good in that some bird(s) were always in sight, but the diversity of species was a bit lower than hoped for. The depth of habitat is not great along the golf course, being thin strips of trees and brush between fairways, so this likely contributes to the reduced diversity. Overall, 23 species of birds were observed, including four species of sparrow, Pine Warbler, and, yes, Eastern Bluebird.

Black Vulture	5	
Turkey Vulture	4	
Killdeer		2
Greater Roadrunner	1	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	
Crested Caracara	1	
Eastern Phoebe	3	
Blue Jay		4
American Crow	4	
Carolina Chickadee	4	
Carolina Wren	2	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	
Eastern Bluebird		11

Some GBBC Interim Results

A quick check of current Great Backyard Bird Count 2016 results as of February 15:

Bastrop County	105 species	111 cklists
Travis County	150 species	432 cklists
Williamson County	145 species	201 cklists
Harris County (Houston)	187 species	577 cklists
Galveston County	162 species	122 cklists
Cameron County	209 species	254 cklists
State of Texas	353 species	6879 cklists

Cameron County was first in Texas in number of species. Harris County (so urban?) was third.

The U.S.A lower 48 counted 609 species. New Jersey (thinking of Cape May): 163 species.

New York City 55 species.

Number of persons counting seems to assure higher results in general, as in Austin and Houston areas. Bastrop County improved in number of checklists and outcome this year



Gratifying results observed within this BCAS

Nest Box in Bastrop State Park:

Three new eggs suggests the female Eastern Bluebird is over half-way through laying her normally expected clutch of five eggs. (Photo by Wesley Smith, Master Naturalist)

Northern Mockingbird	8
European Starling	5
Pine Warbler	5
Chipping Sparrow	89
Field Sparrow	4
Vesper Sparrow	3
Savannah Sparrow	5
Northern Cardinal	9
Red-winged Blackbird	20
Meadowlark (sp)	8

Mike Goebel, Field Trips Chair

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Return Service Requested

Calendar

Thursday, March 3, BCAS Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Bastrop City Library.

March 15, BCAS General Meeting, First National Bank, Bastrop, doors open 6:30 p.m. Self-pay dinner beforehand, 5:00 p.m. at Cedars.

Friday, April 1 Chapter Assembly Field Trip, Hornsby Bend, 2:00-4:00 p.m. (see story p. 1)

Saturday: April 2, Chapter Assembly, breakfast, lunch, and dinner: at McKinney Roughs Nature Park (LCRA). (see story p. 1)

April 9-10: Annual NWR Attwater Prairie Chicken Festival, Tours to booming ground and prairie. To see schedule: fws.gov.

April 14-17, Galveston Feather Fest, 100+ workshops, field trips, events, High Island, Bolivar Flats, +. Register: galvestonfeatherfest.com.

April 30, Saturday: Nature Fest, Fisherman's Park, City of Bastrop, with BCAS booth.

Nat'l Audubon Announces New Strategy

CEO David Yarnold revealed in February the ambitious goal and next steps by National Audubon to become a leader in the conservation field for birds and their habitats. We will hear about this development at our state chapter assembly the first and second of April.

Yarnold wrote: "No other conservation organization matches the size, reach, scale, influence, diversity, and creative energy of our chapters, nature centers, volunteer leaders, and partners. Our network has the knowledge and authenticity to care for birds and their habitats in individual communities; it also unites to tackle big challenges facing birds that cannot be solved by any single part of the network alone."

Bird Calls is published by Bastrop County Audubon Society six times a year. 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 to mbranan@austin.rr.com.

Or send by mail: to 216 Schaefer Blvd., Bastrop TX 78602, ph. (512) 303-2734.

Editor, Mary Ellen Branan, PhD.