



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

Letter from the President

Exploring Audubon's Climate Change Site

As we in recent weeks have read of the forest fires in California, Oregon, and Washington, it's sobering to realize that climate change is expected to increase the size and number of wild fires. And let's not forget about the tornadoes, hurricanes, extreme drought, excessive rain, floods, melting glaciers, and warmer oceans.

For a focus on birds, the National Audubon Society produced their Climate Report, an extensive, comprehensive study, last September. Go to www.audubon.org and explore the wealth of information available.

Want to know the 12 Unexpected Effects of Global Warming? Click on News, then click on Climate.

Want to see the effect on Texas? Your favorite bird? Click on Features, click on Birds & Climate Report, scroll down to Explore the Impacts. Search by state or bird name. I took a look at the migratory Rufous Hummingbird and found a 100% decrease in its US winter non-breeding range in 2080 from the 2000 range. The summer range may be disrupted and moved further north.

Click on Birds, click on Priority Birds. See a great photo of stern-looking Bald Eagle. Click on a bird.

Want an interactive range map? Click on Conservation, click on Climate. Find out how climate change threatens the birds we see every day. Browse the interactive range maps.

Some of these indicators seem rather alarming. Our gaining knowledge about climate change is important in combatting the threat. The National Audubon Society has information on what we can do to help conservation efforts.

We hope to see you at our next meeting on September 15 and our next field trip. We have such a good time!

September Program

Focus on Trees

We have been through floods, fires, and droughts. We don't take our trees for granted. Or do we?

Jason Alfaro, Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Bastrop, will discuss conservation issues, status, and plans regarding trees, as they enhance our environment particularly in the City of Bastrop. Alfaro is a Certified Arborist and is also certified in the use of pesticides and herbicides.

The BCAS general meeting on Tuesday, September 15, resumes the schedule of monthly third Tuesday meetings after the brief summer hiatus. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. in the second floor meeting room of the First National Bank Building, Hasler Blvd. at H. 71 W in Bastrop. The doors open at 6:30.

from David Yarnold National CEO:

"Good news!

The sponsors of legislation aimed at weakening the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) appear to have backed off their destructive course.

The change of heart followed a vigorous, hard-hitting campaign by Audubon's Washington, DC office and a barrage of more than 59,230 messages you and other Audubon members sent protesting the proposal. It's a dramatic turn of events and a stunning victory, and we couldn't have done it without you.

But the bad news is, many on Capitol Hill are still waging war on birds and bird conservation.

We can't rest while others plan new attacks on the MBTA and our core conservation laws." (7/1/15)

[There was a scary threat to this crucial bird protection this summer in Congress, mostly led by Duke Energy.]

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



Field Notes

With no current unpublished field trip data to report, I'm featuring my article for a fresh take on one of the many "hot spots" for birding in the County. I wrote the article recently for our new web site under "Local Birding."

—Mike Goebel, *Field Trips Chair*

Bastrop State Park

Description: Bastrop State Park (HOTE 033) is local eBird hotspot, with 224 species of birds having been observed. The 2011 Bastrop Complex Fire burned a large part of the park, and in 2015, heavy rains led to failure of the park

lake dam. But don't be too quick to write this location off.

First, the acres of dead pine trees have created a woodpecker heaven. During the Winter months when

Northern Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are resident, eight species of woodpecker are possible within the park boundaries. Redheaded Woodpeckers have become much more common since the fire, with your best chances at Alum Creek or the last two miles of Park Road 1C before reaching Alum Creek Road.



As you drive through the park, you can see the forest coming back. There are millions of 6-8 foot tall Loblolly Pine and assorted oak trees growing, as well as brush and native plants that have not been commonly seen in the park recently. The insects are returning, and there's room to fly. Yes, flycatchers! Western and Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested and Brown Crested Flycatchers, as well as Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher are common in season. The last two years, a Vermillion Flycatcher has been reported during the Jan. 1st Christmas Bird Count, both occasions near the park entrance. Last year he hunted the small pond on the golf course near the entrance for two months.

Warblers, sparrows, tanagers, raptors (including Peregrine Falcon), owls, vireos, Gray Catbird and many more can be seen and heard in Bastrop State Park. And, if you enjoy watching Chimney Swift, park near the intersection of Park Roads 1A and 1C during the

summer. The large concrete tank on the hill is their summer home.

Travel Directions: The Bastrop State Park main entrance is at the intersection of Highway 21 and Loop 150, near the eastern outskirts of Bastrop. Both Highway 21 and Loop 150 can be accessed from Highway 71 near the city of Bastrop. A daily use fee of \$5/person (as of 2015) is charge for entrance to the park with some age considerations.

A Creative Summer Job

New Host for New BCAS Web Site, Same Address

In June the Board appointed a committee to determine the future of bastropcountyaudubon.org and, once the committee decided on the basic questions, it held several work-intensive sessions during the summer.

Dru Gabrysch headed up our intrepid crew of Michelle Belden, myself, and Priscilla Jarvis, with current web master Steve Slyker. Precipitating the effort was the upcoming expiration of the three-year contract with the present host, Green HostIT, on September 10, 2015. After researching the alternatives, the committee settled enthusiastically on squarespace.com as the new host and planned to launch on September 1.

Once we chose SquareSpace and one of its templates, the work sessions involved sifting the present web site contents to thoroughly update, condense, and sharpen the essentials for a sleeker site, and then editing the material into the trial web site SquareSpace provided Slyker .

It's still rangy and inclusive enough to feel homey. The committee has resolved to have the web site be dynamic and current, by cycling in and substituting new material for "old" every few weeks. For instance, for the slide show of Bastrop birds we would cycle in new photos and birds to replace current photos. The site, by the way, features three slide shows and many photos as a major message-medium.

Dru Gabrysch and Michelle Belden bear the credentials for posting, hence will be **co-web masters**. I will continue to write up and/or edit content for the web site. Also, I will feature web site articles in upcoming *Bird Calls* editions.

We look forward to your comments and suggestions as you visit the site.

Mary Ellen Branan, *Media Editor*



Duly elected Board and Officers to serve until July 2016, l to r, Mike Goebel, Susan Leslie, Mary Ellen Branan, Dru Gabrysch, Alan Jaeger, Priscilla Jarvis, Jackie Fisher, Sandy Simon, Jan Goebel.

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.

Board Change:

Jackie Fisher will serve this year as Education Chair beginning in September, as Susan Leslie becomes a general director. Fisher especially looks forward to working with younger visitors to booth events.

Fisher will continue to serve also as Recording Secretary.

Binocular-training in Smithville event

Susan Leslie, Priscilla Jarvis, and Dru Gabrysch manned the BCAS table at Riverside Park in July to participate in the Smithville Public Library summer educational event. A good crowd was on hand, and they were kept busy directing children in using BCAS' great youth-sized binoculars.

New Members Welcomed

Membership Secretary Dru Gabrysch announces those who have joined since April, 2014.

Josh Crawford
Rob Sutherland
Holly Hallmark
Sharon Haynes
Denise & Steve Ligon
Steve Moredock

"Everyone, whether a new or long-time member, gets better acquainted by coming on a field trip, booth event, or volunteering. Let's talk!"

—Dru Gabrysch, Membership Secretary

Buescher bluebird boxes annual work completed August 19

Judy Turner and Mary Ellen Branan made a third and final visit to the meadow at Buescher State Park to complete the annual maintenance. The five boxes are now numbered and GPS encoded. Audrey Ambrose, on behalf of the Master Naturalists collaboration in the project, mounted two older boxes we had removed earlier from trees onto their own posts ready to set in the ground. Branan and Turner also spaced the five boxes farther apart, hoping for a better result for nests.

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

Return Service Requested

Window Collisions: Birds See the World Differently

Because birds have poor depth perception, they assume a reflection of clouds, sky or vegetation are real and fly toward it. You have heard the “thud” as a bird hits your window. Every U.S. home kills about two birds each year as they fly into windows at high speeds. Up to one billion birds are killed by collisions with glass in the United States every year. *National Geographic* reported **“Window collisions kill more birds than oil spills or pesticides do”** (11/14/14).

Collisions happen most often during spring and fall migration everywhere from large buildings to the suburban front window. Last year’s protest over the acres of glass to be installed in Minnesota’s Viking Stadium did not succeed in altering the construction plan due to the cost of bird-safe glass.

One company, German-based Arnold Glass, has manufactured a glass (Ornilux) which utilizes the fact that while most birds can see ultra-violet (UV) light, humans cannot. They apply UV-reflecting patterns to windows to make it bird safe without limiting the view for humans.

Prevention is thorny because **humans like a good view out their windows**, the main purpose of windows. For the homeowner, the easiest and least expensive way to help is to apply markings with tempera paint or soap. Walker Textures’ product “Aviprotek” offers a way of etching glass.

CALENDAR

Thursday, Sept. 3, Board Meeting, Bastrop Public Library, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 15, General Meeting, Bank Meeting Room, 7:00 p.m.

Sept. 17-20, Rockport-Fulton HummerBird Festival: Kevin Karlson, field trips, backyard tours, banding.

Saturday, Sept. 19, Hornsby Bend Monthly Field Trip, 7:30-11:00 a.m.
Meet at Center Building, expert leader.

Monday, Sept. 28, “What’s Happening with Our Roads?!?” Bastrop Convention Center, 5:-7:00 p.m., TXDOT & City of Bastrop.

Translucent bird tape works because it transmits light. Window screens and awnings help. Placing your feeder as close as three feet or else as far away as 30 feet also helps.

Sources: American Bird Conservancy and *National Geographic*.