



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

May Program

Birds of Summer: Bastrop County



Barn Swallows:
Pam Hohman



Scissor-tailed
Flycatchers:
Mary Ellen
Branan



Summer Tanager: Pam Hohman



Yellow-billed Cuckoo:
Terry Sohl



White-eyed Vireo:
Chipperwood

“Images of the Colorado”-- by Margie Crisp

Artist, photographer, and conservationist Margie Crisp will present an extensive photo-tour of her journey along the Colorado River Tuesday, May 17, at the General Meeting. She created the photographs as she explored and researched over the past several years for a book on the history of Texas' Colorado River. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

The photos capture the river from its headwaters down to Matagorda Bay on the Gulf of Mexico. The book is forthcoming from Texas A&M University Press.

Crisp is a successful artist, known for her paintings, lithographs and linocut prints, charcoal drawings, and graphic designs, most frequently of birds, other wild life, and natural scapes. She designed several of our BCAS tee shirts, and she was the designer of the Hornsby Bend 50th anniversary tee. Her work has been nationally-exhibited and hangs in private and public collections, galleries, and museums.

Crisp is a long-time member of Bastrop County Audubon Society, presently serving as vice president. She has also been editor of *Bird Calls* and won an award from National Audubon for the newsletter while she was editor.

She lives in the Elgin area with husband Bill Montgomery, also a well-known artist, conservationist, BCAS member and former president.

The public is always welcome to attend the meeting and program.

Judy Ing Memorial Planning

An ad hoc committee has met to consider a project in honor of Judy Ing, deceased last May. They have determined criteria for a worthy memorial would include that it be visible and useful and reflect Judy's love of Bastrop and conservation-activism.

One idea under consideration is a chimney swift tower, including a kiosk to display information about the chimney swift. The committee has obtained the book by Paul and Georgan Kyle covering design and construction of towers. The committee will explore location requirements and feasibility with the City of Bastrop or alternatives. The project requires the commitment of the chapter to maintain the structure through the years, with an annual cleaning and upkeep.

The committee would welcome any other project suggestions.

Book Review**John Muir's *The Mountains of California***

Okay, it's not a new book. But it's a classic.

Originally published in 1894, the copy I have is a re-issue by Dorset Press, copyright 1988. The book is available, new and used, at your favorite sources.



Muir's book belongs to the short-list of the must-read of American nature-writing exemplified famously by Henry David Thoreau. Muir's breadth and length, however, is somewhat larger than *Walden Pond*. He composed the book from his 70 journals covering ten years of exploring the Sierra Nevada Range in California. What he witnessed in the 1870's and '80's was such wilderness, which he fought to preserve as a pioneer conservationist, that we can no longer witness, except as his readers. Thus the book is valuable also as history and geography, dwelling on wind and storm, botany and bees. And one remarkable bird. The edition includes the myriad photographs and illustrations of the first publication.

On forests, moraines, and glaciers, he writes: "All the forests of The Sierra are growing upon moraines. But moraines vanish like the glaciers that make them. Every storm that falls upon them wastes them, cutting gaps, disintegrating boulders, and carrying away their decaying material into new formations. . . ."

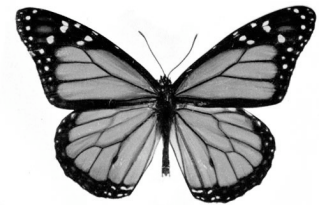
Chapter names include: The Snow, The Passes, The Glacier Meadows, The Forests, The Wild Sheep, The Bee Pastures.

The "Water-Ouzel" gets a chapter on its own, a bird I'd never heard of--much less seen. The present name for it is American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*). "The waterfalls of the Sierra are frequented by only one bird. . . , a singularly joyous and lovable little fellow. . . . No can[y]on is too cold for this little bird, none too lonely, provided it be rich in falling water."

"The Ouzel alone of all birds dares to enter a white torrent. And though strictly terrestrial in structure, no other is so inseparably related to water, not even the duck, or the bold ocean albatross, or the stormy-petrel." Reading elsewhere about the Dipper, I learned that they have a transparent extra eyelid so they can see under water, a membrane which closes the nostrils, extra oil, and an extra layer of down for warmth in cold water. He lives year-round in the western mountains of North America, perks up his tail like a wren, and has a melodious song.

This book can be your trip to Old California and the High Sierras this summer.

The Editor

**BCAS Education Report****Migrating Fifth-Graders**

This year, in Bastrop County most fifth-graders will migrate--1,195 in four school districts, plus more in private and home schools. No, don't panic. They are not leaving the nest early. These students will re-enact some of the dangers and hardships faced by migrating creatures while remaining in the safety of their classrooms.

The re-enactment is a simple game in which each student strives to get all the way across the classroom--a successful migration. Each student has randomly assigned cards that are marked with various conditions. In the bird migration, the student hopes for cards marked "wetland" or "indoor-only cat." A sea turtle student wants the "enforced drag net treaty" or "unlit beaches" card, for example, and "Monarch butterflies" hope for "habitat protection" and "no garden pesticides" cards. As each potentially dangerous situation is encountered, students hear a brief oral explanation of actions humans can take to change the situation.

The card topics and the explanations are drawn from the 2010-2011 National Audubon Classroom Adventures kit, prepared for grades 3-5. The kit topic for this year is "Wildlife on the Move." The highlights of each kit are the "Adventures," a glossy poster that reverses to information and pencil activities. There is one for each of the three covered migration topics -- birds, butterflies, and sea animals.

Susan Leslie, the Education Chairperson, will be in classrooms in May, and again in September, helping science teachers to present the migration game and follow-up activities.

BCAS has purchased enough "Adventures" copies for each student in the county. These materials reinforce the information shared in the classroom exercise. Sending these materials home achieves a secondary goal for BCAS: to acquaint families with the Audubon name and URL. We want families to remember "Audubon" and "BCAS" as go-to links for wildlife and conservation information. Many young families today don't even know that organizations such as "Audubon" exist. "Migrating Fifth-Graders" hopes to change that, one critter, oops, one student, at a time.

Susan Leslie, Education Chair





Field Trip Reports

4/14/11: Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, San Antonio--A pleasant drive along I-10 and Loop 410 brought us to the gate and the landscaped 1910 cottage headquarters, where we obtained a map and bird list for a self-guided tour of the Lake, polders, and wetlands of the huge 1200 acre site. The sky remained overcast throughout our late-morning visit, keeping us comfortable on a possibly warmish South Texas spring day. The target birds, Baltimore Orioles and Yellow-headed Blackbirds, eluded us. Most numerous were American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts.

One bird which kept us speculating for quite a while turned out to be a Cave Swallow, resting in a tree for 20 minutes instead of foraging on the wing. A Green Kingfisher was a life bird for Priscilla.

Other species noted:\

Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe, Eared Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret, White-faced Ibis, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Rock Pigeon, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, American Crow, Northern Mockingbird, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

We also noted a huge hump-backed Texas Tortoise.

The participants were Priscilla Jarvis, Mary Ellen Branan, Cheryl and Gerald Cato, and Dotty Pledge, former BCAS member, now S.A. resident. **Reported by Mary Ellen Branan**

4/16/11: San Antonio Audubon Society in Bastrop County: We had a great trip around Bastrop County today with local birder, Stan Wellso. Highlights included multiple Upland Sandpipers and a large number of Yellow-headed Blackbirds in a flock of Brown-headed Cowbirds.

A Pileated Woodpecker spent an extended period of time in plain view at the top of a tree and was a life bird for one and a state bird for another. We ended the day with 51 species plus an unidentified hummingbird and a raptor that whose identity we couldn't agree on. Stan, an entomologist, graciously took us to his home to see his remarkable collection of beetles.

SAAS Field trip participants: Gail & Terry Nickel, Mariann Golden, Tim Katafias, Bill Zwartjes, Jerry Moulder, Chris Bailey, Sandi Wheeler, Barbara Lapp, Gloria Goffinet and Stan Wellso (BCAS), Leader.

Species List:

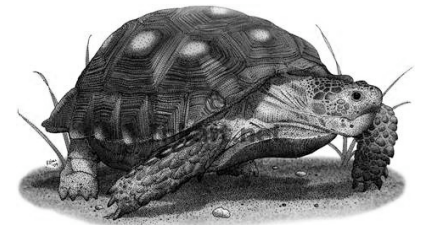
Northern Shoveler	2
Pied-billed Grebe	1
Great Blue Heron	2
Little Blue Heron	1
Cattle Egret	4
Black Vulture	7
Turkey Vulture	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	4
Crested Caracara	5
American Kestrel	3
Killdeer	3
Spotted Sandpiper	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	1
Upland Sandpiper	31
Rock Pigeon	3
Eurasian Collared-Dove	3
Mourning Dove	8
Inca Dove	1
Greater Roadrunner	1
hummingbird sp.	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3
Downy Woodpecker	1
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	8
White-eyed Vireo	5
Red-eyed Vireo	1
Blue Jay	2
American Crow	6
Purple Martin	5
Barn Swallow	6
Carolina Chickadee	2
Tufted Titmouse	1
Carolina Wren	2
Bewick's Wren	1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1
Eastern Bluebird	6
Northern Mockingbird	3
Cedar Waxwing	25
Nashville Warbler	2
Chipping Sparrow	5
Lark Sparrow	3
Savannah Sparrow	7
Lincoln's Sparrow	4
White-crowned Sparrow	6
Summer Tanager	1
Northern Cardinal	12
Red-winged Blackbird	1
Eastern Meadowlark	8

Yellow-headed Blackbird	244
Great-tailed Grackle	20
Brown-headed Cowbird	203
Eur. Starling	3
Orchard Oriole	1
House Finch	1
House Sparrow	9

Reported by Sandi Wheeler

Bird Calls is published seven times per year September through June by the Bastrop County Audubon Society (BCAS). It is edited and produced by Mary Ellen Branan, PhD. We invite letters, articles, poems, news tips, calendar items, reviews, and photos by mail or email. Deadline for submissions is the first of the month. *Birds Calls* is a membership benefit.

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Texas Tortoise



Field Trippers at Mitchell Lake

B.C.A.S
c/o Priscilla Jarvis
783 Lower Elgin Road
Elgin TX 78621

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

May Calendar

May 7, Monthly Kayaking to Monitor Riparian Ecology, Saturday. Meet at Hornsby Bend CER 8:00 a.m. Info at cgmorris@lash.net

May 10, Free Lecture for Camping Enthusiasts: "US Nat'l Parks & Hostel Hopping." Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 p.m., 601 N. Lamar, Austin REI Store Reserve a seat at rei.com.

May 11, Registration for Friends of Lost Pines SP Swim Program, Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m.

May 14, Field Trip with Stan Wellso, Bastrop Hot Spots. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Bank Parking Lot, Bastrop.

May 15, Board Meeting, Sunday, 4:00 p.m., 189 Wailupe Circle, Bastrop. With potluck dinner.

May 17, BCAS General Meeting, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., First Natl Bank, Bastrop, 2nd floor.

May 24, Hornsby Bend Field Trip with Travis Audubon. All levels welcome. 7:30 a.m.

May Refreshments by

Kathy Mazac &
Kat Ellisor



Join or Renew Annual Membership

Benefits include Bird Calls, field trips, social events, continuing education, public influence, good feelings and fun. Contact Membership Chair: Priscilla Jarvis at (512) 281-2762. Dues are used to support local conservation and education concerning bird and other wild life, habitats, and ecology. You may join at our web site or at any meeting. Please consider the Supporting Membership category. www.bastropcountyaudubon.org

Individual	\$20
Family	\$35
Supporting	\$75