



# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

## Annual Meeting Election Results: Jarvis President

The new board for FY 2014-16 was elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting on May 20. A by-law restricting re-election of officers was waived in order to re-elect Alan Jaeger as Treasurer.

President: Priscilla Jarvis  
 Vice President: Mike Goebel  
 Recording Secretary: Jackie Fisher  
 Membership Secretary: Dru Gabrysch  
 Treasurer: Alan Jaeger  
 Program Chair: Jan Goebel  
 Education Chair: Susan Leslie  
 Media/Editor: Mary Ellen Branan  
 Field Trips Chair: Mike Goebel  
 Hospitality Chair: Left vacant  
 General Directors: Roy Smallwood  
 Additional director position left vacant.  
**BCAS does not meet in July and August.**

### Resolution of Appreciation

**Whereas: Susan Leslie, Our President for the term 2012-2014, traveled at her own expense to attend the National Convention of the National Audubon Society in Oregon last summer where she gained distinction and recognition for BCAS, the smallest chapter represented;**  
**Whereas she led us with enthusiasm and perseverance to be co-host and local leader for the State Assembly of Chapters Feb. 29-March 2, by which once again the chapter earned distinction and recognition among its peers;**  
**Whereas she served her position loyally and faithfully throughout her tenure, leaving the chapter, as always her evident wish, better off than when her tenure began;**  
**The Board resolved at its meeting on June 2, 2014, to declare this Resolution of Appreciation to a candid world.**

**Thank you, Susan.**

### June Program

#### *Bill Brooks' latest "Snakes Alive!"*

Ending this year's programs with a hiss, herpetologist Bill Brooks will bring some of his collection of live snakes for an expert show-and-tell.

**And especially for this program, since school will be out, we're urging everyone to bring a young person along to the meeting and program.**

Brooks has been giving such presentations for over 40 years.

Besides being the retiring BCAS education chair, he is a Lost Pines Master Naturalist and a retired staffer from UT. He has "lived in the Bastrop area for 14 years and in central Texas my whole life."

Especially well-known for his expertise on the Texas horned lizard, he has just returned from a lizard survey in the Terlingua area and the Sanderson Snake Days celebration.

The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 17, at the First National Bank in Bastrop, the second floor meeting room. Refreshments will be served. The meeting is open to the public.

#### *BCAS Board Approves New Web Master*

Bastropian Steve Slyker will start working right away to restore activity on the site at [bastropcountyaudubon.org](http://bastropcountyaudubon.org). The site will continue with its present features (birding hotspots, current officers, photo gallery, Bird Calls newsletter archives, PayPal, up-to-date news, etc.) for the present. Our site is linked from the Bastrop Visitors Center, Master Naturalists, and other sites.

Slyker is well-versed in all facets of computer technology and graphics.

The site will be up and running soon. Check it out! And we're still on Face Book, too.

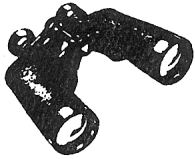


Earth Share

One environment One simple  
way to care for it.

[www.earthshare-texas.org](http://www.earthshare-texas.org)

BCAS received \$75 recently  
through Earthshare and Audubon Texas. Thanks.



## Field Trip Report

BCAS with Pines & Prairies Land Trust,  
May 10, 2014, 7:15 - 10:30 a.m.

Site: Yegua Knobbs Preserve, Lee & Bastrop Counties

Weather: 61-75 degrees, clear changing to bright cloudiness, calm

Observers: Travis Brown, Roy Smallwood, Hugh Brown, Ian Layton, Carroll Moore,

[The report is a compendium of observer reports.]

Total 39 species observed or heard:

Wood Duck 2  
Black-bellied Whistling Duck  
Great Egret 2  
Cattle Egret  
Great Blue Heron  
Wild Turkey  
Black Vulture 1  
Turkey Vulture 2  
Red-shouldered Hawk 2  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Crested Caracara  
Chimney Swift  
Red-winged Blackbird 1  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
White-winged Dove 2  
Mourning Dove 2  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo 2  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1  
Downy Woodpecker 1  
Pileated Woodpecker 1  
Crested Caracara 2  
Great Crested Flycatcher 1  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 4  
Red-eyed Vireo  
White-eyed Vireo 2  
American Crow 2  
Carolina Chickadee 2  
Tufted Titmouse 3  
Carolina Wren 2  
Northern Mockingbird  
Cedar Waxwing 26  
Northern Parula  
Common Yellowthroat 1  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Yellow Warbler 2  
Pine Warbler 1  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Summer Tanager 1  
Northern Cardinal 5  
Painted Bunting 6  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird

## BCAS Nest Boxes in Both State Parks in Spring Survey

Yes, bluebirds like our new boxes installed last year.

BCAS maintains 25 nest boxes old and new in the two parks.  
Photo by Roy Smallwood



### Letter from the President

*As I wrote this last letter,*

I found myself looking 'way, 'way back...a lot of things have changed since I came here in 1979. Back then, we had no animal control, no septic tank red tape, no Quaker or Unitarian fellowships, no Master Naturalists, no string quartets, and birders found company at Travis Audubon. Well, today you still have to drive to Austin for some activities, and county services and regulations are booming - but we have a unique, home-grown Audubon chapter right on our doorstep!

BCAS members and friends continue to include world-class scientists, authors and environmentalists, hard-working long-timers, and active new members. In the past two years we have added a new partner (TreeFolks) to amplify our conservation efforts, presented "small chapter" concerns at the National Convention, and hosted the first state-wide convention in 15 years.

Although the 2011 fire cost us many active members, we continue to provide programs and field trips that not only increase our pleasure in wildlife but maintain our ties with local conservation activities. And those were our initial goals, over 30 years ago! Our Board for the next two years is a mix of new members and long-time supporters, mirroring BCAS: a constant but ever-changing part of the good life in Bastrop County.

*Susan (Guinn) Leslie*

## 2014 Whooping Crane Spring Migration News: Aransas NWR

*from Wade Harrell, U.S. Whooping Crane Recovery Coordinator, as of April 24:*

“Whooping crane migration is well underway. We estimate that less than 20% of the population is still on the Texas coast wintering area and that number should quickly dwindle over the next week or so. A significant portion of the population appears to have made it across the border into Canada. Right now we have whooping cranes spread out from the wintering grounds nearly to the breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park. Though the cranes seem to leave in mass, they actually have staggered departures and leave in small groups. This is important as it ensures survival of the species. If they were to all leave together and encountered bad weather or some other catastrophic event, it could put the whole population in jeopardy.

**“This will be the final Whooping Crane Update for the season.”**

“We have had a few reports of whooping cranes spotted in migration, including observations from Tarrant and Johnson counties in North Texas. While we didn’t have nearly as many whooping cranes use inland sites this winter, Texas Whooper Watch still provided vital information during both fall and spring migration.

“As of Sunday, April 21, four of the marked birds that we are actively receiving data on were still on the coast. Of those in migration, 12 were in Saskatchewan, eight in the Dakotas, four in Nebraska, two in Oklahoma and one in Texas. Based on this information and other observations, it is likely that more than 80% of the birds in the Aransas/Wood Buffalo population are currently migrating north.

### “Documented Mortalities During Winter 2013-2014:

This season we documented four whooping crane mortalities on and around Aransas NWR. The first mortality was an injured subadult that we captured and transported to the San Antonio Zoo for treatment. Unfortunately that bird died 30 days into treatment. We collected an unmarked adult bird at a waterhole on the refuge, and the necropsy identified bobcat predation as the likely cause of death. Two additional marked birds died in February but, because carcasses were not located (only radios), necropsies could not be conducted. Thus cause of death is unknown but predation is suspected.”

He reports a significant impact from the Houston Ship Channel “oil spill on the Matagorda Island Unit of Aransas NWR and home to a large portion of the wintering whooping crane population -- and a number of other threatened and endangered species. Fortunately for the whooping cranes the oil did not make it through any of the Gulf passes or into the coastal marsh habitat used by whooping cranes. The oil that did hit was on the Gulf-side beach of Matagorda Island below the dunes.”



Photo by Michelle Belden

## Controversial Offshore Wind Farm

Some of us heard the concerns of Texas Audubon about the proposed huge wind farm at the Assembly on March 2.

Exec Bryan Trusty reported May 29: “Last week, millions of migratory birds that pass over south Texas each year caught a break when Baryonyx Corporation withdrew its permit applications for the GOWind offshore wind farm project in the Lower Laguna Madre region.”

Audubon Texas’ position: “South Texas is one of the busiest migratory superhighways in the world, with millions of long-distance avian travelers in the fall trekking from the arctic in Canada, Alaska and western Russia, down throughout Central and South America, and back again in the spring. The Laguna Madre is one of only six hypersaline bays in the world, and supports critical habitat for over 300 species of birds and their food supply. This region hosts 80% of the world’s wintering Redhead Duck population and can, in some years, host 50% of the world’s breeding population of Reddish Egret, a colonial water bird species of growing concern. Within the last several years, extensive wind farms have been developed on private lands just inland of the Laguna Madre. An off-shore wind farm in this region would sandwich some of the most critical migratory and wintering shorebird, waterfowl, and colonial water bird habitat in the world between two wind farms, causing mortality, disturbance, and displacement to millions of birds, and destroying pristine and protected habitat with transmission infrastructure. These cumulative effects could have broad-reaching ecological impacts.”

***Bird Calls*** is published September through June by the Bastrop County Audubon Society, edited by Mary Ellen Branan, PhD.

We invite letters, articles, news tips, book and event reviews, and photos. Deadline for the pending issue is noon the last day of the preceding month.

Send to [mbranan@austin.rr.com](mailto:mbranan@austin.rr.com). Ph. (512) 303 2734.

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*Return Service Requested*

### *Summer Calendar*

June 14 & July 12, Saturdays, 9-12:30: "Learn to Fish" events, Bastrop S. P., Hands on for ages 5 and up; all equipment provided. Go to: [texasstateparks.org/gofish](http://texasstateparks.org/gofish).

June 21 & July 19: "Learn to Fish," Buescher S.P. Take home prizes and memories. Bill Brooks in charge.

Tuesday, June 17: BCAS General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Meeting Room, First Nat'l Bank, Bastrop. Doors open 6:30.

Saturday, June 21: Hornsby Bend free monthly birding field trip departs from the parking lot at 7:30 a.m., ends by 11:00. The leader always is a gifted birder who knows Hornsby Bend well, so you are bound to get a promised 50 species minimum and explore new parts of Hornsby Bend. For more information: [coordinator@hornsbybend.org](mailto:coordinator@hornsbybend.org) or 512-972-1960.

July 30-August 2; 23rd Annual Southwest Wings Birding Festival, Sierra Vista, AZ. Field trips, exhibits, etc. [swwings2014.org](http://swwings2014.org).

Tuesday, Sept. 16, BCAS regular meetings resume.

### **Climate: Carbon Crackdown**

"By June, the Obama Administration plans to put forward rules to limit carbon dioxide emissions from the nation's 1,600 existing coal-and gas-fired plants."

"These rules may also be President Obama's last chance to fulfill a key promise made in Copenhagen in 2009—to cut U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. To date the EPA has tightened fuel economy rules for vehicles and set strict limits on carbon pollution from future power plants. Energy emissions have actually fallen nearly 12 percent since 2005, due largely to the economic downturn. But as the economy has rebounded, emissions are rising again."

*Audubon*, January-February 2014

### **So long—it's been good to know you, Roy Smallwood**

An outstanding BCAS member, leader, and birder, we enjoyed his energy and creativity the last too-few years. Burned out, then rebuilding on Kaanapali Road, Pam and Roy now are removing back to Waco. He inspired the forest restoration grant we received last year, procured the binoculars we bought for our youth programs, led field trips, rain or shine, supplied photos, chaired programs, wrote articles. . . .

(You can still enjoy his blog at [kingbirdfeeders.blogspot.com](http://kingbirdfeeders.blogspot.com).)