



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

President's Letter

BCAS Prez Leslie Attends Nat'l Audubon Convention

Executive Director Yarnold's Remarks:

"Audubon's first national convention in 15 years was a resounding success. More than 500 leaders from across Audubon came together to celebrate our achievements and our network and to learn from like-minded conservation leaders.

One hundred and forty two chapter leaders attended from across the flyways. We hosted 127 Audubon staff members from 27 states, as well as sponsors, donors and international partners. We announced the big new partnership with Esri -- a mapping software company that provides seat licenses to all of our chapters and international partners -- and we signed up 70 new chapters at the convention alone.

We tackled some difficult topics and we all came away energized and empowered to take on our next big challenges." *David Yarnold, Executive Director,*

Dear BCAS members, it's another autumn and a new birding year! This means new field trips, exciting speakers, and new community projects. This year, as an outcome of our participation at the (first held in 15 years) National Audubon Convention, we will be partnering with other Texas Chapters to increase our effectiveness, visibility, and FUN !!

While in the Northwest I saw some of my back-yard buddies --Cattle Egrets, Green Herons, Red-tailed Hawks, and Mourning Doves -- and some I had not seen in years: big sassy robins everywhere, Rufous and Anna's Hummingbirds dive-bombing picnic plates, Western, Glaucous, and hybrid Gulls, Caspian Terns, and Lesser Goldfinches. And lots more -- and I wasn't even trying!

One of the major sessions at the Convention was spent on the "flyways concept" for re-organizing Audubon. This very simple but very powerful idea, from Jess Morton, says that Audubon is basically about birds, not people -- so the boundaries for our regional groupings should follow bird flyways, not human political state lines and should be flexible. Thus California is in the Pacific Flyway, because it shares so many sea bird issues with its Pacific neighbors -- but some Southern California chapters are partnering with their Arizona counterparts to work on habitat issues, such as Western Rivers, common *Continued Nat'l Convention p. 2*

Mystery Bird: Can you identify this duck?

Photo: R. Smallwood

September Program

Getting Us Ready for Area's Wintering Waterfowl

Jean Martin of Austin will give a presentation on Central Texas waterfowl at the Bastrop County Audubon Society meeting on September 17 at 7:00 p.m. Jean has long been interested in birds and nature, but began in earnest to study and learn to identify birds over 20 years ago.

BCAS meets at the First National Bank Building on Hasler Blvd. in Bastrop, second floor meeting room.

A naturalist-educator of great expertise, Martin will provide an overview of waterfowl but focus primarily on the ducks, grebes and mergansers found in this area each winter, with tips on identifying females of the more common species. She will include also a discussion on some of the irregular visitors to our lakes.

In the early to mid-1990s Jean served on the board of Travis Audubon Society and chaired the Field Trips Committee and after that, the Education Committee, where she began to organize birding classes. Beginning birding was the first class offered by Travis Audubon and it was soon followed by classes focusing on the identification of various families of birds, such as waterfowl, sparrows, warblers, shorebirds, etc. Jean taught the beginning birding class for 10 ½ years and has taught the waterfowl class for 11 years.

Nat'l Convention, continued

to the entire region. Texas is in the Central Flyway, which encompasses the 14 states circled by Idaho to North Dakota to Texas to Nevada, and includes 65 critical bird species. However, some projects, such as Upper Gulf Coast Wetlands Restoration, will require that Texas and Louisiana chapters work together; these projects will require that the Mississippi and Central Flyways groups work together.

All the Central Flyways representatives met for a long session on our common needs and goals. We agreed that each state needed to have a state-wide meeting in the next year to review our projects, discuss where we can help each other, and make the best use of our State offices. No substitute for face-time, even in the digital age! Out of this the Texas delegates agreed to meet early next spring, in "a Central location" which will be Bastrop County, and BCAS committed to co-host the meeting (after polling the Board of Directors by email). Our co-host, should they choose to participate, will be Travis Audubon, and Texas State Audubon will absorb expenses.

We will need members to set up field trips, coordinate with the C of C to showcase our town, show off our restoration efforts and Swift tower, and whatever else you all believe should go into a mini-convention. Host a dinner? Prepare a hand-out? Offer youth activities to let local teenagers partner with visitors? Start thinking!

An interesting fact was that NONE of the Central Flyways chapters at the convention have paid staff at the chapter level: like us, it is all accomplished with volunteers. That being said, I learned that we have great resources at the State level for media services, website help, brochures assistance, and other how-to help.

Although we were the smallest chapter represented, I learned that our goals and problems were about the same as very large chapters: how to be effective advocates for wildlife, how to attract more and younger members, how to partner with other wildlife organizations to increase our mutual visibility, and how to keep sight of the pure pleasure in bird-watching! I will be glad to go over the many other interesting things I learned with you, individually and as a group, and will see you at the September meeting. Until then, go outdoors!

Susan Leslie, President



Field Trip Report

~ May 15, 2013

The BCAS' May Field trip took us to Richard Moya Park and McKinney Falls State Park. From 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, the weather was in the 70's, cloudy with slight, scattered rain. We identified 35 species including several Summer Tanagers, Great Crested Flycatchers, a Ruby Throated Hummingbird, and Eastern Bluebirds. Raptors and their allies were represented by two Crested Caracara and a lone Red-shouldered Hawk. The best bird of the day was a Ladder-back Woodpecker located after crossing the old iron bridge at Moya Park.

Participating on the trip were Mary Ellen Branan, Joan Barton, Priscilla Jarvis, and Roy Smallwood.

Black Bellied Whistling Duck 1
Cattle Egrets 8
Turkey Vulture 5
Black Vulture 14
Red Shouldered Hawk 1
Crested Caracara 2
Rock Pigeons 4
Mourning Dove 11
White Winged Dove 12
Yellow Billed Cuckoo 1, h
Ruby Throated Hummingbird 1
Red Bellied Woodpecker 2
Ladder-back Woodpecker 1
Empidonax sp.—possibly Acadian 1
Great Crested Flycatcher 1
Western Kingbird 3
Scissortail Flycatcher 3
White Eyed Vireo 3, h
American Crow 3
Barn Swallow 1
Cliff Swallow 6
Tufted Titmouse 1
Carolina Chickadee 7
Carolina Wren 4
Eastern Bluebirds 5
Northern Mockingbird 5
European Starling 4
Pine Warbler 1
Summer Tanagers 4
Northern Cardinals X
Painted Bunting 3
Great Tailed Grackle 100
Brown headed Cowbird 3
House Finch 5
House Sparrow 5

Roy Smallwood, Field Trips Chair

Beautiful Scenery

← Branan, Barton, an Jarvis at the Falls

Grant Money Received

In May Bastrop County Audubon Society received approval of the grant proposal submitted in January with a check for \$1,000 from Audubon Foundation of Texas.

Roy Smallwood originated the idea and wrote up the grant proposal titled "Funding the Replacement and Reforestation of the Lost Pines Area." BCAS received the grant among the several which are awarded to state chapters each year.

The general concept is that one thousand seedlings can be paid for by BCAS at \$1 each of the native loblolly pines for some Bastrop State Park devastated areas.

The Board will be deliberating and deciding on the exact processing of the project, collaborating with a tree nursery and the state park, etc., determining where and when.

The award letter stated, "We are glad we are able to assist your chapter to further the goals of education and conservation through your worthwhile and exciting project."

BOARD CHANGES

At the year's final board meeting in June, 2013, the board recognized the resignation of Judy Turner, Director, who served as web master for two years, and appointed to the board Toni Schweitzer as a director. Schweitzer is the member who has been organizing refreshments at all our meetings in FY 2012-13. Roy Smallwood has moved to field trips chair, which now leaves programs chair vacant. Smallwood is also BCAS vice president. The office of recording secretary remains vacant.

Web Site Interrupted

BCAS Board shelved finalizing the update of the BCAS website for the summer. Hence, the site at bastropcountyaudubon.org has been "frozen." Discussion involves possibly hiring a designer and a professional to mind the web site at a monthly fee and whether or not we would continue to have a BCAS member web master to prepare the inputs, etc. The matter is a priority for the Board at this time.

By-laws Proposal Due for Membership Vote

The board proposes the following language in the by-laws to be voted on at the September meeting. The proposal was presented to the membership to conform to the required minimum 30 days' notice in June, 2013:

Article 2, Section 1: The minimum number of regular meetings of members shall be five, inclusive of September and May.

Article 2, Section 2: An annual meeting shall be held in May each year.

BCAS Membership Application/ Renewal

- Individual \$20
- Family \$35
- Supporting \$75
- Youth \$10

Please make checks payable to:
Bastrop County Audubon Society
Send to: Alan Jaeger, Treasurer
117 Kaelepulu Dr.
Bastrop TX 78602

Or join with PayPal at:
bastropcountyaudubon.org



Earth Share

One environment
One simple way to care for it.
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BirdCalls, published September through June by the Bastrop County Audubon Society, is edited and produced by Mary Ellen Branan, PhD. We invite letters, articles, poems, news tips, calendar items, book or event reviews, and photos by mail or email. Deadline for submissions is by noon the last day of the preceding month. Ph.: (512) 303-2734. Email: editor@bastropaudubon.org

Note: The editor is seeking an assistant interested in desktop publishing, photography, etc., to help in the production of the newsletter, posters, and other media.

More on National Convention from Dir. Joy Hester

"The Convention, held July 12-15 at the Skamania Lodge in the spectacularly beautiful Columbia River Valley in Oregon, was kicked off with an opening reception on Friday evening that included a performance of traditional Native American dance by members of the Yakama Nation.



"On Saturday and Sunday there were five categories of concurrent sessions that ran 90 minutes each. Convention attendees could pick from a wide selection of topics that ranged from nuts-and-bolts sessions on topics such as social media and GIS mapping, to conservation strategies under the Audubon strategic plan initiatives. I attended sessions about use of social media by chapters, wind energy issues, international alliances, and large-scale land conservation alliances, among others, all with a focus on how those issues affect chapters.

"The grand finale of the Central Flyway Session was presentation of the William Dutcher Award (a historic Audubon award that recognizes individuals who've made outstanding contributions to conservation and engagement in their chapter, center, state, region, or flyway), to two very deserving recipients in the Central Flyway: **Patsy Inglet from Bexar County Audubon Society for her outstanding work as a volunteer environmental educator for Audubon Texas and Bexar County Audubon**, and Jo Evans, Water Chair for Audubon Rockies, who has a long history of volunteer service to Audubon on water issues and is author of the recently published Audubon Rockies Water Handbook."

---Joy Hester, Regional Director,
Central Flyway-South

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

Return Service Requested



Buff-bellied Hummingbird

Calendar

September 5, Thursday, BCAS Board Meeting, Bastrop Public Library
6:30 p.m. Members welcome.

September 12-15: 25th Annual Hummerbird Celebraton, Rockport-Fulton.

September 17, Tuesday, General Meeting,
See page 1.

Reminder!

All who would aid hummingbirds on their way south through September and beyond, adhere strictly to this recipe:

Mix 4 parts water and 1 part white granulated sugar. Put in pot and bring to a boil. Cool. Keep excess in refrigerator. Fill hummingbird feeder and hang outside. Preferably not in the sun.

Do not use red or other food coloring. Do not use honey, brown or natural sugar....just plain white sugar.

The following sonnet recounts an event during a BCAS field trip on 12/08/08.

The Rescue

We didn't know how long, poor plucky bird,
he'd dived and swum, swum and dived beneath,
trying to fool and lose in the mud he stirred
the noxious grasp of tangled weed or teeth.

He'd popped up as all grebes we know
and, dragging yellow nylon, somersaulted,
poof! yards from us and out of sight below.
Dumbfounded, we knew he was exhausted

or nearly so. We commandeered a kayak
and reached out with an oar to spear the net,
poor bird even more taken aback
and struggling against us. We cut him out to set

him free, the ingrate, splashing to go his way,
abandoning us to a better day.

*by Mary Ellen Branan,
from The Snowy Egret, Spring/Autumn 2013*