



Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Bastrop County Audubon Society

Web Site Report

The BCAS web site is restored to active status and ready for your use and enjoyment. The new web master Steve Slyker and Yours Truly worked during the summer to update and amend content at bastropcountyaudubon.org. Now that we have two Christmas Bird Counts, for example, we needed especially to add reports for its initial first two years for the Lost Pines CBC. Chapter history in the "About Us" section had pretty much dwindled at the turn of the century. Now the history is up to the present and shows how much we have achieved through the years.

The web site includes a photo gallery of members' bird photography displayed by member name. We added some new works there this summer and remind you to send your choice photos right along to webmaster@bastropcountyaudubon.org. Looking good!

You might want to consult the web site regularly for current news bulletins between Bird Calls newsletters. You can also, as before, call up past Bird Calls as needed. If you are researching bird sightings, the field reports in Bird Calls give all the details.

The webmaster and I welcome any ideas for pages we haven't thought of for the BCAS web site. I will describe other offerings of the web site in future newsletters.

Mary Ellen Branan, Editor

Audubon's 2015 "Songbirds" Calendar Available Now

The reliably beautiful National Audubon annual calendar can be ordered directly from the publisher at a discounted cost. Contact stephanie@workman.com.

Inside

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- Letter from President Priscilla Jarvis
- Unexpected Solar Farms Peril
- CC Hawk Watch

September Program

County Judge on urgent Colorado River issue



Paul Pape

Bastrop County Judge Paul Pape comes to Bastrop County Audubon's September meeting to inform us of the urgent issue facing us in regard to water in the Colorado River and the formation in July of the Lower Colorado River Basin Coalition, where he is on the executive committee.

Judge Pape has been speaking and writing extensively to define the issue and strengthen the Coalition formed in June. It was formed to push back against Highland Lakes strong holders who have been recommending to LCRA and subsequently to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality that the new Water Management Plan should build up lake levels above Longhorn Dam mainly to enhance recreational and economic assurance above that dam.

BCAS meets on third Tuesdays each month (except July and August) in the Meeting Room of First National Bank in Bastrop, Hasler Blvd. at Hwy 71, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:30.

Pape wrote in the *Bastrop Advertiser* June 14, "The flow of fresh water down the Colorado breathes life into places like Webberville, Bastrop, Smithville, La Grange, Columbus, Eagle Lake, Garwood, Wharton, Bay City and finally, Matagorda Bay. It is this life that raising the trigger levels for releases will harm."

In any continued drought, such as the present one, raising the trigger level kills the Texas rice industry downstream. BCAS members who attended the Audubon State Assembly March 2, were alerted to the plight of rice farmers.

Members and the public are welcome to the meeting and program. Refreshments will be served.

The Minnesota Vikings' stadium

under construction intends to use glass which is not adequately visible to migrating birds. The structure includes over 200,000 square feet of the unsafe glass. Builders so far have resisted requests to upgrade to a safer, slightly more expensive product. National Audubon CEO David Yarnold is urging urgent support of Minnesota Audubon's public campaign to alter the specified glass.

"The site of the stadium is less than a mile from the Mississippi River, along which tens of millions of birds fly every year between their breeding and wintering grounds," said Yarnold in an emessage July 25.

The news report from Minnesota Audubon online on **August 26** was the headline: "Petition for Bird-Safe Glass on Vikings Stadium Signed by 76,000." The issue is not yet resolved.

Prevent window collisions at home by strategic feeder placement

The best way to help prevent fatal collisions at your own home is to place your bird feeder within 3 feet or more than 30 feet away from windows. Placing feeders within 3 feet of windows ensures that birds do not have much room to gain speed, reducing the number of fatal collisions, and at 30 feet away, birds will not mistake the glass.

Bastrop Chamber Leadership

The local Bastrop Chamber of Commerce said goodbye to Susan Wendel in August and announced the new director Becki Womble would begin August 25. Wendel served 12 years. Bastrop County Audubon Society is a Chamber non-profit member. Womble has recently been CEO in Lockhart and has advanced study in chamber management.

Monthly Bird Survey:

Since 1999, the monthly Bird Survey at Hornsby Bend has taken place at 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the 2nd Saturday of the month. Everyone meets in the Center for Environmental Research at 7:00 for the morning survey [Coffee and donuts at 6:30] and 4 p.m. for the afternoon survey. All levels of birders are welcome - the survey is a great way to improve skills since they form teams matching experienced and novice birders. In the morning, teams count birds in different areas of the Hornsby Bend facility. Everyone meets again around 11:00 to tally up the species. The afternoon involves looking for species missed that morning, and they go until sundown. If you'd like to come for the morning or the afternoon or both, just show up at 7 or 4. The CER building is the first building at the entrance to Hornsby Bend, on your right. More info: Eric Carpenter at ecarpe@gmail.com

California Solar Farm Disaster for Birds —

The massive Ivanpah Solar Plant in the middle of California's Mohave Desert has become a death trap for thousands of birds flying above it. The temperature in the atmosphere above the installation rises to 800 degrees. Garrison Frost of Audubon-California explains what is happening, "Birds burst into flames or have their feathers singed by the intense heat generated at that solar plant." The falling birds are being called "streamers," over 28,000 since the plant opened in March.

Brightsource, the company which installed the 300,000 mirrors, says it spent \$22 million to help save the desert tortoise beforehand, but didn't foresee the problem with birds. The solar rays hit water-filled boilers making steam, leading to generation of electricity. Thus the quest for clean energy sometimes inadvertently creates environmental harm.

Other solar farms have been criticized for their impacts on desert tortoises, and also wind farms have killed birds, including numerous raptors.

Annual Hawk Watch: Corpus Christi's Hazel Bazemore Park

From their web site: "Historically, the largest flights of hawks arrive at Corpus Christi, Texas between September 18 to September 30, although large flights regularly occur from mid-August to mid-October. Generally, the peak of the Mississippi kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) migration is in late August, followed by broadwinged hawks during the last two weeks in September and smaller numbers of Swainson's hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*) in early October. Flocks of Mississippi kites, anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*), and wood storks (*Mycteria americana*) are often seen in the midst of the broadwinged hawk kettles. Weather in the northern and eastern United States is a big factor in determining the actual dates of the flights.

"An estimated 95% of the North American populations of Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) fly over the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch site at Hazel Bazemore Park every fall in monster flights called kettles." Daily, 9:00 - 5:00 August 14 - Nov. 15.

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 our mission. The deadline for a pending issue is noon on the last day of the preceding month. Submit to editor@bastropcountyaudubon.org. Or by mail: 216 Schaefer Blvd Bastrop TX 78602, ph. (512)

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

Letter from the President

Wow-zee! Welcome to another exciting season with the Bastrop County Audubon Society. We have excellent educational programs, field trips and activities planned for you.

Have you been on one of our field trips? They are always fun with great camaraderie and interesting birds. Most often, the birds cooperate and show themselves. On a recent field trip, an osprey dropped its fish for us at Lake Bastrop. Well, maybe a bald eagle had something to do with it. "The bird thinks it is an act of kindness to give the fish a lift in the air." Rabindranath Tagore on Kindness. You just never know what you will see. Please come along!



You are so important to BCAS. We have a fine board of officers and chairs, but we need your participation. Why not have your people call my people and we can work something out? I hope to see you at our September meeting. Bring snacks if you wish. Snacks are good.

Stay tuned for an important initiative from the National Audubon Society which will be presented at our October meeting.

Priscilla Jarvis, President

BCAS Membership Application/Renewal

- Individual \$20
- Family \$35
- Supporting \$75
- Youth \$5

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State Zip: _____

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



In the Field

September is the middle of the fall migration. Barn Swallows are gone, no longer swooping and diving around you. High overhead unseen small

songbirds are flying south. A good place to spot an occasional warbler come down for rest and fuel might be in woods at Colorado River Refuge or at Big Webberville Park. Your own yard, who knows? In the case of a windstorm these days or soaring temperatures, songbirds come to the ground in a "fallout," an uncanny sight for birders.

Brush Freeman sighted a number of colorful visitors in August, according to his postings at ebird:

Upland Sandpipers, Olive-sided, Alder, Least and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Black and White Warblers, American Redstarts, Yellow Warblers, a Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissels, a Yellow-headed Blackbird, two Baltimore Orioles, a Canada Warbler, Mississippi Kites, a Yellow-throated Vireo, a Hooded Warbler, some Orchard Orioles.



Fred Collins saw a Roseate



Spoonbill at Big Webberville Park.

Mike Goebel saw several Wood Storks at the far south end of Schipp Lake.

Stan Wellso recalls a flock of more than 60 Wood Storks at Schipp in fall 2012.

Mike Goebel, Field Trips Chair, is planning a September field trip. The exact date will be announced at the meeting and posted asap on the BCAS web site.



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Calendar

Sept. 4, Thursday: BCAS Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Bastrop City Library

Sept. 6, Saturday: Monthly Bird Survey at Hornsby Bend, 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Sept. 9, 11, 16, 18, etc. Tuesdays and Thursdays, Wetlands Education Tour, 10–11:00 a.m., UT Marine Sci. Inst., Port Aransas. Free.

Sept. 13, Saturday: Monthly Field Trip at Hornsby Bend, 7:30 –11:00 a.m.

Sept. 16, Tuesday: General Meeting, 7:00 p.m., 1st Nat'l Bank Bldg. Hasler Blvd. @ H 71, in Bastrop.

Sept. 20, Saturday: Kids Birding! Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, San Antonio, 8:30–10:00. \$10. RSVP mlac@audubon.org

Throughout September, October: Hawk Watch, Corpus Christi, Hazel Bazemore Park, daily