March/April 2019 Newsletter

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Visit our website for updates: Bexar Audubon Society

President’s Note
Anne Parrish

The Elmendorf mixed species bird rookery has been the subject of two public meetings and much research in the past month. Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, along with some Tri-colored Herons, are the predominant sequential nesters at the rookery from February until mid-summer.

Lackland and Kelly airfields have seen a steady increase in bird strikes in the past 9 years from a variety of bird species, including Cattle Egrets. The rookery lies 3 miles to the northeast of these airfields. The egrets have been spotted flying twice daily over...
During this same time, our Air Force is continuing training at Lackland, while Kelly airfield is seeing much more commercial flight activity. Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) and the City of San Antonio’s Director of Military Affairs are concerned about the risk these birds’ flight pattern poses to pilot safety and the safety of the public on the ground. The response by the City and JBSA has been to inform the public that they will begin harassment techniques at the rookery to push the birds to move to a different location. However, once the first egg is laid in the rookery, no harassment can occur by Federal and State law. It does appear that Great Egrets are just this week on the nest, possibly with an egg.

We want to assure you that your Audubon board members have been attending these meetings and offering support to our City to find ways to mitigate the bird strikes while still allowing the Westside community to enjoy the beautiful birds in the rookery. We have been asking for more data from the City of San Antonio and communicating with our Audubon wildlife biologists for best practices. If the birds must be relocated, we will help to locate alternate suitable rookery sites for these birds, and we are looking into ways to lure them to these sites. We will also encourage the landfill to follow best practices to limit the attraction to the birds.

We realize the gravity of the situation and feel with proper study in 2019, bringing the expertise of Audubon to the table and working with SA Parks and Rec, JBSA, and concerned citizens, our City and Air Force can develop a multi-pronged solution that will keep both birds and people safe. If you are concerned about this issue and want to help Bexar Audubon deal with it, we would appreciate your offer of help.

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Bexar Audubon Society/San Antonio Audubon Society Monthly Programs

**Thursday, March 7 • 7:00 PM**
San Antonio Zoo Education Center
**Hop, Skip, and Jump:** Why Migration Matters
**Presenter: Dr. Maureen Frank**

Conditions that birds encounter on their spring and fall journeys are critical for population health. The importance of habitats along the migration route is a topic that deserves more consideration in conservation efforts. In this talk, Dr. Maureen Frank will highlight some key features of stopover and staging areas for birds, and share an example based on research from the migratory hotspot of Great Salt Lake. Finally, we’ll discuss migration routes through Central Texas and the role of birders in helping to
Thursday, April 4 ● 7:00 PM  
San Antonio Zoo Education Center  
Mission Reach Avian Study  
2015-2018  
Presenters: Martin Reid & Lee Marlowe

The San Antonio River Authority began a multi-year study of the birds within the Mission Reach between 2015 and 2018 to document which species and how many individuals were using the restored habitat. During that period, 196 bird species and 62,484 individual birds were recorded. A variety of species indicative of the project’s success have been identified, including range-restricted species, wary species, and habitat specialists.

Notable species recorded include Black-billed Cuckoo, Cassin’s Kingbird, Lazuli Bunting, Hooded Oriole, Sprague’s Pipit, Great Kiskadee, Rufous Hummingbird, Wood Stork, Anhinga, Least Grebe, Sora, and remarkably, a territorial Black-capped Vireo!

About the presenters:  
Martin Reid was born and raised near London, England. In 1986 he had an epiphany with birds and birding that changed his life, causing him to travel widely in search of birds and move to Texas in 1991, his home ever since. Martin has found four new bird species for Texas, five dragonfly species new for the U.S., and two butterfly species new for the U.S.

Lee Marlowe is the Sustainable Landscape Ecologist for the San Antonio River Authority. She is a restoration ecologist with over 19 years of professional experience working in the field of ecological restoration and natural resource management including sustainable landscape practices and...
CONSERVATION NEWS

The Golden-cheeked Warbler Is Still Endangered, Federal Judge Rules

The Golden-cheeked Warbler breeds only in the Texas Hill Country.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) first filed a petition to have Golden-cheeked Warblers removed from the Endangered Species Act protection in 2015 on behalf of the Texas General Land Office, part of the state government, which owns land in the warbler habitat zone. In 2016, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the petition and decided it did not present enough new information to warrant delisting. The conservative think tank disagreed: In the summer of 2017, it sued the FWS to force the issue. After several years of legal proceedings, a federal judge in the Western District Court of Texas finally handed down a decision on February 6, ruling that Golden-cheeked Warblers still need federal protection under the Endangered Species Act, thwarting a campaign to delist the species. Read more.

Volunteer to Help with Spring TOS Meeting in San Antonio May 2–5

Bexar Audubon and San Antonio Audubon are teaming up to host the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) Spring Meeting in San Antonio May 2 through 5. All activities will be based at the Hilton Garden Inn at The Rim.
field trips and attend all the great presentations being planned for the meeting, including the banquet on Saturday night with the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Bruce Beehler.

As a BAS-SAAS member, you can join our support team for this event:

- Volunteer to be a Field Trip Assistant: Meet a group at the hotel and guide them to their destination; learn from a veteran field trip leader and see the birds they help the group find and identify; perfect your eBird skills and share the lists with the other participants and enter the data on the TOS Master List.
- Volunteer to help with other TOS Meeting duties: Help secure items and monitor the Silent Auction and Raffle; help set up AV Equipment for the speakers; help distribute box lunches every morning; be the official TOS meeting photographer—the list goes on.

In return for your volunteer help, you are eligible to:

- Participate in field trips.
- Attend all presentations on Thursday evening, Friday afternoon and evening, and Saturday afternoon.

WANT TO JOIN TOS?
Registration for the May TOS meeting will begin in March on the TOS website: www.texasbirds.org. Not a member? You can join on the same website.

WANT TO HELP?
Contact Patsy Inglet saasforbirds@gmail.com. We are happy to find a role for you to fill to make this meeting a great success.

A complete list of field trips and presentations will be available soon.

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Bexar Audubon Society Field Trips

Thursday, March 21, 8:00 AM
**Golden-cheeked Warbler Walk**
Meet in the parking lot at Friedrich Wilderness Park, 21395 Milsa Drive. Wendy Leonard, Nature Preserve Officer, City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Natural Areas, will lead us. For details and to RSVP, contact Sherie Gee at sigee18@yahoo.com or 210/367-1625.

Friday, April 19, 8:00 AM
**Birding Lost Maples State Natural Area**
Leader: Richard Redmond of Bandera, TX. Meet at the park at 8:00 AM or carpool from the San Antonio Park & Ride at I-10 & 1604. A great time for spring migrants! Bring a picnic lunch. For details and sign up, email Patty at outings@bexaraudubon.org or call 210/837-0577.

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Join leader Fred Loxsom to hike up the Joe Johnson trail into the heart of Government Canyon where we will view the 110 million-year-old dinosaur footprints and explore the geology, plants and birds. Meet at the Backcountry Trailhead (inside the park) by 8:00 AM. You will need to have a Texas State Parks Pass or pay a $6 per person entrance fee. The park gate opens at 7:00 AM. The hike is about 5.7 miles round-trip and of moderate difficulty. Bring plenty of water and refreshing snacks, and wear sturdy shoes for hiking on rocky terrain. The round trip takes between 3 and 5 hours. We will finish in time for lunch in the picnic area near park headquarters. Contact Fred to RSVP and for further information at floxsom@trinity.edu or 860/455-3422 (text or call).

Friday, April 26, 8:30 AM
Walk & BioBlitz for City Nature Challenge
Meet at Crownridge Canyon Natural Area, 7222 Luskey Blvd. We'll take a walk and document what we see in the park (birds, plants, insects and more), contributing to community science for Earth Week. For details and sign up, email outings@bexaraudubon.org or call Sherie at 210/367-1625.

Monday, April 29, 8:00 AM
Avenue A Bird Walk
Leader: Lora Reynolds. Meet at the parking area on Red Oak just off of Mulberry Avenue in Brackenridge Park. We'll stroll along the SA River looking for resident and migratory birds (and whatever else we see)! Since this is still Nature Challenge Week, those wishing to may also document plants, insects and more. For questions and to sign up, email outings@bexaraudubon.org or call 210/837-0577.

Friday, May 17, 8:00 AM
Chaparral Wildlife Management Area
The Chaparral WMA is owned by TPWD and encompasses 15,200 acres of South TX brush country in La Salle and Dimmit Counties near Cotulla, approximately 100 miles southwest of San Antonio. This site manages for diversity of habitat and conducts research on the Texas tortoise, Texas horned lizard and indigo snakes, as well as some game animals. Birds recorded include Greater Roadrunners, Hooded Orioles, Great Horned Owls and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. Carpooling will be an option. For more information, please contact Chris Olstead at chrisolstead@hotmail.com.

Saturday, June 1 ● 12:45 to 4:45 PM
Bexar Audubon Society
Field Trip to the UT MARINE INSTITUTE in Port Aransas
SIGN UP SOON / SAVE THE DATE!
Board the Katy Research Vessel to explore the Bay.
Other Birding Events

April 11-14
Galveston FeatherFest Birding & Nature Photography Festival
Click here for more info.

April 13-14
Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival near Eagle Lake
Click here for more info.

April 24-27
Spring Chirp Birding Festival in Weslaco
Click here for more info.

April 26-28
Balcones Songbird Festival
Click here for more info.

April 26-28
2nd Annual South Llano River Birding Festival
Click here for more info.

Mitchell Lake Monthly Birding Tours

1st Sunday: March 3 & April 7, 8:00 AM
2nd Sunday: March 10 & April 14, 8:00 AM
2nd Tuesday: March 12 & April 9, 8:00 AM
3rd Sunday: March 17 $ April 21, 8:00 AM
4th Sunday: March 24 & April 28, 8:00 AM,
4th Saturday (Beginning Birders Tour): March 23 & April 27, 8:00 AM
$8 for non-members; Free for members
Pre-register online at MLAC

San Antonio Botanical Garden
Third Saturday Guided Bird Walks
April 20 (Viva Botanica)
Free to SABG members; $12 non-members.
Visit the SABG website to register.
555 Funston, San Antonio, TX 78209
BUTTERFLIES

March 23-24
4th Annual Monarch Fest at the San Antonio Zoo
In partnership with the City of San Antonio, the San Antonio Zoo is hosting a two-day festival celebrating all things monarchs, milkweed and migration! Learn how you can help encourage and protect the monarch butterfly. Fun games and crafts. Monarch Fest included with zoo standard admission. FREE for zoo members. Free native milkweed and native nectar plant seeds will be given away. Click here for more info.

SAN ANTONIO NATURAL AREA EVENTS

Bexar Audubon cosponsors several Natural Areas events with the Friends of SA Natural Areas
RSVP required for the events listed below. Email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov or call 210/207-3782. Space limited. Suggested donation: $3 per person (unless otherwise stated).

Friday, March 1, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
Lunch & Learn: Karst Habitats with Kelsey Scherschel, Projects Manager for the SA Natural Areas
Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Kelsey will present info on local karst habitats, common cave adapted species found within them and some of the pressures affecting the species in these environments. RSVP required; see above.

Friday, April 5, 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM
Lunch & Learn: iNaturalist Workshop with Dr. Tania Homayoun (Texas Nature Trackers Biologist) from the TPWD Austin Office
Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn all about iNaturalist. Following the indoor presentation, participants will practice using the iNat app on their phones to document biodiversity around Friedrich Park. RSVP required; see above.

Saturday, March 2, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM
Let's Go Birding (ages 10 & up)
Crownridge Canyon Natural Area
Walk with premier birding educators, Patsy and Tom Inglet, who will help identify avian songsters. Space limited. RSVP required. Click here to reserve your spot. Suggested donation: $3/person, $6/family. For questions, see contact info above.

Saturday, March 9, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Slithering Snakes & Other Texas Reptiles!
Eisenhower Park Mass Pavilion
Wild About Texas will lead a family-friendly show teaching kids about Texas reptiles, including the alligator lizard, snapping turtle and venomous and non-venomous snakes. No RSVP needed. Suggested donation: $3/person, $6/family. For questions, see contact info above.

Saturday, April 13, 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM
Photography Walkabout
Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Garcia will combine classroom instruction with an in-the-field photography session, followed by critique of your photographs back in the classroom. Bring your camera. $15 fee includes a box lunch. RSVP required; see above.

Saturday, May 5, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Native Plant Walk
Friedrich Wilderness Park
Discover the native plants of the Hill Country as you walk the park with botanist Bill Carr of Austin. Space limited. RSVP required; see above.

JOIN US!

Join our mailing list here to receive updates of local activities. You do not have to be a member and we will never share your information.

Membership

To join for the first time, please fill out the membership form and send it with your check to: Bexar Audubon Society, P.O. Box 6084, San Antonio, TX 78209-6084.

New Members: Bexar Audubon welcomes new members to join Audubon through the chapter. This brings 100 percent of the first year’s dues directly back to support local work. The same applies to gift memberships placed through the chapter. Your additional tax deductible donation is greatly appreciated. Bexar Audubon receives only a few thousand dollars each year from National Audubon Society as dues share. The rest we must raise ourselves. Your help is needed, and your donations will be put to good use right here in South Central Texas to provide environmental news and education to the community, including the Website, programs, San Antonio Natural Areas Second Saturday programs, and other activities. Individual memberships are $20; any additional donations are appreciated by the Bexar Audubon Society and will be used locally.

Renewing Members: Renewals should be registered through the National Audubon Society; click the Renew tab at the top of the page. Additional amounts over the basic renewal should be sent directly to the Bexar Audubon Society. We appreciate your support and will use the money locally.