

# The Spoonbill

A Publication of the Ornithology Group  
(OG)  
of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club

May 2012  
Vol. 61 No. 5

**Bayland Community Center  
6400 Bissonnet, Houston**

**GENERAL MEETING - 7:00 P.M.  
PROGRAM:**

**PATTERNS & TRENDS OF  
INTRODUCED BIRDS IN TEXAS  
by  
DAN BROOKS**

**Monthly Meeting  
Monday, May 7**

**Join us for the last  
monthly meeting  
before our summer break!**

Daniel Brooks has been Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Houston Museum of Natural Science since 1999. He received his Master's degree in 1993 focusing on ecology, distribution and natural history of large mammals in the Paraguayan Chaco, while his Ph.D. was received in 1998 and focused on community ecology of birds in Texas and the Neotropics.

Most of his research revolves around discovery – both of formerly unexplored pristine places, and describing new species of mammals and birds. Although he has worked in over 20 countries around the globe, his research has focused predominately in the Neotropics with an emphasis in the lowlands east of the Andes (Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay).

At the local level Brooks coordinates two Citizen Science Projects studying local birds, both of which enlist local citizen bird-watchers to collect data. These long-term studies are aimed at learning about status of invasive birds in Texas, as well as patterns of waterfowl community composition in the region.

Since 1985, Brooks has been involved in over 50 research projects, has served as chief editor for seven books, has co/authored over 25 book chapters and approximately 100 scientific articles. He has served on graduate committees of several students throughout the globe, and currently advises 4 Ph.D. candidates. Brooks has also served as Coordinator the Editorial Assistance Program for the Association of Field Ornithologists since 2001.

## **Mission Statement of the Ornithology Group:**

**To promote the study and appreciation of wild birds  
and encourage their conservation.**

**May I Say!**

**Not only has  
Harlan Evans  
been our OG  
Treasurer,**

**he has been a  
treasure to the  
Spoonbill.**

**Spot on to the  
Mission!**



*Photographed on Bryan Beach  
4/17/2012 by Harlan Evans*



*Photographed at Quintana  
4/17/2012 by Harlan Evans*

**Bring your vote to the  
OG Meeting for the  
identification of these  
beautiful birds.**



*Photographed at Brazos Bend  
4/13/2012 by Harlan Evans*

# OG BOARD FACES SOME TOUGH DECISIONS

MAY I SAY...

ADAM WOOD HAS DONE A GREAT JOB FOR THE 2011-2012 SEASON!

NOW IT IS TIME FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO STEP UP, OR FOR THE OG TO MOVE ON TO A NEW SYSTEM... BELOW ARE NOTES FROM THE LAST BOARD MEETING MINUTES REGARDING THE SUBJECT OF FIELD TRIPS.

- I. **Ideas for next year's field trips and how to transition responsibility for the field trips:** [Note that Adam was not able to attend] It was generally agreed that the field trip position on the board would operate as a Field Trip Coordinator (FTC). The responsibilities of the FTC would include recruiting OG members to take one month during the year and be responsible for the field trip for that month. That person would not necessarily have to lead the trip him/herself, but pick the location, date, coordinate it, find a person to guide if necessary, and attend the trip. There should be a set of guidelines for the monthly coordinator to follow. Discussed also was whether to allow a budget for fees that might be paid a guide – and it was generally decided that the OG will consider including a general budget for guide fees, but this would be for special instances, and not a monthly “budget” for the monthly field trip coordinator. This will be considered in more detail at our next board meeting when we talk about budget issues. We discussed whether to have participants pay a small fee for the monthly field trips, and that was decided against. Quarterly and annual trips would continue with nominal participant contribution. Also discussed was having our field trip simply join another organization’s activity that is already going on, but most thought the OG field trips should be separate from other organizations.

SCOPE IT OUT  
VIA THE INTERNET

**Group Field Trips** are a wonderful opportunity to use and evaluate different types of spotting scopes. Here are some tip excerpts from a May 2005 article in the Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine. Head to the magazine archives for the article *Tips for Using Binoculars and Spotting Scopes*, by Gibbs Milliken

Some tips for optic users

\*In cold weather, slowly acclimate your optics to the outside temperature to prevent condensation and fogging on the lenses and internal parts. In hot weather, never leave your optics for long periods in direct sunlight or in an auto that can heat up and ruin the instruments.

\*Avoid touching the rubber coating of binoculars and scope with Deet insect repellent on your hands. This chemical can dissolve some coatings and cause hands to stick to the lens barrels.

\*Improper cleaning can damage lens coatings. To clean safely, use a soft sable brush or air-bulb puff to remove coarse particles like sand. Use a drop of lens cleaning fluid applied to a lint-free tissue to gently remove stubborn smears or fingerprints. Don't develop the bad habits of rubbing the lens surfaces or wiping them with your shirttail every time a speck or two of dust appears.



# MAY FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

## ORNITHOLOGY GROUP FIELD TRIP

### Katy Prairie Field Trip Announcement

May 19, 2012

Paul Rushing Park: 7:00 AM

For this month's field trip we will be visiting the great land that is the Katy Prairie including accessing some of the Katy Prairie Conservancy properties (Barn Owl Woods, Nelson Farms, Mary Manor, and the KPC Field Office). In order to bird these properties all participants must print out and sign the release form (<http://www.katyprairie.org/events.html>, **Link to form is the yellow text near the top of the webpage**) and bring it with them on the day of the field trip. In the past we have always done this trip during the winter, although it is the best time to bird the prairie it is not the only good time to bird the prairie. The late spring and early summer can be rewarding times to bird the prairie as well. Gone are the geese, ducks, and sparrows but arriving our birds like Least Bittern, kingbirds (Western possible), swallows, and a few vireos, warblers, buntings, and grosbeaks. Shorebirds and a few other vireos and warblers will still be moving through as well. During the trip we will be in search of all the birds that call the prairie their home during the breeding season as well as any lingering migrants, like the flycatchers that are typically late migrants in the spring, that we can find. I will be willing to bird as long and as intense as the group wishes, to make sure we find our target species, as well as other good birds. Those of you who may only want to stay for half the day will have the opportunity to leave after lunch. However, once we start birding after lunch there may not be another chance to leave until the end of the day or when everybody is ready to call it quits.

The Katy Prairie lies in the Texas Coastal Plain, and encompasses over a thousand square miles, (Wermund, 1994) bounded by the Brazos River on the southwest, pine-hardwood forest on the north, and the city of Houston on the east. Historically, the Katy Prairie was characterized as a poorly drained tall-grass prairie subject to periodic fires and containing a considerable amount of wetland areas. The Katy Prairie is comprised of a variety of habitats, including agricultural wetlands, depressional wetlands, creek corridors, and coastal grasslands. The diversity of habitats on the Katy Prairie allows for the coexistence of a variety of people and wildlife. The Katy Prairie supports a tremendous amount of wildlife. An average total of 597,000 representatives of 196 avian species were recorded in the 1977-1994 period during Christmas bird counts.

**Directions:** We will meet you at **Paul Rushing Park at 7 AM**. Paul Rushing Park is located at 9114 Katy Hockley Road, Katy Tx. 77493. The Park is off of Katy Hockley Road just north of Longenbaugh Road. To get there take US 290 to FM 529 and head west on FM 529 past Highway 6, Barker Cypress, Fry Road, and Mason Road. Keep going west until you come to Katy Hockley Cutoff Road and turn right (north). Drive north (1 mile from FM 529) and turn left onto Katy Hockley Road and the entrance to Paul D. Rushing Park will be on your left. Go in the second gate.

**Be sure to bring:** Binoculars, **SIGNED RELEASE FORM**, scope, camera, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat, water, snacks, rain gear, and a lunch (we will break for lunch around noon. So make sure to bring a lunch if you plan on staying for the whole day).

~ Adam Wood, OG Field Trip Coordinator; [birdsondabrian@earthlink.net](mailto:birdsondabrian@earthlink.net), 713-515-1692

Saturday May 19th  
Outdoor Nature Club  
Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary  
Potluck Dinner & Social  
Nature Photography

H.A.S. BIRDATHON 2012  
MARCH 24 TO MAY 6

reports and pledges due by May 9

GALVESTON COUNTY  
SPRING BIRD COUNT  
MAY 5TH

GALVESTON CO. INCLUDES SOME GREAT  
BIRDING: HIGH ISLAND, THE BOLIVAR  
PENINSULA, GALVESTON ISLAND, PELICAN  
ISLAND, TEXAS CITY, AD THE MAINLAND  
AS FAR NORTH AS THE HARRIS COUNTY  
LINE AND AS FAR EAST AND WEST AS  
CHAMBERS AND BRAZORIA COUNTIES.  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

TO SIGN UP, CONTACT NORMA RUBIN AT  
[nhrubin@utmb.edu](mailto:nhrubin@utmb.edu)



Wood Thrush photo by Harlan Evans  
Laffite's Cove 4/6/2012

Monday May 7th

HOGG SANCTUARY BIRD SURVEY  
MONTHLY EVENT  
8 A.M. FIRST MONDAY

CONTACT: AARON STOLEY

Saturday May 12th

ARMAND BAYOU SURVEY  
LEADER: ANDREW HAMLETT

Monday May 14th

HERMANN PARK SURVEY  
MONTHLY EVENT  
SECOND MONDAY

CONTACT: JIM WINN

Tuesday May 15th

WEST 11TH STREET PARK SURVEY  
LEADER: MARY DODSON

Saturday May 19th

WILLOW WATERHOLE SURVEY  
MONTHLY EVENT  
THIRD SATURDAY

Monday May 21st

JESSE H. JONES PARK  
THIRD MONDAY BIRD WALK  
8 A.M.

**Spring Migration in full swing!  
Tropical Birding popular this spring in High Island!  
8AM daily walks, 12 Noon shorebirds, field trips, and workshops.**

**DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DAILY WALKS  
THRU MAY 6th**

Find schedule, topics, and how to sign up for workshops on the Houston Audubon Website

H.A.S.  
BRINGS ONE  
OF OUR O.G.  
FAVORITES TO  
THE PODIUM!

HOUSTON AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
WEDNESDAY MAY 9th, 2012  
SOCIAL AT 7:00 PM, MEETING AT 7:30 PM

PROGRAM SPEAKER STEPHAN LORENZ

**BIRDS AND LANDSCAPES OF THE BERING SEA, ALASKA**

Few places in the world remain as pristine as the Bering Sea and its far flung islands. The nutrient rich cold waters support over 40 million nesting seabirds along with innumerable marine mammals and other life. Remote islands, like the Pribilofs and Aleutian chain, offer safe nesting sites for over 20 species of seabirds, especially Alcids, which are represented by an astonishing 16 species. Several unique shorebirds and passerines also visit these islands during the breeding season adding songs and breeding displays to the maritime tundra.

The presentation will focus on the unique birds found in the region, including ecology of seabirds, tundra landscapes, and best places to visit. The proximity to Asia of many of these islands in western Alaska also brings a wide variety of Old World species to ABA territory. Many cannot be seen anywhere else in North America. Part of the presentation will highlight some of the more interesting vagrants found during four springs of birding and will summarize what a visitor can expect to see.

Stephan Lorenz received his BS in Biology from the University of Houston and his Masters in Biology from University of Texas at Tyler. He joined various research projects focusing on avian ecology and evolution. He has done fieldwork in Australia, Jamaica, and Costa Rica, assisting with bird studies for the Smithsonian Institute, Max Planck Institute, and Cornell University. Stephan Lorenz spent four full summer seasons in Alaska studying and monitoring seabirds for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Memorial University. He also worked two seasons on St. Paul Island as a naturalist and bird guide for St. Paul Island Tours. He had the chance to get close looks at all seabirds nesting in the Bering Sea, and took many photographs which will be a part of his presentation.

In his remarks, Stephan will highlight the great diversity of seabirds found in Alaska, the ecology of the Bering Sea, and some of the vagrant birds found in the region, as well as logistics for visiting the islands. Stephan has published several papers on bird distribution and natural history. More recently, he has written articles about Alaska experiences for magazines such as *Birdwatcher's Digest*, *Wildbird*, ABA's *Winging It*, and *Bird Watching*. When not in Alaska or Texas, he enjoys travel to tropical places such as Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, and most recently, Colombia. [article copy from H.A.S. flier](#)

## MAY I SAY...

THE OG SPOONBILL OWES A TREMENDOUS DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR TIME, WRITING TALENTS, PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS, EDITORIAL SAVVY, SUPPORT AND TUTORING, WHICH HAVE HELPED ME CREATE THE NEWSLETTERS...

**MY DEEPEST APPRECIATION:** TO JOANN RAINE AND STEPHAN LORENZ FOR THEIR WONDERFUL ARTICLES. TO HARLAN, WHO PUT SUCH FUN IN DOING THE WEB VERSION BY SENDING ME PHOTOS. TO AL SHULTZ, JOANNA FRIESEN, MARY FITZGERALD, & RYAN UBIAS, proofreading support. TO APPLE.



*Eastern Screech Owl  
Photo by Nancy Cash*

### *editors note:*

THE PRINTED VERSION OF THE SPOONBILL,  
ONE OF THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS FACING THE OG BOARD

During the April OG meeting I presented some of issues facing the Spoonbills printed newsletter. One of those issues involves the deadline for getting a printed version to the HISD printer. It has proven to be next to impossible to get a printed copy completed, proof read, to the printer, back to me for me to approve their version, to print, to post office, and to your mailboxes, on time. Added to the complexity of the problem is the need to work around the HISD holiday schedules that impact 4 of these months.

I had to set a deadline for the printed version articles on the 10th, but this has not proved to be an adequate solution. The printed version of the Spoonbill is very expensive and a waste of your OG dollars when the system fails. Because of a May system failure I chose not to send a version to print.

Here are the cost figures from Treasurer Harlan Evans which I presented during the April OG meeting.

Printing per issue	\$195.95	Annual	\$1,959.50	At 200 subscribers this is about \$12/year
Mailing	\$27.57		\$275.70	At 120 subscribers this is about \$20/year
Postage Fee			\$190.00	
Total			\$2,425.20	

I will continue as the Spoonbill Editor for the August-May 2013 season, then will be passing the job on. There have been both trials and rewards for me with this volunteer job. I would like to pass along the rewards, and leave the trials behind, for the person who takes over.

*Spoonbill Editor, Vicki Sims*

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

**THERE WILL NOT BE  
A PRINTED VERSION  
OF THE  
MAY SPOONBILL**

**IF YOU KNOW A  
MEMBER WHO DOES  
NOT USE THE LIST-  
SERVE OR ON LINE  
ACCESS PLEASE  
CONTACT THE  
SPOONBILL EDITOR**



## What's Worse Than a Bad Hair Day? from the bird re-hab point of view

**Bad Feathers.** Feathers are unique to birds, and good, complete feather condition is vital to a bird's survival. Beyond the ability to make birds capable of flight and all the amazing things birds can do because of flight (hunt, predator evasion, migration, etc.) feathers also assist with thermoregulation and waterproofing. Without good feather condition in rehab, a bird is non-releasable.

If a mammal has lost some fur, as long as the reason for fur loss was corrected, such as being treated for mange, their fur will grow back relatively quickly. This is not the case with birds. Unlike mammals that grow fur continuously, birds have a molt period, so if they broke a feather that just grew in, they will not have any new feather growth until the following molt, likely the following year. One broken feather or two is okay, but more than that starts to interfere with flight.

There are three options for rehabbers to prepare a bird with broken feathers for release after their initial injury has healed.

**Option 1: Wait.** If you keep the bird in captivity until she completes her normal molt cycle, she'll have a new set of beautiful feathers. The downside to waiting is that she will have a long stay with us, and if she's upset enough, she'll end up breaking her new feathers. If her seasonal molt is coming up soon, however, it may be a good option.

**Option 2: Plucking.** Feathers will not grow back in if they are broken (the feather follicle still has part of the feather shaft, so it doesn't "know" to grow a new one.) If a feather is physically pulled out, then the feather follicle "knows" to grow a new feather. The downside to plucking is that the bird will need to be sedated because this is a painful procedure. Additionally, there is still a long stay in captivity to allow the new feathers to grow in. However, if she's not going to molt for a year, this will significantly speed up the process.

**Option 3: Imping.** This is like "hair extensions" for birds. If a bird has broken a vital flight feather, this feather can be repaired by taking the same feather from another bird of the same species (we save feathers from deceased birds for this purpose) and attaching it to the shaft of the broken feather (which is a detailed and delicate process). It takes some finesse, but feather imping can make a stressed Cooper's Hawk releasable if all they need are a few flight feathers.



*Photo by Harlan Evans*

We have utilized all three options depending on the species, individual temperament of the bird, and other factors, and have had success with all. Feathers may seem simple, but each feather has a specialized purpose and birds are dependent upon them to thrive in the wild. [Article copy from the Ozaukee Humane Society](#)

**MAY I SAY...** Many thanks to Marie Asscherick, our OG Secretary for her marvelous comprehensive minutes. Marie has done a great job this season recording the events at our meetings. If you weren't able to attend the April Learning Corner or the O.G. meeting you can catch up by reading the following minutes...



**Ornithology Group Houston Outdoor Nature Club**  
**Minutes of Meeting Monday, April 2, 2012**  
**Bayland Community Center**  
**Number of Attendees: 42**

**Learning Corner:** Swifts Over Houston was presented by *Pam Smolen*. Counts are held at Lakeview in Sugarland on Tuesdays. The count leader is Jennifer Lezak. Counts are also held at Pershing and Whole Foods. The count leader is Pam Smolen. (172 Chimney Swifts at Pershing; 9 Chimney Swifts at Whole Foods.) You are encouraged to:

Visit an existing count.

Discover a new site—an online report form is on the HAS website.

Adopt a site of your own.

**Existing sites are located at the following locations:**

**St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 Main @ Binz**

**Congregation Emanu El, 1500 Sunset, Houston, TX 77005**

**Buffalo Soldiers Museum, Caroline @ St. Thomas**

**Old Jeff Davis Hospital**

**Lanier Middle School**

**Wharton Elementary School**

Chimney Swifts enter the roost tail first, between sunset and civil twilight. On cloudy days their time of entry will be earlier.

Chimney Swifts are 5 inches in length with a 12 to 12.5 inch wingspan. Their weight is 0.8 ounces.

Color is sooty gray to bluish black with lighter grey throat.

Males and females are identical in appearance. Lifespan is approximately 4 years. The oldest known individual was 14 years old. Chimney Swifts have sharp points on the tail ("spine-tailed") and have strong feet and legs.

Chimney Swifts eat mosquitoes, midges, flies, spittlebugs, aphids, winged ants, tiny bees, wasps, mayflies, stoneflies and termites. They can eat one-third of their body weight.

Arrival time in the southern United States is in mid-March and in Canada by May.

The winter home of the Chimney Swift was discovered in 1943 to be in the Amazon River Basin.

Offspring return to their area of origin and will nest in close proximity.

There is only ONE nest per chimney. The nest is built by both parents who use saliva to glue approximately 265 pieces of sticks together to form the nest. Three to five eggs are incubated in about 25 days. In 30 days the young birds do their first flight outside the chimney. In Houston this occurs from late June to late July.

**For more information, check the following website:** [www.chimneyswifts.org](http://www.chimneyswifts.org)

**Please join SWIFTS OVER HOUSTON 2012 at the following locations:**

**Pershing Middle School, 7000 Braes Blvd., Houston, TX 77025 on Aug 21.**

**Whole Foods Market, 4004 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77025 on Aug 21.**

**Lakeview Elementary, 314 Lakeview Dr., Sugarland, TX 77498 Sept 14.**

**Sightings:** Greater Yellowlegs; Mottled Ducks (Braeswood); Hooded Warbler. 2 Calliope, 2 Rufous Hummingbirds, Chipping Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows in the Woodlands. A Hooded Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler and a Wilson's Warbler at Edith L. Moore. 2 Pacific Loons; a Red-throated Loon and 200 Common Loons at Galveston Island. Northern Parula, Prothonotary Warbler, and a Purple Gallinule at Brazos Bend State Park. Wood Ducks and a Merlin at El Franco Lee Park. Northern Parula and Pine Warbler at Dixie Farm Road Park. Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-chinned Hummingbird at Perdinales Falls. Worm-eating Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush at High Island. On East Beach, a Lesser Black-backed Gull. To cap it off, some men from India were mesmerized by a singing Northern Cardinal at High Island!

**Minutes:** No comments. Check with Marie if changes need to be made.

**Library:** Debbie Valdez said that she has books, CD's and tapes to check out.

**Treasurer's Report:** Harlan Evans stated that we have \$8,018 in the treasury.

**Membership:** JoAnn Raine reminded us to sign in and pay our dues.

**The Spoonbill:** A few people don't have computers. There is free library access to computers. Vicki stated photos on the website are better than the printed form. **[ PLEASE SEE EDITOR COMMENTS PAGE 7, AS CORRECTIONS TO THE MINUTES ]**

**Announcements:**

**Mission Statement** of the Ornithology Group: **To promote the study and appreciation of wild birds and encourage their conservation.** (Voted and Passed.)

We might have a booth at FeatherFest.

Jesse Jones Park NatureFest: Thank you for having a booth there. There were 1,158 visitors.

David Sibley is speaking for Houston Audubon on Wednesday, April 11. Get there early. You can have books signed.

**Past Field Trips:** No comments.

**Future Field Trips:** Sabine Woods, Sea Rim State Park and McFaddin on April 21. We need a liaison to keep the Bird List for the trip and to keep everyone together.

**Program: South Africa: “Birding South Africa - Cape to Kruger: The Birds and Big Game of South Africa”**

was presented by **Scott Watson** of **Tropical Birding**.

Scott is from Toronto, Canada and now lives in Cape Town where he leads African tours. South Africa has 50 million people; 11 official languages; 470,000 square miles and is 80% Christian.

As a birding destination, South Africa has 852 species in 77 families. One can see Sugar Birds and Cave Rock Jumpers, whales in migration, Great White Sharks and 9,600 species of flowers. There are more species in Table Mountain in Cape Town than in the British Isles. One can see Orange-breasted Sunbirds, Cape Sugar Birds, Black Harriers, Crowned Cormorants, and Blue Cranes (the National Bird).

On a pelagic trip where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet, one can see 25 to 30 species (including 7 species of Albatross). There are Humpback Whales and 4 to 5 species of dolphins. Be prepared for rough water!!!

In the Afro-Montane Forests, Great Collared Songbirds and Robin Chats reside. Karoo is the residence of 35 species of Larks, Rufous-eared Warbler, 10 species of Bustards and the Spotted Eagle Owl. Kalagadi Transfrontier Park is the home of one billion Red-billed Quail. Red-headed Finch, Swallow-tailed Bee Eaters, Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Crimson-breasted Shrikes, Ostrich, Secretary Birds, Lions, 7 species of vulture including the biggest, the Lapit-faced Vulture also reside in Karoo.

The next stop is from Johannesburg to the grasslands. There, one should see Yellow-breasted Pipit, Blue Bustard, Long-tailed Widow Bird and the heaviest flying bird in the world, the Denims Bustard.

Bushveld-Kruger NP, the next location, is the home of African Savannah Elephants, the largest mammal in the world. One can also see Cheetahs, Leopards, Wild Dogs, White Rhinos and the shorter tempered Black Rhino. This is a good place to see Pels Fishing Owl, African Jacana, White-crested Helmet Shrike, Crested Barbet, White-browed Robin Chat and Red-billed Ox Peckers.

One can do an extension of the trip and go to the Coastal Forests where one can see Purple Crested Turako, Violet-backed Starling, Spotted Ground Thrush and Black-throated Wattle Eye.

In the Drakensberg Mountains one can see the Bearded Vulture. This is the second best place in the world to see it. (Ethiopia is better.) It drops bones on rocks and eats the marrow. Other birds here are the Jackal Buzzard (endemic), Southern Bald Ibis (declining), Drakensberg Rock Jumper, Ground Woodpecker, Guerneys Sugar Bird, and Bush Black Cap.

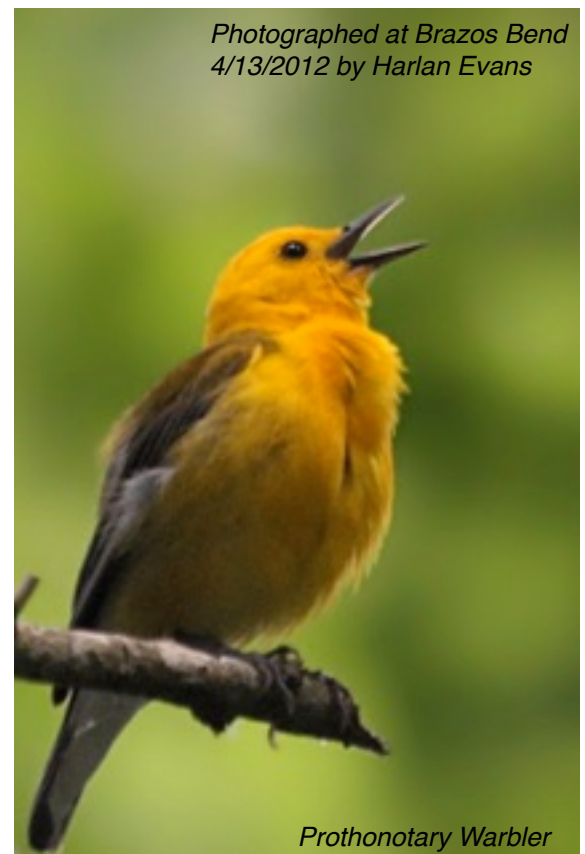
There is more petty theft and vehicle break-ins in South Africa than here, but most of the time the trip will be away from the cities. Bottled Water is safe drinking water. Malaria pills are needed for Kenya. Birdwatching is better in January; in September, mammals are better to see.

For more information check with [www.tropicalbirding.com](http://www.tropicalbirding.com)  
[info@tropicalbirding.com](mailto:info@tropicalbirding.com)  
USA: 1-800-348-5941  
1-409-515-0514

**High Island Birding: Notes from Scott Watson**

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year that Tropical Birding has been at High Island. Iain Campbell is the owner of the House with the tower across from Boy Scout Woods at High Island. Tropical Birding is giving Free Guided Walks 8am at Boy Scout Woods. Shorebird Showdown Field Trip is at noon. (Free) Smith Oaks Walk is at 4pm. (Free) Saturday and Sunday Warbler and Shorebird Workshops are held at the Methodist Church that sells the barbeque. Reservations are required for the talks. There is a fee. For more information check: [www.birdinghighisland.com](http://www.birdinghighisland.com)

**Marie Asscherick/Ornithology Group Secretary**



*Photographed at Brazos Bend  
4/13/2012 by Harlan Evans*

*Prothonotary Warbler*

# MAY I SAY...

Nina Rach has been busy getting ready for the next season of OG speakers. Here is the line-up of exciting speakers which we can look forward to in the approaching months. The quest for speakers has produced an outstanding August 2011 - May 2012 group of presenters for both the Learning Corner and Program presenters.

You, the OG members, can help continue this tradition by contributing suggestions and facilitating contacts with potential presenters. The board welcomes your input to help fill the empty slots!

August 6, 2012 – **Fred Collins**, Kleb Woods Nature Sanctuary  
“**topic to be decided**”

Sept 10, 2012 – **Tad Finnell**  
“**Completing a Bird-a-Day Year in Texas, 2009**”

Oct 1, 2012 -

Nov 5, 2012 – **Greg Green**, Ducks Unlimited  
“**Winter Waterfowl trends in Texas**”

Dec 3, 2012 – **Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, PhD**  
Director of Conservation Programs, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, “**Cranes**”

Jan 7, 2013 – **Susan Heath**, GCBO,  
“**American Oystercatcher Stewardship in Texas**”

Feb 4, 2013 – **Kendra Kocab**, staff naturalist, Kleb Woods Nature Sanctuary  
“**Picture This: Digital details.**” [about the struggles of online bird identification.]

DON'T HAVE A BAD HAIR DAY!  
FLY TO YOUR CALENDARS  
TO FILL IN THESE DATES

YOUR OG BOARD WILL BE MEETING IN JUNE

PLEASE SEND YOUR THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS  
FOR CONSIDERATION

HELP US MAKE A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT DECISIONS  
AFFECTING OUR GROUP

# HAVE A WONDERFUL SPRING & SUMMER

Saturday June 19th  
Outdoor Nature Club  
Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary  
Botany Field Trip  
Cullinan Meadow Wildflowers

## About the Ornithology Group

The Ornithology Group (OG) is a division of the Outdoor Nature Club (ONC), a non-profit organization dedicated to greater knowledge about the environment and wildlife of the Upper Texas Coast. The OG is a club of individuals interested in all aspects of birding, including bird identification, listing bird sightings, competing in birding events, and preserving bird habitat. Some members study bird behavior, biology, distribution and migration, while others just enjoy watching birds. The organization is designed to accommodate these diverse birding interests. Monthly meetings and field trips provide an opportunity to interact with and learn from experts in local and international birding.

Chair:	Marcy Brown	713-664-5206	<a href="mailto:marcydbrown@gmail.com">marcydbrown@gmail.com</a>
Vice-Chair:	Nina Rach	281-433-0651	<a href="mailto:NRach@autreVie.com">NRach@autreVie.com</a>
Vice-Chair Asst:	Stennie Meadors		<a href="mailto:stenmead@aol.com">stenmead@aol.com</a>
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OG website: <http://www.ornithologygroup.org/>  
ONC website: <http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/>

"THINGS ARE NOT  
ALWAYS  
BLACK AND WHITE"



Black-and-white Warbler, Lafitte's Cove 4/6/12

Photo by Harlan Evans