



The Spoonbill

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

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HOT TOPICS - SUMMER SPECIAL EDITION

Update on the ONC

Just before our May OG meeting emails and discussions circulated among the membership that put the future of the Outdoor Nature Club into question. The ONC was without a president, and the participation of members active in the ONC, other than the OG and the Botany/Entomology Group, was very small. There were questions as to the ability of the ONC to manage the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS) effectively without leadership and with so few people involved in the LTNS. We have had some progress since then.

I am pleased to inform our OG members that Olga Beishir (an OG member!) has been appointed to the position of President of the Outdoor Nature Club. She will be filling the remaining term of that office left vacant by the resignation of the previous President, and will be exploring ways to reinvigorate the ONC membership. We look forward to working with her! We are optimistic that, under Olga's leadership, the ONC will remain a viable organization, and the OG will remain as part of that organization.

At the ONC board meeting in July, the board recognized the problems of dealing with the LTNS, and while hopeful of the ONC being able to continue its stewardship of the property, the ONC board is exploring other organizations that may be willing to take on that role if it becomes infeasible for the ONC to do so. Remember - the LTNS belongs to YOU! I urge each of you, if you are interested in preserving our interest in the LTNS, please get involved and become active in the outings and programs offered at the sanctuary. Members of the ONC can arrange for access of the sanctuary even at times there are no organized activities. It is a wonderful place to visit and explore!

Please be assured that regardless of the status of the ONC and/or the LTNS, the Ornithology Group will continue as the strong and active group it is now.

Marcy Brown
OG Chair

Update on the OG Field Trips

Important Information from Adam Wood

Concerning the Field Trip Coordinator position and the future of field trips for the organization:

I hope everybody had a good summer and is ready for another fun filled OG Year. This will be my last year as Field Trip Coordinator. I have not been able to find anybody to replace me as of this moment but the board has come up with a good idea of how to handle this position from this point on. We are proposing to create a Field Trip Coordinator group comprised of several members in hopes of making this position less daunting. The plan is to have one person develop a slate of trips for the year. I have done that for this year and the schedule is below. That person will also be in charge of finding a group of members to organize one, two or however many of the field trips on the slate that they feel comfortable with. To organize a trip is to:

- Be responsible for finding the leader for their month(s) trip(s). The organizer is not responsible for leading or even attending the trip,
- Deciding on a meeting location and time (can be left up to the leader if the organizer prefers)
- Post the leader, meeting location, time and date on the OG website,
- Announce the details at that trip months meeting, and
- to get that information to the Spoonbill Editor before the deadline for materials to be submitted for publishing.

The number of members in the Field Trip Coordinator Group will be decided by the number of volunteers I get in response to this email. If you are interested in organizing one or more of the trips on the slate below please let me know. Our hope with this plan is to have one or more of the group members realize that this position is not so bad and be willing to take it on full time for the following term or at least be willing to take on my duties as group leader. I believe the formation of a Field Trip Coordinator Group will serve to lower the expectations of the Field Trip Coordinator back to the duties as stated in the ONC Constitution. The ultimate goal will be to get back to a single Field Trip Coordinator. If anybody has any questions please let me know.

Monthly Field Trips (12-13)		
Date	Location	Leader
8/18/2012	Texas Century Club Challenge: Montgomery County	TBD
9/15/2012	Smith Point Hawk Watch and Environs	Hawk Watch Count Volunteer
10/20/2012	High Island	TBD
11/17/2012	Freeport & Quintana Area	TBD
12/15/2012	CBCs	X
1/19/2013	Brazos Bend SP	Bill Godley
2/16/2013	Angelina NF & Boykin Springs (Bachman's Sparrow)	TBD
3/16/2013	Fermosa Tejano Wetlands/Lake Texana	TBD
4/20/2013	Galveston to Bolivar Flats	TBD
5/20/2013	Sam Houston NF (Breeding Warblers)	TBD

OG MEMBER RESPONSE

One absolutely crucial item is missing: follow-up with the leader to ensure that no conflicts have arisen that would prevent the leader from leading and that the the leader doesn't forget about the date. That would involve 2 emails/phone calls (or 3 if the Coordinator feels it is necessary): one about a month before the field trip -- this should be before the info goes to *The Spoonbill*; and one during the week before the field trip to ensure that no last minute conflicts have arisen. The last thing you want is to have a personal or work-related emergency arise for the leader and he/she forgets to notify OG; or that he/she loses track of the date.

I also have a suggestion: I agree with the date flexibility. I suggest that, unless unavoidable, OG field trips not be on the same date as Houston Audubon field trips, as many of us are members of both organizations.
Bob Honig

**PRINTING AND MAILING OF THE SPOONBILL NEWSLETTER
TO BE DISCONTINUED
IN 2013**

Treasurer note:

Harlan Evans reports that the Ornithology Group had a substantial \$1,608.00 deficit last year. The major differences were lower income (no field trip income, slightly lower dues, checklist sales and contributions) and higher expenditures (mostly Spoonbill).

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

In addressing this deficit at the June board meeting, a decision was made to discontinue sending the Spoonbill out in the mail beginning in 2013. The board is aware that there are individual members who do not have access to a computer. ***Those individuals not on the ListServe should contact the editor, special arrangements will be made to mail a copy to these members.***

Editors note:

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 HISD 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 in May.

Here are the cost figures from Treasurer Harlan Evans 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

PARTICIPATION IS KEY: THE OG BOARD WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS, COMMENTS, AND CONCERNS



Scarlet Tanager, Lafitte's Cove, 4/23/12

photo by Harlan Evans

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.

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ONC website: <http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/>