

The Spoonbill

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

September 2012 Vol. 61 No. 8

Bayland Community Center 6400 Bissonnet, Houston

LEARNING CORNER 6:30 P.M.

GENERAL MEETING 7:00 P.M. SEPTEMBER LABOR DAY
SHIFTS
MONTHLY MEETING DATE

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR SECOND MONDAY SEPTEMBER 10

Learning Corner: Stephan Lorenz -

"Join the Mob, Follow the Flock: A fresh look at an old lesson." Stephan will talk about how to follow and observe mobbing flocks to help with finding owls and other predators.

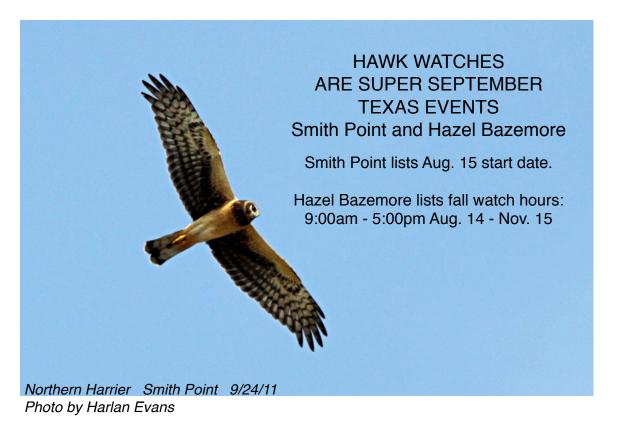
Speaker Presentation: Professor Clay Green -

from Texas State University, San Marcos

"Egret Plumage Variation"

"Wayward egrets: Are movement and gene flow of Reddish Egrets restricted across their range?"

Bio: Born in San Antonio, graduated from Univ. of Texas in 1992, spent 4 years active duty in Navy following graduation, then went on to earn MS from Sul Ross State University and PhD from University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Has been studying Reddish Egrets since 2001 and involved in other avian research including American Oystercatchers, Black-capped Vireos, and swallows, as well as mammalian research with javelinas, bats, and kangaroo rats. He also teaches Field Ornithology and Mammalogy. In 2011 was mobilized thru Navy Reserves and spent 2011 in Afghanistan. Currently, Dr. Green is Associate Professor at Texas State University. Married to wife Michele and has 3 sons, Matt, Josh, and Nathanael.



Spoonbill Page 7 has the official OG Field Trip Slate for 2012 - 2013

Local Audubon Counts Page 10

and H.A.S.

Planned Work Dates Page 10

SEPTEMBER OG FIELD TRIP SEPTEMBER 22nd

Date Change from August Newsletter -- Saturday September 22nd

Sep. 22: Smith Point Hawk Watch (Hawk Watch Count Volunteer)

September field trip is to the Smith Point Hawk Watch and surrounding area.

Our field trip coordinator will be Marcy Brown.
Where and when to meet will be announced at the September meeting, a notice will be sent via email. Those not receiving email may contact Marcy Brown prior to the field trip date for more details.
713-664-5206

Houston Audubon Fall Event
Thursday, September 27th
7:00p.m. - Social 7:30p.m. Presentation

Kevin J. McGowan of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

Renowned expert on crows and developer of All About Birds - online bird guide

Unites Way Center 50 Waugh Drive

MORE SUPER TEXAS EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 13 - 16

24TH ANNUAL HUMMERBIRD CELEBRATION-ROCKPORT - FULTON

www.rockporthummingbird.com

SATURDAY SEPT 8 AND SATURDAY SEPT 15

ANNUAL XTREME HUMMINGBIRD XTRAVAGANZA
GULF COAST BIRD OBSERVATORY
IN LAKE JACKSON
8:00AM UNTIL NOON

www.gcbo.org

FREE FRIDAY FALL FEATHERED FEATURES
KLEB WOODS NATURE CENTER - BIRDING PROGRAMS 9 - 11:00AM

SEPTEMBER 28: GARY CLARK, HAWKS AND THEIR IDENTIFICATION

THE KATY PRAIRIE BASH 2012

Wednesday, October 3, 2012, 7:00 pm

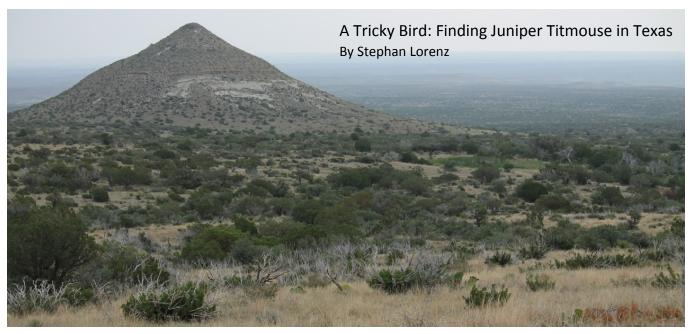
Co-Chairs Ann and Tom Kelsey and Donna and Roger Soape

The Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) is throwing itself a party – make that a blowout – to celebrate its 20th birthday. Since 1992, we've conserved land on the west of Houston at a rate of nearly 1000 acres a year. Our fierce and festive birthday party – Born to be Wild – will take place on Wednesday, October 3rd. We hope you will join in the revelry and also lend your support as an event sponsor.

Imagine an area that would fit Hermann Park, Memorial Park, and the entire island of Manhattan, with acreage left over - that is the extent of the 18,000+ acres of prairie we have conserved so far. The Katy Prairie has something for everyone - it's a birdwatchers' and hunters' paradise, a wide open space for hiking and cycling, and productive agricultural land for family farms and ranches.

To make a donation and attend the KPC Bash 2012, go to https://secure.piryx.com/donate/exehSqAI/Katy-Prairie-Conservancy/bash2012.

For more information contact us <u>info@katyprairie.org</u> or 713-523-6135. And please visit <u>www.katyprairie.org</u> to learn more about KPC.



Juniper Titmouse habitat in Texas Guadalupe Mountains Photo Stephan Lorenz

The Juniper Titmouse (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) has a very restricted range within Texas and is essentially limited to the foothills of the Guadalupe Mountains, Culberson County, where it is an uncommon resident. It is arguably one of the most difficult resident or regularly occurring bird's to see in Texas, with Spotted Owl, Hook-billed Kite, Red Crossbill, and Cassin's Finch also in the running for toughest non-review species. Juniper Titmouse is a common species throughout many areas of the southwestern United States, including New Mexico just across the state line. Yet, just to the south in Texas, birds are thin on the ground and are regularly reported from only two places within the lower elevations of the Guadalupe Mountains, Dog Canyon and Frijole Ranch. The species has been sighted in the El Paso area, but the national park remains by far the best location to add this little drab Parid to your Texas state list.

I had attempted to see Juniper Titmice in the Guadalupe Mountains on several previous occasions in the past seven years. On each visit to the Guadalupes, I set aside a little time to wander in the juniper woodlands and foothills, hoping to come across the birds. I even made a concerted effort during the summer of 2005, when I took the long route through New Mexico into Dog Canyon. Despite long hikes and chasing after everything that even remotely sounded like a titmouse, I always came up empty or with plenty of Rock Wrens. I know that several Texas birders can commiserate with similar experiences.

Overall, the single best place remains Dog Canyon, which lies at the end of State Road 137, a long winding gravel track that meanders south after turning off Highway 285 just north of Carlsbad, New Mexico. This is not a casual trip and it is best to take advantage of the beautiful and isolated campground at Dog Canyon, packing gear for a night or two. Keep in mind, Juniper Titmice are not guaranteed here, but plenty of scenery and other birds are. Once the road crosses back into Texas start looking for titmice in the juniper woodlands.

During my recent visit to the area, I didn't have time to visit remote Dog Canyon and decided to give the alternative location a try, Frijole Ranch. The historic ranch is located just off Highway 62 and offers easy access to foothill habitat and several productive springs. When I pulled into the gravel parking lot, the weather looked ominous. Afternoon thunderstorms are not uncommon during late August. Black clouds were tumbling over gray and I could see dark streaks of rain falling in the high country. I grabbed my binoculars, camera, and rain jacket, hoping to catch a few minutes of birding. Just past the ranch house starts a trail leading to Frijole Springs and beyond, the sparse juniper woodland here is probably the best place to look for titmice. First, I was greeted by Scott's Orioles and Western Tanagers, adding color to the Chihuahuan desert. A Gray Flycatcher flitting between ocotillo sported titmouse colors, but was the wrong family.

When I heard a bird just a minute later, I almost didn't trust my ears. I walked off the trail towards a dense stand of junipers. Several sparrows flew off the ground and then it called again. It fluttered between trees and the complete lack of color gave it away, finally there was a Juniper Titmouse on Texas soil. I followed the bird several minutes as it foraged relatively quickly, moving from tree to tree. When it was quiet it was difficult to keep track off. During the entire observation there was no sound or sight of a second bird, just a single Juniper Titmouse. After it disappeared, I took a long look at the surroundings and could see similar stands of juniper stretch from the foothills to the north, east, and south. It looked like there was an abundance of suitable habitat and why the species occurs in such low densities in Texas is a mystery to me, but all it takes is one.



Juniper Titmouse Guadalupe Mountains Texas Photo Stephan Lorenz

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 managed to stay cool. This will be my last year as Field Trip Coordinator. It has been a pleasure serving this organization in this capacity for the last eight years.

From this point forward the position of Field Trip Coordinator will be run by a committee. If you are interested in serving on this committee please let me know. I am still looking for one or two more volunteers.

The way this committee is structured is the chair (Me this year) develops the slate of field trips and then asks the committee members which trips they would like to be in charge of organizing. The committee members are responsible for finding a leader for the trips they volunteered to organize and to establish the date, meeting place, and time for the trip. This is usually done in conversations with the leader based on the leader availability and expertise.

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.
- Post the information to the Spoonbill Editor before the deadline for materials to be submitted for publishing.
- Follow up with the leader a week or so in advance of the trip to make sure that everything is on schedule
- Follow-up with the leader to ensure no conflicts have arisen last minute.
- Send ListServ message or make phone calls if necessary for any last minute update.

OG MEMBER RESPONSE MADE A DIFFERENCE:

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*

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.

Adam Wood OG Field Trip Coordinator birdsondabrain@earthlink.net 713-515-1692

Field Trip Slate for 2012 - 2013

Oct. 20: High Island (TBD)

Nov. 17: Freeport & Quintana (Mike Austin)

Dec. 15 - Jan 6 (Dates Not Official): Christmas Bird Counts

Jan. 19: Brazos Bend State Park & Davis Estates (Bill Godley)

Jan 24-Feb. 3: Panhandle (Amarillo & Lubbock Area w/ Albuquerque Extension (Rosy-Finches)) (TBD)

Feb. 16: Angelina NF & Boykin Springs (TBD)

Mar. 16: Fermosa Tejano Wetlands and Environs (TBD)

Apr. 20: Galveston to Bolivar Flats (TBD)

Apr. 25- May 5: Corpus & Lower Rio Grande Valley (TBD)

May 20: Sam Houston NF (TBD)

THE SEVEN PLEASURES OF BIRDING

Recently, HBO aired a special called *Birders: The Central Park Effect*, depicting some of the regular birders – and birds – in the middle of Central Park in New York City. It was a wonderful journey through the park over a spring, summer, fall, winter, and then to spring again.

One featured birder was a young man named Chris Cooper, who talked of how his non-birding friends would ask why he likes birding so much. In fact, he was asked this so often he came up with what he calls "The Seven Pleasures of Birding" that he used to explain his passion:

The Seven Pleasures of Birding:

- 1) The beauty of the birds
- 2) The joy of being in a natural setting
- 3) The joy of scientific discovery
- 4) The joy of hunting without the bloodshed
- 5) The joy of puzzle-solving
- 6) The joy of collecting [making lists]
- 7) The "unicorn effect"

The unicorn effect? He went on to explain:

After you've been birding for even a little while, you become familiar with the birds, just from seeing them in a book or field guide or whatever, and ... you've never seen them in real life, so they sort of take on this mythological status almost... You know what [the bird is] suppose to look like but you've never seen it. And then one day, there it is for real, live, and it's as if this unicorn came walking out of the forest.

Yes, birding can be rather magical. When was the last time you saw a unicorn?

Marcy Brown

Learning Look A-likes: Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs

The ultimate shorebird look-a-likes--that's what these two Yellowlegs are! Luckily, it is pretty easy to tell you are looking at one of the Yellowlegs. Both are tall, slim, gray sandpipers with long, bright yellow legs. The back is spotted gray, black, and white. The slim bill is long. As they feed at water edges, shallow ponds, or flooded fields, they usually peck at, or just below, the surface; they seldom probe in the mud as many other shorebirds do.

They often bob the head up and down as they wade. In flight, the wings are dark and the rump and tail are white.

Okay, so you know it's a Yellowlegs. But which one? If you see them side by side the Greater is noticeably larger, (about one third larger), and it weighs twice as much. But how about when they are not together?



photo by Skip Alimoney taken during his summer adventure to Alaska.

October Spoonbill will feature the Alaska adventure article by Jennifer Backo and photographs from Joann Raine and Skip Alimoney!

There are three good was to identify the Greater Yellowlegs:

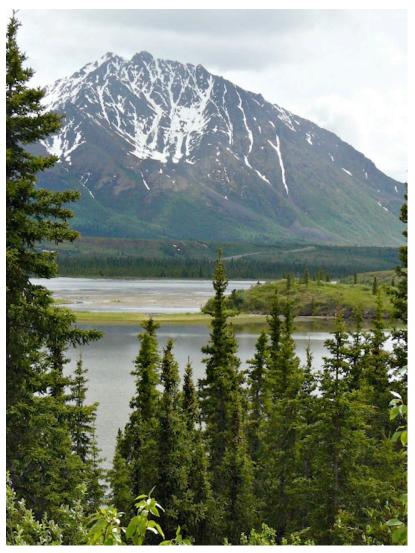
- 1. The bill is about one and one half times as long as the bird's head, and the bill is also slightly upturned near the tip.
- 2. The call (which is given often and loudly) is a 3 to 5 note ringing whistle.
- 3. The Greater Yellowlegs is about the same size as a Black-necked Stilt (about 14 inches long in flight).

On the other hand, the Lesser Yellowlegs has:

- 1. A bill that is a shorter, thinner, straight bill which is only about as long as the bird's head.
- 2. The call (which is give less often) is a softer, one or two note whistle.
- 3. The Lesser Yellowlegs is the length of a Killdeer, about 10 inches long. There are often Killdeer nearby in these habitats to provide a size comparison.

Two other shorebirds can look like a Yellowlegs in the fall when they are in non-breading plumage. Wilson's Phalarope has shorter, greenish legs and a needle-like bill. The Stilt Sandpiper has a droop at the tip of the bill and the legs are closer to green than yellow.

Adapted from text by Art Arenhotz for series by Central New Mexico Audubon Society



HOUSTON BIRDERS BEAT THE HEAT BY TRAVELING TO ALASKA

Anchorage Scenery

photos by Joann Raine

Seward boat trip saw Orca fin and Humpback whales



HOUSTON

DATE CHANGE DUE TO LABOR DAY! 2nd Monday Sept 10th

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

CONTACT: AARON STOLEY



Saturday September 8th

ARMAND BAYOU SURVEY
MONTHLY EVENT
SECOND SATURDAY

Tuesday September 11th

WEST 11TH STREET PARK SURVEY LEADER: MARY DODSON

Saturday September 15th

WILLOW WATERHOLE SURVEY

MONTHLY EVENT

THIRD SATURDAY

Thursday September 20th

NEM !

BAYTOWN NATURE CENTER BIRD SURVEY Monday September 10th

HERMANN PARK SURVEY
MONTHLY EVENT
7:30 A.M. SECOND MONDAY

CONTACT: JIM WINN

Friday September 14th

SWIFT NIGHT OUT
Lakeview Elementary, 314 Lakeview Dr.
Sugarland, Texas

Monday September 17th

JESSE H. JONES PARK THIRD MONDAY BIRD WALK

Check out the Houston Audubon Website for details on September/October events

BOLIVAR FLATS BEACH CLEANUP SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd Contact Danny Lynch, 713-932-1639 dlynch@houstonaudubon.org

WORK DAYS BEGIN IN OCTOBER: HIGH ISLAND SATURDAY OCT. 13th HORSESHOE MARSH THURSDAY OCT. 18th

Learning Corner Clarifications

Some clarifications of the summary of my 7 May 2012 presentation on the 2011 drought on the Katy Prairie, that appeared in the August 2012 issue of *The Spoonbill*:

- In 2012, at least 99% or more of the surface areas of Texas was in severe drought or drier for 8 weeks, and at least 90% for 35 weeks.
- Some of the events I presented in May were simply examples from our yard meant to be indicative of trends due to the drought and should not be taken as definitive statements about the entire Katy Prairie. E.g., ...
- The cuckoo that showed up to drink was at our front yard pond, something that we considered unusual, but no other water was available nearby. The summary indicated no Downy Woodpeckers were present, but rather Ladder-backed Woodpeckers (a species more common in drier habitats to the west) were; this was another example from our yard Downy Woodpeckers were present in elsewhere on the Katy Prairie.
- Some, not all, winter sparrows increased. That Harris's Sparrow outnumbered White-crowned Sparrow was a reversal of their typical relative abundances, as was Vesper Sparrow outnumbering Savannah Sparrow.
- Lincoln's Sparrow did in fact disappear from our yard, but they were present elsewhere on the Katy Prairie.
- My reporting that I was unable to find nesting Painted Bunting and Blue Grosbeak was limited to Hebert and Penick Roads, another example of the drought's impact on a specific location. I cannot comment on whether they did not nest at all on the Katy Prairie in 2011.
- The 5 species on the annual summer butterfly count in 2011 versus 22 in 2010 was just for our yard. Surely there were more species on the entire Katy Prairie in both of those years.
- We have not heard or seen King Rail at our house for the several years of the drought; and they may not yet have returned to this area of the prairie despite the wet year we are having in 2012.
- The long-term climate predictions for this part of Texas are not just hotter but much drier.
- The paragraph headings format may have been misleading: the summary of the presentation ended with the paragraph entitled "Now."

-Bob Honig

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

Ornithology Group Houston Outdoor Nature Club

Minutes of Meeting Monday, August 6, 2012

Bayland Community Center

Number of Attendees: 54

Learning Corner: Birding the Big Bend was presented by *Marcy Brown* and *Adam Wood*. Reservations were made very early for members to stay in a lodge at Chisos Basin. (Reservations should be made 9 months to a year in advance.) (One can stay in Marathon or Terlingua.) Birders need to get in shape ahead of time as there is a 12 1/2 mile hike and 2,000 foot elevation. One should bring lightweight clothing, but it gets cool at night. Hikers should wear hiking shoes, not tennis shoes. It is recommended to bring TWO Hiking Sticks!!!

The Northern Route included Junction, Sheffield Loop, and Balmorhea State Park and a lake. The Southern Route included Del Rio, Marathon, and Fort Davis. Some of the birds seen in Junction included: Black-throated Sparrow; Lark Sparrow; Claycolored Sparrow; Summer Tanager; Spotted Towhee; Vermilion Flycatcher; Yellow-headed Blackbird; Painted Bunting; Goldencheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. The Gray Vireo was missed on the Sheffield Loop at I-10 West. Six or seven Cassin's Kingbirds were seen at LE Woods Picnic Area. Members of the group also saw Wild Turkey; Montezuma Quail; Red-naped Sapsucker; Western Bluebird and Gracie's Warbler. The following were seen at Fort Davis/Davis Mountains State Park: Montezuma Quail; Blue Grosbeak; Black-headed Grosbeak; Western Bluebird and Western Scrub Jay. Fort Davis Fort also had interesting birds: Canyon Wren; Gray Flycatcher; Black-headed Grosbeak; Townsend's Solitaire; Black-chinned Hummingbird and Black-crested Titmouse. In addition, there was a Collared Peccary. Balmorhea State Park had Bullocks Oriole; Scaled Quail and a pair of Great Horned Owls and Western/Clark's Grebes. Balmorhea Lake had Green-winged Teal; Blue-winged Teal; Cinnamon Teal; Gadwall; Northern Shoveler and Mallard. In the Christmas Mountains the following birds were encountered: Varied Bunting; Lark Bunting; Scaled Quail; Lucifer Hummingbirds and a Zone-tailed Hawk. A high clearance vehicle was required. In the Big Bend Basin Area a Cactus Wren and Brewer's Blackbird was encountered. The Boot Springs/South Rim area had a Roadrunner; Black Bear on the Laguna Meadows Trail; Dusty-capped Flycatcher; Colima Warblers in Boot Canyon; Blue-throated Hummingbird; Mexican Jays and Acorn Woodpecker. Dugout Wells & Rio Grande Village produced a Curvedbilled Thrasher; a Red-tailed Hawk (Western) and a Common Black Hawk in a nest. Cottonwood Campground at Santa Elena Canyon had a Vermilion Flycatcher and a Golden-fronted Woodpecker. Pine Canyon had a Band-tailed Pigeon and a Painted Redstart. There was no time to go to **Cottonwood Ranch**.

Sightings: Mississippi Kites & Western Kingbird (Grimes County); Swallow-tailed Kite (Hwy 90); Least Flycatcher (Kleb Woods); Roadrunner (Fred's house); Swainson's Hawk; Glossy Ibis (Chain of Lakes).

Minutes: See Marie if changes need to be made.

Library: Debbie Valdez was not here.

Treasurer's Report: Harlan Evans stated that the treasury has \$9,332.

Membership: Please sign in!!!

The Spoonbill: Vicki Sims stated that next year, The Spoonbill will not be sent to everyone's house. If you don't have internet access, contact Vicki and she will mail you one.

Announcements: Jennifer Backo has a Bauch and Laum, waterproof, 8 X 42, Close Focus Binoculars for sale.

ABA Sparrow Field Trip (6 day) is the 1st week in December in Tucson, AZ.

Adam Wood is looking for 1 or 2 volunteers to coordinate or organize field trips.

Kleb Woods Hummingbird Festival will be on Saturday, September 15 from 9am to 3pm.

Kleb Woods will also have Free Friday Fall Feathered Features. Gary Clark will talk about Hawks and Their Identification on September 28.

Past Field Trips: See Learning Corner notes.

Future Field Trips: Pam Smolen is leading a Chimney Swift trip a week from tonight.

September 22, 2012 on Saturday, Marcy Brown is leading a Hawk Watch field trip.

Program: Birdin' Texas: Is August the Best Month to Bird in Texas? Presented by *Fred Collins*, Director of Kleb Woods Nature Sanctuary. What is special about August?

- The sky turns a clearer blue.
- The sun feels warm.
- Plants reach their zenith; wetlands are lush; grass matures and seeds turn golden.
- Some trees like buckeye and sycamore start to drop leaves.
- Shorebirds are thick in the seaweed.
- Purple Martins congregate.

Fred Collins mentioned his favorite places to bird in August:

- Katy Prairie
- Kleb Woods
- Shorebird places (Warren Ranch Lake; Bolivar Flats; Sod Farms; Bryan Beach Lagoon @ Quintana)
- The Valley August Pelagic Trip from South Padre (Jaegers)
- Davis Mountains in July and August. August is monsoon season there. (5,280 feet) (Look for Hummingbirds.)
- Wood Storks at Hegar Lake. (Jacana show up among Wood Storks. Keep an eye out for them.)
- Upland Sandpipers pass through in April and in August. It is unusual to see one after May 5th. They are hard to see in August because the grass is tall in August.
- Buff-breasted Sandpipers can be seen in August and September.
- If shorebirds are around, Falcons are around.
- Most Eastern Kingbirds are to be found in thickets of Hackberry Trees and Hercules Club Trees. When migrating, Eastern Kingbirds eat fruit.
- Cattle Egrets follow tractors that are plowing and disking corn stubble. They came to Texas in 1957. Could the Cattle Egret be why we no longer have Horned Lizards?
- Lots of King Rails can be seen when rice is cut.
- August is Mississippi Kite month. They are usually flying between 10am to 2pm catching Dragonflies that move up into the sky when it gets really hot. Watch closely and you can see the wings helicopter down after the Mississippi Kite eats the Dragonfly.
- Least Flycatcher is the earliest migrant. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers show up early. Summer Tanager and Eastern Wood-Pewee are birds seen in August.
- Hornsby Bend near Austin (Sewage Treatment Plant) is a good place to see shorebirds. Spotted Redshank can be seen in September.
- Follets Island and Bryan Beach are good places to look for Red Knots with variable plumage in July or August. Marbled Godwits are one of the earliest returning shorebirds. In addition, look for Magnificent Frigatebirds.
- Bolivar Flats is a good place to see Red-necked Stint in June. Also, look for Curlew Sandpiper.
- Three Pelagic Trips are run by Eric Carpenter from Port Isabel. The boat trip lasts for 12 hours. Mary Gustoff points out birds and is an impressive Sea Birder. One can see Band-rumped Storm-Petrels, Cory's Shearwaters, Audubon's Shearwaters, Masked Boobies, Pomarine Jaegers (barrel chested and has more white in the wings), Bridled Terns, Pilot Whales and Whale Sharks.
- Birds seen in The Valley include Botteri's Sparrow, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Groove-billed Ani and Common Pauraque.

- Davis Mountains yields Hepatic Tanagers, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds (the most common Hummingbird there), Magnificent Hummingbirds (in the upper portions), Lucifer Hummingbirds, White-eared Hummingbirds, Berylline Hummingbirds, Slate-throated Redstarts, a Fan-tailed Warbler (August 23, 2007 in Pine Canyon), and Aztec Thrush.
- Black Swifts are passing through Texas on their way to a Brazilian lowland area. They pass through the Trans Pecos of Texas twice a year. (They pass through in August.)

The above listed places and birds are reasons that Fred Collins gave that one should bird in AUGUST. So get out and go bird watching!!!!

Marie Asscherick/Ornithology Group Secretary

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

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	marcydbrown@gmail.com
Vice-Chair:	Nina Rach	281-433-0651	NRach@autreVie.com
Vice-Chair Asst:	Stennie Meadors		stenmead@aol.com
Secretary:	Marie Asscherick	832-721-8140	birdswelove4ever@aol.com
Treasurer:	Harlan Evans	713-797-6468	harlanj42@sbcglobal.net
Clearing House:	David Sarkozi	713-412-4409	david@sarkozi.net
Library:	Debbie Valdez	832-794-3314	xxijumpstreet@sbcglobal.net
Membership:	Margret Simmons	713-776-2511	msimmons@compassnet.com.
Membership CoChair:	JoAnn Raine	832-567-7310	rainejoann@gmail.com
Field Trips:	Adam Woods	713-515-1692	birdsondabrain@earthlink.net
The Spoonbill:	Vicki Sims	713-779-7609	oncspoon@gmail.com

OG website: http://www.ornithologygroup.org/
ONC website: http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/