

## **Monthly Meeting May 5, 2014**

**Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX**

6:30 pm Learning Corner: Members will show warbler and flycatcher pictures

7:00 pm [Ornithology Group](#) (OG) Business Meeting

7:30 pm Program: Highlights of Kleb Woods Birding Classes by Fred Collins

[Field Trip](#): Warbler Woods (May 4, 7:00 am), led by Debbie Valdez

[A Vote for the Beauty of the Roseate Spoonbill](#)

## **Warbler Woods Field Trip, May 4, 7:00 am**

**Led by Debbie Valdez**

The Houston OG is sponsoring a field trip to Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary on Sunday, May 4. Best place to stay would be the Hampton Inn and Suites in Schertz. You will need to make your own reservations. We will meet Don Schaezler at the sanctuary gate at 7 am. On the morning of our visit, we will collect \$10 per participant to be donated to the bird sanctuary, which is non-profit. There are several other birding hotspots nearby, including Crescent Bend, Mitchell Lake, and Friedrich Park. Friedrich Park is a guarantee late in the day for the Golden Cheeked Warbler according to Susan Schaezler.

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## A Vote for the Beauty of the Roseate Spoonbill

By Hart Rufe (reprinted with permission; first published October 23, 2013)



The compliment is the kind that photographers dream about receiving. It arrived “out of the blue,” from a far off land (well, Los Angeles, CA), unexpected, unsolicited, and unannounced in my email inbox. It was originally sent to the general email address for the St Lucie Audubon Society on May 31st of this year, but did not find its way to my inbox until September 18. The email simply said:

*“Dear Sirs and Madams,  
Please tell whoever took that photo on your home page of the Roseate Spoonbill standing in the water with its wings open that that is the best photo of a bird I have ever seen (Okay, I’m biased, because R Spoonbill is one of my favorite birds). But seriously: it is sharp, in focus, well-composed, etc. etc. etc. That photo should go on the cover of National Geographic Magazine. I am stunned by how perfect that photo is. Tom”*

Of course, I could not let that note go by without sharing it with you, and also presenting additional photos of this gorgeous species. In an earlier HartBeat article I suggested that the Painted Bunting was the most beautiful of all the birds in North America. <http://stlucieaudubon.org/docs/hartBeat/hb130416Buntings.html>. Most readers who commented on the article agreed, but quite a number also suggested other birds as candidates for the “Most Beautiful” crown. However, none mentioned Roseate Spoonbill. Undoubtedly, “Tom’s” email should be counted, like a late absentee ballot coming into a Florida voting precinct, as a vote for Roseate Spoonbill. Does any reader want to change your vote as a result of this new contestant?

Unlike a regular election we can reopen the voting, and even offer additional advertising photos in support of the new candidate.

And so, in addition to the original spread wings photo, we present a formal “regal” pose; a baker’s dozen shot including an interloper; a group of squabbling Spoonbills acting like bickering legislators; and a cute juvenile Spoonbill with a just-beginning-to-develop spatula bill. Okay, you can now cast your vote.



*A quartet of Roseate Spoonbills dispute landing rights?*





Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is a wonderful place to see Roseate Spoonbills up close and personal, and the spread wings, regal and baker's dozen photos all were taken there. In early spring the Roseate Spoonbills compete for prime nesting spots at the T M Goodwin Waterfowl Management Area, also known as the "Stick Marsh," near Fellsmere, FL, and can be seen in good numbers squabbling for sites. And finally, the Alligator Farm in St Augustine in late March through early May is an excellent place to see all kinds of baby herons, Wood Storks and Spoonbills at relatively close range.



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## About the Ornithology Group

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Secretary | needed

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