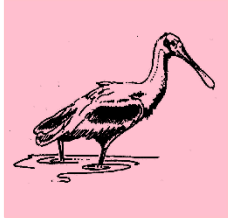


## Monthly Meeting April 6, 2015

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



6:30 pm Nominations and Report on ONC's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): Texas Pelagic Trips by Eric Carpenter

[Field Trips](#): ONC's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, Saturday, March 28, 8:30 am, led by Aaron Stoley

Katy Prairie, Saturday, April 18, 3:45 pm until dark, led by Bob and Maggie Honig (20 persons maximum; registration by email required)

[Pelagic Trip | Renew Membership](#)

## Texas Pelagic Trips

**By Eric Carpenter**

Eric will talk about the great pelagic trips that you can take in Texas.

He says, I have been birding in Texas for almost 36 years, starting at the age of 10. My brother and I started watching birds because my dad, Larry, did; and growing up in far northwest Houston we had the great birding spots of the Upper Texas Coast rather accessible. I received a Computer Science degree from Trinity University (San Antonio) and eventually made my way to Austin, where I've lived for the past 20 years, working as a software engineer. I am also recently married to my wife Maggie, also a birder, and we will be celebrating our one-year anniversary this spring. When I'm not working, I am most likely birding or doing something related to birds. In 2003, I was the first one to crack the 500 barrier in a Texas Big Year with a tally of 505 species. I currently serve as the Secretary of the Texas Bird Records Committee and am an eBird reviewer for many areas of the state. My interest in Texas pelagics started as a participant on some of the pioneering trips in the mid 1990's and I have been addicted ever since.

[↑top↑](#)

## ONC's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, 8:30 am

**Led by Aaron Stoley**

Please contact Debbie Valdez ([debvaldez66@gmail.com](mailto:debvaldez66@gmail.com)) if you are interested in sharing a ride so we can arrange to meet to carpool. We will meet Aaron Stoley at the gate at 8:30.

**Directions to the sanctuary (GPS at entrance gate: N 30° 32.141' W 95° 13.564')**

**Route 1 — US 59 via Cleveland**

Take US Highway 59 north to Cleveland; turn left on FM 2025; go five miles and turn left on FM 945. Go 11 miles to the entrance on your right.

**Route 2 — I-45 via Willis**

Take I-45 north to Willis; turn right on FM 1097 to SH 150; go approx. 9 miles to FM 945 South; turn right. Go two miles to the entrance on your left.

**Route3 — I-45 via New Waverly**

Take I-45 north to New Waverly; turn right on SH 150; go approx. 17 miles to FM 945 South; proceed as above.

**Katy Prairie, April 18, 3:45 pm until dark (about 8:15 pm) (20 person limit; email [debvaldez66@gmail.com](mailto:debvaldez66@gmail.com)) with the names of those who will be coming**

**By Bob and Maggie Honig**

We plan to focus on [Katy Prairie Conservancy \(KPC\)](#) properties that don't have public access. We hope to see migrant land and water birds as well as early arriving summer breeders, and of course resident species (see the [Katy Prairie Bird Checklist](#)). Meet at the KPC Field Office at the [Indiangrass Preserve](#). Participants should bring flashlights in case we need them for the walk back to vehicles when it's getting dark (no moonlight -- new moon that night). Participants must sign a [KPC release](#) form in order to enter KPC properties (please print and sign the form and bring it with you to save time). Those who want to spend more of the day birding prior to the field trip can go to [KPC's Matt Cook Wildlife Observation Platform](#) at Warren Lake and/or [Paul Rushing Park](#). Registration by email is required. Only the first 20 to register will be allowed to attend. Send Debbie Valdez ([debvaldez66@gmail.com](mailto:debvaldez66@gmail.com)) a message with the names of those who will be coming in the message.

[↑top↑](#)

**Pelagic Trip (excerpt from 2014 trip report)**

**By Eric Carpenter**

Over the next few hours it seemed like non-stop action. A couple of Band-rumped Storm Petrels passed close by the bow. Then a distant huge splash seen off the bow really startled us. As we watched in amazement we had four or five huge Sperm Whales breach in rapid succession. Too bad they were maybe 1/2 mile away, still it was just spectacular! No one aboard had ever seen Sperm Whales breach before. As we cruised toward them to try for a closer look, a second closer pod of six Sperm Whales surfaced just in front of the boat, very close. After a minute or two the two large bulls sounded for the depths off the port bow showing off their flukes. Then the

smaller females and their calves approached the starboard bow giving us superb views of the two calves side-by-side with their blunt noses reaching up out of the water to look us over. There were even a few more whales from a third group at the same time blowing behind us off the stern. By now we had seen somewhere around 16-19 Sperm Whales ... in 4 different pods! Finally, 40 minutes later another few blows from a fifth pod of sperm whales was spotted. Our total Sperm Whale count for the day was 18-20+ an unprecedented high count for 20+ years of Texas Pelagics; we had seen Sperm Whales on only two previous South Padre Island Texas Pelagics.



Following all the whale action, it was a steady stream of sightings. We had some brief looks at another Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, and Audubon's and Cory's Shearwater. We were also building a nice list of land birds as well including Black-and-White Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Barn Swallows, Olive-sided Flycatcher, cattle egret, and numerous other unidentified passerines. Once back over the continental shelf a very friendly sub-adult Masked Booby greeted us and circled the boat for about 20 minutes. It was fascinating to watch it repeatedly make shallow dives torpedoing just below the water's surface in pursuit of flying fish that the boat was scattering. As we were growing tired of watching the booby a flurry of four terns, two jaegers and a few passerines scrambled by the bow. It was confusing to sort out all the action with binoculars alone. One jaeger alternately chased a fat passerine and then was sidetracked to chasing the terns. This jaeger was initially identified as a 'parasitic' and the photos proved that the 'passerine' it was chasing was a Sora. There were two or three Bridled Terns in the group

and a second jaeger of uncertain ID. Reviewing the photos later revealed that the ‘parasitic’ was actually a first summer Long-Tailed Jaeger. The photos also revealed at least one of the terns was a Sooty Tern.



Sounds like an exciting event. See if you would like to be on a boat trip into the Gulf of Mexico!

[↑top↑](#)

## **2015 Dues are Due!**

Don't forget to renew your ONC/OG dues if you haven't already done so. ONC/OG dues are paid yearly on a calendar basis beginning January 1st. Ornithology Group dues are used to pay honorariums and travel expenses for speakers at OG meetings, to make OG donations to other organizations, and for a few other OG expenses. Life Members of ONC still need to pay yearly OG dues. Pay by check at the next OG meeting or use the form below (it specifies the proper dues amounts) to submit updated information for the ONC database, and mail along with your check to the ONC post office box.

We need your dues to keep the Ornithology Group running!

If you have questions about your membership status, contact Margret Simmons at [msimmons@compassnet.com](mailto:msimmons@compassnet.com) or 713-776-2511.

Thank you for your renewal!

## TO START OR RENEW A MEMBERSHIP:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

ONC Annual Dues: \$ 8.00 for individuals; \$ 15.00 for families

OG Annual Dues: \$ 12.00 for individuals; \$ 15.00 for families

**Total: \$ 20.00 for individuals; \$ 30.00 for families**

Additional contributions are welcome in any amount.

Send to:

Outdoor Nature Club

PO Box 1014

Bellaire, TX 77402

[↑top↑](#)

## **About the Ornithology Group**

**Chair:** Nina Rach | 281-433-0651 | NRach@autrevie.com

**Vice Chair (Programs):** | JoAnn Raine | RaineJoann@gmail.com

**Secretary** | needed

**Treasurer:** Harlan Evans | 713-797-6468 | harlanj42@sbcglobal.net

**Clearing House:** David Sarkozi | 713-412-4409 | david@sarkozi.net

**Library:** Pam Smolen | pjsmolen@att.net

**Membership:** Margret Simmons | 713-776-2511 | msimmons@compassnet.com

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**Spoonbill Outgoing Editor:** Vicki Sims: oncspoon@gmail.com

**OG website:** <http://www.ornithologygroup.org/>

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

[↑top↑](#)