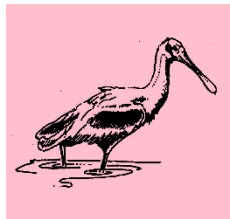


Monthly Meeting May 2, 2016

Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX



6:30 pm [Learning Corner](#): Birding Coastal South America - Cape Horn the Easy Way by Jean Greenhalgh

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): Why Warblers Make My Profession Exciting by Greg Lavaty

[Field Trip](#): Sabine Woods, May 7, 8 am, led by Stephan Lorenz

[OG Field Trip Report](#) | [Galapagos Trip](#)
[Minutes of April 4 Meeting](#)

2016 Dues are Due: <http://ornithologygroup.org/Dues>

Birding Events: <http://ornithologygroup.org/Events>

[Sustainability Handout from April 4 Meeting](#)

Birding Coastal South America – Cape Horn the Easy Way

By Jean Greenhalgh

A cruise on a 3,000 passenger ship may seem an unlikely place for a birding trip, but seeing birds on a cruise round South America may be easier than you might think. Apart from the pelagics seen from the ship, the ports of call can provide good opportunities to see unusual species in many different countries. And it can give you ideas for where you might wish to return for a land based trip. In words and pictures, this will give you a taste of South American birding and cruising.

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Why Warblers Make My Profession Exciting

By Greg Lavaty

For the past two decades Greg Lavaty has been busy photographing birds of all descriptions around the world. A chance encounter with a Prothonotary Warbler got Greg excited enough to buy a camera and sent him down the rabbit hole of bird photography. This lure of the warblers was intensified when he witnessed a fallout at High Island. Though Greg is thrilled to photograph anything with feathers, it is the warblers that he finds most exciting. Greg will share some of his warbler photos and a few stories of how they came about.

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**Field trip: Sabine Woods, Saturday, May 7, 8 am, led by
Stephan Lorenz**

Send email/questions to Debvaldez66@gmail.com.

We have a pleasant surprise for our May field trip. Stephan Lorenz is in town and will be our guide for our late Migration Field Trip May 7. We have picked Sabine PASS and Sabine Woods to have the best opportunity to observe late migrants.

There is a change in the meeting place. MEET at the intersection where Hwy 87 turns right towards Sabine Woods at 8:00 am. This intersection is in Sabine Pass, there is a Gas Station/Store there (Sportman's Supply). We want to bird this area first before we get to Sabine Woods.

Here is the map link: 5265-5299 S Gulfway Dr, Port Arthur, TX 77655, US - <https://goo.gl/maps/B3zWYBwciNC2>

You can call Stephan, Michelle Rometry or Debbie Valdez as needed. Debbie's cell 713 771 5417 and Michelle's cell is 979 943 1588. Stephan's cell is 713 483 0247.

I am out of town, so would like someone to do a trip report. Please coordinate with Deb Valdez and email to me.

BRING your Lunch along with sunscreen, mosquito spray, maybe something for chiggers, and a hat

Jean Booth
cell 832 816 1060

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OG Field Trip Report - Mad Island Marsh Preserve April 9, 2016

By Jean Booth

OG members met up in Bay City early in the morning to caravan out to the Mad Island Marsh Preserve. We were escorted by Steve Goetz, the preserve manager, for a full day of birding. The first stop was at the Smithsonian banding station set up on the intercostal waterway. Tim Guida and Kristin Oliver patiently explained the banding procedure going on while Daniel Aubrey was busy collecting migrants from the nets. The group watched as a Kentucky, Blue-winged, Tennessee, and Worm-eating warblers were weighed, had their toenails clipped, one feather plucked, and examined. Additional birds included Northern Waterthrush, White-eyed Vireo, Hooded Warbler, and Common Yellowthroat plus one very active Carolina Wren. Unfortunately the wind picked up and the nets that captured the birds had to be put away. But Mad Island Marsh never disappoints as we saw Black Terns following the boats on the Intracoastal Waterway among other shorebirds before we left the area.



The rest of the day was spent exploring various wetlands, coastal prairie areas, and the bay by the lodge. Many birds and plants were spotted and much discussion about them took place. We also saw adult and baby alligators. Lunch was provided, we ate by the lodge overlooking the bay. The trip ended with our group heading down to the bay where we observed some Seaside Sparrows and an Osprey hunting for fish. Is there any better way to spend a beautiful spring day?

The next day about ten members stayed for a half day excursion lead by Sue and Tad Heath, who took us to one of their favorite spots, Chinquapin Road. This dirt road winds through rice and agricultural fields, pastures, and the border of Big Boggy NWP all the way to a handful of houses that form the town Chinquapin on the intercostal. We knew the trip would be great when we encountered 43 Swainson's Hawks sitting in a field waiting for a meal. Additional Swainson's were flying over and resting on posts. We then went to a rice field and were scanning for birds when the farmer drove over and told us we could drive on the field to get a better view! We were rewarded with American Golden Plovers and other shorebirds plus a juvenile Swainson's that was resting on the edge of the ditch next to the cars. After those amazing experiences we drove past a pasture full of wildflowers and Upland Sandpipers. Another field contained a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. A stop at the part of the road that had some trees yielded warblers including Black-throated Green, Black-and-white, Worm-eating, and a Louisiana Waterthrush walking along the side of the road and went under our cars. Down by the Intracoastal Waterway we saw a Peregrine Falcon, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, more Black Terns, and American Oystercatchers, one banded, plus more.



All OG members were excited to bird the well-known Mad Island Marsh Preserve and had a great time.

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Galapagos Trip

By Joann Raine

Sometimes you get an opportunity that demands you stretch the budget. My Houston children decided to make the ship "Endeavor" home for a week. National Geographic tours are legendary for quality.

Our trip started in Guayaqui, Ecuador and a flight to Santa Cruz. Our ship, Endeavor held 90 passengers in style and comfort. We were offered four things to do each morning and afternoon. Zodiacs are the transportation to each of the Islands. Wet or dry landings are decided by the type of beach.

Under the eyes of the Ecuadorian guides, you can explore each very different habitat. Santa Cruz is green and has the giant tortoises in the highlands. Floreana has gorgeous beach with sea lions. Genovese has Iguanas a plenty.

Each of the islands has a mockingbird and a finch which have evolved to adapt to a specific food source. The Island nesting seabirds are the most sought after species. It is assured that you will see all the booby species very close up. The frigatebirds and the red billed tropicbirds will soar above your zodiac.

It is a trip of a lifetime and I am really glad I went.

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Minutes of April 4 Meeting

By Jean Greenhalgh

The OG monthly meeting was held on Monday, April 4 at 6:30 and 35 people attended.

The Learning Corner –Vicki Sims and Pat Tovren, who met many years ago while docents at the Houston Zoo, discussed various aspects of environmental sustainability and ways in which members can help. Pat spoke about Houston Zoo, and other zoos, becoming spokespeople for conservation for wildlife around the world. She especially described tantalum mining in a gorilla preserve in the Congo where the primate population has halved from 258 to 130. Miners, earning 2000% more than the average rate of \$10pm, eat bush meat, which includes gorillas. Tantalum is a mineral used in all rechargeable batteries but is easily recyclable. Cell phones are collected by Houston Zoo for recycling. Vicki spoke about Orangutan and elephant habitat destruction for palm oil production and provided a hand-out about Orangutan-Friendly sustainable palm oil, which had a treat list and also a list of good food and cosmetic brands.

The Citizens Environmental Coalition for Houston has a very informative website and has produced an Environmental Resource Guide for Houston. <http://www.cechouston.org/CEC/>

Harlan Evans, our Treasurer, stated that OG has bank balance of \$9,300.

The OG Field Trip on May 7th is to Sabine Woods, a Texas Ornithological Society bird *sanctuary*. This is an area of large oaks on a chenier ridge, a few miles west of Sabine Pass. Meet at Hwy 87 entrance gate, 8am. Trip leader: Stephan Lorenz. Still need a trip liaison.

Field trips in April include the Mad Isle weekend (Matagorda) April 9 & 10; and our second bird survey of a new A&M property – Long Ranch in Richmond on April 21. Jean Booth emails details of field trips to all members. If you are not receiving emails, please let Jean know at ljeanbooth@aol.com

The Texas Ornithology Society is holding its Spring meeting in Uvalde on May 6 – 8. The focus of the birding trips will be Golden Cheeked Warbler, Black Capped Vireo and other Edwards Plateau specialties. Registration is open, and details are on the TOS website <http://www.texasbirds.org/>

Joann Raine introduced the speaker, Sarah Flournoy from Houston Audubon Society (HAS), speaking about Bird Friendly Communities: Where Birds Thrive, People Prosper.

Nature Deficit Disorder is growing as people become more removed from nature. Research has shown that hospital patients recover at least a couple of days faster if they can see a garden or green space instead of a brick wall. Even landscape pictures in their room are beneficial.

The HAS vision is the creation of a healthier natural environment and more beautiful place to live by leading and nurturing a community that values and supports birds. HAS accomplishes this through Awareness – Appreciation – Action.

National Audubon is promoting Bird Friendly Communities and the focus for HAS is

1. Native Plants for Houston
2. Habitat and Community Projects
3. Education and Advocacy

Houston: Urban Conservation Treaty

Houston is on the central migration flyway, especially for spring migrants. A big problem is the increasing urban density over the last 100 years. Projections for the next 15 years are not good.

Houston has an Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds which is a partnership between the City of Houston and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve migratory birds in Urban areas. One of the ways this is being carried out is through the Bayou Greenway initiative, which will establish an interconnected system of parks and trails linking people, places and green space, while enhancing air and water quality, reducing flooding, and stimulating economic development.

Bird Friendly Garden: Every green space counts

Research shows that birds prefer native plants, and some insects, especially butterflies, rely on specific native host plants for food. A chickadee with 4 babies needs 9,000 caterpillars to raise the chicks and will return to native trees, even if further way than non-natives, for food. Caterpillar host plants are beneficial to both birds and insects.

Diverse and layered plantings should be diverse and also layered – with understory, mid-story and over-story trees and shrubs.

A water feature is essential and needs to be shallow and audible. Nesting and roosting sites should be provided.

Reduction in lawn area, or replacing some or all with prairie grasses and growing natives in flower beds works well.

Re-thinking ways to choose plants to consider food and water value and carbon sequestration.

HAS works with nurseries to get native plants

The Native Plant Nursery, at its Edith L Moore Nature Sanctuary, collects seeds from roadsides and prairie remnants, grows them and sells them both there and, in April, at Boy Scout Woods on High Island.

Examples of native plantings include the MD Anderson Prairie at the corner of Fannin and Holcombe and Mandell Park which is 1.22 acres surrounded by Bonnie Brae, Mandell and Richmond Avenue in Houston's Museum District.

An excellent book on the subject is *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas Tallamy, available from Amazon.

HAS has information on bird friendly communities, including plant lists on its website houstonaudubon.org under the “about us” tab.

Another useful website is the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.

The next Ornithology Group meeting will be held on Monday May 2nd when the speaker will be Greg Lavaty, photographic program on spring warbler migration. The Learning Corner will be Birding Coastal South America.

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