

## Monthly Meeting January 9, 2017

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



6:30 pm Learning Corner: Rock Doves by Rusti Stover

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): How Baby Birds Grow by Kendra Kokab

[Field Trips](#): Birding Brazoria County by Ron Weeks, January 7, 6:45 am and Katy Prairie in the Winter by Bob Honig, January 28, 6:30 pm

[Field Trip Report to Matagorda County](#)

2017 Dues are Due: <http://ornithologygroup.org/Dues>

### Rock Doves

By Rusti Stover

Although maligned as a pest bird, especially in cities, Rock Doves, our common pigeon, have been around almost forever. They vary widely in colors and patterns, some quite beautiful, for bird watchers to enjoy! So let's learn about this species, both the good and the bad!



### How Baby Birds Grow

by Kendra Kolab

Kendra Kocab is our primary speaker at 7:30 on Jan 9, 2017 She is the naturalist at Kleb Woods north of Houston. Kendra is the bird walk leaders at Kleb Woods and Bear Creek and is our "identifier in chief" for the birding bus trips.



The presentation starts from the egg and goes through the development of chicks through independence. We talk about some confusing terminology, extremes in each stage (most eggs laid, fastest time to fledging, etc.), and compare altricial vs precocial chicks.

[↑top↑](#)

## **Field Trips:**

### **Birding Brazoria County, guided by Ron Weeks, January 7, 6:45am**

*San Bernard NWR, Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary, and Brazoria NWR.*

We will meet at 6:45 AM at TDECU (Texas Dow Employees Credit Union) located 1001 FM 2004, Lake Jackson which is located near the intersection of TX288 and FM2004 in Lake Jackson. Take TX288 south toward Lake Jackson and take the FM2004 exit and make a slight Right on FM2004 for .69 mile. If you reach Lake Rd, you have gone a little too far. It is close to Brazos Mall.

We will start at San Bernard NWR looking at woodland (Bobcat Woods), waterfowl (Wolfweed Reservoir and Moist Soil units) and marsh (Moccasin Pond) birds, move to Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary to look and gulls, terns, and shorebirds, and finish up at Brazoria NWR. This trip will focus on rare birds found on the Christmas Bird Counts and any other special birds participants would like to see.

**Bring Walkie Talkies and a lunch.** Dress for the weather and bring boots (we probably won't need them), warm clothes, sunscreen and mosquito spray. Bring binoculars and your scope and bird books. Bring your smiley faces and remember to birding etiquette practice in consideration of the group and our guide. We will merge into fewer cars and leave some in their parking lot.

The field trip is limited to 15 participants, so sign up by emailing [Ljeanbooth@aol.com](mailto:Ljeanbooth@aol.com) – cell # 832 816 1060.

[↑top↑](#)

## **Katy Prairie Sunset in Winter**

### **Saturday, January 28, 2:30 to 6:30 PM**

**Destination:** Katy Prairie – we plan to focus on Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) properties to which the public does not have frequent access.

**Guide:** Bob Honig, KPC Board of Directors Member 1992-2016, moving to Advisory Boards in 2017, and OG member, has spent countless hours observing birds and other wildlife on the Katy Prairie (Bob lives within sight of the KPC Field Office).

**Reservations:** Space is limited to 20 participants, so we need you to sign up in advance to confirm a space on this great field trip. Just send me an email to register for this trip. We will have a wait list if over 20 of you sign up.

## Special Instructions:

- Once you sign up I will email you the *KPC release of liability* form that you will need to sign to authorize you to the KPC property property. Please bring your signed form with you. You can also print a copy off the website.
- Bring a flashlight for the very end of the trip in case it's starting to get dark (it will be dark just after 6:30 PM).
- Wear footwear that you don't mind getting a bit wet – it's still may be very wet in places.
- Don't forget water, a hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent. (Though we don't expect insects to be an issue.
- Regardless of the weather, please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Long sleeves will protect you from the sun and bugs.
- Bring food if you want to eat your dinner as we watch the sunset (or at any other time during the field trip; you are welcome to bring a folding chair to sit in as we leisurely watch the sunset.). And of course bring your binoculars, scope, camera.

**Description:** We'll explore grasslands, wetlands, and tree lines – on properties owned by the Katy Prairie Conservancy, which has helped protect approximately 20,000 acres in west Harris County and east Waller County. We hope to see a variety of wintering birds such as sparrows, hawks, and waterfowl. At sunset we plan to situate ourselves where we can observe the evening flight of maybe Sandhill Cranes or Long-billed Curlews, maybe wading birds and waterfowl, plus maybe a Short-eared Owl or two, we'll go where we think the action will be. Check out the Katy Prairie bird checklist.

**Directions:** Meet at KPC's Field Office on the Indiangrass Preserve in Waller County at 2:30 PM. From Houston go west on Interstate 10 – Take Exit 737 Pederson Rd. and turn right (north). Go north on Pederson Rd. about 1/2 mile until it tees into US 90 (note: no sign for US 90 here). Turn left (west) on US 90 and go about 1/2 mile to the first right (turn north) which is FM 2855. Go 6 miles north on FM 2855 to the intersection with FM 529. Continue straight across FM 529 – you are now on Morrison Rd. After 1 mile, Morrison makes a sharp left turn to the west – continue on Morrison 1 more mile to Pattison Rd. Turn right (north) onto Pattison Rd and go 3 miles to where Pattison tees into Hebert Rd. Turn left (west) on Hebert Rd.; go 1 mile to the KPC Field Office sign on the left – 31950 Hebert Rd. Turn left (south) through the entrance gate and go about 400 yards to the office. Map and More Directions on the KPC website.

Note: Should you wish to head out to the prairie a bit early, we suggest KPC's Matt Cook Memorial Viewing Platform at Warren Lake and/or Harris County Precinct 3's PaulRushing Park.

*If severe weather is predicted, check for an email from me for any last minute changes or cancellation of the field trip.*

Send email to [Ljeanbooth@aol.com](mailto:Ljeanbooth@aol.com) to sign up for this field trip. **Reminder - 2017 Dues are due**

[↑top↑](#)

## **Ornithology Group Field Trip to Matagorda County, November 18 - 20, 2016**

**By Sandy Parker and Jennifer Backo**

Six intrepid OG members ventured out on the road by 5 am on November 18, 2016, in order to arrive at the Mad Island Marsh gate by 8 am to participate in the monthly bird count. While waiting at the gate, a juvenile male Northern Harrier glided over the fields and seven Sandhill Cranes were heard, then spotted in the distance. Our guides Bob Friedrichs, Cathy Wakefield, and the delightful Ms. Murphy escorted us throughout the preserve during the count, where we were thrilled to see two Aplomado Falcons sparring in midair. Other highlights of the count included a Say's Phoebe, three Vermillion Flycatchers, a White-tailed Hawk, a Sedge Wren, several White-tailed Kites and numerous ducks and geese.

During our lunch break, our hosts provided an overview of the formation of Mad Island Marsh, a Nature Conservancy property. After the bird count, Bob took us to Oyster Lake, where we saw American Oystercatchers, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Western Sandpipers, Long-billed Curlews, Dunlins, Dowitchers and a raft of Red-breasted Mergansers. Then, the front came in with blustery winds and some rain, but we soldiered on until the end of the day. Traveling back to Bay City, Bald Eagles were sighted.

Later that evening, we met at Applebees for dinner then headed to the hotel for an early night so that we would be ready to leave before dawn the next day.



We met Bob in the lobby the next morning at 6:30, where he reviewed the plans for the day which were to spend the morning visiting ponds and wetlands along county roads. Then, in the afternoon, we were to reach Matagorda Bay and bird the beach and the dunes. We were prepared to brave the cold and wind all day but we enjoyed beautiful sunny, but cold, weather.

We began on South Citrus Road at a large pond containing lots of Pintails and also some Shovelers, Green-winged Teals, Gadwalls, Redheads, Scaups, and Buffleheads. Perhaps the most thrilling sight was the Bald Eagles harassing the ducks. Altogether, we saw six eagles during the



day, including adults and immatures. We also visited a pretty little pond that had two Least Grebes along with many Coots and some more ducks. Bob led us along many county roads where we made our most thrilling find; a couple of Sprague's Pipits walking along the side of the road. This species gave at least one member of our group a "lifer". Other memorable birds were Avocets and Black-necked Stilts on the ponds and a roadside Merlin that flew overhead.

After lunch, we headed for Matagorda Bay where we took the boardwalk to the beach. Down there, we had some nice surprises, including three Horned Larks, a flock of Franklin's Gulls and some Boat-tailed Grackles. Also seen were two Snowy Plovers near the Franklin's gulls.

That evening, we met for dinner at 9er's, a local restaurant. There we went over our lists and made plans to bird on Sunday morning along South Gulf Road which follows the bank of the Intercoastal Canal. There we stumbled upon a roost of about thirty Black-crowned Night Herons. Other birds spotted were one Pectoral Sandpiper, lots of peeps and some Savannah Sparrows.

Those participating on the Matagorda trip were:

Jean Booth, Sandy Parker, Billie Strickland, Debbie Burnett, Karen Terrell, Debbie Repasz, Joann Raine, Jennifer Backo, Lori McKenna, and Bill and Edie O'Brien.



I would like to thank Bob Friedrichs for giving up his time to guide us for a wonderful day of birding. Thanks also goes to Jean Booth for planning a great day of birding in Matagorda County.

We donated \$200 to the upcoming FIRST Matagorda County Birding Festival that is scheduled for February 18-19. Bob will send us the agenda for the 2-day Festival once it is finalized and I will send to the OG Group. Bob hopes to see some of us there.

Also, Bob is the CBC Leader for the first ever Jackson-Calhoun County CBC to be held on December 27. I have made a commitment to participate and hope some of you will join. See the details below. Please copy me on an email to Bob to Register and we may arrange for carpooling.

There is an exciting new CBC opportunity in the midcoast section of our state; the first ever Jackson-Calhoun County CBC will be held on December 27. The circle will straddle the Jackson and Calhoun County lines and be centered near the community of Weedhaven, just east of Port Lavaca and Point Comfort. The circle will include bay and estuarine habitat in the lower reaches of the Lavaca and Carancuhua Rivers as well as riparian habitat along Cox Creek and Keller Creek. Also in the circle are large tracks of pasture and crop land great for geese, cranes, falcons and Sprague's Pipits. Formosa Plastics and ALCOA properties should provide good birding as well should the Formosa Tejano Wetland. A trial run of the CBC in these areas in mid-December of 2016 produced approximately 170 species, so we're excited about the potential of this new count. Section leaders and their teams will meet at the Education Center of the Formosa Tejano Wetland at 6am on 12/27 for assignments and then proceed to their sections. A catered dinner and countdown will follow ju-at the Education Center at approximately 5:45pm. For more information and to participate, please contact the compiler, Bob Friedrichs at [bird.fried@gmail.com](mailto:bird.fried@gmail.com) or 925-998-7052.

[↑top↑](#)

## About the Ornithology Group

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[↑top↑](#)