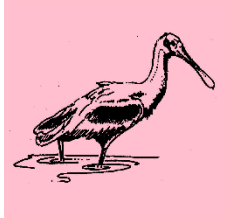


Monthly Meeting March 6, 2017

Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX



6:30 pm Learning Corner: A Brief History of the Honduran Emerald by Stephan Lorenz

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): Birding the Gem of Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito by Stephan Lorenz

Field Trips: Galveston area, guided by Alice Anne Odonell, 8 am, Sunday, March 5; Mad Island Marsh, guided by Bob Friedrich, Saturday, March 11; Powderhorn Ranch, guided by Daniel Walker, Saturday, April 22

[Winter at Sunset: Field Trip Report to the Katy Prairie | Minutes of the February 6 Meeting](#)

[2017 Dues are Due: http://ornithologygroup.org/Dues](http://ornithologygroup.org/Dues)

Birding the Gem of Honduras: The Lodge at Pico Bonito

by Stepha Lorenz

Honduras, the second largest country in Central America, is quickly growing as a hotspot on the world birding map. With a total bird list approaching 800 species (new ones being added annually) it is no surprise that more and more birders fly to the country to immerse themselves in some of the most exciting Neotropical birding. Best of all, a relatively new lodge on the edge of Pico Bonito National Park offers access to one of the superior birding areas in the country and at the same time lets visitors enjoy luxurious accommodations and superb food. (It was included as one of the top 50 eco-lodges in the world)! The lodge's bird list exceeds 400 species, basically half of Honduras' birds, and during a week here we usually find between 215 and 225 species. The lodge's location allows for easy access to diverse habitats. In addition to a variety of raptors, toucans, parrots, tanagers, the lodge ground plays host to two rare specialties, Lovely Cotinga and Keel-billed Motmot (photo by Stephan Lorenz on the left), both of which are relatively common. A day trip to the arid Aguan valley will add the critically endangered Honduran Emerald, Honduras' only endemic, plus other dry forest specialties. Other day trips from the lodge include birding the mangroves of Cuero y Salado Refuge by boat for water birds,



Lancetilla Botanical gardens for lowland species, Rio Santiago for hummingbirds, and finally a trip to Cayos Cochinos for island birding and snorkeling.

Stephan Lorenz started birding and guiding in Central America 10 years ago and has returned to Honduras every year since 2014. In addition, he has been fortunate to bird on every continent with a focus on Central and South America, southeast Asia, and Australia. After a decade of biological field work and teaching he now works full-time as a tour guide, leading trips for High Lonesome BirdTours since 2014.

He enjoys sharing his experiences in papers and articles on bird distribution, natural history, bird identification, and travel. Some of his photos and writing have appeared in BirdWatcher's Digest, WildBird, Birder's World, and ABA Birder's Guide. Currently, he serves on the Texas Bird Records Committee and is constantly scheming what place to bird next.

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Field Trips:

Galveston area

guided by Alice Anne Odonell

8 am, Sunday, March 5

Alice Ann Odonell, Board Representative for Galveston County Audubon and Houston Audubon, and our favorite local guide, will take us to the off the beaten path birding spots in Galveston. Bring Walkie Talkies

Meet @ 8 am at Moody Gardens at the NW Parking Lot by the Paddle Wheeler and carpool from there.

Mad Island Marsh

guided by Bob Friedrich - Option to Bird Sunday until midday

Saturday, March 11

Limited Space - once registered, details will follow.

Powderhorn Ranch

guided by Daniel Walker - Project Leader for Powderhorn WMA

Saturday, April 22

Owned in conjunction with TNC and TPW, this property is in transition and not open to the public. Read description below of property.

This field trip is limited and we may add another day due to size of group, which would be Friday. Registration required.

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Katy Prairie Conservancy: Winter at Sunset January 28, 2017 Trip Report

By Bob Honig

Thanks to The Katy Prairie Conservancy, Bob Honig and David and Iris Poteet for guiding our OG group on the exciting field trip. Everyone had a really great time. See the trip report from Bob Honig below.

Fourteen Ogers enjoyed this field trip that I led with the help of David and Iris Poteet. The itinerary was very different from what I'd imagined when it was first planned. Compared to most years, the originally planned sunset destination, KPC's Mary Manor property, has had relatively few birds lately, I believe because there has been too much water. It's very likely too deep to attract the large numbers of waterfowl and waders that I'd expected, and there's plenty of water in the landscape to attract these birds elsewhere. Fortunately, the ponds at KPC's Field Office afforded wonderfully close looks at White-faced Ibis in particular as well as other water birds, plus an immature Bald Eagle overhead. Next we went to KPC's Hebert Preserve in search of sparrows especially. We didn't have much luck on that account (sparrows have been very hard to find throughout the region this winter), but we did catch a break with an unexpected Least Grebe swimming with several Pied-billed Grebes. We ended the day at a very recently acquired KPC tract on Pattison Road where at sunset we watched about 300 Long-billed Curlews and between 500 and 1000 Sandhill Cranes come in to their overnight roosts a bit over 1/2 mile from us. A species list is below. Many thanks to KPC for allowing access to its properties. To find out more about KPC, visit <http://www.katyprairie.org>.

- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Snow Goose
- Gadwall
- Mottled Duck
- Northern Pintail
- Green-winged Teal
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Least Grebe
- Great Egret
- White-faced Ibis
- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture
- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- *Accipiter* sp.
- Red-tailed Hawk

- American Coot
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- Greater Yellowlegs
- yellowlegs sp.
- Long-billed Curlew
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl
- Crested Caracara
- American Kestrel
- Eastern Phoebe
- Loggerhead Shrike
- American Crow
- Carolina Wren
- Sedge Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- American Robin
- Northern Mockingbird
- Cedar Waxwing
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Vesper Sparrow
- Savannah Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Swamp Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Brewer's Blackbird
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Meadowlark sp
- Great-tailed Grackle

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Minutes of February 6, 2017 Meeting

By Jean Greenhalgh

The February meeting of OG was held on February 6th 2017 at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, at 6:30 pm. 35 people attended.

Learning Corner was a video of the Galapagos and Ecuador, presented by Joann Raine and her daughter and son-in-law Linda and Charles Sternbach.

Several of the eastern islands in the Galapagos were visited including San Cristobel, San Salvador, Santa Cruz and Floreana on the week-long National Geographic cruise in February 2016. Landings were either dry or wet – which were effected precariously by Zodiac rubber boats and clambering out into shallow seas. It was interesting to see just how fearless the birds and creatures were and we saw video of people within a couple of feet of them. Because of the isolation of each island some species, notably finches, have developed from one finch to become over a dozen different species. Each is determined by a different beak which has adapted to a different food source on each island, e.g. seeds, fruit or nectar. The birds seen included Nazca, red-footed and blue-footed boobies, Galapagos penguin, lava and swallow-tailed gull, and red-billed tropic bird. Also marine and land iguanas, Galapagos tortoise, sea lions and Sally Lightfoot crabs.

They then went the Mindo Valley, near Quito for a few days. The video of various hummingbird species was beautiful. This part of the trip was arranged privately through a Quito birding guide website.

Membership fees of \$20 are due now.

OG has been given a gift of a number of birding books and these will be at the next meeting. They will be sold and the proceeds will be given to a birding charity, which has yet to be decided. It has been suggested that the Gulf Coast Birding Observatory would be a good choice.

David Sarkozi is going to lead a week-long trip to Maine in June. Further details to follow.

Upcoming birding events include Featherfest in Galveston April 6 – 9 and the Texas Ornithological Society meeting in Rockport May 5 – 7. There is also the inaugural Birdiest Festival in America to be held in Corpus Christi April 20 – 23, details of which are at STXBOT.ORG.

Jean Booth talked about field trips.

The program for the evening was a presentation from Mike Austin on Birding in Colombia. He went in July on a tour with Birdwatch Colombia, founded by a Colombian birder Christopher Calonje, who lives in Oregon (Colombiabirdwatch.com).

Colombia has the largest bird list in the world with over 1,950 species and this expected to increase when little birded areas, such as the southeast borders next to Brazil, are explored by more birders. Because of the Colombian civil war which started in 1964 and lasted over 45 years, very few foreigners traveled there. Thankfully most of the country is now safe and birding tours have been going there for the last five years.

The country is split into many ecological isolated regions, divided by the Andes which split into three ranges – the Eastern, Central and Western Andes, with two major river basins between them. It has both a Pacific and a Caribbean coast and a sky island mountain region rising from the Caribbean plains.

Mike flew to Cali and birded that Andean valley region, then to Bogota and finally to the Caribbean coast and Anta Marta Mountains. He had wonderful photos of many of the neotropical families, including cotinga, toucan, becard, fruit eater, cock of the rock, euphonia, spinetail, puffbird and saltator.

From the Cali area the photos of an Ornate Hawk Owl and two amazing hummingbirds – the Long -tailed Sylph and the Booted Racket-tail – were outstanding. And those wonderful tanagers, from the ubiquitous blue-grey to the multi-colored tanager, golden-naped and golden tanagers.

Mike then flew to Barranquilla on the Caribbean coast and from there traveled to the Sierra Nevada De Santa Marta – the Santa Marta mountains. This is the highest coastal mountain in the world at 18,700 ft. He stayed in Minca, traveled up to top of the mountain on very muddy roads and stayed at El Dorada Lodge. Santa Marta has 22 endemics and Mike showed photos of some of those and other wonderful birds, including white-tailed starlet, band tailed guan, black cheeked mountain tanager, yellow capped redstart, Santa Marta bush tyrant and groove billed toucanet. Then it was down to the Caribbean coast and visits to Tayrona National Park, Los Flamincos Sanctuary and Salamanca National Park with photos of double striped thickknee, puffbirds and vermilion cardinal.

For further information, Mike suggested ProAves Colombia (website www.proaves.org/?lang=en for the English language version), and Nature Colombia (website www.naturecolombia.com/?lang=en English version).

He left us with a poem written over 200 years ago by William Wordsworth which feels even more relevant now.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

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