

**Monthly Meeting March 5, 2018**  
**Bayland Community Center**  
**6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX**

6:30 pm Member Social

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): A Taste of Australia by Glen Lindeman

**Field Trips**: Cameron Parish Louisiana Weekender, March 3-4, led by Teresa Connell and Nina Rach; Texas City Prairie Preserve and Texas City Dike, March 31, 8am, led by Tim O'Connell; Kerr-Kimball-Bandera County Weekender, April 5-8, coordinated by Nina Rach

[Austin Weekender Field Trip Report](#) | [Arlie Kyle McKay](#)

[Minutes of February 21, 2018 OG Board Meeting](#)

[Minutes of February 5, 2018 Meeting](#)

[Upcoming Texas Birding Events \(link to web page\)](#)

2018 Dues are Due: <http://ornithologygroup.org/Dues>

## **A Taste of Australia**

By Glen Lindeman



In November, 2016 Fred Ramsey of Corvallis (OR) Audubon Society led a month-long birding trip to eastern Australia. Sixteen people participated, including TOS member Glen Lindeman. Join us for the monthly TOS meeting on Monday, March 5th at 6:30 PM when Glen will share pictures and stories of the places the group went and the birds and other wildlife they saw. The group saw over 300 different species of birds, most of which were lifers for Glen - about 25 of the birds, such as Great Egret, Pacific Golden-Plover and Whimbrel, occur both in the US and in Australia, but the others were all new to him. Some of the places the group visited, which will be described in the show, were Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, Gluepot Reserve, Kakadu National Park, Edith Falls, Darwin Botanical Gardens, Kingfisher Park, Cassowary House, Cairns Botanical Gardens and O'Reilly's Guest House. The trip covered parts of the provinces of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, as well as the Northern Territory. Wildlife other than birds included 3 species of Kangaroo, 6 species of Wallaby, Bandicoot, Dingo, Fruit Bat, Crocodile and a brief glimpse of a Duckbilled Platypus.

Glen grew up in central Minnesota, but didn't become a birder until after he moved to Oregon in 1978. He first joined the Corvallis Audubon Society, and later the Salem Audubon Society after he moved to Salem in 1988. He retired from the Oregon Lottery in 2005, and his primary activities since then have been travel, birding and photography. He is chairman of Salem Audubon's Field Trip Committee, and helps organize and lead birding trips around Oregon. He has been a member of TOS for about two years, and is also a member of the Houston Audubon Society. He currently splits time between Salem (summer) and Richmond, Texas (winter).

[↑top↑](#)

## **Field Trips:**

### **Cameron Parish Louisiana Weekender**

**Saturday and Sunday, March 3-4, 2018**

**Led by Teresa Connell and Nina Rach**

Our March trip takes us to Cameron Parish in southwestern Louisiana for target bird opportunities such as: Glossy Ibis, Bonaparte's Gull, Northern Gannet, Surf and White-winged Scoters, four species of Plover (Snowy, Piping, Semipalmated, and Wilson's), and up to ten species of sparrows and ducks. This could easily be a 100-species weekend! Please plan to carpool because the fewer vehicles we have, the more opportunities everyone will have to see the birds.

- \$30 for OG and TOS members or \$40 for nonmembers; 10-person limit.
- Bring lunch and drinks for both days. Check local weather reports and dress accordingly.
- Bring a scope if you have one.
- Two-ray radios (walkie talkies) will be available for use.

- Optional Friday lodging at Three Rivers Inn and Suites (est. \$69/night; 2015 TX-73, Port Arthur, TX 77640; phone [409.983.8000](tel:409.983.8000)) or meet at Peveto Woods at 7:30 AM (about a two-hour drive from Houston).
- Saturday lodging at MainStay Suites Hackberry Sportsman's Lodge (est. \$95/night; 700 W Main St, Hackberry, LA 70645; phone [337.762.3128](tel:337.762.3128)).
- Sunday optional mealstop at Pat's of Henderson for some of the best Gumbo in Louisiana.
- **Trip Coordinator:** Teresa Connell; phone [505.280.7443](tel:505.280.7443).
- **Trip Leaders:** Teresa Connell ([505.280.7443](tel:505.280.7443)) and Nina Rach ([281.433.0651](tel:281.433.0651)).
- All Harvey Fundraiser proceeds go to American Bird Conservancy [www.helpgulfbirds.com](http://www.helpgulfbirds.com)

## **Saturday: Peveto Woods, Holly Beach, and Sabine National Wildlife Refuge**

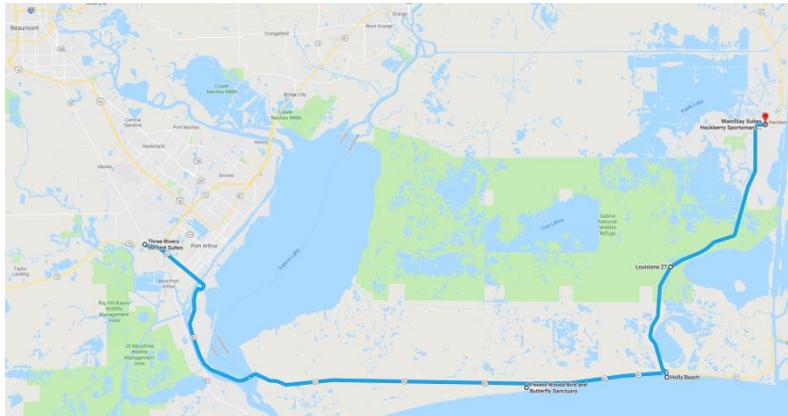
- 7:00AM departure from lobby of Three Rivers Inn & Suites (2015 TX-73, Port Arthur, TX).
- Stop 1 at Peveto Woods (No. 2 state hotspot and No. 1 in Cameron Parish), a 50-acre sanctuary owned by Baton Rouge Audubon. Peveto Woods is similar to Sabine Woods in Texas, but with beach access, making this a Louisiana favorite. A visit during peak migration puts you in Warbler Heaven! We will have lunch at the woods.
- Stop 2 at Holly Beach, a beautiful stretch of pristine Gulf coast. We will look for plovers, scoters, mergansers, gulls, and Northern Gannet.
- Stop 3 at Sabine National Wildlife Refuge to find other species we haven't yet seen. Look for Wilson's Snipe, Belted Kingfisher, cormorants, and egrets.
- Dinner at Hackberry Recreation Center (1250 Recreation Center, Hackberry, LA). Fried and grilled shrimp Po-Boys with fries are the town favorites.
- Overnight at MainStay Suites Hackberry Sportsman's Lodge (700 W Main St., Hackberry, LA).

## **Sunday: Cameron Oxidation Ponds, Willow Island, Cameron Prairie NWR**

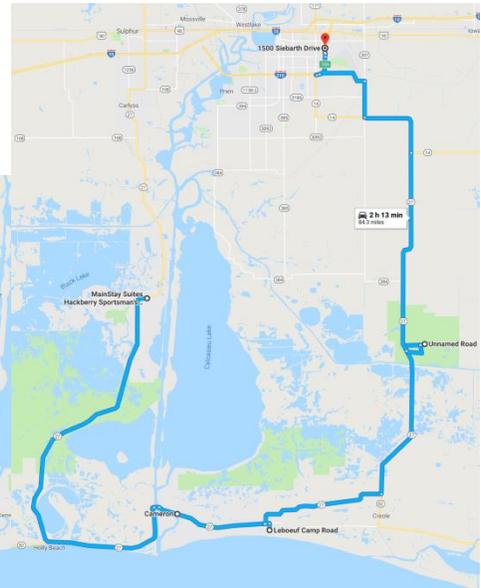
- 7:00 AM departure from lobby of MainStay Suites for drive to West Landing (Cameron) Ferry crossing. Cross on ferry and continue to first stop of the day.
- Stop 1 at Cameron Oxidation Ponds to look for Fish Crow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Black-bellied Whistling Duck and Clapper Rail.
- Stop 2 at Willow Island, which is the No. 6 state hotspot. This is a restricted, special access area, so we must tread lightly. This is a great place to see up to ten species of sparrows, downy and hairy woodpeckers, rails, and plovers this time of year. We have an opportunity to see wintering warblers, such as Black-and-white, Yellow-throated, Yellow-rumped, Orange-Crowned, Pine, and Common Yellowthroat Warblers.
- Stop for lunch.
- Stop 3 at Cameron Prairie Preserve to see the Glossy Ibis, Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, and Snow Goose, and more than ten species of waterfowl. Look for Sora, King, Virginia, and Clapper Rails on the side of the road.
- ***Return walkie-talkies you may have borrowed.***

- Return home through Lake Charles with optional stop off main road at Pat's of Henderson (1500 Siebath Drive), which is known for some of the best Gumbo in Louisiana!

## DAY 1 MAP



## DAY 2 MAP



[↑top↑](#)

## Texas City Prairie Preserve and Texas City Dike Spring Migration, March 31, 2018, 8:00am

Led by Tim O'Connell (The Nature Conservancy)

Experience spring migration in Texas City for an awesome morning of birding. Meet at the Main Building of the Texas City Prairie Preserve at 8:00am. To get there from Houston: Go south on I-45 to FM 1764 (exit 16). Go east on FM 1764 to highway 146. Go under 146 and turn left. Go approximately 1.9 miles north. The gate entrance will be on your right after crossing Moses Bayou. (If you reach the flashing yellow light at Attwater Avenue you have passed us.) The building is 1/4 mile down the gravel road.

Bring your scopes for the TX Prairie. Later we will go as a group to the Texas City Dike. We will be birding by car, so we want to consolidate into no more than 4 cars so we all can get good looks. Walkie Talkies will be available. Maximum number of participants is 14. To reserve a spot RSVP to Fieldtrip Coordinator Teresa Connell (505.280.7443, [teresacConnell@live.com](mailto:teresacConnell@live.com)).

[↑top↑](#)

## **Kerr-Kimble-Bandera County Weekender**

**April 5-8, 2018**

**Coordinated by Nina Rach**

This Ornithology Group trip will begin at: Mo-Ranch, 2229 FM 1340, Hunt, Texas 78024 (275 miles west of Houston).

Reservations for Thurs, April 5, Tel: (800) 460-4401 [www.moranch.org](http://www.moranch.org).

Fri & Sat night reservations (April 6 & 7) at America's Best Value Inns-The Legends Inn, 1908 Main St., Junction, Tel (325) 446-8644 [www.redlion.com/junction](http://www.redlion.com/junction) (\$75/2Q).

Kerr County – 312 species; Kimble County – 316 species; Bandera County – 301 species.

### **Schedule:**

**Thursday, April 5** – arrive at Mo-Ranch, check in, birding around the property (#4 Kerr Co. hot spot, 171 sp.) or at adjacent Kerr WMA (#2 Kerr Co. hot spot, 229 sp.). For dinner try Elaine's Table- [elainestable.com/TheTable/](http://elainestable.com/TheTable/), or Hunt Rock Cafe- [thehuntstore.com/hunt-store-cafe-menu/](http://thehuntstore.com/hunt-store-cafe-menu/).

**Friday, April 6** – Check out, drive to Ingram (20 min) to Heart of the Hills Fisheries Center (HOTW 069, #1 Kerr Co. hot spot, 237 sp.), guided by Paul Sellin ([pjsellin@yahoo.com](mailto:pjsellin@yahoo.com)), adjacent Sunset cemetery (HOTW 070, 140 sp.). Lunch at a local restaurant, visit other hot spots around Ingram & Kerrville. Drive to Junction (50 min on I-10), check in to The Legends Inn for two nights.

**Saturday, April 7** – South Llano River State Park (HOTW 093, #1 Kimble Co. hot spot, 261 sp.), Schreiner Park (HOTW 091, 163 sp., on river in town), Junction WTP, other spots.

**Sunday, April 8** – Drive to Vanderpool (1 hr via US 83 S) to Lost Maples State Natural Area (HOTW 061, #1 Bandera Co. hot spot, 257 sp.), guided by Richard Redmond ([ewigeon64@Hughes.net](mailto:ewigeon64@Hughes.net)). Lunch at a café. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples>

There will be a small charge for the weekend. Proceeds to ONC's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary in San Jacinto County for the restrooms renovations: \$45 for OG or TOS members; \$60 for others.

Please make check payable to: Ornithology Group and mail to: Harlan Evans, 8100 Cambridge, #34, Houston, TX 77054

Trip Coordinator: Nina Rach, [NRach@AutreVie.com](mailto:NRach@AutreVie.com), cell 281-433-0651.

[↑top↑](#)

## **Austin Weekender Trip Report, February 3-4, 2018, guided by Deb and Lee Wallace**

**By Jean Greenhalgh**

Cool temperatures (40s) greeted us on both days, in addition to rain, then mist on Saturday and fog on Sunday, but that didn't stop the fourteen participants from having a good time on the Austin weekender trip. The money paid by the participants was donated to American Bird Conservancy [www.helpgulfbirds.com](http://www.helpgulfbirds.com).



From left to right: Sandy Parker, Glen Lindeman, Jean Greenhalgh, Gene Doggett, Renee Langner (Fort Worth), Kelley Miller, Janice Robinson, Susan Haney, Lee Wallace, Michelle Rometry, Deb Wallace, Ed Robinson, Teresa Connell, Ray Steelman (Round Rock), WOMAN with short blond hair, Elizabeth Garney. Photo by Nina Rach.

Seven of us met on Friday evening at our hotel for a riotous game which was “led” by our Field Trips Coordinator, Teresa Connell. Those of us attending included two birders who were Texas Ornithological Society members. The invitation to the weekender had been extended to TOS members when it was found that OG members would not fill all the available places. It was a great ice-breaker as most of us hadn't met everybody on the trip.

We met on a very wet Saturday to drive the 10 minutes to Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory where we met our leaders for the weekend, Deb and Lee Wallace. Deb and Lee were great

leaders with an obvious passion for birding and who especially delighted in showing us their favorite Austin area birding locations.

Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory is at the Water Treatment Plant (only birders go to every treatment plant they can find). Just off Hwy 71, it is on the southwest side of Austin and is easy to visit on the way to and from Austin. There are many large oblong settlement ponds, with drivable levees around them all. While we were driving the ponds, the rain stopped. There is also an area to park near some greenhouses, from which paths lead down to the Colorado River to wooded habitat. The more notable birds for the morning included eared grebe, 9 duck species (including Bufflehead) and 8 Wilsons Snipe. Adjacent to Hornsby Bend is Platt Lane where we also spent some time.

After eating our packed lunches back at the hotel, we drove 15 minutes to McKinney Falls State Park. Here we parked and walked for a couple of hours. This is a wooded area with paths and meadows at the confluence of Onion and Williamson Creeks. The creeks run through the SP and form the North and South Falls, both of which we visited. We saw the typical woodland birds including four sparrows, woodpeckers, and two wrens - including Winter. A highlight was the interactions of three Red-shouldered Hawks. What we at first thought was a territorial dispute, probably turned out to be two males fighting for the attentions of a female. To the victor the spoils, when most of us averted our gaze or were unintentionally looking in the wrong direction, and we hope the happy couple went off to build a nest.

After a full days birding dinner was at a local Mexican place and then it was an early night

Sunday started gray and foggy and it took over 30 minutes to drive to Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park where we met Deb and Lee again. This is their favorite Austin birding location and they were disappointed that it did not show to their best advantage in the fog. This park located between Lake Travis and Austin comprises river frontage to the Colorado, some wooded areas, mown areas and some restored prairie. With the many habitat varieties, it is not surprising ebird shows 265 species at the park. Deb and Lee knew where the special birds were. We had five sparrows including white-crowned and a very cooperative Sharp-shinned Hawk. However, the Canyon Wren was a lifer for more than one participant, and the Great Horned Owl on the nest was a treat for us all.

Many thanks to Teresa Connell for organizing the trip; to Deb and Lee Wallace to leading it and to Glen Lindeman for compiling and sharing ebird lists for the weekend. We saw a total of 71 species.

[↑top↑](#)

## **Arlie Kyle McKay: Request for Research Assistance**

**By Paul Klinger**

I am currently researching various birders and conservationists in Southeast Texas and one has led me to this group. His name was Arlie Kyle McKay and he lived from 1902 to 1975 in Chambers County Texas, mostly in the Cove Area. Arlie was a member of the Ornithology Group and regularly contributed to the Spoonbill over many years, until his death in 1975. He also hosted birding field trips the group had in Chambers County, which are documented in back issues of the Spoonbill. Arlie was a very impressive birder, having corresponded with Roger Tory Peterson on “A Field Guide to the Birds of Texas” and with Connie Hagar on the Rockport bird counts. Arlie also assisted George Williams, former Professor at Rice, on the Gulf Coast Migrant (1936 to 1947) by contributing birding observations from Cove and the surrounding area. Many notable birders, including Victor Emanuel, have referred to Arlie’s wisdom and generosity as a guide and birding resource as a formative influence on them.

Arlie was known to have had field books with his birding notes dating from the 1930s into the 1970s. If anyone in the Ornithology Group had the pleasure of corresponding with Arlie or knows of the whereabouts of any of his written work, I would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss these subjects and compare notes. I am very interested in learning more about Arlie's annotation style when recording his sightings.

Contact me at [Pklinger81@gmail.com](mailto:Pklinger81@gmail.com) if you have any information.

[↑top↑](#)

## **Minutes of February 21 OG Board Meeting**

**By Jean Greenhalgh**

Held on February 21, 2018 at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet

Present

Chair - Nina Rach

Treasurer - Harlan Evans

Membership - Michael Honel

Secretary - Jean Greenhalgh

Field Trips - Teresa Connell

Spoonbill Editor - Larry Dybala

The meeting was convened to discuss various matters relating to OG expenses and to field trips.

It was stated that the current OG practice will continue. All monies collected from field trip participants will be given to the Treasurer for deposit in OG’s bank account. All disbursements for expenses and donations will be made by the Treasurer.

It was proposed that OG donates \$500 to support Gulf Coast Bird Observatory's expenses for the Hawkwatch program. This will be presented at the March OG meeting for a vote by attending members.

It was proposed that the money collected from the Austin Weekender be donated to American Bird Conservancy's restoration efforts in hurricane Harvey's aftermath, [helpgulfbirds.org](http://helpgulfbirds.org). This was passed by unanimous vote.

It was proposed that OG purchases four new, warranted two-way radios at a cost of approximately \$200. Additionally, there is a possibility of purchasing more later. Field Trip Coordinator will be responsible for purchase. This was passed by unanimous vote.

It was proposed that operating expenses incurred for any trip longer than a day will be covered by fees charged to the participants. This was passed by unanimous vote.

It was proposed that the net proceeds from the March Weekender trip to Louisiana will be donated to American Bird Conservancy's restoration efforts in hurricane Harvey's aftermath, [helpgulfbirds.org](http://helpgulfbirds.org). This was passed by unanimous vote.

It was proposed that \$5 per participant from the April Weekender trip will be donated to the Outdoor Nature Club for bathroom restoration at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. This was passed by unanimous vote.

[↑top↑](#)

## **Minutes of February 5, 2018 Meeting**

**By Jean Greenhalgh**

The February meeting of OG was held on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, at 6:30 pm. 30 people attended.

Teresa Donnell, Field Trip Coordinator, talked about the trip led by Skip Almoney to Archbishop Firenza Park. Despite the rain, five participants braved the weather and saw 51 species. The Park has four habitat zones which are water, shore, grass prairies and trees. In addition to the established pine trees, newly planted trees are growing and these should provide good habitat in the next few years.

The Austin weekend, led by Austin birders Deb and Lee Wallace, was a success. Seven participants went on to Warbler Woods and saw the Golden-crowned Sparrow within half an hour of their arrival.

The February 10<sup>th</sup> trip to San Jacinto SP led by Erik Ostrander needs a Coordinator.

The March weekender will be on March 3 & 4. Saturday will be spent at Baton Rouge Audubon Society's sanctuary Peveto Woods (ebird 306 species) and then on to Holly Beach (restricted

access) both in Cameron County. Sunday will be spent at Cameron Prairie NWR. Cost is \$30 and the Saturday hotel is Hackberry Mainstay Suites. Call Teresa at 505-280-7443 to sign up.

Nina Rach presented the Learning Corner about Distinguishing among the large, spectacled vireos: Blue-headed, Cassin's and Plumbeous.

The Blue-headed is an eastern bird, Cassin's in the west and Plumbeous has a restricted montane range in the Rocky Mountains. However, they all migrate through Texas from the Trans-Pecos and down the Rio Grande river. Consequently identification in some regions can be more difficult.

The pictures of each bird highlighted the main identification points. The Blue-headed has a bluish gray head with bright greenish-yellow flanks. There is strong contrast between the cheek/auricular area and the white throat. The Cassin's has a brownish-gray head with yellowish flanks and weak contrast between the cheek/auricular area and the white throat. The Plumbeous has a dull gray head and back and gray flanks.

It was noted by one audience member that the Blue-headed has the habit of flocking its wings, while the Cassin's does not.

For additional information, there is a full synopsis of the talk in February's Spoonbill.

Nina then chaired the general meeting. Some notable Texas sightings included a Glaucous Gull at Quitana jetty and a Elegant Trogon at New Braunfels.

15<sup>th</sup> of each month Houston Audubon Society is going to conduct a new monthly bird survey at Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve. More details on the HAS website.

February 28 the Kleb Woods meeting is on the Hummingbirds of Texas. More details on their website.

April 27 – 29 there is a new birding festival is to be held at South Llano State Park.

August the Annual Birding Conference of the AOS (formerly AOU) is being held in Vancouver BC.

The main program was presented by Fred Collins and Bob Honig on Birding Then and Now, on the Upper Texas Coast.

This was a very entertaining presentation by Bob and Fred. Bob gave the results of his research into the changes in bird populations, both numbers and distribution, from the 1960's and 1970's to the present. The bird species which have declined include Fulvous Whistling Duck, Attwater's Greater Prairie Chicken, Northern Jacana, Eskimo Curlew, Purple Sandpiper, King Rail, Hairy Woodpecker, Purple Finch, breeding Henslow's Sparrow and Bachman's Sparrow. Species which have increased or arrived since the 60's/70's include Egyptian Goose, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Brown Pelican, Cattle Egret, Bald Eagle, White-tailed Hawk, European

Collared Dove, White-winged Dove, Crested Caracara, Monk Parakeet, Couch's Kingbird, Greater Kiskadee, Western Kingbird, Cliff Swallow, Cave Swallow, Great-tailed Grackle and House Finch.

Both Bob and Fred then described both the possible reasons for the changes.

Fred told many personal stories of birding in the 1950's, 60's and 70's.

Both compared the birding trips described in OG's 1967-68 "Good Birding Trips" to where we bird today. Satellite imagery showed the difference between the habitats then and now for places including High Island, Anahuac and Bolivar Peninsula.

After a fascinating hour by which time they had only presented half their information, it was decided that they would return to a future meeting to conclude their talk.

[↑top↑](#)

## **About the Ornithology Group**

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

**Vice Chair (Programs): Volunteer needed**

**Secretary | Jean Greenhalgh | JeanBrit01@yahoo.com**

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

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

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

**Membership: Michael Honel | 713-432-1985 | michaelhonor@sbcglobal.net**

**Field Trips: Teresa Connell | 505-280-7443 | teresaconnell@live.com**

**Spoonbill Editor: Larry Dybala | 713-923-4040 | larrydybala@gmail.com**

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

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

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

[↑top↑](#)