



Monthly Meeting September 10, 2018 **Bayland Community Center** **6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX**

6:30 pm Learning Corner: Group Social

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): The Dirty Dozen by David Sarkozi

[Field Trip](#): Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS), September 22, 8 am (Winters Bayou) led by Carlton Collier) and 10 am (LTNS led by Connie and Calvin Blakley)

**[Letter from the Chair](#) | [OG Field Trip to Katy Prairie](#) | [Hummingbird Quiz](#)
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[Hart Beat: The Other Blue Birds \(link to web page\)](#)**

The Dirty Dozen

By David Sarkozi

Texas has more than 490 regularly occurring birds. Just because they are regular doesn't mean that they are easy to find. We'll discuss the "Dirty Dozen," the twelve most difficult to find Texas birds based on the results of a recent poll and I'll provide some thoughts on how you might be able to find them.

David Sarkozi started birding as a teenager in central Texas. College distracted him from that but after college it soon became an obsession. He has been birding for more than 30 years now and still has his first field guide.

David served a Chairman of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club—Ornithology Group, President of the Friends of Anahauc Refuge, and President of the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS). He served on the board of TOS for 16 years. David has been an active leader in field trips across the state. He has a special interest in Belize and has organized more than 20 birding trips to Belize under the name KoziBirding.com. In 2016 David retired after 35 years from the University of Houston where he was Manager of Public Safety Systems. In 2015 he completed a 500 bird Big Year in Texas and in 2017 he completed a 504 bird Big Year.

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Field trip to Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS), 8 am (Winters Bayou), September 22, 2018

Led by Carlton Collier (Winters Bayou) and Connie and Calvin Blakley (LTNS)

Our September field trip will be in San Jacinto County, and we have the opportunity to walk trails and observe birds at the nearly 700-acre nature sanctuary owned and maintained by the Outdoor Nature Club, <http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/ltns.html>.

Early birders can meet at 8:00am at the entrance to Houston Audubon's Winters Bayou Sanctuary for a short hike and introduction by Carlton Collier. Winters Bayou comprises 165 acres of upland pine forest and mixed pine-hardwood bottomland, adjacent to Sam Houston National Forest. The sanctuary is 11 miles NW of Cleveland, and fairly close to the LTNS. There is off-road parking for only four cars, so please try to carpool. Other cars will need to park on the side of the road. <https://houstonaudubon.org/sanctuaries/winters-bayou.html>

At 9:30, we'll drive to the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, and meet long-time volunteers Connie and Calvin Blakley for a nature and birding walk. There are about 20 miles of trails. Bring lunch and drinks. There are toilets, but no potable running water available.

Print a trail map for yourself before the trip:

http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/LTNS_trail_map.pdf

For those interested, we may make arrangements to continue to Houston Audubon's Damuth Sanctuary in northern Liberty County in the later afternoon.

<https://houstonaudubon.org/sanctuaries/damuth.html>

Directions to Winters Bayou: From US 59 N in Cleveland, TX, take FM 2025 (Cold Spring Rd.) north for 5.3 miles to FM 945. Turn left on FM 945 at the Valero gas station and drive 5.2 miles to Moody Rd. Turn left on Moody Rd. and travel 0.9 miles to the sanctuary entrance. Parking and the trailhead are located at the intersection of Moody Rd. and S. Moody Ln.

Directions to Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary:

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.

Route 3 — 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.

GPS at entrance gate: N 30° 32.141' W 95° 13.564'

Maps: http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/LTNS_route_map.pdf

Any questions, contact Nina Rach, cell 281-433-0651, NRach@AutreVie.com

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Letter from the Chair

Shorebirds are already heading south in big numbers. Mississippi and Swallow-tailed Kites are passing by Hazel Bazemore Park in Corpus Christi, Wood Storks flying along the central and upper Gulf coast, and NEXRAD (next generation radar) show large flocks of migrating birds, allowing us to track migration in near-real-time. <https://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/stories/cornell-updated-birdcast-maps-track-bird-migrations>

Hummingbirds are showing up at feeders across the state, and hundreds were seen during the Fort Davis Hummingbird Celebration in and around the Davis Mountains 23-26 August. It was a terrific event. More about it in a later issue.

Closer to home, Kleb Woods will celebrate its 11th Annual Hummingbird Festival on Saturday, 8 Sept (9am-3pm), and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) will offer its Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza in Lake Jackson on Sat-Sun, 8-9 Sept.

Warblers are beginning to migrate as well. Several small groups of warblers and a single Yellow-breasted Chat were spotted far offshore on Friday, 31 Aug during the Port Aransas pelagic trip. The next pelagic trip will be Saturday, 22 Sept; see texaspelagics.com

We can expect some sparrows and thrushes in October, and of course waterfowl after that.

I hope everyone will be able to participate in at least a few of the interesting field trips that Teresa Connell has planned for us. Most are single day or half-day, and at least two are planned for weekends: Rosy Finch trip to New Mexico in January, and King Ranch trip in March.

2018 has been declared the Year of the Bird puts bird conservation in the spotlight. This year marks a century since the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was put into place. This year we commemorate this great achievement for bird conservation.

A few taxonomy notes:

New split – Mexican Duck

As Kendra mentioned during her presentation at the August meeting, Mexican Duck, *Anas diazi*, will be recognized as a separate species in the next update of eBird. Armchair life bird for some, and a new reason for others to go out to see one. Or as Brian Johnson says, “Schrödinger's Duck; it's simultaneously a lifer and not a lifer”

Seed eaters - Big change to AOU Checklist!

Found in the Rio Grande Valley, Morelet's Seedeater, *Sporophila moreletii*, is now being treated as a species separate from White-collared Seedeater, *Sporophila torqueola*, following Mason et al. (2018). *S. torqueola* is now being referred to as the Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater.

So – birds found in Texas should now be called Morelet’s Seedeater.

The new name honors the collector of the type specimen, P. M. A. Morelet (Salvin and Godman 1885), but Bonaparte misspelled his name in the species description, an error perpetuated in the English name “Morellet’s Seedeater” by AOU (1886), Ridgway (1901), and others.

Ref: <http://www.bioone.org/doi/pdf/10.1642/AUK-18-62.1>

Mason, N. A., A. Olvera-Vital, I. J. Lovette, and A. G. Navarro-Siguenza. 2018. Hidden endemism, deep polyphyly, and repeated dispersal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec: Diversification of the White-collared Seedeater complex (Thraupidae: *Sporophila torqueola*). *Ecology and Evolution* 8: 1867–1881.

Nina Rach, OG Chair

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OG Field Trip to Katy Prairie, August, 12, 2018

By Nina Rach

The Ornithology Group took a field trip to Katy Prairie Conservancy properties in Waller County on Sunday afternoon, 12 August, under partly cloudy skies and humid, 90-deg weather. Eleven OG members met Bob Honig at the KPC field headquarters (31950 Hebert Road) at 5pm for an introduction to KPC operations. We all signed the required KPC liability waiver and took a walk around the Indiangrass Prairie Preserve; most birders got a decent view of a resident Barn Owl before it fled its roost. It was great to see the new, sturdy footbridge from headquarters to the western ponds (which attracted a European Wigeon last winter), a terrific addition to the property. eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S47812065>

We next headed to the Live Oak Creek crossing on Pattison Road, where we tried to discern swallow species, and saw Orchard Orioles and a Western Kingbird. eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S47812503>

Further south on Pattison Road, we arrived at Mary Manor Preserve, normally closed to the public, where we found three Common Nighthawks at the entrance and many cows on the road. We walked down the prairie to the prolific wetlands, and returned to the cars after sunset. A light breeze came up as we watched hundreds of waterfowl move to roosting sites. eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S47814855>

Katy Prairie Bird List (35):

Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Mottled Duck, Common Nighthawk, Mourning Dove, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson’s Phalarope (spinning), Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, White Ibis, White-faced Ibis, Roseate Spoonbills, White-tailed

Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Barn Owl, Eastern Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Eastern Meadowlark, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cave Swallow, Northern Mockingbird, Orchard Oriole, Northern Cardinal [as recorded by Nina Rach; folks may have seen additional species].

Thank you Bob Honig and Katy Prairie Conservancy for a lovely late afternoon birding adventure!

Indiangrass Preserve is KPC's base of operations out on the prairie and comprises 55 acres. It is open to the public on Tuesdays (9am-3pm), Fridays and Saturdays (9am-1pm). They are always looking for volunteers on many different projects, as well as birders for the Christmas Bird Count on January 1 every year. <http://www.katyprairie.org>.

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Hummingbird Quiz

by Kelly B Bryan

This quiz was presented to participants of the Fort Davis Hummingbird Celebration, following the Saturday evening Banquet, August 25, 2018. It was written by Kelly B. Bryan and is republished here with his permission. Have fun and learn something new? Answers will be published in the October issue of the Spoonbill.

(Ruby-throated Hummingbird fall migrants have been in the Houston area for three weeks and will continue in numbers through September. Rufous Hummingbirds commonly over-Winter here. Put out your feeders with 4-parts water to 1 part sugar, cleaning and refilling twice a week in the warmer weather.)

1. The smallest hummingbird and "bird" in the world is the:
 - a. Tiny Hummingbird
 - b. Bumblebee Hummingbird
 - c. Calliope Hummingbird
 - d. The Bee Hummingbird
2. How many species of hummingbirds are there in the world:
 - a. 441
 - b. 123
 - c. 338
 - d. 602
3. The largest hummingbird (the appropriately named Giant Humminbird) lives in:
 - a. Tropical jungles along the Amazon River in Brazil
 - b. The deserts of coastal Peru
 - c. The tundra zone of the Andes mountain at 10,000 feet elevation and above
 - d. The grasslands of Patagonia
4. Approximately one-third of the species of hummingbirds are found in the old world:

- a. True
 - b. False
5. There are only four species of hummingbirds found in Australia:
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. There is only one species of hummingbird found in Antarctica:
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds make a high pitched metallic sound with:
 - a. Their tail feathers
 - b. The tip of their outer wing feather
 - c. Their vocal box
 - d. A cymbal and drumstick
8. Which species of hummingbird is known to fly across the Gulf of Mexico nonstop in Spring migration:
 - a. Buff-bellied Hummingbird
 - b. Black-chinned Hummingbird
 - c. Ruby-throated Hummingbird
 - d. The Antillean Crested Hummingbird
9. In anticipation of migration, a hummingbird engages in frenzied feeding activities that can add nearly half its weight in as little as four days. This fat is added subcutaneously as well as internally around its organs:
 - a. True
 - b. False, they do not add any fat subcutaneously
 - c. False, they do not add fat internally around organs
 - d. False, they are lean, mean machines that hitch rides on the backs of geese
10. The longest distance migratory hummingbird in the world is the:
 - a. Ruby-throated Hummingbird
 - b. Calliope Hummingbird
 - c. Rufous Hummingbird
 - d. Allen's Hummingbird
11. Hummingbirds mate for life:
 - a. True, they even migrate together and spend the winter together
 - b. True, but they do not migrate together
 - c. False
12. The highest diversity of hummingbird species in Texas is:
 - a. In the Hill Country
 - b. In the Rio Grande Valley
 - c. In the Mountains of West Texas
 - d. In El Paso
13. The smallest migratory bird in the world is:
 - a. The Bumble Bee Hummingbird

- b. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird
 - c. The Rufous Hummingbird
 - d. The Calliope Hummingbird
14. The most widespread breeding Hummingbird in Texas is:
- a. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird
 - b. The Broad-tailed Hummingbird
 - c. The Black-chinned Hummingbird
 - d. The Buff-bellied Hummingbird
15. Of the 19 species of hummingbirds on the official Texas list, how many have been record during the winter months of December, January, and February:
- a. None
 - b. 12
 - c. 15
 - d. 8
16. Most juvenile hummingbirds have longer wings and tails during their first year of life than their adult counterparts:
- a. True
 - b. False
17. A Calliope Hummingbird weight approximately the same as a:
- a. Penny
 - b. Nickel
 - c. Dime
 - d. Quarter
18. The highest recorded heart rate in a hummingbird is:
- a. 100 beats per minute
 - b. 450 beats per minute
 - c. 700 beats per minute
 - d. 1250 beats per minute
19. The iridescence in the feathers of a hummingbird, primarily in the gorget and crown, is due to:
- a. Pigment
 - b. Neon lights
 - c. Air bubbles trapped in the feathers
 - d. Glass-like beads in the feathers
20. A hummingbird with atypical plumage with some or many feathers all white (instead of normal pigmentation) is referred to as:
- a. Really cute
 - b. Leucistic
 - c. Melanistic
 - d. Angelic

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