



Monthly Meeting November 5, 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](#): Birding in Cuba by Gary Clark

Field Trip: Huntsville November 3 field trip has been cancelled because of a cycling event; next trip is Saturday, December 8, to Laas Farm led by John Berner and Harvey Laas

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Laas Farm Field Trip, Saturday, December 8, 7 am

Led by John Berner and Harvey Laas

Lass farm, located at 9870 FM 359, Brookshire, Texas (10 miles from downtown Brookshire) is 1500 acres, about 2.5 square miles. It has been in the Laas family since the 1800's. It is an ebird hotspot with 230 species recorded. <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3107741>.

We will meet at Harvey's house. To get there, go through a small, short gate is on east side of road (just S of FM529 on FM359). The Gate is hard to see at 0.75 miles south of FM529 on FM 359. Once you go through the gate off FM359, Harvey has a one mile long quite bumpy dirt lane to the east so allow 5 minutes after leaving FM359 to drive due east across his property to reach his new house.

We will start field tip at 7am but some may bird earlier than that at the meeting place while were waiting for others to show.(Short-eared Owl is possible along entrance driveway before 7 on your way to the house. Harvey will be looking for the owl earlier in the week, and John will let us know).

Field trip Coordinator: Teresa Connell, (505) 280-7443.

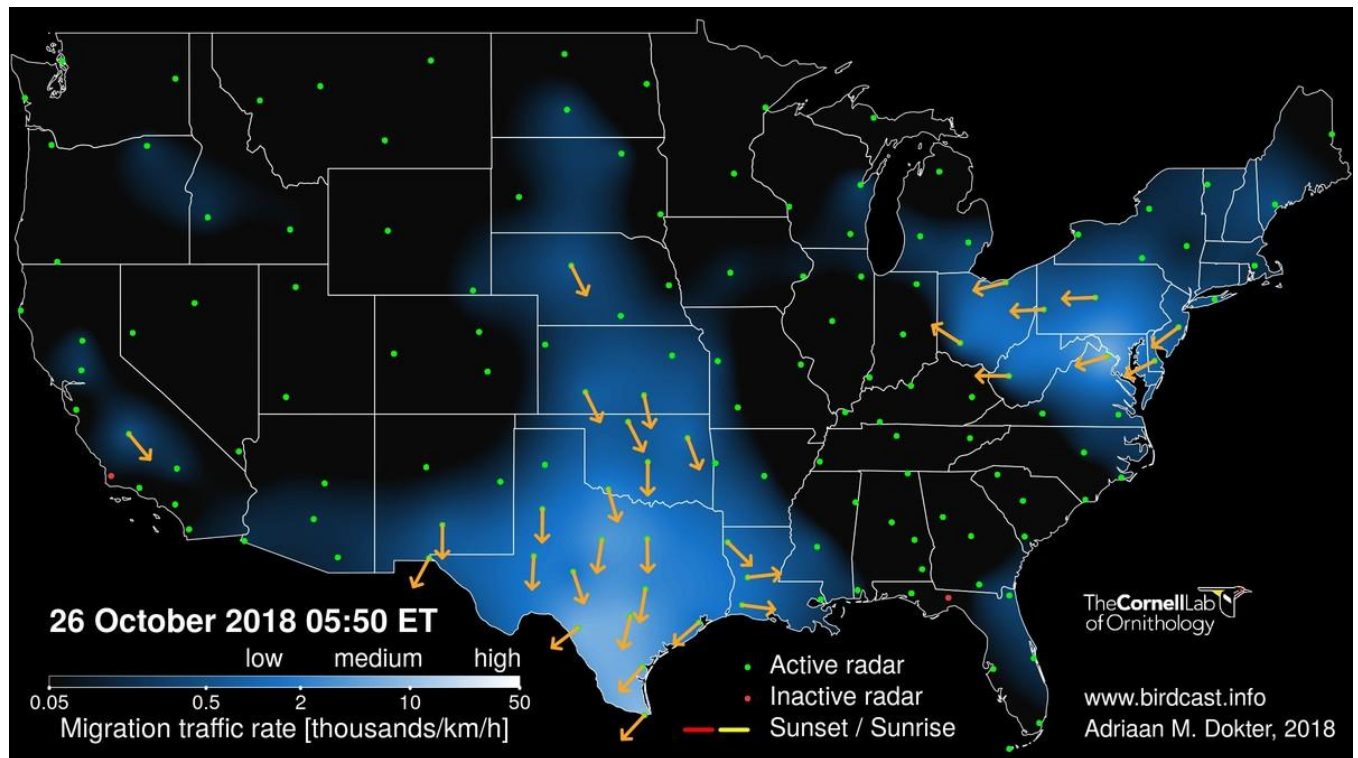
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Letter from the Chair

First of all, I'd like to offer a hearty Thank You! to Connie Blakley for preparing, printing, and distributing the Outdoor Nature Club 2018-19 Yearbook, which includes a roster of all current members, recent donations, schedule of activities, and trail map of our Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary.

With widespread rain throughout the state in October, Texas' rivers and reservoirs are full to overflowing, floodwaters have taken out South Llano River State Park, and fields and hillsides are lush, with standing water even in west Texas. Summer crop harvest and winter planting are delayed due to rain, according to Texas A&M's Crop and Weather Report, which will affect birds arriving for the winter. <https://today.agrilife.org/2018/10/23/texas-crop-and-weather-report-oct-23-2018/>

Fall migrants are still passing through, with amazing numbers landed in South Padre Island in mid-October, and thousands of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (along with one Fork-Tailed FC) observed lining roads in south Texas. Even in late October, very large numbers of birds are being picked up on radar on their way and through Texas. Green dots in this image from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology represent radar locations providing data.



Did you know that there's a free online course called "eBird Essentials" that will help you get the most out of eBird? Visit Cornell's bird Academy:
<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/courses/ebird-essentials>

Coming up: Christmas Bird Counts – Most of the dates are posted and I’ve assembled them in chronologic order in our birding events list, available at our website. We’ll post a more complete list in the December Spoonbill.

Please consider writing up any interesting trip notes from your birding journeys. I believe all birders love to learn, by reading and reviewing photos, so why not let them read your story? We'd love to hear about your birding adventures or discoveries, where you went, how you did it (interesting or vital logistics), and even your birding background - how, where, when and why you started birding. And of course we want to know how you tackle migration or the summer “doldrums.” Remember to include a photo or two, even a map, and submit to The Spoonbill. We’re all interested and it helps build our community.

Nina Rach, OG Chair

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Brazoria Field Trip Report, Saturday, October 13

By Nina Rach

The Ornithology Group visited Brazoria County on Saturday, 13 October, and enjoyed sunny skies with scattered clouds, a light breeze, and balmy temps in the mid-80s. Participants included Teresa Connell, Michael Honel, Jerry Chen, Nelson Messinger (Richmond), Lisa Li and her husband (Kingwood), and Nina Rach.



We met trip leader Mark Scheuerman at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters and Discovery Center in the Big Slough Recreation Area, in Freeport. There was a lot of water from recent rains. The early group walked around behind the buildings and birded from the raised

wooden walkways to the forested area, where they saw a nice smattering of migrating passerines and then we all continued birding with frequent stops along the auto tour route. Alligators were readily apparent.

Fall songbird migration was underway, and a few wintering birds had also arrived. As a group, we saw a total of 83 identifiable bird species.



Bird list for Brazoria NWR (UTC-108), 66 species:

Blue-winged Teal, Mottled Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Clapper Rail, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Black-necked Stilt, Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Least/Semipalmated/Western Sandpipers, Dowitchers, Greater Yellowlegs, Western Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs, Laughing Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull (distant fly-by), Forster's Tern, Anhinga, Neotropic Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, , Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-heron, White Ibis, White-faced Ibis, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Crested Caracara, American Kestrel, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, White-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Eurasian Starling, Seaside

Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Boat-tailed Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Parula, Palm Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel. Additional details and photos on our eBird Checklists.

After more than four hours at Brazoria NWR, we drove through Oyster Creek and crossed over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to Follett's Island, where we enjoyed lunch at the Red Snapper Inn on Bluewater Highway (257) in Surfside.

After lunch, we spent about 45 minutes birding Bay Ave/Swan Lake, adding a few more species: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Short-billed Dowitcher, Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Black Skimmer, Brown Pelican, Green Heron, Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, Belted Kingfisher, and Cave Swallow.

Incidental birds: Rock Pigeon, American Crow

More Info: <https://brazoriacountytx.gov/departments/parks-department/follet-s-island>

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Bear Creek Park Field Trip Report, Saturday, October 20

by Teresa Connell

Bear Creek Park greeted us with swollen reservoirs; up on the highest picnic area at least 20 Boy Scout tents dotted the landscape above the flooded surroundings. The smell of bacon and eggs filled the air as fathers washed the dishes. Our leader Drew Dickert looked concerned as he looked up into the sky and raindrops spotted his glasses, the boy scouts gathering gave us hope! A total of six dry OG members ignored the weather and showed up. Drew spotted the finch flock looking for the Prairie warblers he saw earlier in the week; Michael Honel located the first view.



We toss aside our umbrellas and start bird watching for real. Nina Rach points out a Black-throated Green and soon was focusing on another tree. Forgetting the rain, Eastern Bluebirds serenaded us, later were seeking cover to bypass a short downfall. The rain came and went all morning and when the sun came out for a brief moment it shined on a female pileated Woodpecker perched atop a pole and we all went AHHHH! We saw a total of 33 species and all eagerly helped Drew find birds, such as Yellow-rumped, Magnolia, and Pine Warblers. Highlights included a male Summer Tanager, 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and a lone cave swallow. Margaret and Kathy Kneeland help spot waterfowl. We were a team and no longer dry! Drew Dickert was warm and welcoming on this wet and chilly morning. He was a perfect match for a fun morning at Bear Creek Park.



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Minutes of September 10, 2018 Meeting

by Jean Greenhalgh

The September 2018 meeting of OG was held on September 10, 2018 at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, at 6:30 pm.

In place of the Learning Corner, members discussed birds seen since the last meeting and general matters pertaining to Texas birding.

Nina Rach then chaired the general meeting. Forthcoming birding events are listed on the OG website at <http://ornithologygroup.com/Events/>.

David Sarkozi was the speaker for the meeting. The subject was the **Hardest non-review bird species to find in Texas**. These are not the rarest birds in Texas. These birds are included in the 491 regularly occurring Texas birds, the definition for which is that a minimum of 4 are seen per year. David presented them in reverse order.

12. Northern Shrike

This is primarily found in the Panhandle in the top two tiers of counties north of Amarillo. The first couple of weeks of December have the most sightings. However, this is probably an under-birded area and the birds may be more extensive than reported.

11. Audubon's Shearwater

Only seen on a pelagic trip at least 35 miles from the coast. They peak August to September and are rarer May through October.

10. Band-rumped Storm-petrol

Seen on pelagic trips 50 - 60 miles offshore from mid-May to the end of July, rarely seen August through October.

9. Pygmy Nuthatch

Regular in the Guadalupe mountains, especially in the Bowl

8. Little Gull

This is annual at White Rock Lake, Dallas. Also seen at Port Aransas Jetty 4 out of 10 years. Often found with Bonaparte's Gulls. Seen from mid-November to mid-April, with most seen early-December to mid-March.

7. Black Rail

This bird is more often heard than seen. Resident year round on marshes along the Gulf Coast. Prefers *Spartina patens* grass or Marsh hay.

6. Baird's Sparrow

Winters in the Trans Pecos, Big Bend area and Davis Mountains. Here from September to May with most seen from January to May. FM 2810 out of Marfa is a good location.

5. Muscovy Duck

Most of the Muscovy Ducks seen in Texas are domestic hybrids. The only reliable, and countable, place to see wild Muscovy Ducks is on the Rio Grande at Salineno, Chapeno and the picnic area north of San Ignacio. They are present November through July with most sightings March through May.

4. Lesser Prairie Chicken

These are resident, but in low numbers. Consequently, their exact locations are not reported in eBird, just the square in which they are located. They are found in short grass prairie, about knee high. They favor habitat without tall structures. They're not found in fracking fields. Get to the likely location half an hour before first light (earlier than dawn) and they stop booming by 9:00 am. Possible locations in Yoakum and Cochran counties are North of US 380 and south of TX

125. Also scout Lipscomb and Hemphill counties around US 60 and north of TX 15 in Lipscomb county.

3. Flammulated Owl

These owls are resident, breeding above 6,000 ft in the Guadalupe Mountains at The Bowl where David has seen them into July, in the Davis Mountains, and Boot Canyon in the Chisos Mountains (Big Bend).

2. Red-faced Warbler

Summer migrant seen in the high Chisos Mountains and the high Davis Mountains. eBird sightings are April 22 - May 8 and August 8 - 22.

1. Mexican Spotted Owl.

Resident breeders. The Davis Mountains may have as many as 9 pairs, mostly in inaccessible canyons, often on private land. Also in the Guadalupe Mountains, at the Devil's Hall trail.

To compile this list, David conducted a Texbirds poll and received 60 responses. Texbirds is at <https://www.freelists.org/list/tebirds>.

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Texas Birding Events, November 2018

by Nina Rach

1 Nov – Thurs – Houston Botanic Garden Bird Survey, Glenbrook Golf Course, 8205 N. Bayou Dr. Meet leader Mary Anne Weber at the main parking lot at 8am.

1 Nov – Thurs – Migratory Birds in the Landscape, walk at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin, 8-10am.

2 Nov – Fri - First Friday Birding at Palmetto State Park, Gonzales, 8-11am. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/palmetto/first-friday-birding/>

2 Nov – Fri - Bird watching hike at Brazos Bend State Park, 8:00am, meet at 40-Acre Lake restrooms. www.brazosbend.org

2 Nov – Fri – Owl Prowl at Houston Audubon's Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary, 7-9pm. Online Reservation required. \$10 adults, \$8 children.

2-6 Nov – Fri-Wed – El Paso Audubon trip to South Texas – meet in Harlingen. More info: jntperk@elp.rr.com or call Mark Perkins at 915-637-3521.

3 Nov - Sat – First Saturday Bird Walk at Kleb Woods Nature Center, Tomball, 8-10am

3 Nov – Sat – Class: Birding by Ear with Mikael Behrens, 8-11am at Travis Audubon's Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary; \$20/\$30. Info: contact Mikael at birdingonbroadmeade@gmail.com

3 Nov – Sat – Owl Prowl event at Houston Audubon's Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary, 7-9pm, \$10 adults, \$8 kids. Register online: <https://houstonaudubon.org/programs/all-age-groups/owl-prowls-edith-moore.html>

4 Nov – Sun - Bird watching hike at Brazos Bend State Park, 8:00am, meet at 40-Acre Lake restrooms. www.brazosbend.org

4 Nov – Sun - Bird walk at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 8:00-11:00am; free to members, \$8 others

5 Nov – Mon - Houston's Ornithology Group (OG) monthly meeting, Bayland Community Center. 6:30pm Learning Corner. 7:15pm program by Gary Clark, "Birding in Cuba"

6 Nov – Tues – Tues morning bird walk, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center, Hidalgo, 8:30am. Contact: mbarrera@cityofedinburg.com or EWBC at 956-381-9922.

6 Nov – Tues – Super Tuesday at Pedernales Falls State Park, led by Terry Banks. Meet at 7:00am through afternoon. Online registration required,, 12 max. Info: contact Terry Banks at 55bluebirds@att.net

7 Nov – Wed – Weekly Bird Walk, Kleb Woods Nature Center, Tomball, 8:00-11:00am.

7 Nov - Wed – (Last) Lunch with the Birds at Nature Discovery Center, Houston, Noon-1:15pm

7-11 Nov – Wed-Sun – 25th Annual Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, Harlingen, <https://www.rgvbf.org/>

8 Nov – Thurs – Houston Audubon meeting, 7pm social, 7:30 speaker, Ray Bednar, "Fantastic Cranes and Where to Find Them," United Way, 50 Waugh Dr.

8 Nov – Thurs – Fort Worth Audubon meeting, 6:50pm Bird ID class; 7:30pm program by Chester McConnell, President-Friends of the Wild Whoopers on "Whooping Crane Migration and Stopover Conservation." Room 100 (Everett Lecture Hall), UNT Health Science Center, 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd (at Montgomery St.); use Parking Lot 6 on Clifton St.

8 Nov – Thurs – Night Hike Owl Prowl – Trinity River Audubon Center, Dallas, 8-10pm. Register in advance \$15

9 Nov – Fri – Senior birding Bus Trip to Sabine Woods and Sea Rim Park, 7am-7pm, free but advance registration required. Kleb Woods

10 Nov - Sat – Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Count, Austin, 7:00-11:30am and again 4:00pm-dusk. Contact Eric Carpenter at ecarpe@gmail.com

10 Nov – Sat – Commons Ford monthly walk, 7:30am

10 Nov – Sat – Second Saturday Bird Walk, Lewisville, Denton Co., Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area, (LLELA), 7:30am, \$5 vehicle entrance. LLELA bird guides: Sue Yost & Keith Lockhart. Info: sdyst@asunnytexas.com

10 Nov – Sat – Rio Bosque Bird Bash at Rio Bosque Wetlands, El Paso, 10am-2pm. Info: www.riobosque.org

11 Nov – Sun – Winter birding at Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary on Lake Walter E Long, NE Austin, 7:30-11:30am. 16 max; register in advance by email to Park Ranger Owen Moorhead at Owen.Moorhead@austintexas.gov.

11 Nov – Sun - Bird walk at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 8:00-11:00am; free to members, \$8 others

11 Nov – Sun - Bird watching hike at Brazos Bend State Park, 8:00am, meet at Elm Lake Viewing Platform. www.brazosbend.org

11 Nov – Sun – Owl Prowl event at Houston Audubon's Sims Bayou Urban Nature Center, 6-8pm, \$10 adults, \$6 kids. Register online: <https://houstonaudubon.org/programs/all-age-groups/owl-prowls-sims.html>

12-16 Nov - Mon-Fri – Post-RGVBF trip to El Cielo Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO site), southern Tamaulipas, Mexico. \$995-\$1115, leaving from Harlingen 7:00am.

13 Nov – Tues – Tues morning bird walk, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center, Hidalgo, 8:30am. Contact: mbarrera@cityofedinburg.com or EWBC at 956-381-9922.

13 Nov – Tues – Bird walk, Devine Lake in Leander, north of Austin, with Ray and Ginny Steelman, 7:30-9:30am

13 Nov – Tues – Travis Audubon - Sparrow Identification class with Byron Stone, class sessions Nov 13 & 28, Dec 3 & 12, 7-9pm; field trips on Sat mornings Nov 17 & 24, Dec 8 & 15. \$75 members, \$95 non-members. Limit 12.

14-17 Nov – Wed-Sat – 31st Annual Festival of the Cranes, Bosque del Apache, NM. Registration opens Sept 5. <http://www.friendsofbosquedelapache.org/festival-of-the-cranes.aspx>

14 Nov – Wed – Weekly Bird Walk, Kleb Woods Nature Center, Tomball, 8:00-11:00am.

14 Nov – Wed – Duck Identification Class, 1:30-3:30pm, Kleb Woods Nature Center, Tomball.

15 Nov – Thurs - Baytown Nature Center Bird Survey, led by David Hanson. Meet before 8am in the front parking lot.

15 Nov – Thurs – Galveston County Audubon Group meeting, 6:30pm, Wortham Auditorium on the first floor at the Rosenberg Library. 7pm program by Kristen Vale of American Bird Conservancy, 2018 Update on Nesting Shorebirds in Galveston County.

17 Nov – Sat – Hornsby Bend monthly bird walk, Austin, 7:30am

17 Nov – Sat – Hogg Bird Sanctuary Survey, led by Cin-Ty Lee. Meet at 7:30 in the parking lot on Westcott St, off Memorial Drive, Houston

17 Nov – Sat – McKinney Falls State Park field trip, 8-11am. Registration required with Travis Audubon, 12 max. Info: Dennis Palafox at dennis_palafox@hotmail.com

17 Nov - Sat – Willow Waterhole monthly Bird Survey, 5310 South Willow Dr., Houston. 8:00-10:00am, led by Mary Ann Beauchemin.

17 Nov – Sat – Houston Arboretum bird survey, 8-10am; meet leaders Theo Ostler and Kelsey Low in front of the building.

17 Nov – Sun - Bird walk at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 8:00-11:00am; free to members, \$8 others

17 Nov – Sat – Bird banding at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Lake Jackson, 8am-12noon. www.gcbo.org

17 Nov – Sat – Galveston Audubon Group field trip to Texas City Dike, 8:30-noon Meet at the pavilion parking lot. Info: galvestoncountyaudubongroup@gmail.com

17 Nov – Sat – Golden Triangle Audubon Field trip to West Jefferson County. Meet at 8am at FM365 & Johnson Road

17 Nov – Sat – Hueco Tanks Bird Walk, 8:00am, led by Kevin Floyd & Vikki Milne. Call ahead to reserve a spot: (915) 849-6684

19 Nov – Mon – Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve Bird Survey, 20215 Chasewood Park Drive, Houston, TX 77070. Meet at 8am in front of the restrooms. Led by Mary Anne Weber & Skip Almoney.

19 Nov – Mon – El Paso = Trans-Pecos Audubon meeting – 7:00 program by Dr. Philip Lavretsky, Waterfowl Research

20 Nov – Tues – Bird walk at Commons Ford Ranch, Austin, with Lee and Deb Wallace, 7:15-10:30am

20 Nov – Tues – Tues morning bird walk, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center, Hidalgo, 8:30am. Contact: mbarrera@cityofedinburg.com or EWBC at 956-381-9922.

21 Nov – Wed – Weekly Bird Walk, Kleb Woods Nature Center, Tomball, 8:00-11:00am.

21 Nov – Wed – Bird watching hike at Brazos Bend State Park, 8:00am, meet at 40-Acre Lake restrooms. www.brazosbend.org

24 Nov – Sat – Woodland Park Bird Survey. 7:30-9:30am; meet leader Jason Bonilla in parking lot at 212 Parkview, Houston 77009.

24 Nov Sat – Fourth Saturday Bird Walk at Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary. Meet at cabin at 8:00am.

24 Nov – Sat – Houston Audubon members' field trip to Robert C. Stuart Park and Cullinan Park. Info: maweber@houstonaudubon.org or 713-640-2407

24 Nov – Sat – Spectacular Saturday at Edinburg Scenic Wetlands; free entry to grounds 7am-6pm, center 8am-5pm.

24 Nov – Sat- Birding Tour of Rio Bosque Wetlands, El Paso, 3:00pm Info: www.riobosque.org

25 Nov – Sun - Bird walk at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 8:00-11:00am; free to members, \$8 others

27 Nov – Tues – Bird Survey at Rio Bosque Wetlands, El Paso. Meet at Rio Bosque Visitor Center at 6:40am

27 Nov – Tues – Bird Walk at Cedar Breaks Park, Georgetown, with Dan Callaway, 7:30-9:30am. Travis Audubon.

27 Nov – Tues – Houston Audubon Senior Members' field trip to Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Stark Museum of Art in Beaumont. Advance registration required. Info: maweber@houstonaudubon.org.

27 Nov – Tues – Tues morning bird walk, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center, Hidalgo, 8:30am. Contact: mbarrera@cityofedinburg.com or EWBC at 956-381-9922.

28 Nov – Wed – Weekly Bird Walk, Kleb Woods Nature Center, Tomball, 8:00-11:00am.

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

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

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