



Monthly Meeting April 1, 2019
Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX

6:30 pm Learning Corner: Information Unavailable

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

7:15 pm Program: Beach-nesting Bird and Shorebird Conservation on the Texas Coast by Kristen Vale

[Beach Babies Field Trip, April 27, 9:00am, led by Kristen Vale](#)
[Field Trip Report to Lone Star College](#) | [Field Trip Report to Cullinan Park](#)
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[Upcoming Texas Birding Events \(link to web page\)](#)
[Hart Beat: Joe Overstreet Road \(link to web page\)](#)

Beach Babies Field Trip, April 27, 9:00 am

Led by Kristen Vale

Join American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) Kristen Vale at East Beach where she will guide you around the beach-nesting bird habitat that ABC and partner Houston Audubon have been protecting for 6 breeding seasons. Meet at R.A. Apffel East Beach Park, 1923 Boddeker Rd, Galveston, TX 77550 at 9 am; the trip should end at noon. You can park in the free parking lot on the east side of Boddeker Rd (left side) directly before the East Beach entrance fee station.

The habitat is nesting grounds for a rare population of Snowy Plovers, as well as Wilson's Plovers, Least Terns, Willets, and Horned Larks. Love will be in the air and we are likely to witness courtship behavior, adults incubating nests, and if we're lucky Snowy Plover chicks. We will also walk around the South Jetty to observe migrating shorebirds, terns, gulls, and skimmers feeding and roosting along the shoreline. Migrating warblers are often spotted in the dunes as well. This fundraiser will help continue to fund conservation in action by putting boots on the ground, as well as signs and fencing around the sensitive nesting habitat to protect the habitat and increase nest success.

This is an OG fundraiser for the American Bird Conservancy; suggested donation is \$10.

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Field Trip Report to Lone Star College

By Teresa Connell

Michael Cooper had a big smile on his face when the cars arrived. He led a group of 18 happy bird trippers with his buddy Thomas Hellweg on February. Many were new members! Thank you facebook. Lisa Li spotted a Brown Creeper down the path and we become so focused that the day went by quickly. Everyone including Kathy Swarts was taking turns spotting flyovers, birds in trees, and on-the-ground birding, which brought the group closer together. We became a team as Michael shared his favorite spots for Purple Finches and an American Woodcock that he flushed earlier in the season. A total of 36 species were seen and heard. As we all walked towards our cars to depart the last bird spotted was a Bald Eagle soaring not far beyond us. We all went home with a smile on our face, just like the one Michael had when he greeted us. It was a fun day with a fabulous group.



The favorites of the day were Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Bald Eagle, Winter Wren, and a handful of woodpeckers (Downy, Pileated, Red-bellied, Northern Flicker, and Yellow-bellied sapsucker).

Flyovers included White Pelicans, Cedar Waxwings, and Coopers, Red-shoulder, and Red-tail hawks. New member Erik Wolf shared his passion foraging for wild edibles on our walk. I was

stuffed by the time I got back to the car from munching Wood Sorrel. Yum!

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Field Trip Report to Cullinan Park, Sugar Land

by Jean Greenhalgh

Despite clouds and the rainy forecast, 18 people (including five new members) joined the field trip to Fort Bend County, on February 23, which was led by Mark Schuerman. Before leaving the parking lot we watched a pair of Wood Ducks investigate a nest box, a good start to the day. The boardwalk leads from the parking lot to two overlooks over a lake. In addition to cormorants, coots, herons, egrets and ducks, we had good views of Sora and a very cooperative American Bittern. It stood for at least 15 minutes and was so close that the scope views were of head, neck and upper breast.

After a short rain break sheltering in our vehicles, we walked on trails leading through the woods. Parts of the trail were very muddy, and there were frequent rain showers. However, we were able to see smaller birds who were sheltering in the woods. There were three woodpeckers, including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, House and Winter Wrens, White-throated and Swamp Sparrows and five warblers. We saw Coopers, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks and, just as we were leaving, a Bald Eagle flew over. Some participants went to a local Thai restaurant for lunch where we talked birds and birding for about an hour.

Our thanks to Mark for leading a productive and informative trip. We totaled 47 species.



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Minutes of March 4, 2018 Meeting

by Jean Greenhalgh

The March 2019 meeting of OG was held on March 4, 2019 at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, at 6:30 pm. 24 members were present.

Nina Rach presented the Learning Corner on Grosbeaks in Texas. Nina will submit a report of her talk.

Nina Rach, OG President, conducted a short business meeting. She was sad to announce the passing, on March 3rd, of long time member Marilyn Crane. Marilyn had been an active member for many years before she moved to Michigan ten years ago.

Houston Audubon Society Birdathon is now taking sign-ups

The City Nature Challenge will take place April 26 – 29. Details are on the Houston Audubon website.

Field Trips

April 27 - Galveston Beach Babies. A trip to Galveston's East End led by American Bird Conservancy's Kristen Vale, who is also the April speaker. See Field Trips on the OG website for more details. www.ornithologygroup.com.

The main program was Kendra and Megan's Accidental Big Year – a comedy of errors told through terrible photos.

Kendra Kocab and Megan Ahlgren are both Naturalists at Kleb Woods Nature Center in Tomball.

On January 1, 2018, Kendra and Megan spent the day doing the Cypress Creek Christmas Bird Count. Kendra is co-compiler of the CBC and Megan helps her. They decided to do a checklist a day and find new Texas and life birds and go to new Texas counties.

Kendra went to the January Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) meeting in Nacodoches and, together, they chased the Snowy Owl found in Odessa. Bird totals at the end of the month were Kendra 156 and Megan 150. Their boss, Fred Collins asked if they were doing a big year and both said no.

Their totals for the next three months increased and by April 30 Kendra had 366 and Megan 345. While attending the May TOS meeting in Alpine Kendra saw that she was number one for species in Texas, and decided that she wanted to remain number one and do a Texas big year. Megan joined her but had the additional goal of visiting a new place in Texas every month.

Kendra's first piece of advice was Start a Big Year on January 1st, not in May.

She also listed some of her conclusions on what was necessary for a big year

Leave at a moment's notice

Drive for hours

Be single-minded but also flexible

Be patient

Be good at driving, navigating and mobile eBirding.

By the end of May Kendra had 424 and Megan, who had been sick for part of the month, had 350. Kendra added two birds in June and July while Megan added ten. In August they went to the Texas Nature Conservancy Preserve in the Davis Mountains for their open weekend but the chilly and wet weather was not helpful. August Kendra 439 and Megan 392.

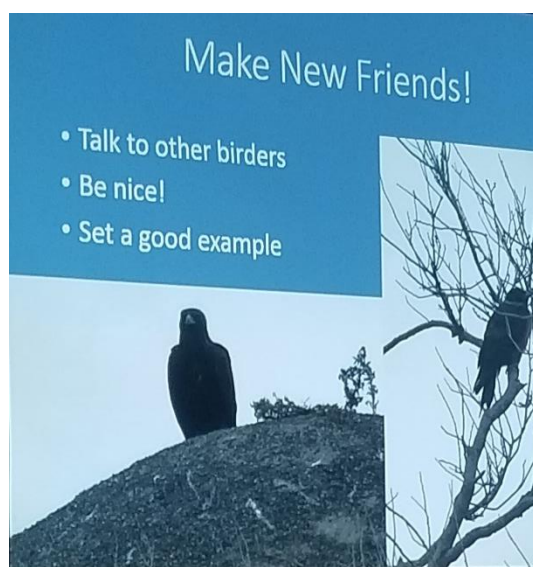
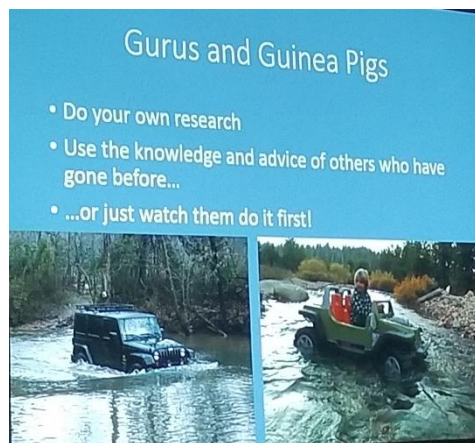
Here are more of Kendra's thoughts on Big Year planning.

Keep your car packed!

- Toilet paper
- Go bag – change of clothes, toiletries, meds, etc
- Car emergency kit
- Camping equipment
- Non-perishable food
- Water
- Paper map/offline maps
- Binocs, scope, camera (batteries, etc)

Get the latest

Websites/Listservs	Facebook Groups
• Texbirds	• Texbirds
• eBird needs alerts	• Real Texbirds
• Lower Rio Grande Valley Birding Hotline	• Texas Chase Birds
• North American Rare Bird Alert <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Texas Rare Bird Alert	• Rio Grande Valley Birding
	• North Central Texas Bird Ale
	• Texas Pelagics
	• Birds of Texas
	• Trans-Pecos Birds & Birding
	• ABA Rare Bird Alert
	• What's this Bird?



September brought a pelagic trip from South Padre Island and then Kendra went to the lower Rio Grande Valley, a place Megan to which had not yet been. September: Kendra 447 and Megan 395.

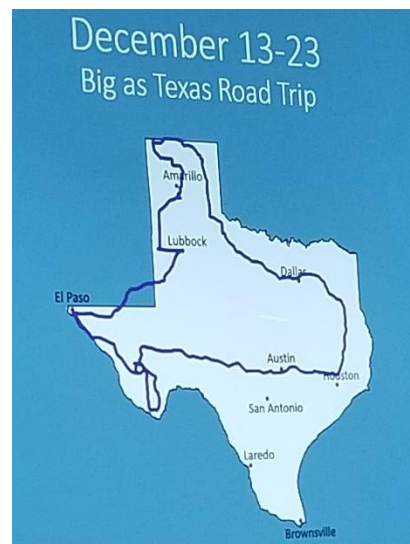
The hunt for birds became more intense during the last three months of the year. October finished with Kendra 451 and Megan at 406. The Rio Grande Birding Festival in November helped them both, as did a trip to the Guadalupe Mountains. November had Kendra 463 and Megan 430. December was very hectic as both appeared to spend almost every spare moment looking for birds and by the end of the year Kendra was at 486 and Megan at 458.

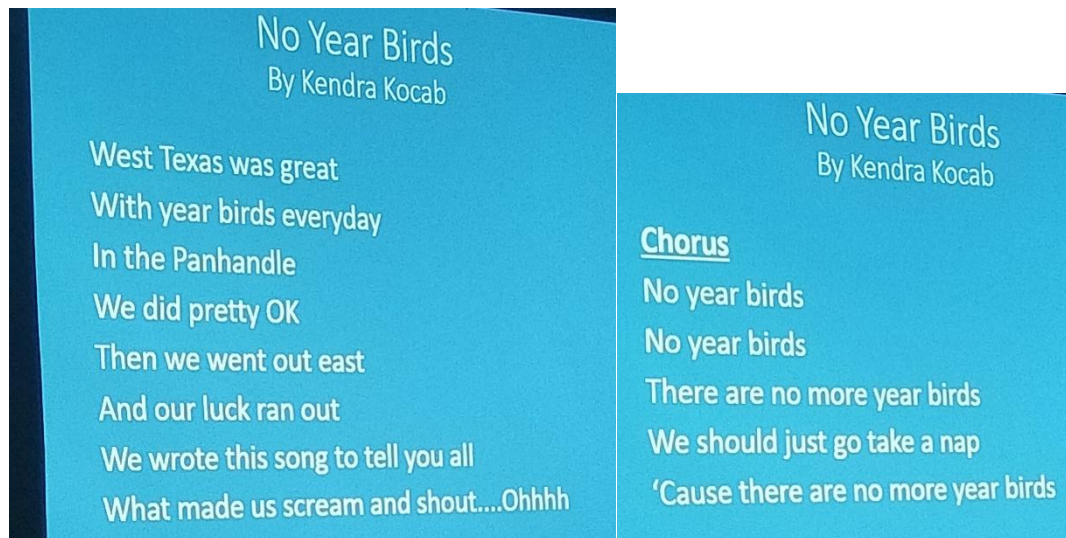
For their big year they only counted birds on the Texas Bird Records Committee list. However, eBird includes all birds, including those not recognized by the TBRC, and each had five exotics.

They finished the year with more thoughts on a Big Year, and a 5 verse song, sung to the tune of Jingle Bells about their December birding experiences.

Big Year – Worth it, better birder?

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet new people• Bird new places• Don't "skip" the hard stuff• Learn to keep rarities in mind• Rack up a lot of Expedia or hotel points!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't get a lot of chances to just bird• Hard to look for rarities because you are always chasing birds found by others• Spend a lot of time in cars, use a lot of gas





Thus ended a thoroughly entertaining and informative presentation.

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