



The Spoonbill

A Publication of the Ornithology Group
Of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club

August 2020

Welcome back after our summer hiatus!

Although Bayland Community Center has reopened, in an abundance of caution, we are planning to use the Zoom online platform for our August 3 meeting. You will need a (free) Zoom account to log in for the meeting, either on a desktop, laptop, or cell phone. Meeting ID: 930 5302 9932

The Zoom lobby will open at 6:45pm for check-in, and the meeting will begin at 7:00pm.

The program, “**The Birds of Southeast Arizona,**” will be given by David Bradford, who will take us on a photographic tour of SE Arizona, based on a tour he led in July 2019. July is a time of heightened bird activity and the start of the rainy season in the desert southwest. We will visit four "Sky Islands" of SE Arizona: the Santa Catalina, Huachuca, Chiricahua, and Santa Rita Mountain Ranges.

Learn about David's upcoming tours here: <http://birdtoursbydavidbradford.shutterfly.com/>

Below: Rufous-winged Sparrow, *Peucaea carpalis*. Photo by Bob Schwartz



2020 Membership

If you have not yet renewed your 2020 membership, please do so. The ONC/OG has continuing expenses for our website, Zoom, speakers, yearbook printing, and maintenance of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary.

OG single membership \$20, Family \$30, or consider once-in-a-lifetime ONC dues! Life membership \$250, Patron \$500, Founder \$1000, or Benefactor \$5000.

Please make checks payable to “Outdoor Nature Club” and mail to:

Outdoor Nature Club, P.O. Box 1014, Bellaire, TX 77402-1014



Upcoming OG meetings (Monday evenings)

Sept 14 – Program TBA

Oct 5 – Program: “Mad Birding - Birding the Four Corners of Madagascar,” by Steven Gast

Nov 2 – Program: “Birds and more in Southeast Asia” by Kendra Kocab

Dec 7 – Program TBA

Volunteer Opportunities!

The Ornithology Group is looking for a Newsletter Editor for The Spoonbill, as Larry Dybala is stepping down after several years of dedicated service. Thank you, Larry!

Enjoy our field trips? We really could use a Field Trip Coordinator to insure that they continue! The OG Vice-Chair (your name here) is in charge of arranging our monthly speakers – consider volunteering!

The Outdoor Nature Club has four board positions: President, Membership VP, Sanctuaries VP, and Secretary/Treasurer. We normally hold an election in May, but that was not possible this year due to Covid-19, and we are looking for ideas on how this can be accomplished.

Record-keeper extraordinaire Connie Blakley has served for many years as ONC Secretary/ Treasurer but would like to step down for a well-earned break. This is an extremely important position, fundamental to the operation of the entire organization, and we all hope that someone will step up to take over this essential job.



Texas State Parks Status

Almost all Texas State Parks are open, although access and hours may be limited, and camping still closed at some. The following are closed until further notice: Mustang Island SP (Corpus Christi), Honey Creek SNA (Spring Branch), Balmorhea SP (Toyahvale), Hueco Tanks SP & Wyler Aerial Tramway (El Paso).

Texas' National Parks status

On July 1, the National Park Service announced the temporary closure of Big Bend National Park and Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River, beginning July 2, “in response to a positive case for COVID-19 in the park residential community.” It has not reopened, as of Aug 3.

Several trails have reopened, for day-use only, in Guadalupe Mountains National Park: Devil’s Hall trail (to Pine Spring Canyon), Guadalupe Peak trail, and the Frijole Ranch area including the Smith Springs loop trail. This is a positive step and we hope to see both of the campgrounds, back-country access, and the visitor center re-open as well.

Local birding events

In addition to what we hope will be several OG field trips this fall...

Kleb Woods Nature Preserve – Wed morning bird walks, 8am-10am in August. Beginning in September, the walks will be 8:30-11:30am. Kleb also has First Saturday bird walks, always 8-10am (Sept 5, Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 5)

John Paul Landing – Thurs morning bird walks 8am-10am (Aug), 8:30-11:30am (from Sept).



Birding Webinars

Audubon New Mexico's 2020 Spring Webinar Series is available online, <https://nm.audubon.org/news/watch-our-spring-webinar-series>

- Birds Eye View of New Mexico, by Jon Hayes, ANM Executive Director
- An Introduction to the Rio Grande, by Paul Tashjian, Director of Freshwater Conservation
- Birds and Habitat of the Rio Grande, by Amy Erickson, Avian Biologist
- Backyard Birds: A Beginner Guide, by Katie Weeks, Director of Community Education

Tucson Audubon Society will host the **Virtual Southeast Arizona Birding Fest** on August 5-6-7, with more than 8 hours of exclusive Zoom presentations; Full festival pass \$20.

Details at <https://tucsonaudubon.org/news-events/>



Aracari in Spring Branch

Unique opportunity to see and hear a beautiful male **Curl-crested Aracari**, *Pteroglossus beauharnaesii*, at Adventures in Birds, 7414 Westview Dr., just west of Antoine, in Spring Branch.

This heavy-billed, small toucan is found south of the Equator in humid tropical forest in Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia. The crown and nape are dark gray, nearly black, covered with shiny curled feathers, the dark eyes surrounded by turquoise, and the face and neck white, flecked with black. The large bill is tipped with bright orange; the lower mandible is cream-colored, and the upper mandible iridescent purple-maroon. There are two bright red patches, on the upper back and on the rump, and a single red belly band. The underside is yellow, and the back, wings, tail, and leg feathers are dark gray-green.

Adventures in Birds also offers a changing selection of locally made bird and feather cotton/elastic masks (\$5). Open 11-3 Tues-Sat, closed Mondays. (713) 681-5299



Ornithology Group

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