



The Spoonbill

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

December 2021

Greetings! **This month we will be meeting in-person at Bayland Community Center!**
Please join us for a holiday get-together at 6:30 and bring snacks to share, if you like.
We will also offer the program on the Zoom online platform.

6 December 2021 OG meeting

The program: **“Birding in California!”** will be presented (live!) by Kendra Kocab

Kendra is a naturalist at Kleb Woods Nature Preserve and John Paul Landing Environmental Education Center in Harris County. She serves on the board of the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS), is a co-compiler for the Cypress Creek Christmas Bird Count, and helps coordinate the annual Red-vented Bulbul Survey.

Kendra will be talking about her nearly 3-week long birding trip to California. Learn about the places she visited, birds she saw, and tips she has for planning your trip to the Golden State.

Each month, the Zoom lobby opens at 6:45pm for check-in, and the meetings begin at 7:00.
Zoom links are sent to registered OG/ ONC members.



December Trivia Q:

What two bird species are the sole members of their Orders and Families?
(Based on Mark Kulstad’s presentation on 1 Nov)

Using the Linnaean System of Classification:
Kingdom-Phylum-Class-**Order-Family**-Genus-Species



<p>Please RENEW your OG/ONC membership for 2022! We operate on a calendar year basis.</p> <p>OG/ONC Annual Dues: \$ 20.00 for individuals; \$ 30.00 for families</p> <p>Additional contributions are tax-deductible and welcome in any amount, to help support our Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary in San Jacinto County.</p>	<p>If you have questions about your membership status, contact Michael Honel at michaelhonor@spcglobal.net or 713-432-1985.</p> <p>Make checks payable to Outdoor Nature Club, Send to: Outdoor Nature Club PO Box 1014 Bellaire, TX 77402</p>
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OG Field Trips for members – RSVP to Lisa Li, scissortailed20@gmail.com

January 8, 2022 – Laas Farm, Waller County – Harvey Laas and John Berner

Jan/Feb 2022 - TBD – NRG Cooling Ponds, Chambers County – David Sarkozi

March 2022 – possibly Santa Marta Mountains, Colombia. Contact Nina or Lisa if interested
Info: <http://www.northerncolombiabirdingtrail.com/birding-santa-marta-mountains.html>

If you are interested in birding any other locations, or want to plan a trip, contact Lisa to discuss!

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OG is kicking off 2022 again with membership-drive field trip to the Laas Farm in Waller County on Jan 8 at 7:30AM. The field trip will be led by John Berner and Harvey Laas. Space is limited, please RSVP by December 31, 2021 (email Lisa scissortailed20@yahoo.com).

You should have your 2022 membership on file BEFORE you sign up for any OG field trip.

A summary from our January 2021 field trip to Laas Farm:

The day started as slow and worrisome with fog and drizzle, but we had luck on our side after 8AM. It stayed cloudy but dry the entire morning to allow us 5+ hrs of fine birding. Led by John Berner and Harvey Laas, we walked/drove to corners of the farm, and spotted/heard **73 species** of birds. All birds are good, with some more special than others. We were treated with a pair of nesting Great Horned Owls AND a pair of Barred Owls. Not to be outshined by owls, sparrows (LeConte's and Lark Buntings, along with other species) not only showed up, they also perched long enough for good viewing and pictures. One shy Eastern Towhee played hide-n-seek with us, but eventually lured out by John that everyone enjoyed a brief view. We also flushed out a pair of Common Ground Doves, which landed on a bush just long enough for us to get our binocs on them. Around Pine Lake, we connected with purple finches and flycatchers (Ash-throated and Couch's). The lake was also home for hundreds waterfowls and herons, including 9 Black-crowned Night Herons.

[eBird Checklist - 24 Jan 2021 - Laas Farm \(private\) - 73 species](#)

Upcoming 2021-2022 Ornithology Group meetings (First Monday, 7:00pm)

Jan 3 – **Charles Alexander**, Wild Parrots of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Zoom)

Feb 7 – **Lisa & Li Li**, Pandemic Birding in Peru (Zoom)

March 7 – TBA

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Sign up for Christmas Bird Counts! The 122nd CBC runs Dec 14, 2021 – Jan 5, 2022

Houston Audubon's Texas CBC list: <https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-counts/>

National Audubon's CBC count circle map:

<https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4&emci=2cd84f6a-5054-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&emdi=78360524-1355-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&ceid=3397017>

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..... **Texas Ornithological Society Winter Meeting: January 14-16, 2022 in Abilene**

Registration will open December 10. Info at www.texasbirds.org

Among the new COVID protocols: programs will be offered Thurs-Fri-Sat evenings and Fri-Sat afternoons via Zoom. There is no central hotel location, but ~14-15 field trips will be offered and the groups will gather and depart from the Abilene Mall.

Two hotels suggested by TOS will offer discounts:

Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Abilene, 3902 Turner Plaza Drive
and Hampton Inn Abilene, 3917 Ridgemont Drive, near Dyess AFB
(NOT the Hampton Inn & Suites Abilene I-20)

Results & Trends of the 121st Christmas Bird Count (Dec 2020-Jan 2021)

- National Audubon Society

Last year's CBC was an interesting one. While the COVID-19 pandemic definitely put a damper on the more social aspects of the counts, and a few count circles in high-transmission areas decided to cancel for the year, more than 2,000 counts still took place. Director of the CBC, Geoff LeBaron noticed some really interesting trends in the data, and he and the rest of Audubon's Science team have spent some time digging into the numbers. Learn more about how some pandemic-related practices actually made the CBC data better—plus lots of other cool information—in Geoff's 121st CBC Roundup.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/121st-christmas-bird-count-summary>

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Birding Webinars & Live Events, December 2021 – January 2022

2 Dec – Thurs - ABA’s American Birding Podcast, with host Nate Swick: Encore: A Life in Raptors with Jerry Liguori. <https://www.aba.org/encore-a-life-in-raptors-with-jerry-liguori/>

8 Dec – Wed – Rockjumper’s Dream Destinations Webinar: Namibia, The Okavango Delta & Victoria Falls, with Greg De Klerk, 10am CST.
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/2616377620055/WN_bdILMBeZRzyysI_11I6Rsw

9 Dec – Thurs – International Crane Foundation’s From the Field Webinar: Oh Behave! Crane Antics Questions Demystified, 11:00am CST, With North America Programs Senior Manager Anne Lacy and Interpretive Digital Media Assistant Hannah Jones.

13 Dec – Mon – Institute for Bird Populations webinar: Long-term bird monitoring in the Maya Mountains of Belize, presented by Mathieu Charette.
<https://www.birdpop.org/pages/blogPost.php?id=82>

15 Dec – Wed – Partnership for International Birding (PIB) webinar: Arizona Birding, with Chris Charlesworth, David Trently, and Jesse Huth. 2:00pm CST. <https://www.pibird.com/conferencesignup>

15 Dec – Wed – NY Audubon Webinar: An Inside Look: Saving the Saltmarsh Sparrow, 3:00pm CST
<https://ny.audubon.org/events/inside-look-saving-saltmarsh-sparrow>

16 Dec – Thurs – ABA’s American Birding Podcast with Nate Swick (every OR every other Thursday)

14 January 2022 – Fri – PIB Webinar: Birding in the Dominican Republic, with Luis Paz, 11:30 CST

17 February 2022 - Thurs – PIB Webinar: Birding in Costa Rica, with David Rodriguez, 12:00noon CST

Upcoming, repeating, local birding events

Baytown Nature Center Monthly Bird Count, Harris County – Third Thursdays: **not in Dec**
Meet David Hanson & Chuck Davis at 8:00am in the parking lot behind the entrance building.

Seabourne Creek Nature Park, Rosenberg, Fort Bend County - Weekly Wednesday Bird Walks -
Meet at 8:00am. <https://rosenbergtx.gov/seabourn-creek/>

Kleb Woods Nature Preserve, Tomball, Harris County – Wednesday morning bird walks,
8:30am-11:30am. Kleb Woods staff also run First Saturday bird walks, 8-10am **Dec 4**
and Senior (50+) birding bus trips, usually on Fridays, usually 12 hours long.

John Paul Landing Environmental Education Center, 9950 Katy-Hockley Rd, Katy, Harris
County – Thursday morning bird walks 8:30am-11:30am and other events!

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Lake Jackson, Brazoria County (third Saturday, 8am-12pm)
Join licensed bird banders and GCBO Research Associates Robert and Kay Lookingbill, as they weigh, measure, band, and record details of birds captured in mist nets.

<https://www.gcbo.org/avian-research-and-monitoring/bird-banding-at-gcbo/>

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS) Open Day, San Jacinto County – fourth Saturday, usually first nature walk begins at 10:00am: **Not in December**

Monthly Bird Counts through Houston Audubon – You can join any of 14 different surveys in the Greater Houston urban area to learn more about bird movements and meet fellow birders.

See: <https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/bird-surveys/surveys.html>

Ornithology Group - www.OrnithologyGroup.org and www.facebook.com/OrnithologyGroup

Chair	Nina Rach	Nina.Rach@yahoo.com
Vice-chair (Programs)	- OPEN – interesting job!	Your email here!
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Treasurer	- OPEN – easy job!	Your email here!
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The Spoonbill Editor	- OPEN – temporarily Nina -	Nina.Rach@yahoo.com

Great Volunteer Opportunities at OG

1. The Ornithology Group needs someone to serve as Newsletter Editor for The Spoonbill.
2. The OG Vice-Chair is in charge of arranging our monthly speakers – consider volunteering and trying this out for a year!
3. Harlan Evans has volunteered for many years but has stepped down as OG’s Treasurer. We need someone to take this on. There is not much work involved, but a multi-year commitment would best.
4. Advertising and outreach – We could use some help in these areas!

Please contact Nina if you are interested in any of these positions, or have ideas to contribute.

December Trivia Q:

What two bird species are the sole members of their Orders and Families?

Hoatzin, *Opisthocomus hoazin*, is pheasant-sized, originally described in 1776 by German zoologist Statius Müller, found in South America-Amazonia, and is the national bird of Guyana. It is in the Order Opisthocomiformes. "The Hoatzin is one of the most ancient, living bird lineages, possibly sister to the Caprimulgiformes (sensu lato (Kuhl et al. 2020))"

Photo at right by Francesco Veronesi (Italy), 5 Aug 2007, Manu National Park, Peru.



The **Cuckoo Roller** or **Courol**, *Leptosomus discolor* (Hermann 1783), from Madagascar and the Comoro Islands, also has its own Order: Leptosomiformes.

"Formerly included in the Coraciiformes, the Cuckoo Roller is the only member of an ancient lineage that is the sister group to Trogoniformes, Bucerotiformes, Coraciiformes and Piciformes (Hackett et al. 2008, Prum et al. 2015)."

Photo at right of a female or juvenile, by Frank Wouters (Belgium), 19 Oct 2005.

"Unlike the true rollers and ground rollers, where the sexes have identical appearance, the cuckoo roller is sexually dichromatic." Males have a pale ivory underside.



Sources:

<https://www.worldbirdnames.org/new/classification/orders-of-birds-draft/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoatzin>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuckoo_roller