

The Spoonbill

A Publication of the Ornithology Group
of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club
January 2022

Greetings! **This month, our meeting will take place on the Zoom online platform.**

3 January 2022 OG meeting

The program: “**Birds of the Caribbean coast and Santa Marta, Colombia**” was presented by Lisa Li, featuring photography by Li Li.

In preparation for a future OG field trip to the Santa Marta Mountains of northern Colombia, Lisa and Li described their birding experiences in the region in 2018. They discussed the species and shared their tips about traveling internationally, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

One of their favorite guides, Sebastian Ballesteros, is a native of Minca and knows the local birds and habitats well. His great hearing can pick up a slight chip and find the skulkiest birds deep in the woods.

Photo at right, by Li Li:
Blue-naped Chlorophonia, *Chlorophonia cyanea*

Each month, the Zoom lobby opens at 6:45pm for check-in, and the meetings begin at 7:00.



Please join us for our first meeting of 2022, via Zoom.

January Trivia Q:

What is the longest common name of a bird on the American Birding Association (ABA) checklist?

The ABA Checklist includes species found in the ABA Area which are breeding species, regular visitors, casual and accidental species from other regions that are believed to have strayed here unrestrained by humans, and well-established introduced species that are now part of our avifauna.



2023 Santa Marta Mountains field trip – by Lisa Li

March field trip to Northern Colombia, Santa Marta Mountain, and the Guajira Peninsula. Separated from the rest of Andean Mountain range, Sierra Nevada is the highest coastal range in tropics, and that makes Santa Marta one of the most endemic rich regions with more than 20 endemic birds. In addition, the tropical dry forest along the Caribbean Coast offers its unique habitat and specialty birds.

When: March 1-9, 2023

Start/End: Barranquilla

Guide: Sebastian Ballesteros Caro

Price: TBD. 2-3p USD \$2650 per person

4-6p USD \$2350 per person

7-8p USD \$2050 per person

Deposit: \$400 upon registration, which is not refundable

Single Supplement: \$350. Single room at El Dorado Lodge might not be available

RSVP by July 1, 2022: email me (Scissortailed20@yahoo.com) for interest and question.

If you haven't renewed or joined OG, please do so before you register for this trip.

Itinerary

Day 1

Pick up from Barranquilla airport. Night in Barranquilla (Hotel Ibis, with WiFi). Both American and Spirit Airlines fly between Houston (IAH) and Barranquilla. Alternately, fly to Bogota and connect.

Day 2

Early morning transfer to Santa Marta with stops in Salamanca Park, then continue to Minca town, making stops on the way, in the foothills of the Santa Marta Mountains, birding for the rest of the day along the road and trails. Night in Minca (Hotel Minca - La Casona, WiFi)

Highlight birds: Russet-throated Puffbird, Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird, Pied Puffbird, Northern Screamer, Chestnut-winged Chachalaca, Bicolored Conebill, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, and Yellow-chinned Spinetail

Day 3

Birding for the whole day around Minca and visit bird feeder stations and trails (walking and make use of vehicle). Possible night walk in search of nocturnal wildlife. Night in Minca

Highlight birds: Golden-winged Sparrow, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Whooping Motmot, Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Aracari, Scaled Piculet, Swallow Tanager, Steely-vented Hummingbird, White-bearded Manakin, Black-chested Jay, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Rufous-capped Warbler, Crimson-back Tanager, Gartered Trogon, Masked Tityra, Rufous-and-white Wren, and Pale-eyed Pigmy-Tyrant.

Day 4

Early trip from Minca to the highlands at 2000m, arriving at El Dorado Bird Reserve. Birding for the whole day on trails and watching bird feeders. Night at El Dorado Lodge, electricity and WiFi.

Highlight birds: Bay-headed Tanager, Santa Marta (SM) Foliage-Gleaner, SM Antbird, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Coppery Emerald, SM Brush-Finch, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Band-tailed Guan, Groove-billed Toucanet, SM Blossomcrown, SM Woodstar, White-lored Warbler, Montane Foliage-Gleaner, SM Tapaculo, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, and Blue-naped Chlorophonia.

Day 5

Early journey in 4x4 to the top of the mountain, San Lorenzo ridge, where some endemic bird species can be found plus other very local ones. Birding for the whole morning; return in the afternoon for more birding around the lodge. Night at El Dorado Lodge

Highlight birds: Santa Marta Warbler, Santa Marta Wood-Wren, SM Mountain Tanager, SM Bush-Tyrant, SM Antpitta, SM Rufous Antpitta, SM Parakeet, Brown-rumped Tapaculo, SM Emerald Toucanet, White-tailed Starfrontlet, White-tipped Quetzal, Masked Trogon, Sickle-winged Guan, Golden-bellied Grosbeak, Golden-breasted Fruit-eater, Black-fronted Woodquail, and White-rumped Hawk.

Day 6

Early birding around the lodge and then start driving down to Minca and the lowlands; stay at Taironaka Ecolodge, with electricity and WiFi, close to a nice river. Birding in the afternoon.

Highlight birds: Black-back Antshrike, Panama Flycatcher, Blue-headed Parrot, Buff-breasted Wren, White-chinned Sapphire, Black-throated Mango, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Bicolor Wren, Scaled Dove, and Brown-throated Parakeet.

Day 7

Birding in the morning along trails along the river and in gardens. Possibly take a boat trip along the river to the sea, in search of aquatic birds, howler monkeys, caimans, etc.

After lunch, transfer to Flamencos Park area, for afternoon birding, and then drive towards Riohacha city to stay at Hotel Gimaura, on the beach, with WiFi

Highlight birds: Black-crowned Antshrike, Lance-tailed Manakin, Olivaceous Flatbill, Southern Bentbill, Bright-rumped Attila, Orange-crowned Oriole, Red-legged Honeycreeper, White-bellied Antbird, Sepia-capped Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Little Blue-heron, Osprey, and Great Black-hawk.

Day 8

Birding in the morning with a local indigenous guide, along trails. There is also the possibility to arrange a boat trip to take a closer views of the America Flamingos and other aquatic species. In the afternoon, transfer to Minca or Barranquilla.

Highlight birds: Vermillion Cardinal, Orinoco Saltator, Black-crested Antshrike, White-fringed Antwren, Slender-billed Inezia, White-whiskered Spinetail, Chestnut Piculet, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Pale-legged Hornero, Tocuayo Sparrow, Crested Bobwhite, Russet-throated Puffbird, Venezuelan Flycatcher, Green-rumped Parrotlet, Rufous-vented Chachalaca, American Flamingo, and Reddish Egret.

DAY 9

Transfer to Barranquilla airport for departure. Depending on departure time, we would return to Barranquilla either on Day 8 evening or Day 9.

Listed price includes 8 nights of lodging in double accommodation, all meals, all ground transportation, entrance fees to nature reserves, feeders and national parks, local expert guide specialized in birds and wildlife (guide will have a scope), water supply and snacks.

Airfare, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks, laundry, and other personal items are not included in the price. Tips to driver and guide are recommended, although they are optional.

Please **RENEW** your OG/ONC membership for **2022!**
We operate on a calendar-year basis.

OG/ONC Annual Dues:
\$ 20.00 for individuals; \$ 30.00 for families
Life membership remains \$250.00

Additional contributions are tax-deductible and
welcome in any amount, to help support our Little
Thicket Nature Sanctuary in San Jacinto County.

If you have questions about your membership
status, contact Michael Honel at
michaelhonel@spcglobal.net or 713-432-1985.

Make checks payable to Outdoor Nature Club,
Send to:
Outdoor Nature Club
PO Box 1014
Bellaire, TX 77402

OG Field Trips for members – RSVP to Lisa Li, scissortailed20@gmail.com

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

Feb 2022 – TBD – Lower Rio Grande Valley trip for winter rarities

Feb 2022 - TBD – possibly NRG Cooling Ponds, Chambers County

March 2023 – 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.

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

Enjoy the Tomball Bald Eagles – a FaceBook group

There is an active bald eagle nest in Tomball behind the Target store at FM 2920 & Highway 249 (address: 14302 FM 2920 Rd, Tomball, TX 77377). We see eagles here in southeast Texas from the fall through the spring of each year (~September through May). So, don't look for them from late May through early September.

Chicks in this area are generally born sometime between Christmas and early February, and fledge between mid-March and late May, at 10 weeks of age. They stay around for about a month before they migrate off (to parts unknown). Then the adults return in the fall to start all over again.

This active bald eagle nest is easy to find and enjoy, but definitely bring your binoculars because it's across a large detention pond, about 700 feet away from the back of Target.

Please be respectful of Target and do not block the roadway behind Target because there are many delivery trucks that go in and out all the time. Also be respectful of the eagles and stay in the parking lot and don't attempt to hike closer to the nest as this can cause alarm to the parents and potentially cause nest abandonment.

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

February 7 – **Charles Alexander**, Wild Parrots of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Zoom)

March 7 – TBA

April 4 – TBA

January eBirder of the Month Challenge

Each month, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology features a new eBird challenge and set of selection criteria. Now is the time to start submitting lists for the [2022 Checklist-a-day Challenge!](#)

Complete the free, self-guided eBird Essentials course, which contains the fundamental information that the Cornell Lab thinks every eBirder should know— everything from best practices to time-saving tips and tricks, and submit at least one eBird checklist during the month, to be entered into a drawing for a pair of new [ZEISS Conquest HD 8×42](#) binoculars.

<https://ebird.org/news/january-ebirder-of-the-month-challenge-2022>



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

Registration opened 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)

10th Annual Laredo Birding Festival, February 2-5, 2022

After last year's virtual 9th Laredo Birding Festival, they will be back in-person for the 10th Laredo Birding Festival, which promises to be the biggest and best LBF yet!

Each day, birders will have a chance to select from a variety of full-day scenic trips. Escorted by professional field guides and members of our local Monte Mucho Audubon Society, birders will have an opportunity to deepen their avian knowledge of South Texas, and explore areas along Laredo's riverfront, creek systems, nature trails and private ranchland. Based once again at the La Posada Hotel.

<https://laredobirdingfestival.org/>



Burrowing Owl, the 2022 ABA Bird of the Year!

Excerpts from Frank Izaguirre

Every ABA Bird of the Year has charm and character, but the 2022 Bird of the Year is arguably the world's most charismatic bird species: the Burrowing Owl.

Christina Baal captures this quality superbly in her three electrifying paintings. Portraying the Burrowing Owl in three distinct parts of the ABA Area, we see the owls in the desert Southwest, the Badlands, and Florida.

In the ABA Area, there are two subspecies of *Athene cucularia*: *hypugaea* and *floridana*.

<https://www.aba.org/2022-bird-of-the-year-burrowing-owl-athene-cucularia/>



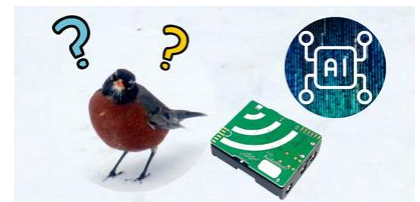
Birding Webinars & Live Events, January-March 2022

6-13-20-27 Jan – Thurs – ABA's American Birding Podcast with host Nate Swick (every Thursday).
<https://www.aba.org/podcast/>

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

29 January 2022 – Sat - The **18th Annual SparrowFest**, Doeskin Ranch, Bertram, TX, 7:00am-5:00pm. In-Person Sparrow Identification Workshop, Hosted by the Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR. Workshop leaders, Byron Stone, Bill Reiner, Randy Pinkston, and Jeff Patterson, \$150.00
<https://www.friendsofbalcones.org/event-4593178>

31 January 2022 – Mon - Institute for Bird Populations,
Zoom webinar: An Introduction to Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), presented by IBP biologist Jerry Cole, starting at 1:00pm CST.
Register in advance at www.birdpop.org



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

24-27 February 2022 – Thurs-Sun – **25th Whooping Crane Festival** @ Port Aransas Civic Center
<https://www.portaransas.org/event/25th-annual-whooping-crane-festival/1499/>

26-27 March 2022 – Sat-Sun – **Virtual Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival**, 7:00am- 8:00pm
Van tours *may* be scheduled. Contact: Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, 979-234-3021

Upcoming, repeating, local birding events

Baytown Nature Center Monthly Bird Count, Harris County – Third Thursdays:
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 and Senior (50+) birding bus trips, usually on Fridays, usually 12 hours long. **Jan 7, Feb 4**

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: **Jan 22, Feb 26**

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>

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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!
Field Trips	Lisa Li	scissortailed20@yahoo.com
Secretary	Jean Greenhalgh	Jeanbrit01@yahoo.com
Treasurer	- OPEN – easy job!	Your email here!
Membership	Michael Honel	MichaelHonel@sbcglobal.net
ONC Board Represent.	Tira Overstreet	Oddbird47@comcast.net
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.

January Trivia Q:

The longest common name of a bird species on the American Birding Association (ABA) checklist is...

Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler (MIGW),
Helopsaltes ochotensis;
French: Locustelle de Middendorff.

One of four Grassbirds (Locustellidae) on the ABA checklist, this species is listed as **Code-4: Casual**. "Species not recorded annually in the ABA Area, but with six or more total records—including three or more in the past 30 years—reflecting some pattern of occurrence."

It breeds in East Siberia to North Japan - Kamchatka Peninsula and North Kuril Islands and winters in the Philippines, Borneo and Sulawesi and in small numbers China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and the U.S.A.

According to eBird, this species prefers dense forest edge growth or wetlands.



Photo by Tokumi Ohsaka, Hokkaido, Japan.
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The common name commemorates [Alexander Theodor von Middendorff](#) (1815–1894), a German–Russian naturalist who traveled extensively in Siberia.

The next longest name is **Northern Beardless Tyrannulet (NOBT)**, *Camptostoma imberbe*.
French: Tyranneau imberbe.

One of 48 Tyrant Flycatchers in the ABA region. Listed as Code-2: *Regularly occurring ABA Area avifauna*, with "restricted range in the ABA Area, are widespread but occur in lower densities, or are quite secretive which makes their detection often difficult."

Photo by Nina Rach, Santa Ana NWR, 24 March 2018



Sources:

<https://www.aba.org/aba-checklist/> Version 8.1 was published December 2021. Species total: 1128

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middendorff%27s_grasshopper_warbler

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

Future Look:

Stay tuned for our February issue, for news of the **Bat Falcon** at Santa Ana NWR, a first US record!