

The Spoonbill

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

January 2021

Greetings! Although Bayland Community Center has reopened, in an abundance of caution, we will once again use the Zoom online platform for our **January 4 meeting**.

The program: “**Owls & other birds of Sax-Zim Bog,**” will be presented by David Bradford.

David has previously chaired this Ornithology Group and has served on the board of the Houston Audubon Society. He has been a member of the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) and the American Birding Association (ABA), and taught biology at Westbury High School.

He most recently spoke at the August 2020 OG meeting about birding in southeast Arizona.

At right: Great Gray Owl, *Strix nebulosi*, on the Sax-Zim Bog welcome sign, in St. Louis County, Minnesota, about 40 miles northwest of Duluth.



Sax-Zim Bog birding map: <https://saxzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Sax-Zim-Birding-Map-INTERIOR-MAP-brochure-NOV-2019.pdf>

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/77190955581?pwd=cTVKVfVkwjFkZXY1ZDNXZUxjWXYrdz09>

Meeting ID: 771 9095 5581

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

January Trivia Q: What is the latest Swallow species accepted to the Texas list by the Texas Bird Records Committee (TBRC, part of TOS)? (Answer is at the very end of the newsletter)

Our January speaker, David Bradford, has been leading trips throughout the United States for *Penfeathers* Tours since 1989. Upcoming tours include:

Owls of Minnesota - Jan 30 - Feb 3, 2021 - Will probably cancel due to the pandemic.

SE Arizona - April 26 - May 7, 2021

Big Bend NP and the Colima Warbler - May 15-21, 2021

Idaho and Cassia Crossbill - June 17-21, 2021

SE Arizona - July 18-28, 2021

For more details visit: <https://birdtoursbydavidbradford.shutterfly.com/>

Email: dbrdfrd@aol.com or Tel: 281 744 6484

This Month's Field Trip – Sunday, 10 January 2021

OG is kicking off 2021 with membership-drive field trip to Laas Farm on **Sunday morning at 7AM.** Located at [9870 FM 359, Brookshire](#), Texas (10 miles from downtown Brookshire), the Laas farm is 1500 acres, about 2.5 square miles. It has been in the Laas family since the 1800s.

The farm is an [eBird hotspot](#) with over 230 species recorded.

The field trip will be led by John Berner and Harvey Laas. It's a walking tour, so we are expecting to be on our feet for 2-3 hrs.

OG membership is required for participation, and \$10 donation per person to Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) is recommended. Space is limited, RSVP by emailing Lisa Li at scissortailed20@yahoo.com

Time to Renew Membership for 2021 - NOW

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2021, please do so. We are all volunteers, but the ONC/OG has continuing expenses.

OG/ONC 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 2021 Ornithology Group meetings (Monday evenings, on Zoom for now)

Feb 1 – Program: “**Corvids-The Amazing Crow Family**,” by Scott Kiester

March 1 – Program: “**Birding Northeast Brazil**,” by Lisa Li

April 5 & May 3– TBA

Three Great Volunteer Opportunities

1. The Ornithology Group needs someone to serve as Newsletter Editor for The Spoonbill.
2. The OG Vice-Chair (**your name here**) 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 would finally like to step down as OG’s Treasurer and is looking for someone else to take on the responsibility.

Please contact Nina if you are interested in any of these positions.

Cool Local Birds! Over the last month...

Harris County:

Painted Redstart in Briarforest area, off Dairy-Ashford; **Pacific Slope Flycatcher** along Buffalo Bayou north of Woodway (near The Houstonian); **Mountain Bluebird**, **Brewers Sparrow**, and **Henslow’s Sparrow** near John Paul Landing Environmental Education Center, off Katy Hockley Cut off Road; **Red-naped Sapsucker** off E NASA Pkwy in Taylor Lake Village Community Park; **Common Ground Doves** on Warren Ranch (Katy Prairie); **Black-headed Grosbeak** in El Lago, between Seabrook and Armand Bayou Nature Center; and **Pine Siskins** seemingly everywhere.

Fort Bend County:

Long-tailed Duck at Cross Creek Ranch Wetlands; **Pacific Slope Flycatcher**, **Ash-throated FC**, and **Bullocks Oriole** at Brazos Bend State Park

Galveston County:

Forked-tailed Flycatcher off Bay Street Ext, Texas City; **Iceland Gull** at the Texas City Dike; **Long-tailed Duck** at O’Quinn Estuary Corridor; **Short-eared Owl** at Galveston Island State Park

Brazoria County:

Dusky Flycatcher and **Common Ground Doves** at San Bernard NWR; **Anna’s Hummingbirds** at Quintana Neotropical; **Pomarine Jaeger**, **Parasitic Jaeger**, and **Sooty Shearwater** offshore.

Farther afield (day trips):

Spotted Rail at Choke Canyon State Park, Calliham Unit (McMullen County)

Little Gull and **Red-throated Loon** at Trading House Creek Reservoir (McLennan County)

OG Field Trip report, Saturday, Nov 14, 2020 to Cullinan Park (UTC 095)

12300 Aldine Westfield Rd, Fort Bend County – organized by Texas Master Naturalist Robbin Mallett



There have been 264 bird species recorded on 2873 eBird checklists at Cullinan Park

For this field trip, there were 29 attendees, split into 3 groups (led by Ryan Shaw, Mark Scheuerman, and Bill & Julie Schneider) and a few people walking separately. Collectively, we saw 79 bird species, two of which were new listings for the park: Common Loon and Red-headed Woodpecker.

Species encountered at Cullinan Park on 14 Nov 2020 (89):

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Muscovy Duck (domestic), Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Common Gallinule, American Coot,

Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Anhinga, Greater Yellowlegs, Common Loon, Neotropic & Double-crested Cormorants, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture,

Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Crested Caracara, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe,

Couch's Kingbird, Blue-headed Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Cave Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Marsh Wren, House Wren, Carolina Wren,

European Starling, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Scaly-Breasted Munia, American Pipit, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow,

Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Black-and-White Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and Northern Cardinal.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L224113> ,

Top eBirder for the park, Albert Ribes, was birding at Pumpkin Lake that same morning, and saw ten species not seen by the other groups (included above).

As Robbin Mallett says, **“You just can't cover all of Cullinan in one hike. It's too big.”**

OG Field Trip report, Brazos Bend State Park, February 1, 2020

By Tira Overstreet (was meant to be published in March 2020 Spoonbill, but we missed that issue)

On a cold, but sunny, Saturday morning, 21 birders and photographers joined Mark Scheuerman at 8:00am for a leisurely walk around 40-Acre Lake at Brazos Bend State Park in Fort Bend County.

We found all the expected birds with the exception of American Bittern. Many birds were seen, but some of the highlights were 80+ Tree Swallows, many of which were sitting in the middle of the lake on stalks, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, a male Vermilion Flycatcher, several Ring-necked Duck pairs, Northern Shovelers, a Least Grebe, and two Bald Eagles (a juvenile and a full adult).

It warmed up enough so that two adult alligators (one with babies!) came up on the banks to sun and be photographed. Afterwards, most of us shucked our coats and moved to Elm Lake for birding while lunching in the warm sun. It was a relaxing and interesting walk, with great birds and a beautiful day.



Field trip eBird lists [59 species overall]

AM: 40-Acre Lake, by Mark Scheuerman, <https://ebird.org/checklist/S64037104> (56 species)

6 Black-bellied Whistling Duck, 15 Blue-winged Teal, 3 Northern Shoveler, 12 Ring-necked Duck, 1 Least Grebe, 12 Pied-billed Grebe, 2 Sora (heard), 25 Common Gallinule, 80 American Coot, 4 Anhinga, 1 Neotropic Cormorant, 2 Double-crested Cormorant, 2 Great Blue Heron, 3 Great Egret, 1 Snowy Egret, 1 Little Blue Heron, 3 Tricolored Heron, 1 Green Heron, 2 Black-crowned Night-heron, 17 White Ibis, 2 White-faced Ibis, 20 Black Vulture, 70 Turkey Vulture, 2 Northern Harrier, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 2 Bald Eagle, 4 Red-shouldered Hawk, 3 Red-tailed Hawk, 3 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, 1 Crested Caracara, 8 Eastern Phoebe, 1 Vermilion Flycatcher, 1 White-eyed Vireo, 6 American Crow, 4 Carolina Chickadee, 4 Tufted Titmouse, 100 Tree Swallow, 1 Golden-crowned Kinglet, 10 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 4 House Wren, 6 Carolina Wren, 2 European Starling (heard), 8 American Robin, 2 American Pipit (heard), 6 Swamp Sparrow, 12 Red-winged Blackbird, 12 Boat-tailed Grackle, 6 Orange-crowned Warbler, 4 Common Yellowthroat, 15 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 1 Wilson's Warbler, 1 Summer Tanager, 30 Northern Cardinal.

PM: Elm Lake, by Mark Scheuerman, <https://ebird.org/checklist/S64009579> (17 species)

25 Black-bellied Whistling Duck, 1 Ring-necked Duck, 1 Pied-billed Grebe, 7 Common Gallinule, 6 American Coot, 1 Tricolored Heron, 4 Turkey Vulture, 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Eastern Phoebe, 3 American Crow, 4 Tree Swallow, 1 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 1 American Goldfinch (heard), 2 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 3 Northern Cardinal.

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2020 Ornithology Group Birding Field Trip Summary, by Nina Rach:

Jan 25 – Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, San Jacinto County– reviewed in April 2020 Spoonbill

Feb 1 – Brazos Bend State Park, Fort Bend County, led by Mark Scheuerman, reviewed this issue

Feb 2 – KPC's Warren Ranch, Harris County, led by John Berner

Feb 29 – Leap Day Birding at the **NRG Cooling Ponds**, Chambers County, led by David Sarkozi and John Berner and reviewed in April 2020 Spoonbill

March 7 – Spring birding in **Cullinan Park**, Fort Bend County, organized by Robbin Mallett and reviewed in April 2020 Spoonbill

March 14-15 – OG Weekender trip to **Welder Wildlife Foundation**, the coast, and **Lake Corpus Christi State Park** in San Patricio County, organized by Nina Rach and Ron Weeks and reviewed in April 2020 Spoonbill

April 26 - **Matagorda Island** by chartered boat (6 people) – organized by Nina Rach and reviewed in May 2020 Spoonbill

Oct 3 – **Bear Creek Park**, Harris County, led by Drew Dickert and reviewed in October 2020 Spoonbill

Oct 24 – **Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary**, San Jacinto County, led by Nina Rach and reviewed in November 2020 Spoonbill.

Nov 14 – Fall birding in **Cullinan Park**, Fort Bend County, led by Robbin Mallett, reviewed this issue

Dec 1 – **Keith-Wiess Park**, Harris County, led by Tira Overstreet and Nina Rach, and reviewed in December 2020 Spoonbill.

Thank you to all our 2020 field trip leaders! Despite missing five months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we took precautions and we birded in six counties in 2020. Stay active and healthy, y'all.

Upcoming local birding events – please wear a mask

Baytown Nature Center Monthly Bird Count, Harris County –

Third Thursdays: None in December, due to CBCs. **Next will be Jan 21.**

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 (**Jan 2, Feb 6**) and Senior (50+) Fri. bus trips.

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

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Open Day (usually third Saturday): **Jan 23, Feb 27, March 27**



Texas State Parks Status

Almost all Texas State Parks are open, although access and hours may be limited, and camping is still closed at some. The following are closed: Balmorhea SP (Toyahvale), and Wyler Aerial Tramway (El Paso). But Indian Lodge (Fort Davis) has reopened – book online!

See <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/parks-map>

Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) Virtual Winter Meeting – Jan 14-17, 2021

Registration closes on Thursday, January 7. The event is free, but the speaker package (10 presentations) will cost TOS members \$25, and non-members \$35 (free to students). It looks like a great program! Renew your TOS membership, if you haven't already, and sign up today.

Details are in the Fall 2020 TOS Newsletter:

http://texasbirds.org/publications/newsletters/newsletter_fall_2020.pdf

It will include a 3-day, Statewide COVID Collaborative Birding Blitz, via collated eBird lists!

Jan 14, 7-8pm Speakers: **TOS Regional Directors** – Favorite Birding Locations in Their Regions

Jan 15, 3:30-4:30pm **Cin-Ty Lee**– Empidonax ID

Jan 15, 4:45-5:45pm **Dr. Tania Homayon** – Texas Nature Trackers: Discovering Populations & Documenting Change for Conservation

Jan 15, 7-8pm **Romey Swanson** – Audubon Texas Bird Conservation in Texas

Jan 16, 9-11am Photography Class with **Lee Hoy**

Jan 16, 3:30-4:30pm **Dr. Byron Stone** – Birding Alaska with TOS

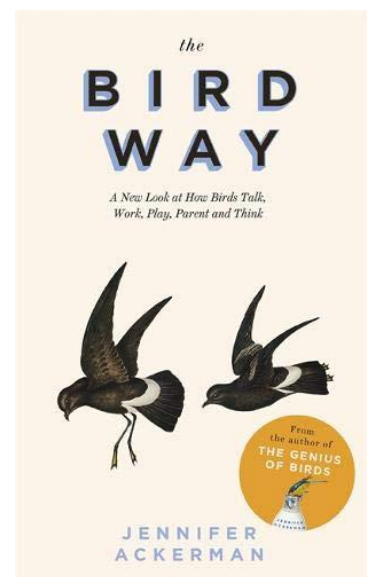
Jan 16, 4:45-5:45pm **Shelia Hargis** – Magical Migrations

Jan 16, 7-8pm – **Keynote: Jennifer Ackerman**, author of 'The Bird Way,' published in 2020, celebrating "the dizzying variety of bird life and behavior."

Jan 17, 3:30-4:30pm **Kent Rylander** – Bird Behavior

Jan 17, 4:45-5:45pm **Sue Heath** with **Jennifer Wilson** – Migrant and Resident Loggerhead Shrike Habitat Affiliations in Texas

Jan 17, 7-8pm **Nathan Pieplow** – Listen to Her Sing



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Ornithology Group - www.OrnithologyGroup.org

Chair	Nina Rach	Nina.Rach@yahoo.com
Vice-chair (Programs)	- OPEN – interesting job!	Your email here!
Field Trips	Lisa Li	scissortailed20@yahoo.com
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ONC Board Represent.	Tira Overstreet	Oddbird47@comcast.net
The Spoonbill Editor	- OPEN – temporarily Nina -	Nina.Rach@yahoo.com

January Trivia Q answer:

On Dec 15, 2020, the TBRC announced that **Blue-and-white Swallow** (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) was officially added to the state list, bringing it to 655!

“Keen-eyed Dan Jones should be commended for being alert to this possibility while sorting through a mixed swallow group in his own yard (south of Progresso, Hidalgo County,) as well as picking this one out & photographing it over a two day period this summer (20-21 July).

“The photos match up well with the migratory P.c. patagonica subspecies from southern South America, a subspecies a few folks have been expecting to make an appearance in the ABA region. The ABA Checklist Committee will now consider this same record for addition to the official ABA checklist.”

Photo by Dan Jones, Progresso Lakes, TX



Trivia references:

<https://www.facebook.com/TexasBirdRecordsCommittee> and

<https://www.texasbirdrecordscommittee.org/>
