

The Spoonbill

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

February 2022

Greetings! This month, our meeting takes place on the Zoom online platform.

7 February 2022 OG meeting

The program: “**Wild Parrots of the Lower Rio Grande Valley**” was presented by Charles Alexander, Brownsville, Texas, but we lost connection to the PowerPoint due to internet service issues.

We are rescheduling this talk for Monday, June 6.

Photo at right, by Charles Alexander:
Green Parakeets, *Psittacara holochlorus*

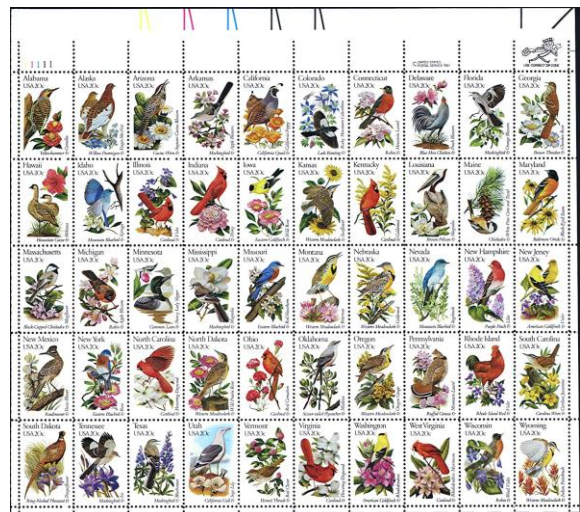


Each month, the Zoom lobby opens at 6:45pm for check-in, and the meetings begin at 7:00.

February Trivia Q:

What is the only state in the USA to have a “State Raptor?” (In addition to having a state bird)

At right: In 1982, the US Postal Service issued a sheet of 20-cent stamps featuring the state bird and state flower of each of the 50 states.



February Meeting Summary, by Nina Rach

Thanks to all 45 people who logged in for our Zoom meeting this evening. It was gratifying to see so much interest in this topic and speaker.

We started a few minutes late, and learned of Charles Alexander's early interest in the Carolina Parakeet and the research he accomplished as a wildlife artist, examining skins in several collections, interviewing ornithologists, observing Dusky-headed Parrots (*Aratinga weddellii*) at a lick off the Rio Napo in Yasuni National Park, Ecuador, and even visiting Mark Bittner and his Wild Parrots on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco. Charles' initial focus was to learn enough to more realistically paint/portray the Carolina Parakeet. This led him to south Texas, to study parrots in Hidalgo County for several years, before changing his focus to wild parrot colonies in Cameron County.

He has filled dozens of notebooks with meticulous notes and sketches, which we were unable to truly appreciate, as he lost his satellite internet connection mid-way through the talk. He recouped part of the story via cell phone, through my Zoom link, using a few of his Green Parakeet (*Psittacara holochlorus*) images. These showed the two yellow morph birds, hatched in 2013 in a palm log nest near a La Quinta in McAllen, and christened "Hope" and "Glory." They were never banded, but Glory grew ill following a cold spell, weeks after their primary foraging lot, filled with *Ehretia anacua* trees, was bulldozed in November 2013. Charles recovered and sent the body to the American Museum of Natural History, and staff determined it was a female. The skin resides in their collection.

Charles noted that Red-crowned Parrots and Green Parakeets live in close proximity, and fight for the same nesting territories in February in the LRGV. The RCPA fledge first, and the GREP fledge later.

Green Parakeets live ~20 years in captivity, and Red-crowned Parrots much longer, he told us. There is pressure on wild parrots by the illegal pet trade.

Brownsville has a long-standing law protecting the Red-crowned Parrot, but none of the other species that are so often seen there, particularly at Oliveira Park. McAllen recently enacted (2014) protections for all parrot species, but actual enforcement is another matter.



During his continued discussion of the colonies, I ran some other images from the Cornell Lab, including the Red-throated variant of the Green Parakeet (*Psittacara holochlorus rubritorquis*), Mitred Parakeets (*Psittacara mitratus*), and Red-crowned Parrots (*Amazona viridigenalis*). We also played a few recordings of the three species from the Macaulay Library, and heard that the Mitred Parakeet does indeed have a gull-like call.

In order to see Charles' remarkable images, **we're going to reschedule this program for Monday, June 6**, again on Zoom, and our speaker plans to broadcast from the very stable internet service at the Gladys Porter Zoo - a wonderful place to visit when you are next in Brownsville.

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

Feb 26/27 - TBD

March 2022 – TBD

April 2022 – W.G. Jones State Park, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers

March **2023** – Santa Marta Mountains, Colombia. Contact Nina or Lisa if interested

Info: <http://www.northerncolombiabirdingtrail.com/birding-santa-marta-mountains.html>

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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.

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

March 7 – TBA

April 4 – **Letha Slagle**, Birding Locally! A Harris County Big Year

May 2 – TBA

June 6 – **Charles Alexander**, Wild Parrots of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Zoom)



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

...Was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19
Info at www.texasbirds.org

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

Last year's 9th Laredo Birding Festival was virtual, but the 10th Laredo Birding Festival is being held in-person this month!

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 the 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/>



Birding Webinars & Live Events, February-March 2022

3-10-17-24 Feb – Thurs – ABA's American Birding Podcast with host Nate Swick (every Thursday).
<https://www.aba.org/podcast/>

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

24 February 2022 – Thurs - John Paul Landing Environmental Education Center will hold a *Nature Discussion Group* from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., following the regular weekly bird walk starting at 8:30 a.m. This month, Mark Froehlich will discuss *The Bird Way: A New Look at the How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent, and Think* by Jennifer Ackerman. This book delves into the extraordinary lives of birds around the world, showing their intelligence, deception, playfulness, culture, and more. Ackerman uses the latest scientific research along with her own experience to explain a variety of bird behaviors, some of which were previously widely dismissed or unexplained. 9950 Katy Hockley Rd, Cypress 774333. For more information, email johnpaullanding@pct3.hctx.net or call 713-274-3131.

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

12-15 May 2022 – **Indiana Dunes Birding Festival**,

<https://indunesbirdingfestival.com/> &

<https://www.facebook.com/indunesbirdingfestival/>

Field trips and a great speaker lineup:

12 May: Elizabeth Hargrave, Wingspan: How a Board Game Took the Birding World by Storm

13 May: Dan Gardoqui, Talking with Birds: From Listing to Listening

14 May: Diego Calderon, Colombia, Birding with FARC:

How Birds Connect People

14 May: **Keynote:** David Lindo, the "Urban Birder"

15 May: Dr. Ken Brock, Lake Michigan's Fall Funnel Affect and What You're Missing Out on



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. **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: **Feb 26, March 26, Apr 23**

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 help 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.
The Spoonbill, February 2022

January Trivia Q:

The only state in the USA that has a
“State Raptor” is...

Idaho.

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus* [PEFA]

Idaho House Bill No. 712, to adopt the peregrine falcon as the official raptor of Idaho, was introduced and read for the first time on February 16, 2004; approved by the House ten days later on February 26.

Read for the first time in the Idaho Senate on February 27, House Bill No. 712 was approved unanimously by the Senate on March 19, 2003.

The Idaho state quarter was subsequently issued by the US Mint on Oct 16, 2007. The reverse side features the Peregrine Falcon.

The peregrine falcon was the first species protected under the Endangered Species Act and its recovery is considered the most successful ever undertaken. It was removed from the Endangered Species list in 1999.



Source:

https://www.netstate.com/states/symb/raptors/id_peregrine_falcon.htm

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190113041028/https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/50-state-quarters/idaho>

<https://www.peregrinefund.org/explore-raptors-species/falcons/peregrine-falcon> Based in Boise, Idaho

Future Look:

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