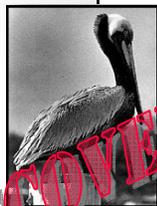


March/April 2010

The Brown Pelican



RECOVERED

The Newsletter of the Coastal Bend Audubon Society

On the Web at <http://www.coastalbendaudubon.org>

LOOK FOR COLOR, WEB-LINKED VERSION OF NEWSLETTER ON THE WEB AT www.coastalbendaudubon.org

THIS JUST IN!

By David Newstead

Literally! On February 11, a very special Purple Martin returned to the colony maintained by John Barrow and Louise Chambers. You may recall that last summer we attached 15 geolocator devices to Purple Martins from two colonies in the City of Corpus Christi. Since then the birds migrated out and we've been anxiously awaiting their return. We have captured a returning female, removed the geolocator and harness, and set her safely free.

We will send the geolocator so the data gathered can be downloaded to see where she's been over the winter and during migration. Did she hang out for a while in Mexico? Did she winter in the heart of the Amazon? Did she migrate across the Gulf of Mexico or follow the coastal route? In the meantime, we'll be carefully watching those colonies to see if other birds with geolocators return. Stay tuned!



Purple Martin with geolocator. Photo by Juan Bahamon

UPCOMING EVENTS! MORE DETAILS INSIDE!

Saturday, March 27— SANCTUARY WORK DAY (p. 6)

Sunday, April 25—THE BIG SIT (p.4)

Sunday, May 2—SWAMP THINGS Field Trip (p.4)

Saturday, October 23—BIG DAY (p. 4)

More information on upcoming speakers (p. 4)

CBAS Monthly Meetings

Tuesday, March 2

Speaker: Craig Gigglesman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Topic: Turtles and the Texas Prairie Wetlands Program

Tuesday, April 6

Speaker: Elizabeth and David Smith

Topic: Capturing the Capture: Wading Bird – Prey Item Images

Tuesday, May 4

Speaker: Rosaleen Baluyot, TAMUCC graduate student

Topic: Ingleside barrier strandplain peninsulas

Location:

Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History
1900 N. Chaparral
Corpus Christi, Texas

Time: 7:00 p.m.

All members and the public are invited!



Earth Share
OF TEXAS

One environment.
One simple way
to care for it.

WHAT'S UP AROUND TEXAS

JONES PARK NATURE FEST

March 6, 2010 Humble

Enjoy a fun, educational day as noted speakers discuss birds, butterflies, native plants, photography, reptiles, and other nature topics. Enjoy book signings, guided nature, bird, and wild edible walks, pontoon boat tours, educational booths, live animals, and a catch-and-release fishing tank, 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Contact: Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center,
20634 Kenswick Drive, Humble, Texas 77338
(281)-446-8588

Website: <http://www.hcp4.net/jones/contact.htm>

GALVESTON ISLAND FEATHERFEST

April 8-11, 2010 Galveston

Due to annual spring migration, Featherfest could see more than 200 species of birds. One of the best times to visit Bolivar Flats and High Island. Excursions by bus, boat or kayak will visit a variety of habitats, from beaches to bays, bay marshes to wetlands, and coastal prairies to upland wood mottes.

Contact: Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council
(409)-392-0841 or (888)-425-4753

Website: <http://www.galvestonfeatherfest.com/>

E-mail: NatureTourismGalv@juno.com

ATTWATER'S PRAIRIE CHICKEN FESTIVAL

April 10-11, 2010 Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, Eagle Lake

Experience the beautiful courtship dance of the Attwater's Prairie Chicken and virgin coastal prairie habitat through many different guided tours by vehicle or walking.

Contact: Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR
(979) 234-3021

Website: www.southwest.fws.gov/refuges

E-mail: AttwaterPrairieChicken@fws.gov

16th ANNUAL MIGRATION CELEBRATION

April 16-18, 2010 San Bernard NWR, Lake Jackson

Haven to over 350 species of birds, the area's diverse habitats include coastal prairie, hardwood forests and southern bayous along the Central Flyway. Potential birds include tanagers, warblers, buntings, hawks, waterfowl and shorebirds.

Contact: Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges
(979) 849-8725

Website: <http://migrationcelebration.org>

E-mail: information@migrationcelebration.org

FENNESSEY RANCH SPRING MIGRATION TRIP

April 17 & 24, 2010 Fennessey Ranch, Bayside

Full-day hayride-style tour with short hikes. Experienced bird guides may spot as many as 70 - 80 species of birds. Beginning to expert birders welcome. 7:30 a.m. \$62.

(361) 529-6600

Website: www.fennesseyranch.com

GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC

April 25 - May 2 Texas Coast

Birding in teams to raise money for coastal habitat conservation with tournaments for birders of all skill levels and any age. Costs vary.

(979) 480-0999

Website: www.birdingclassic.org

E-mail: criley@gcbo.org

NATURE QUEST 2010

April 22-24, 2010 Uvalde

Learn about birds, bluebirds, bats, hummingbirds, butterflies, insects, big trees, natural history, native and medicinal plants, invasive plants, Texas wildflowers, backyard wildlife habitats, horned lizards and reptiles through field trips, workshops, seminars and evening programs.

Contact: Texas Hill Country River Region
(800) 210-0380 or (830) 591-1065

Website: <http://www.hillcountryrivers.com>

BALCONES SONGBIRD FESTIVAL

April 23-26, 2010 West of Lago Vista (on FM 1431)

Located 35 miles northwest of Austin, Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge offers excellent habitat for two Texas endemic endangered birds — the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo. The festival includes opportunities to view both of these species on birding walks as well as butterflies, wildflowers, reptile exhibits and family events.

Contact: Friends of Balcones Canyonlands
(512)-339-9432

Website: <http://www.balconessongbirdfestival.org/festival>

E-mail: friends@friendsofbalcones.org

ANNUAL BLUEBIRD FESTIVAL

April 24, 2010 Wills Point

Wills Point celebrates its birds with driving tours for access to hundreds of bluebirds and nesting boxes lining the roads into town. Live entertainment, craft, antique and food vendors are set up on the historical brick streets of downtown.

Contact: Wills Point Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 217
Wills Point, TX 75169
(903)-873-3111

Website: <http://www.willspointbluebird.com>

DRAGONFLY DAYS

May 20-23, 2010 Weslaco

Focusing on the diversity of dragonflies found in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, this event offers field trips, seminars and opportunities to see birds, butterflies, and other insects. The event is sponsored by the Estero Llano Grande State Park World Birding Center site and the Valley Nature Center.

Contact: Valley Nature Center
(956) 969-2475

Website: <http://www.stxmaps.com/go/dragonfly-days.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, April 25 CBAS will field a team for the Texas Birding Classic's Big Sit. It will be held at the South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. Participants remain within a 25 ft. area and count all the birds visible (or audible) from this spot. The event is supported by the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Scott Large, CBAS Conservation Director, will coordinate this event. He is looking for volunteers to assist in organizing and people to participate. Contact him at largesi@gmail.com.

CBAS Big Day will be Oct 23. Mark your calendars. We had a great event last year, with lots of participants. Co-chair Rosalie Rossi, member of the Board of Directors of CBAS is organizing the event. This event needs many volunteers for different tasks, so if you've been wanting to get involved, this is your opportunity. Contact Rosalie at rosalierr@gmail.com.

MARCH SPEAKER

On Tuesday, March 2, at the CBAS monthly meeting, Craig Giggelman will discuss the development of freshwater wetlands through the Texas Prairie Wetlands Program focusing on the land-based Turtle species found in South Texas. Due to multiple reasons (habitat alterations, fire ants, pet trade, commercial harvesting, etc.), populations of species of land based turtles are in decline. The development of freshwater wetlands in South Texas can benefit these species by providing essential aquatic habitat in a water poor environment. Mr. Giggelman will also discuss ways in which we, as members of the Audubon Society, can help in monitoring these turtles. Mr. Giggelman is a Senior Environmental Contaminants Specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has worked all over the state of Texas for the past 13 years.

APRIL SPEAKERS

Dr. Elizabeth Smith and David Smith will be speaking about "Capturing the Capture: Wading Bird – Prey Item Images" on Tuesday, April 6, at the Museum for Science and History at 7:00 p.m.

Identifying what wading birds and shorebirds are eating continues to be the focus of Liz and Dave's photography and video efforts. High-resolution imagery and video make the task of identifying the prey items easier and interesting to evaluate. In this presentation they will provide an overview of the feeding strategies of several species in the Texas Coastal Bend and show results of their recent efforts to document this behavior.

KAYAK/BIRDING FIELD TRIP

Sunday, May 2 - SWAMP THINGS! A kayak/canoe field trip

The Womack Ranch encompasses the confluence of the San Antonio and Guadalupe Rivers near McFaddin, TX, which is south of Victoria. We will paddle through a buttonbush/willow swamp and view a variety of wading birds in a nesting colony, which usually includes Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Tricolored Herons, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night-herons, Roseate Spoonbills, White Ibis, Neotropic Cormorants and Anhingas. You'll also hear the sweet song of Prothonotary Warblers which breed on the wetland edges. The property usually has a pair of nesting Bald Eagles which may make an appearance, as well as a whole host of other waterbirds and late migrant songbirds and raptors. There is potential for a spectacular migratory fallout depending on the weather. We will also do some birding by foot through the woodlands. This is our closest example of an Austroriparian (Southern Rivers) system, where Pileated, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers breed, along with Summer Tanagers, Red-eyed Vireos, Eastern Kingbirds, Black-and-white Warblers, and Northern Parulas. Did I mention alligators?

You must provide your own kayak or canoe and other equipment (including life jacket), and be able to paddle up to two miles in still water. In addition to paddling gear, don't forget sunscreen, bug spray, and a lunch. A caravan will be leaving Corpus Christi at 6:30 a.m., or you can rendezvous at the old McFaddin store at 7:45.

This is a CBAS members-only field trip, limited to 20 participants. There is no fee, but a recommended minimum \$10 donation per person will go to the ranch for hosting us. If you are not a member but would like to go on the trip, you can become a member for \$15 by filling out the registration form in the newsletter.

To register for the trip, contact David Newstead at 361.885.6203 or davnewst@yahoo.com to get on the roster for this unique opportunity.



BIRDING COMMUNITY E-BULLETIN

AMAZON KINGFISHER

The article on the Amazon Kingfisher (see article at right) was taken from the February edition of the Birding Community E-bulletin. It is distributed to active and concerned birders, those dedicated to the joys of birding and the protection of birds and their habitats. You can access an archive of past E-bulletins on the website of the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA):

www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html.

If you would like to receive the monthly E-bulletin, please contact either:

Wayne R. Petersen, Director
Massachusetts Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program,
Mass Audubon
718/259-2178

wpetersen@massaudubon.org

OR

Paul J. Baicich
410/992-9736

paul.baicich@verizon.net

From the February edition of the Birding Community E-Bulletin (see article at left).

Late in the afternoon of 24 January, Alan Wormington and Robert Epstein found and photographed a female Amazon Kingfisher in Laredo, Texas. This species normally ranges from Mexico (no closer than southern Tamaulipas) to Argentina and Uruguay. Amazon Kingfisher is the largest "green" kingfisher in the Americas.

In April 1999, ABA's BIRDING magazine ran an article on the "next birds" that might be seen in North America, with Amazon Kingfisher featured, not among the half-dozen core predictions to appear as Texas and U.S. first occurrences, but as the first alternate "honorable mention" species. It took a little over a decade, but the prediction was accurate.

Wormington and Epstein saw the kingfisher at the mouth of Zacate Creek, then along the creek itself. Zacate Creek is downstream from Las Palmas Park along the Rio Grande, specifically located within the Laredo city limits. Alan Wormington said of the experience, "It is a bit ironic that we were constantly complaining that we had not seen a single kingfisher anywhere during our week-long trip; then we saw FOUR kingfisher species at Zacate Creek!"

The two original observers are currently submitting photos and other details for eventual publication. This would be the first record of an Amazon Kingfisher for North America north of Mexico. To see two photos taken on site on 25 January by Dan Jones and Stuart Healy, respectively, see:

<http://i48.tinypic.com/33aajs.jpg>

<http://www.aztrogon.com/images/birds/Kingfishers/AMKI20100125TX-f2.jpg>

As of the end of January, the Amazon Kingfisher was still present at Zacate Creek, and many birders from far and wide were beating a path to Laredo. In fact, the City of Laredo has made a special effort to welcome birders - from local clean-up and cordial police attention to bringing in port-a-potties! The city and the local Monte Mucho Audubon Society also cooperated in putting up bright yellow crowd-control tape to keep birders from inadvertently entering areas too close to the Amazon Kingfisher's favorite perches.

RARE BIRD SITINGS



A first year male Siberian race, Northern wheatear has spent the winter at John Borntreger's place west of Tynan. John is an Amish farmer who has been exceptionally helpful to birders searching for this bird, in residence around his farm most of the winter. This is an exceptionally rare bird for USA, though wheatears are known to appear in somewhat out the way places.

An immature Northern Jacana continues to spend time at Choke Canyon State Park. He was

initially spotted on Nov. 1 and was seen by those who attended the Choke Canyon Birding Festival on February 6.

Thanks to photographers Sylvia Garcia Smith and Martin Reid for permission to use their photos in the newsletter.

The Northern Jacana, above, was photographed by Sylvia Garcia Smith of Three Rivers, on Nov. 6, 2009. Visit her website to view more of her bird and nature photography: www.sylvia-garcia-smith.com.

Northern Wheatear photo, right, was taken by Martin Reid Jan. 2, 2010. Please visit Mr. Reid's website at www.martinreid.com.



NORTH BAY SANCTUARY NOTES

Feb. 11, 2009

By John Keller

To start off I'd like to thank the nine volunteers who came out to lend a hand at our Sanctuary work day last month. We got a lot of work done with some visible changes - most notably the new martin housing system near the observation tower. Two Black-bellied Whistling-duck nest boxes were erected, one at each of the wetlands. We also did some planting at the water feature and the wetland nearest the observation tower. I would like to plan a seasonal work day for spring, summer, fall and winter so that we and the wildlife can begin to enjoy our sanctuary more.

The wetlands are all full and there are Sandhill cranes and Wilson's snipe to be seen in the cordgrass flat. I haven't seen too many ducks lately except for a few shovelers, gadwall and a lone scaup, but I did see some canvasback earlier in the season. A couple pairs of Mottled ducks have been seen in the big wetland and may be thinking of nesting there this year. Still seeing lots of coots - or "poule d'eau" (pronounced "pool-doo") as we call them in South Louisiana. There are at least 9 species of sparrows to be seen and some wintering warblers.

There are some signs of spring already starting to show - the Agarito, Colima and Elbowbush are all about to bloom. With all the rain we've had this winter, our spring could prove to be very lush. Insect repellent is a must if you are planning a trip to the end of the road. As the weather warms be aware of rattlesnakes. As far as mammals are concerned the cottontails are moving around and let you get pretty close. I had the fortune of watching a gopher excavate a burrow one evening, which was pretty cool. Numbers of deer can be seen in the evening if you are quiet and patient. You might also catch a glimpse of a coyote or a bobcat if you're lucky. The sounds at dusk are interesting if you happen to be there late. The paraques hit the trails and start calling just after dusk.

Still in the idea phase is a star party with the local astronomy group; I'll keep members posted as planning develops. I would like to have a **work day on March 27 starting at 9 a.m.** to combat the soon-to-rise Guineagrass and clear some brush from trails. Also on the planner is a wine and cheese social to showcase our sanctuary this spring, date not yet determined.

My goal is to make our sanctuary as good a habitat as possible for wildlife and those who enjoy nature and being outdoors. It is a hope that we will start to utilize our sanctuary more in the future, because it really is a special place once you start becoming a regular visitor. If you have any questions, contact John Keller at 361-728-8587.

Directions to North Bay Sanctuary:

Take 35 north of Corpus Christi as if heading to Rockport. Turn left on CR 93 McCampbell Road (there is a fire-works stand and another building on the right). Follow CR93 several miles to a stop sign. Turn right on CR 93A and go all the way to the end. The sanctuary is on the left.

14TH ANNUAL GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC 2010

by Carol Jones, Tournament Coordinator

You can hit all the coastal marshes, both fresh and saline, and see the birds that live there while participating in the 2010 Great Texas Birding Classic. The Fourteenth Annual Classic will be held April 24 - May 2, 2010. It is not too late to get your team registered. The deadline for registering without late fees is March 22. There is a tournament for every kind of birder from the casual backyard bird watcher to the serious and highly competitive.



As you may know, the conservation mission of the Classic is achieved through awarding grants. Winning adult teams choose projects that have submitted proposals and each was reviewed and approved by a committee. The 2010 conservation project proposals are currently under review. There are many worthy conservation projects along the Texas Coast and the Classic is proud to have contributed \$686,000 dollars for on-the-ground habitat conservation. Since 1997, Classic conservation grants have enabled the permanent protection and restoration of over 3,000 acres and increased access for birding and nature viewing at dozens of sites. Grants for land acquisitions, habitat restorations where non-native, invasive plants were removed and replaced with native species, and habitat enhancements to allow easier access and better viewing opportunities have been funded through this aspect of the Classic.

So you're not able to participate on a team? Not to worry, there are many ways that you can support this effort. Your purchase of items from the Classic online auction directly support the conservation grant program. You could sponsor a team, purchase an advertisement for the Winners Report, help out with a kids team, or donate prizes for the teams or auction items. We can also use volunteers to write press releases and assist with publicity or coordinate one of the Classic tournaments. Or perhaps you have a conservation project that needs funding and want to submit a project proposal for possible funding.

Please remember to checkout all the great auction items in the Birding Classic online auction. It will continue through the conclusion of the Classic on May 2. Funds raised through the auction go into the Conservation Grant fund. All the details you need to know are at www.birdingclassic.org

Carol A. Jones
Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
Great Texas Birding Classic Tournament Coordinator
103 Hwy. 332 West
Lake Jackson, TX 77566
979-480-0999 - p
979-480-0777 - f

TREASURER'S REPORT

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

By Leatrice Koch

December 1, 2009—January 31, 2010

Beginning balance.....	\$20,911.13
Income.....	\$ 539.04
Expenses.....	<u>869.44</u>
.....	(<u>330.40</u>)
Ending balance.....	\$20,580.73
Less grants, donations & reserved fund.	<u>6,313.81</u>
Operating fund	\$14,266.92

The Brown Pelican is looking for a Newsletter Editor. Some experience with email and computers is desired, but training and software will be provided. Training and assistance can be provided up to one year for interested volunteers.

An excellent way to keep up with the local, national and global birding communities while informing members of Society activities and opportunities. Please contact Sally Bickley at 361-688-6418 or s8bickley@yahoo.com.



NEW OR RENEWING MEMBERSHIP

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member		<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal		Chapter: C9ZW130Z	
Name:		Address:			
City		State		ZIP	
Phone (optional)		Email (optional)			
Indicate Membership Preference: I would like to become a					
<input type="checkbox"/>	member of National Audubon Society and Coastal Bend Audubon Society . Your membership includes the National Audubon Magazine, chapter membership and other benefits. Your chapter receives part of your dues. Dues: One year \$20 Make checks payable to National Audubon Society				
<input type="checkbox"/>	member of Coastal Bend Audubon Society ONLY . No NAS membership and no National Audubon magazine. Your chapter only membership includes all other Audubon membership benefits. Your chapter receives all of your dues. Dues: One year \$15 Make checks payable to Coastal Bend Audubon Society				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional Tax Deductible Contribution Please consider making a tax deductible contribution to the local chapter, Coastal Bend Audubon Society. You may designate the category you would like your contribution applied to. Designate category of support.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tern	One year	\$50		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Osprey	One year	\$100		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pelican	One year	\$500		
Designate specific area of support (Optional).					
General Fund <input type="checkbox"/>		Education Program <input type="checkbox"/>		Sanctuary Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/>	
				New letter Fund <input type="checkbox"/>	
AMOUNT Enclosed: _____ Date: _____					
MAIL TO: COASTAL BEND AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 3604, Corpus Christi, TX 78463					
					10/09

The Newsletter of the Coastal Bend Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3604
Corpus Christi, Texas 78463

Phone: 361-885-6203

Email: coastalbendaudubon@gmail.com

<http://www.coastalbendaudubon.org>

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Corpus Christi, TX

Regular CBAS meetings:

First Tuesday of the month, September through May, 7 p.m. at the CC Museum of Science and History



The Brown Pelican

Coastal Bend Audubon Society Board of Directors

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361-885-6203
davnewst@yahoo.com

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vacant

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cherie.mccollough@tamucc.edu

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Leatrice Koch
leak36@aol.com

The Coastal Bend Audubon Society is a non-profit 501c(3) organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and bird habitat, and to conservation education in the Coastal Bend.

The organization is supported by contributions from local memberships and from the National Audubon Society.

Your CHAPTER needs you! You can help steer the course of growth and change in our community by working together. Please contact us at 361-885-6203 about getting involved!

DIRECTORS

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This newsletter is compiled, written and published every other month. Articles of interest are gathered from various sources and compiled by the editor, volunteers, and/or contributing authors. All contributions and comments are welcomed.

