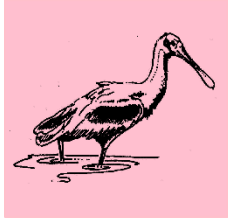


Monthly Meeting November 7, 2016

Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX



6:30 pm [Learning Corner](#): Making Suet Cakes by Teresa Connell

7:00 pm [Ornithology Group](#) (OG) Business Meeting

7:30 pm [Program](#): Field Studies of Flammulated Owls (Earthwatch Study) by Bob Honig

[Field Trip](#): Matagorda Hot Spots and South Texas Project (STP) – Waterfowl, Shorebirds and Sparrows, Saturday, November 19, 6:30am at the Comfort Suites in Bay City, led by Bob Friedrichs

[Field Trip to San Jacinto Monument State Park | Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve | Birding in Western Spain | Minutes of October 3 Meeting](#)

Making Suet Cakes

by Teresa Connell

After the Meyerland flood many homes who fed our backyard birds were sold. One morning I had 17 Blue Jays at my suet feeder and realized they were abandoned unintentionally.

I was going through two cakes a day and realized I needed to find a cheaper solution to maintain this healthy population of backyard birds. I tried many recipes and created a solution that is easy, delicious, and inexpensive! Please join me as I give a live demo on the most simple way to make suet cakes, ready in 30 minutes. I will have some cakes for sale, with the proceeds going to OG.

So far they have attracted:

Bluejay

Northern Cardinal

Carolina Wren

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Pine Warbler (winter)

Orange-crowned Warbler (winter)

House Sparrow

Mourning Dove

White-wing Dove

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Field Studies of Flammulated Owls (Earthwatch Study)

By Bob Honig

Bob Honig will present a program on the July 2016 Earthwatch expedition studying Flammulated Owls in Utah in which he and his wife, Maggie, participated. The program will also include an introduction to the Earthwatch Institute and the wide variety of expeditions one can join. The Earthwatch web page for the Flammulated Owl project, which also includes teams in Arizona, is <http://earthwatch.org/expeditions/following-forest-owls-in-the-western-us>.

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Field Trips:

Matagorda Hot Spots and STP – Waterfowl, Shorebirds and Sparrows, Saturday, November 19, 8:00am

Led by Bob Friedrichs.

Bob lives in Matagorda county area and you may be familiar with his frequent texbird notices. He is a Texas Master Naturalist and is active in bird counts and volunteering at the refuges in his area. Bob will guide us to some of his favorite birding hot spots, including South Texas Plant (STP) and area fish farms, duck ponds and other favorite spots.

Sunday Option - We are offering an extension on Sunday for those who want to stay over and will continue to bird the local area until lunch time.

Friday Option - There is also an opportunity to participate in the Feathered Friday monthly Bird Count at Mad island Marsh Preserve Friday, November 18. If you are interested, contact Jean Booth to sign up and get details. We will meet at the gate of MIMP at 8am and bird until around 1 pm. Then lunch at the Marsh and bird another hot spot the remainder of the day. Bring your lunch.

This field trip has limited space and you will want to sign up early. Send an email to Ljeanbooth@aol.com to sign up for the field trip. Also, watch for more information for time and place to meet. There will be a minimal cost for the field trip based on the number of OG Members signed up for the trip. Make sure to bring a raincoat, walkie-talkies, bug spray, sunscreen, snacks and lunch.

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FALL WEEKENDER

Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Sherman, Texas

November 11-13 Friday PM to Sunday PM

Led by Jack Chiles, who is their guide for weekly bird counts.

Our Fall Weekender Field trip offers a change of pace and a little farther to drive. Saturday, Nov 12, we will be visiting Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Sherman, Tx, located in Grayson County, and guided by Jack Chiles who is a Naturalist and leads the weekly bird counts and at the Refuge. We will bird Lake Tawakoni on Sunday, just east of Greenville with a local Guide. Watch for separate email with details. We have seven OG Members signed up at this time.

Hagerman NWR, a haven for migratory birds and other wildlife, lies in Northwestern Grayson County, Texas, on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma, on the Red River between Oklahoma and Texas. This 11,320-acre Refuge is a mixture of forests, grasslands, creeks, freshwater wetlands, and Lake Texoma. Each habitat has its own unique natural history and supports a variety of native wildlife. Its location on Lake Texoma and within the Central Flyway ensures Hagerman NWR is host or home to an amazing diversity of wildlife species.

The most popular type of wildlife at Hagerman NWR is birds. Songbirds, shorebirds, raptors, wading birds, and waterfowl – each change of season brings a change in what species you will see at the refuge.

Check out their website for a checklist of the birds of Hagerman NWR.

www.fws.gov/refuge/Hagerman. Also, Jack Chiles sends out the results of the weekly bird count at the refuge both on Texbirds and Ebird.

This field trip will be limited so you will want to register early by sending an email to Ljeanbooth@aol.com. We will work with you regarding roommates and rides once you sign up.

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Field trip to San Jacinto Monument State Park and Baytown Nature Center, October 22, 2016

By Jean Booth

It was a beautiful day Saturday and we were excited to have Stephan Lorenz as our guide for the day. We especially enjoyed birding by ear and having him help us learn how to identify so many of the species. We identified 78 species of birds for the day.

There were 19 OG Members on our field trip and we started at San Jacinto Monument State Park at 7 am. We birded the park until noon and after lunch went to Baytown Nature Center. We were lucky to get so many shorebirds with highlights - Peregrine Falcon, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-billed

Dowitcher and both Yellowlegs, and Semipalmated Plover and Black-bellied Plover, Wood Stork and a flock of Anhingas flying over. Also, four woodpeckers including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Flicker, Downy, and Red-bellied, a Vermillion Flycatcher, three species of wrens including House, Sedge and Marsh, Golden-crowned Kinglet, five species of Sparrows including crippling views of a Nelson Sparrow, and six species of warblers including Black-throated Green.

Thanks Stephan for spending the day with us and we hope to have you back with us again this birding season.

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Galveston Bay Foundation Opens Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve

By David Sarkozi

Chamber's County has a new site that has some great birding potential.

The Galveston Bay Foundation just opened the Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve. I visited it on Oct 17 for the first time and although I wasn't there at a good time, still managed 24 species. The habitat is mixed and I suspect it will yield a good list with some birding.

The Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve West Tract is 514 acres. Not all of the trails are done yet, I got down a half mile dead end before I figured that out! There is some access to Turtle Bayou and at least eventually to Lake Anahuac. The parking lot is about 1 mile south of I10 on FM563 and is well-marked. It's right before you cross Turtle Bayou. There is an East Tract also across the FM563 but I didn't have time to explore that. See:

<http://www.galvbay.org/uncategorized/turtle-bayou-nature-preserve/>

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“Birding in Western Spain”-- Mark Kulstad’s September OG Program

By Nina Rach

Houstonian Mark Kulstad put together a very informative video talk and supplementary slide show for the September OG meeting, introducing attendees to largely unfamiliar European bird species of the Sierra de Gredos Park, the plains of Extremadura, Monfragüe National Park, and the area around Trujillo, all west of Madrid (Spain’s capitol city, with a population of more than 3 million).

[Note on binomial nomenclature: Mark showed us 13 Spanish bird species whose scientific names are **tautonyms**, in which both the genus and the specific epithet have

the *same* spelling: *Oenanthe oenanthe*, *Petronia petronia*, *Ciconia ciconia*, *Carduelis carduelis*, *Buteo buteo*, *Porphyrio porphyrio*, *Vanellus vanellus*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Tetrax tetrax*, *Amandava amandava*, *Troglodytes troglodytes*, *Milvus milvus* and *Nycticorax nycticorax* (read on to find out the common names!) BTW, tautonyms are permitted for animals but not for plants.]



The program was based on Mark's latest trip in June 2013, beginning in Sierra de Gredos Regional Park, a protected natural area covering 86,397 hectares (213,492 acres) established in 1996 in the province of Ávila. This mountainous area includes Almanzor Peak (2592m, 8504ft). Above the tree line, Mark showed us the sparrow-sized **Ortolan Bunting** (*Emberiza hortulana*), a species widespread in northern Europe. [The Ortolan is prized as a delicacy in France, where the birds were traditionally drowned in Armagnac. It has been illegal to sell Ortolan in France since the 1990s, but not illegal to eat them! Anti-poaching was only enforced in France in 2007, and many chefs and politicians still want the law to be revoked, even though the population has severely declined.]

Other species he showed us from the Sierra de Gredos include **Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*); **Sky Lark** (*Alauda arvensis*); **Bluethroat** (Iberian subsp. *Luscinia svecica*); **Rock Bunting** (*Emberiza cia*); **Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush** (*Monticola saxatilis*); **Melodious Warbler** (*Hippolais polyglotta*); **Booted Eagle** (*Hieraetus pennatus*); **Eurasian Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*); **European Pied Flycatcher** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*); and **Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*, western form).



Mark also showed us some species from the Plataforma area, which begins at 1750m elevation within Sierra de Gredos: **Short-toed Snake-Eagle** (*Circaetus gallicus*); **Cinereous Vulture** (*Aegypius monachus*); **Dunnock** (*Prunella modularis*); **Northern Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*); **Rock Petronia** (*Petronia petronia*); **Greater Whitethroat** (*Sylvia communis*); and a **Great Spotted Cuckoo** (*Clamator glandarius*), one of three Cuckoo species found in Spain.

From the plains of Extremadura, we saw the “Spanish Imperial Eagle,” with a blazing white leading edge and a white ring tail. It's now split into the **Spanish Eagle** (*Aquila adalberti*) and the **Eastern Imperial Eagle** (*Aquila heliaca*), in the same genus as the Golden Eagle found in the US.

From there, Mark took us into Monfragüe National Park, established in 2007 and the only NP in Extremadura. It's classified as a biosphere reserve, and includes cliffs and rock faces. Mark's local birding guide was Jesus Porras, who lives south of Monfragüe (www.iberian-nature.com). We were treated to views of an **Egyptian Vulture** (*Neophron percnopterus*) on a nest; **Crag Martin** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*); **Woodchat Shrike** (*Lanius senator*); **Black-eared Wheatear** (*Oenanthe hispanica*); **Azure-winged Magpie** (*Cyanopica cyana*); and **Cirl Bunting** (*Emberiza cirlus*), in a dry area.

On to the walled medieval town of Trujillo in the Province of Cáceres, at an altitude of 564m (1850ft). It's the "birding center of Spain" and home to Francisco Pizarro (1474-1541; conquered the Inca empire in Peru) and the conquistador Francisco de Orellana (1511-1546; first known navigation of the entire Amazon River, founder of Guayaquil, Ecuador). We looked at **White Stork** (*Ciconia ciconia*); **Black Kite** (*Milvus migrans*), which Mark said is similar to our White-tailed Kite; **Booted Eagle** (*Hieraetus pennatus*); **European Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*); **Lesser Kestrel** (*Falco naumanni*); **Common Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*); **Little Owl** (*Athene noctua*); **Greater Short-toed Lark**; a juvenile **Great Spotted Cuckoo** (*Clamator glandarius*), - this species parasitizes European Magpie nests; **Red-necked Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*); **Thekla Lark** (*Galerida theklae*); **Red-legged Partridge** (*Alectoris rufa*); and a **European Roller** (*Coracias garrulus*).



Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*); and **Southern Grey Shrike** (*Lanius meridionalis*).

More Trujillo area birds: **Greater Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus roseus*); **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*); **Marsh Harrier** (*Circus aeruginosus*); **Eurasian Thickknee** aka **Stone-Curlew** (*Burhinus oedipnemus*); **Black Wheatear** (*Oenanthe leucura*); **Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*); **Short-toed Treecreeper** (*Certhia brachydactyla*); **Red-backed Shrike** (*Lanius collurio*); **Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*); **Spotless Starling** (*Sturnus unicolor*); **Western Swamphen** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*);



After the video presentation, Mark showed additional slides beginning at 8:15, from other trips around Spain he took prior to 2013. We saw: **Garden Warbler** (*Sylvia borin*); **Common Chiffchaff** (*Phylloscopus collybita*); **Willow Warbler** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*); **European Stonechat** (*Saxicola rubicola*); **Eurasian Griffon Vulture** (*Gyps fulvus*); **Northern Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*); **Common Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*); **Tawny Pipit** (*Anthus campestris*); **Corn Bunting** (*Miliaria calandra*); **Little**

Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*); **Zitting Cisticolla** (*Cisticola juncidis*); **European Bee-eater** (*Merops apiaster*); **Great Bustard** (*Otis tarda*); **Common Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*); **Little Bustard** (*Tetrax tetrax*); **Red Avadavat** (*Amandava amandava*, exotic “Strawberry Finch”); **Great Cormorant** (inland, *Phalacrocorax carbo*); **Red-rumped Swallow** (*Hirundo daurica*); **Blue Rock-thrush** (*Monticola solitarius*); **Wren** (our “Winter Wren” in the US, *Troglodytes troglodytes*); **Grey Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*); **Great White Egret** (*Ardea alba*); **Red Kite** (*Milvus milvus*); Black-crowned **Night-Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*); and two species from the Doñana area: **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** (*Pterocles alchata*) and **Black Stork** (*Ciconia nigra*).

Overall, 563 bird species have been recorded in Spain, including its outlying islands (predominantly the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands), the most of any country in Western Europe. Spain has 15 national parks.

Photos by Mark Kulstad: Iberian Magpie, White Stork, Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Hoopoe

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Minutes of October 3 Meeting

By Jean Greenhalgh

The monthly OG meeting was held on Monday, October 3 at 6:30 at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet and 31 people attended.

The Learning Corner was a presentation and discussion led by JoAnn Raine about the Pomarine Jaeger which has spent the summer at East Beach on Galveston Island. It was first seen in mid-July by Scott Buckle and was still there on Sunday, October 16. It is not sick and it has been suggested that parasites, possibly feather lice or feather mites had destroyed the barbs on its feathers and the bird has been growing new feathers for the last three months. The photos, provided by Nina Rach, show the bird as it has changed from very tattered and worn with no tail, to its current well plumaged condition.

Pomarine Jaegers, the largest Jaeger, are ground nesters, breeding in the high Arctic – Barrow, AK is usually a reliable place to find them in summer – and migrate across North America to

winter in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico, where they can be seen on pelagic trips, but rarely from land. Jaegers, one of the smaller members of the Skua family (*Stercorarius*), are kleptoparasitic and rely extensively on stealing food from other birds, often by chasing and attacking, them until food is dropped. All three US Jaegers are in the Gulf, August and September are the height of the season, and Parasitic are usually nearer to shore in September than either Long-tailed or Pomarine.

Marie Asscherick was recognized for having achieved the incredible milestone of volunteering for 10,000 hours as a Master Naturalist.

The OG Field Trips

Jean Booth gave a trip report for the trip to Texas City Dike/Marathon Land farms led by Allan Hardee. Marathon Ponds are private property and 12, very fortunate, participants saw 65 species including Upland and Buff-breasted Sandpipers

Jean handed out a tentative list of Field Trips for the next 9 months. Additional details are on the OG website.

October 22 is a trip to San Jacinto Monument State Park led by Stephan Lorenz.

November 11 - 13 will be a weekender to Hagerman NWR. 7 are signed up.

November 19 is Matagorda Hot Spots and STP, led by Bob Friedrichs.

December is CBCs. The Houston Audubon website has a list.

January 7 Ron Weeks will lead a trip to the Freeport/Lake Jackson area

February 10 – 12 will be a weekender to Lake Corpus and the Corpus Christi area led by Mike Austin.

March 5 will be Galveston led by Alice Anne O'Donnell

March 11-12 will be a weekender to the Matagorda area led by Bob Friedrichs.

Jean Booth emails details of field trips to all members. If you are not receiving emails, please let her know at ljeanbooth@aol.com

David Sarkozi's new birding company, KoziBirding, is offering an exclusive trip for OG members next year. It will be to Belize from February 16 – 28 with a possible extension to coastal Belize. Details are available from David at david@kozibirding.com

The TOS winter meeting will be held on MLK weekend, January 13 – 15, in Weslaco.

David Sarkozi was the main speaker talking about Monotypic Bird Species

Monotypic families of birds have a single genus and a single species, and many are unusual and interesting. Clements lists 31 such species. David showed us photos and gave a description of each including why they are monotypic. He also displayed range maps, which showed how widespread the species can be and also how restricted – the Sulawesi montane forest or a remote mountain or island for some. There are Monotypic birds on every continent and some on more than one, with the Osprey being the most widespread, occurring on every continent except Antarctica. Their current Status was shown and, surprisingly, 23 were of least concern, with 3 Near Threatened, 3 Vulnerable and only 2 Endangered.

Only three range into the USA – Limpkin, Osprey, and Olive Warbler, which is the only North American endemic ranging from Arizona to Nicaragua.

Some are well known to birders, including Emu (Australia), Secretary Bird (Africa), Shoebill (Africa), Hammerkop (Africa) and Oilbird (South America from Trinidad to Brazil), while most of the names on the list were unknown to many of us.

In taxonomic order (Clements 2015), they are:

Emu; Magpie Goose, Shoebill; Hammerkop; Secretary Bird; Osprey: Kagu; Sunbittern; Limpkin; Magellanic Plover; Ibisbill; Plains Wanderer; Crab Plover; Hoatzin; Oilbird; Cuckoo-Roller; Sapayoa; Sharpbill; Stitchbird; Borneo Bristlehead; Rail-Babbler; Bearded Reedling; Wallcreeper; Black-Capped Donacobius; Przewalski's Rosefinch; Spotted Elachura; Palmchat; Hylocitrea; Hypocolius; Olive Warbler.

The next meeting will be on November 7. In the Learning Corner Teresa Connell will be showing us how to make Suet Cakes. The program is the Field Status of Flammulated Owls Earthwatch Study) by Bob Honig.

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