



Monthly Meeting April 2, 2018
Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX

6:30 pm Member Social

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

7:30 pm [Program](#): Spring Migration on the Texas Upper Gulf Coast

Field Trips: Texas City Prairie Preserve and Texas City Dike, March 31, 8am, led by Tim O'Connell; Kerr-Kimball-Bandera County Weekender, April 5-8, coordinated by Nina Rach

[In Memory of Vicki Sims](#) | [Cameron Parish Louisiana Weekender Field Trip Report](#)

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[Upcoming Texas Birding Events \(link to web page\)](#)

[Hart Beat: Eagles! \(link to web page\)](#)

2018 Dues are Due: <http://ornithologygroup.org/Dues>

In Memory of Vicki Sims

By Billie Strickland

Long-time OG member, Vicki Sims died on January 24, 2018. She was Editor of the *Spoonbill* from August 2011 to September 2013, taking over from Al Shultz. While Larry Dybala was

Editor, she continued to provide printed copies of the *Spoonbill* to members who needed them.



Vicki (left) with Billie (right) preparing for Hurricane Harvey

Vicki was active for 20 years with Don Greene and company "White Water Experience". She taught "Women on the River" basic canoe, camping, and dutch-oven cooking classes, as well as assisting with the river trips. Vicki loved to write and had a wonderful way with expressions. She loved birds, nature, stars, and the outdoors. Vicki could always be

found walking the bayou with her beloved dog, Blaze. She completed her nursing career as an OR Nurse at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. Vicki lived a full life, and was always there to help someone if needed. We will miss her.

A memorial for Vicki will be held in Houston at 10 am, Monday, April 16. [Click here for details.](#)

One If By Land, Two If By Sea: Spring Migration on Texas' Upper Gulf Coast

By Brad and Norma Macurda

In the legend of Paul Revere, he was to show one lantern if the British were coming by land, two if by sea. Our spring migrants will flood across the Gulf of Mexico and follow the upper Texas Gulf coast by land and sea; Revere would be overwhelmed. It is show time! So let's go see the "Redcoats," aka birds in all their magnificence! Spring migration in our area is one of the greatest avian shows on earth.

Brad and Noma have roamed the seven continents for two decades viewing and studying birds. Noma retired from Exxon in 1979; Brad shut down his petroleum exploration/training consultancy, The Energists, in 2016. They spend their winters in Spring and their summers in a cabin in the high mountains of Colorado, giving them opportunities to see birds in the best of both worlds.

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Field Trips:

Texas City Prairie Preserve and Texas City Dike Spring Migration, March 31, 2018, 8:00am

Led by Tim O'Connell (The Nature Conservancy)

Experience spring migration in Texas City for an awesome morning of birding. Meet at the Main Building of the Texas City Prairie Preserve at 8:00am. To get there from Houston: Go south on I-45 to FM 1764 (exit 16). Go east on FM 1764 to highway 146. Go under 146 and turn left. Go approximately 1.9 miles north. The gate entrance will be on your right after crossing Moses Bayou. (If you reach the flashing yellow light at Attwater Avenue you have passed us.) The building is 1/4 mile down the gravel road.

Bring your scopes for the TX Prairie. Later we will go as a group to the Texas City Dike. We will be birding by car, so we want to consolidate into no more than 4 cars so we all can get good looks. Walkie Talkies will be available. Maximum number of participants is 14. To reserve a spot RSVP to Fieldtrip Coordinator Teresa Connell (505.280.7443, teresacConnell@live.com).

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Kerr-Kimble-Bandera County Weekender **April 5-8, 2018**

Coordinated by Nina Rach

This Ornithology Group trip will begin at: Mo-Ranch, 2229 FM 1340, Hunt, Texas 78024 (275 miles west of Houston).

Reservations for Thurs, April 5, Tel: (800) 460-4401 www.moranch.org.

Fri & Sat night reservations (April 6 & 7) at America's Best Value Inns-The Legends Inn, 1908 Main St., Junction, Tel (325) 446-8644 www.redlion.com/junction (\$75/2Q).

Kerr County – 312 species; Kimble County – 316 species; Bandera County – 301 species.

Schedule:

Thursday, April 5 – arrive at Mo-Ranch, check in, birding around the property (#4 Kerr Co. hot spot, 171 sp.) or at adjacent Kerr WMA (#2 Kerr Co. hot spot, 229 sp.). For dinner try Elaine's Table- elainestable.com/TheTable/, or Hunt Rock Cafe- thehuntstore.com/hunt-store-cafe-menu/.

Friday, April 6 – Check out, drive to Ingram (20 min) to Heart of the Hills Fisheries Center (HOTW 069, #1 Kerr Co. hot spot, 237 sp.), guided by Paul Sellin (pjsellin@yahoo.com), adjacent Sunset cemetery (HOTW 070, 140 sp.). Lunch at a local restaurant, visit other hot spots around Ingram & Kerrville. Drive to Junction (50 min on I-10), check in to The Legends Inn for two nights.

Saturday, April 7 – South Llano River State Park (HOTW 093, #1 Kimble Co. hot spot, 261 sp.), Schreiner Park (HOTW 091, 163 sp., on river in town), Junction WTP, other spots.

Sunday, April 8 – Drive to Vanderpool (1 hr via US 83 S) to Lost Maples State Natural Area (HOTW 061, #1 Bandera Co. hot spot, 257 sp.), guided by Richard Redmond (ewigeon64@Hughes.net). Lunch at a café. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples>

There will be a small charge for the weekend. Proceeds to ONC's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary in San Jacinto County for the restrooms renovations: \$45 for OG or TOS members; \$60 for others.

Please make check payable to: Ornithology Group and mail to: Harlan Evans, 8100 Cambridge, #34, Houston, TX 77054

Trip Coordinator: Nina Rach, NRach@AutreVie.com, cell 281-433-0651.

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Cameron Parish Louisiana Field Trip, March 3-4, 2018, guided by Teresa Connell and Nina Rach

By Connie Clark

Nine birders from the Houston Ornithology Group (OG) convened at Southwest Louisiana, Peveto Woods, a 40-acre bird and butterfly sanctuary maintained by the Baton Rouge Audubon Society. Just a 2-hour drive from Houston, it is a significant chenier sanctuary for trans-gulf migration. The OG birders spent the early morning hours in the woods as well as on a walk along the adjacent beach area. Teresa Connell and Nina Rach led the group, and most participants saw the Eastern Towhee, Lincoln's Sparrow, Gray Catbird, a solitary Yellow Throated Warbler, hundreds of yellow rumped warblers and many black and white warblers. A white-tailed kite was spotted flying over while the group was having lunch in the woods. Shorebirds on the beach there were sparse, but several hundred Lesser Scaup and a flock of Red-breasted Mergansers were visible out beyond the waves.



The afternoon started with a drive along the coast including Holly Beach, where scattered groups of Laughing Gulls, alternate plumage Herring Gulls, Royal, Caspian and Foster Terns, many more Lesser Scaup were recorded as well as a large number of American Avocet.

Late in the afternoon, participants took the 2-mile walk on a paved trail around the beautiful Sabine National Wildlife Refuge. Near the visitor center, a good view of a Sora gave the photographers opportunity to get shots of this little bird foraging in and out of the reeds. Marsh Wrens and Swamp Sparrows appeared and disappeared. Clappers were heard. By 5:30 pm exhausted birders were ready to call it a day and there was a half-hour ride to our overnight hotel in Hackberry, Louisiana and someplace to eat. Everyone enjoyed the evening's conversation while having a Louisiana seafood dinner in Sulphur.

Day two of the trip, an early morning start on a drive along the Creole Coast Highway, took the birders onto the Cameron Ferry and then to Willow Island, a large private residence loaded with live oak trees, within 500 yards of the beach. Northward, the group took a short side trip to an industrial pond, where several hundred Skimmers were seen roosting on the ground. The days' destination was the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Birders drove an approximately 3-mile loop where the leaders were able to identify a Glossy Ibis amongst the many dark White-faced Ibis. Additional species recorded in the refuge was one White-fronted Goose alongside a dark morph Snow Goose. A good look at Fulvous Whistling Ducks and four Anhingas was had by all, with an American Bittern making it a very productive drive. It was about mid-afternoon, and all had a bit of a drive to make back to Houston, so pulled over to review the groups lists and find that an estimated 100 species for the 1 and ½ day field trip had been listed. A fellow visitor stopped by the group to ask what had been seen, noting the Texas license plates. When told that the group was from Houston OG, Greg Lasley introduced himself. What a surprise to see and meet a former OG officer, Texas birder, birding guide and nature photographer who got his start in the same Houston birding community. That made it a perfect ending to a great trip exploring this beautiful, nearby birding destination. Cameron Parish should be on all Houston OG members trip list.

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Minutes of March 5, 2018 Meeting

By Jean Greenhalgh

The March meeting of OG was held on March 5th, 2018 at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, at 6:30 pm. 25 people attended.

Mark Kulstad presented the Learning Corner by taking us on a photographic tour of Harris County Hotspots. In addition to photos, Mark listed some of the rarities which have been seen at each site though they may not have been seen recently. Locations included Addicks North for Bells Vireo; Baytown Nature Center for Nelson's Sparrow, Groove-billed Ani, and Prairie Warbler; Bear Creek for Greater Pewee and Pintail WYdah; George Bush Park for Wilson's

Phalarope, White-rumped Sandpiper and Hudsonian Godwit; Crosby Sod Farms, Newport for Western, Semi-palmated and Buff-breasted Sandpipers; El Franco Lee for Rusty Blackbird, Ruff, Palm Warbler, Say's Phoebe, and King Rail; Kemah Boardwalk for Sabine's Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake and Bonaparte's Gull; and the Houston Yacht Club for Black and White-winged Scoters.

Mark distributed a list of Accidental, Very Rare or Rare Harris County Birds and a list of Uncommon to Rare Harris Co. Birds.

He will return at a later meeting to conclude his tour of hotspots.

Nina then chaired the general meeting.

The successful March Weekender to Cameron Parish, Louisiana, found 101 birds.

The April Weekender will be to Kerr, Bandera and Kimble Counties on April 6-7-8. Thursday night will be at Mo-Ranch and Friday and Saturday in Junction. We will have guides familiar with each area. The cost will be \$45 for OG & TOS members. Proceeds will go to ONC's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary for the restrooms renovation. For further information contact Trip Coordinator Nina Rach at NRach@AutreVie.com, cell 281-433-0651.

Some of the notable birding events coming up include

April 14-15 Attwater NWR for Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival

April 18 – 25 Featherfest

April 27 – 29 South Llano State Park is hosting a new birding festival

April 27 – 30 City Nature Challenge bio-blitz

May 3 – 6 TOS Spring meeting in Alpine

May 4 – 11 Biggest Week in Birding at Magee Marsh, Ohio

August the Annual Birding Conference of the AOS (formerly AOU) is being held in Vancouver BC.

For a complete list visit <http://ornithologygroup.com/Events/>

The main program was presented by Glen Lindeman. He is a long time birder who is Field Trip chairman for Salem (OR) Audubon Society and has a ABA list of over 725 birds (excludes Hawaii).

He took us on a photographic birding tour of the month-long trip he took to Australia in November 2016. The trip started in Sydney with tour of the Botanic Gardens, which were quite birdy. Additionally, the tour went to a performance of My Fair Lady at the Sydney Opera

House. One night, dinner was at the Sydney Tower revolving restaurant for great views of the harbor and city. The buffet included Australian specialties such as emu, kangaroo and camel.

Then it was overland for about a week from Sydney to Adelaide, visiting different habitats and including lakes, rainforest, grasslands and semi-desert. Places included the Minnamurra Rainforest, Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, Chiltern National Park, Hattah Lakes NP and Gluepot Reserve. Birds seen during this week included Emu; Tawny Frogmouth; Royal Spoonbill; White-necked and White-faced Herons, Little Pied, Little Black, Pied and Great Cormorants; Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo; Crimson, Adelaide, Yellow and Eastern Rosellas; Superb, Splendid and White-winged Fairy-Wrens, and the iconic Laughing Kookaburra.



White-bellied Sea Eagle

After a three and half hour flight from Adelaide to Darwin, which is 12 degrees south of the equator, the heat and humidity felt like a Houston summer. A couple of days were spent in the city birding the shoreline and estuary where notable birds included a Brahminy Kite on a TV antenna; Rose-crowned Fruit Dove and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. Then it was south to Kakadu National Park. Ancient rock paintings depicted some of the native Aboriginal beliefs. This was a hot, dry, area with birds including Lemon-bellied, Shining and Paperbark Flycatchers; Mistletoe Bird, and three birds that are captive-bred caged birds in the USA - Crimson Finch; Double-barred Finch and Gouldian Finch.



Southern Cassowary

Next it was on to Cairns in Queensland, also hot and humid. A stroll along the Cairns seafont yielded a Black-tailed Godwit; Great Knot; Black Bittern; and Beach Stone-Curlew. Inland in

the Atherton Tablelands area a stay at Kingfisher Park gave great views of Buff-Breasted Paradise-Kingfisher, Forest Kingfisher; and Papuan Frogmouth. For many birders visiting Australia, a must-see bird is the Southern Cassowary. An overnight stay at Cassowary House yielded a pair of the birds wandering around and, in one case, into the lodge rooms.



Satin Bowerbird with his bower

After a flight to Brisbane, the final leg was to the internationally-known O'Reilly's Guesthouse in Lamington National Park in the Green Mountains. This lodge has expanded from its humble beginnings to about 100 rooms and a spa. After a driving about 10 miles up a rough, winding road the lodge is situated in dense tropical forest. Early morning bird walks with the hotel's naturalist yielded close encounters with Regent and Satin Bowerbirds, King Parrot, Yellow-throated Scrubwren and Australian Logrunner. There were views of the third Black-tailed Cockatoo – the Glossy.



Regent Bowerbird



Australian King Parrot

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About the Ornithology Group

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ONC website: <http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/>

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