

May/June 2022

Volume 68, Number 3

Field Trips Announcement: If you plan to attend the Maverick Ranch field trip on Sunday, April 24, please contact Christian Fernandez (Christian1253@yahoo.com) for important information and to RSVP. Please read details in the Field Trips section about how to RSVP for upcoming Warbler Woods field trips as well.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks by Mike Scully

By the time this article is published, many of us will have already made our pilgrimages to the coast in search of our annual waves of spring migrants. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (*Pheucticus Iudovicianus*) are often among the more numerous and conspicuous of these birds. The loud, clear warbled song of this species is one of the characteristic sounds of Northeastern forests, and homeowners enjoy the visits of these brightly patterned songsters to backyard bird feeders. There are six related grosbeak species within the genus *Phuecticus*, and all are woodland species with loud, melodious songs. Four of these are mostly sedentary residents of Tropical Central and South America, while the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and the closely related Black-headed Grosbeak (*P. melanocephalus*) are the only North American migrants in the genus.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak Male Photo: By John Harrison, <u>CC BY-SA 3.0</u>

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is something of a habitat generalist, able to occupy a variety of wooded habitats. This species may have actually benefited in places from human alterations to the landscape,

preferring forest edges and first and second growth woodlands as well as being tolerant of forest fragmentation. The breeding range encompasses mixed and deciduous forests as far west as North-Central Oklahoma and the Dakotas east across the Midwest and Great Lakes region to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and south along higher elevations in the Appalachians. In Canada, the range extends across Southern Ontario west to include much of Saskatchewan and British Columbia. A trans-Gulf migrant, the species occupies a broad winter range encompassing the Caribbean Islands and Central and South America from the Yucatan and Southern Mexico south to Ecuador and Peru.

Males arrive on the breeding grounds shortly before the females and commence singing their melodious songs. Pairing occurs quickly and both sexes defend their territory against their respective genders. One year-old (SY) males returning to the breeding range for the first time arrive later and wear drabber, incomplete plumages, appearing to be intermediate between the sexes. The degree of male plumage developed this first year appears to correlate with testosterone levels; brighter males are more likely to secure a mate while the drabber-plumaged males are less likely to suffer attacks by resident males.

Considering the degree of sexual dimorphism in this species with its conspicuously plumaged males and cryptically colored females, the degree of division of labor between the sexes during breeding seems remarkable. The cup-shaped and relatively flimsy nest is constructed by both sexes adjacent to forest clearings or shrubby areas. The three to five eggs and young are rarely left unattended. Incubation is primarily performed by the female, but males incubate the eggs and brood the young for extended periods of time in her absence.

Males may even sing while on the nest; however, studies have shown they sit close and cannot be induced to leave it even in response to song recordings of rival males. Females also sing to a lesser extent, using song to announce their return to the nest and to call to fledged broods. While one might expect the habitat preferences of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks would leave them susceptible to attack by cowbirds, the extent to which this actually happens is unclear.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak Female
Photo by Cephas own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

Early authors such as A. C. Bent anecdotally reported the Rose-breasted Grosbeak to be a common cowbird host. Recent field studies have found this not to be the case; few nests in the locations

studied suffered brood parasitism, which has been attributed to the rose-breasted pairs' constant attendance at the nest combined with an aggressive response to cowbirds. Although sample sizes observed were small, the number of rose-breasted young raised in nests parasitized by cowbirds did not appear to differ significantly from the norm and none of the cowbird nestlings survived to independence.

In areas of range overlap on the Great Plains, Rose-breasted and the more western Black-headed Grosbeaks occasionally interbreed. While males of the two species differ in appearance, females are similar and the two species have similar songs, breeding behavior and habitat preferences. Hybridization most often occurs in area of poor habitat and correspondingly low grosbeak population . Mixed pairs typically lay smaller clutches and may suffer higher rates of cowbird parasitism, the extent to which this lesser fecundity is due to habitat deficiencies or to some incompatibility between the species has not been determined.

(mike.scully@nisd.net)

SAAS Monthly Meeting May 5, 7:00 PM | Zoom

Creating a Native Plant Pollinator Garden at Mission San Juan Capistrano

Presenters: Cyndie Segovia and Pat McGuire



Becky McGuire and Cyndie Segovia planting milkweed.

In February 2021, volunteers from the San Antonio Salsa Squad created a Native Plant Pollinator Garden next to the San Juan Capistrano Mission and alongside the adjacent San Juan Acequia. Generous donors supplied the funds to purchase the native seeds and milkweed plants. Volunteers planted the garden and have continued to provide ongoing maintenance.

In recent years, the San Antonio Missions have seen a dramatic increase in visitors based on their designation in 2015 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Creating a native plant pollinator garden at Mission San Juan Capistrano demonstrates the importance of native plant pollinator habitats to visitors from Texas and around the world.

Presenters Cyndie Segovia and Pat McGuire will explain the steps involved in creating the Pollinator Garden and the numerous benefits to insects, birds and other wildlife.

Approved for AAMN AT hours.

Cyndie Segovia has been a Texas Master Naturalist for the past four years and is an active volunteer with the Salsa Squad and The Headwaters Sanctuary. Cyndie's hobby is restoring native habitats by propagating native plants. She gifts her plants to local groups, citizens of her city of Garden Ridge and her local park. Cyndie planned, planted and currently maintains the .75-acre butterfly meadow as part of her Mayor's Monarch Pledge. Cyndie also works with her city's Park Committee to identify and protect native plant communities and control invasive plants. She has completed the four-class Native Landscape Certification Program with the Native Plant Society of Texas and generously shares her expertise to help spark an interest in native plants for the benefit of wildlife and the environment.

Pat McGuire is retired from the Navy, where he was a Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman. He also retired from his position of Program Director for a Cardiovascular Technology Program in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Pat has been a Texas Master Naturalist for the past 3½ years. Pat volunteers with the Salsa Squad and is a trail steward and co-leader of the Gardening Group at the Headwaters Sanctuary. He also volunteers with the Great Texas Wildlife Trail, a citizen scientist project with TPWD that documents the distribution of wildlife in particular locations. Pat is a member of the Native Plant Society of Texas and has completed the four-class Native Landscape Certification Program and Landscaping for Birds class offered by NPSOT. Pat has transformed his one-acre+ property in Lytle, Texas, into a wild-life habitat by planting more than 100 different species of native plants!

Click **HERE** to Join the Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 833 8577 2512

Passcode: 301372

Click HERE to find your local number to dial in

SAAS Monthly Meeting June 2, 7:00 PM | Zoom

The Unseen World of Spiders Ashley Wahlberg, Stephen F. Austin State University



Ashley Wahlberg, a member of the biology faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University, will discuss the diversity of spiders around the globe, from giant tarantulas to spiders so small you can only see them under a microscope. A Bold Jumping Spider is pictured below. She will also talk about spiders'



unique adaptations for capturing prey and parental care, and she will dispel common myths about spiders. Ashley will include a section on commonly encountered spiders of Texas as well. Ashely was featured in a Texas Monthly article you can read here.

About Ashley

Ashley has a BS in wildlife biology and MS in biology, both from West Texas A&M University. Her master's research investigated the effects prescribed burning has on herpetofaunal communities

in East Texas. She is currently a member of the biology faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University, where she is working on her PhD, with research investigating how the non-native brown widow spider was able to establish in East Texas and how it fits into already established spider communities. She is very active in the birding community and is president of the Pineywoods Audubon Society.

Click HERE to Join the Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 863 9884 3169

Passcode: 541408

Click **HERE** to find your local number to dial in

SAAS Field Trips

Friday, April 22, 8:00 AM Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary in Cibolo, TX

IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE: If you are planning to attend this Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary field trip, please contact Sandi Wheeler by email wheels5683@gmail.com or text (210) 632-2812 for gate access information and other instructions necessary to join the field trip.

Directons: Take I-35 north toward Austin. Take Exit 176, Wiederstein Road. Turn right on Wiederstein at the overpass. Turn left at the next road, Old Wiederstein. After you pass Dean Road, the Schaezler property begins on the right. Look for the green mailbox, 19349 Old Wiederstein.

Sunday, April 24, 7:45 AM

Maverick Ranch

IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE: If you are planning to attend this field trip, please RSVP to Christian Fernandez (christian1253@yahoo.com) for important instructions and access information.

Meet Mary and Bebe Fenstermaker (956/236-3779) at the gate to their ranch on Boerne Stage Road. Exit I-10 West in Leon Springs. Turn left on Boerne Stage Road and drive 3 miles to the stop sign and turn right on Boerne Stage Road. Drive 1.4 miles to the gate on the left. The gate will be locked after we meet, so please note the start time and arrive early. Wear suitable footwear for hiking. Bring snacks and water.

Thursday, April 28, 8:00 AM Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmail.com) in the parking lot of the park. From San Antonio, take IH-10 east to the FM 1518 exit and go north toward Schertz. Look for a brown park sign at Schaefer Road. Turn right and go 3 miles to the park. Entrance on left before Cibolo Creek. Bring water. The park address is 12780 W Schaefer Rd, Cibolo, TX 78108. Participation requirements will be based on CDC guidelines at the time of the field trip.

Friday, May 6 | 7:30 AM (Note Early Start Time) Leon Creek Greenway – Buddy Calk Trailhead/Earl Scott Pond

Meet trip leader Zachary Tonzetich (210/232-3670, <u>zachary.tonzetich@gmail.com</u>) in the parking lot of the Leon Creek Greenway Buddy Calk Trailhead at 7:30 AM. The parking area is located at 6934 Babcock Rd. We will walk around the pond and creek areas looking for migrants. Bring water, sunscreen, and bug spray.

Saturday, May 7 | 8:00 AM

John James Park

Meet leader Christian Fernandez (christian1253@yahoo.com or 210/415-0843) at 3910 Rittiman Road. We will meet in the parking lot and walk dirt paths along Salado Creek. Bring water and bug spray.

Saturday, May 14 | 8:00 AM

Beginners Bird Walk at Judson Nature Trails

Meet leader Lora Reynolds (reynoldswrite@sbcglobal.net or 210/414-0792) at the Judson Nature Trails, 246 Viesca Street. From the 5900 block of Broadway, turn west on Ogden Street and drive to the stop sign at Greeley Street. You'll see a sign to Judson Nature Trails. Turn left, go one block and turn right on Viesca, then into parking lot on left. Bring water. Please RSVP to Lora to let her know you'll be attending.

Saturday, May 21 | 8:00 AM

Castroville Regional Park

Meet Derrick Mims (757/775-5660 or derricklmims@gmail.com) in the upper parking lot of the park. Take US 90 West to Castroville. At the end of the Medina River bridge you enter Castroville, turn left onto Florence Street and follow the signs to the park. Bring water and snacks.

Sunday, May 22 | 8:00 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmail.com) in the parking lot of the park. From San Antonio, take IH-10 east to the FM 1518 exit and go north toward Schertz. Look for a brown park sign at Schaefer Road. Turn right and go 3 miles to the park. Entrance on left before Cibolo Creek. Bring water. The park address is 12780 W Schaefer Rd, Cibolo, TX 78108. Participation requirements will be based on CDC guidelines at the time of the field trip.

Saturday, June 11 | 8:00 AM

Beginners Bird Walk at Judson Nature Trails

Meet leader Barbara Sykes at the Judson Nature Trails, 246 Viesca Street. From the 5900 block of Broadway, turn west on Ogden Street and drive to the stop sign at Greeley Street. You'll see a sign to Judson Nature Trails. Turn left, go one block and turn right on Viesca, then into parking lot on left. Bring water. Please RSVP to Barbara at intbirding@gmail.com to let her know you'll be attending.

Tuesday, June 14 | 7:00 AM (Note Early Start Time) Choke Canyon State Park

Meet trip leader Zachary Tonzetich (210/232-3670, zachary.tonzetich@gmail.com) at the Choke Canyon South Shore Unit at 7:00 AM. The South Shore Unit is located in Three Rivers, TX on State Hwy 72. If travelling South on I-37, continue onto 281 S toward Three Rivers. Once in town, turn right onto Hwy 72 and proceed about 4 miles until you see the entrance to the South Shore Unit. We will bird the South Shore Unit first, then proceed to the Calliham Unit. Lunch to follow in Three Rivers if there is interest. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, and insect repellant. Day passes for the state park should be purchased ahead of time here.

Thursday, June 16 | 8:00 AM Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmail.com) in the parking lot of the park. From San Antonio, take IH-10 east to the FM 1518 exit and go north toward Schertz. Look for a brown park sign at Schaefer Road. Turn right and go 3 miles to the park. Entrance on left before Cibolo Creek. Bring water. The park address is 12780 W Schaefer Rd, Cibolo, TX 78108. Participation requirements will be based on CDC guidelines at the time of the field trip.

Saturday, June 18 | 7:00 PM (Note Evening Start Time) Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary

Contact leader Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmailcom or text 210/632-2812) for access information and other instructions if you would like to attend this evening walk at Don and Susan Schaezler's sanctuary in Cibolo. Directions: Take I-35 north toward Austin. Take the Cibolo Valley Drive exit from I-35 and turn right onto Cibolo Valley Drive. Turn left onto Old Wiederstein Rd. Look for the green mailbox and turn right into the drive at 19349 Old Wiederstein. Your RSVP to Sandi is required for this trip.

SAAS-Y Notes

Donation from Recycled Cans

Georgina Schwartz thanks those of you who gave her smashed aluminum cans to recycle. Georgina donated to SAAS the \$16.50 she received from the recycler (55 cents/pound).

Materials from Leon Ruttley's Wildlife Rescue & Rehab Program

If you were not able to join us online April 7 for Leon Ruttley's program about Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation, he sent us several resources featuring information he used for his presentation. Click below to read the flyers. If you would like to volunteer for the organization or have a release site they can use, please email Leon: LRuttley@wildlife-rescue.org.

If You Find a Baby Bird

If You Find a Baby Mammal

Living with Urban Wildlife

Mountain Lions

Project Coyote

Release Site Flyer

Urban Deer Information

Welcome New Members!

C. Lautzenheiser/David Smith
Alene Lindley
Rhonda Martin
Katherine Schmitt
Geoffrey Smith

City Nature Challenge 2022: San Antonio



Join Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Master Naturalists, the Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society, and many others in a fun challenge to see which city can document the most species during April 29 - May 2. It is easy to participate by joining an event or making observations on your own using the iNaturalist app. With the iNaturalist app, you just take a picture of a plant or animal, and the community will help identify which species it is. Any observation in the greater metropolitan area of San Antonio will count during the four-day challenge. You can participate by exploring the life in your backyard, in your local park, or on a field trip with your local naturalist group. You can also help with IDs for other people's observations to increase our species count, come to a bioblitz, or even hold your own event! Click here to join the project on iNaturalist.

Warbler Woods Featured in Texas Wildlife Association Publication

Susan Schaezler of Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary sent us a link to a wonderful article about the Schaezlers and their fantastic birding property. Click here to read the magazine. The Warbler Woods article begins on page 34.

Issues in Birding

Audubon Magazine: Guide to Nocturnal Bird Migration

BirdCast.Info: Bird Migration Forecast Maps

BirdWatchingDaily: Oldest Known Roseate Spoonbill Found Nesting in Florida

Change.org: Stop New Housing Development Near Helotes

CNN.com: Wild Birds and Avian Flu eBird.org: Global Big Day May 14

Migratory Bird Month Special Presentation Online

Wednesday, May 4, 7:00 PM | \$5 | Zoom

The Texas Hill Country: An Ecological Collage Presenter: Ted Lee Eubanks



Ted Lee Eubanks has spent the past 25 years studying and photographing the Texas Hill Country. In his talk, Ted will discuss the diversity of the region and show many of his images of both the plants and animals found here. Ted will conclude by discussing ways in which this unique area is currently threatened and what we need to do to protect the Texas Hill Country for future generations.

To Buy Your Ticket (\$5) Click HERE: You will receive a link to register for the Zoom meeting.

YOU MUST REGISTER FOR THE MEETING TO RECEIVE THE LINK THAT ADMITS YOU TO THE PROGRAM.

APPROVED FOR MASTER NATURALIST ADVANCED TRAINING

Co-sponsored by Bexar Audubon Society & Native Plant Society of Texas – San Antonio Chapter

April Migratory Bird Fest Open House 8:00am - 3:00pm 23 FREE ENTRY ALL DAY Beginner Bird Walk 8:00 - 10:00 am FREE | RSVP Required Storytime Make & Take 8:00 - 12:00 pm FREE | Drop in **Guided Bird Tour** 8:00am FREE for Members | \$10 for General April City Nature Challenge: At Night 5:30 - 7:30pm 29 FREE for Members | \$5 for General April Intro to Native Plants Workshop 9:30 - 11:00am **30** \$10 for Members | \$15 for General May **Guided Bird Tour** 8:00am FREE for Members | \$10 for General May Nature Photography Workshop 9:00am | Ages 16+ \$15 for Members | \$20 for General May **Guided Bird Tour** 8:00am FREE for Members | \$10 for General May **Digital Birding Tools Webinar** 11 6:30pm FREE | Presented by Bexar Audubon Society May **FREE Community Festival** 10:00am - 2:00pm 14

For more information: MitchellLake.Audubon.org/birdfest

FREE

All events at 10750 Pleasanton Road, SATX 78221 CONTACT US: MLAC@audubon.org or 210.628.1639



American White Pelicans, Photo: Cindy Fullwiler



Send Us Your Bird Photos and Stories for SAAS Facebook Page

SAAS would love to share your bird photos and stories on our Facebook page. Whether you have been birding in your backyard, around the county, or places beyond, we are eager to hear from you. Share your story on our Facebook page by sending info and photos to Christine at cbsturnbull@hotmail.com.

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

<u>Mitchell Lake Audubon Center</u> is open Tuesday through Sunday, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Birding tours take place every Sunday (except the fifth Sunday of the month or when the Center is closed for holidays) at 8:00 AM. <u>REGISTER HERE</u> for bird tours. Find more events <u>here</u>. Visit the <u>MLAC website</u> or email mlac@audubon.org or call 210/628-1639.

Birding for Beginners Webinar

Thursday, April 28 | 6:00 - 7:00 PM Zoom Webinar | FREE Register Here



If you've just discovered the joys of birding and want to learn the basics, then this webinar is for you! We will cover the skills, gear, and resources that will help you become a better birder either out in the field or right in your own backyard. Includes tips to attract birds to your yard, such as native plants. Sponsored by Mitchell Lake Audubon Center.

Tech Bird: Digital Birding Tools Webinar

Wednesday, May 11 | 6:30-8:00 PM FREE | Online Register Here



Learn how to use eBird and the eBird app, Merlin Bird ID, and BirdNET to enhance your birding skills. Patsy Inglet will show you how to get started using these apps and websites to identify and learn about your surroundings while contributing to community science. Co-sponsored by Bexar Audubon Society and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center.

Local Birding Locations

MITCHELL LAKE AUDUBON CENTER

10750 Pleasanton Road
San Antonio, TX 78221
Visit the MLAC website or email mlac@audubon.org or call 210/628-1639

SAN ANTONIO BOTANICAL GARDEN

555 Funston, San Antonio, TX 78209 Visit www.sabot.org or call 210/207-3250

GOVERNMENT CANYON

12861 Galm Rd, San Antonio, TX 78254 Visit www.friendsofgc.org or call 210/688-9055

CIBOLO NATURE CENTER

140 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX 78006 Visit www.cibolo.org or call 830/249-4614

JUDSON NATURE TRAILS

246 Viesca Street, San Antonio, TX 78209

WARBLER WOODS BIRD SANCTUARY

19349 Old Wiederstein Rd, Cibolo, TX 78108
Visit www.warblerwoods.org to request permission for birding

San Antonio Audubon Society Leadership

San Antonio Audubon Society

5150 Broadway #257
San Antonio TX 78209-5710
info@saaudubon.org
www.saaudubon.org

Officers

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Directors at Large

Gail Nickel Sandi Wheeler

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Education/Outreach <u>info@saaudubon.org</u>
Field Trips, Christian Fernandez <u>christian1253@yahoo.com</u>
Historian, Betty Walters
Membership Database, Michael Shaw
Judson Nature Trails, Barbara Sykes <u>intbirding@gmail.com</u>
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Newsletter, Lora Reynolds <u>editor@saaudubon.org</u>

TO JOIN SAAS OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, CLICK HERE

San Antonio Audubon Society Membership/Renewal Form				
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Click here for online membership form and payment.

SAAS Membership

The SAAS newsletter is sent by email only to all members who have provided an email address. You will also receive a membership renewal notice by email. We no longer mail a printed membership directory to everyone, but a PDF copy is available by email from the Membership Chair at saasforbirds@gmail.com.

San Antonio Audubon Society Newsletter

Editor: Lora Reynolds

Newsletter Distribution: Lora Reynolds

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