

 San Antonio Audubon Society  
**AUDUBON NEWS**  
A Conservation and Birding Club since 1954

September/October 2022

Volume 68, Number 5

### SAAS Volunteers Needed for Board, Field Trips, Newsletter, Website, Membership

SAAS needs several volunteers to step up if we are to continue as an organization. Field Trip Chair Christian Fernandez has resigned, and we are looking for someone to assume this role. Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair Lora Reynolds will continue through the end of 2022, but we need someone to take her place starting in mid-December for the January/February 2023 newsletter. Our website is now being updated by Sandi Wheeler, but we need a webmaster. We have been short a board member most of 2022 and will be looking for new members to serve going forward so we have a full slate of seven. Please email Sandi Wheeler at [Wheels5683@gmail.com](mailto:Wheels5683@gmail.com) if you're interested in one of these positions.

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### Western Sandpipers by Mike Scully



Once again the birding doldrums of late summer have arrived; most local birds have fallen quiet for the year and some migratory species are already departing. Fall songbird migration is a protracted event and although there are many more migrants going south in the fall, they are seldom as visible as they are in the spring. Temperatures this time of year run high and the

sunlight is intense, further discouraging expeditions afield. An often overlooked summertime avian phenomenon, however, is the southbound passage of Arctic shorebirds from their distant breeding grounds. These birds more easily observed than songbirds as they gather around open shorelines and mudflats.

Among the most common of these migrants passing through our area is the Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*). Though possibly the most numerous shorebird in North America, Western Sandpipers actually breed across a somewhat restricted range on the tundra along the north coast of Alaska from the Yukon Delta west to Point Barrow. Upon arrival on the breeding grounds, the males establish nesting territories, advertising by means of calls and flight songs and constructing a series of nest scrapes in hidden locations amid woody scrub and taller vegetation. Pair formation occurs rapidly, with the males actively courting arriving females and leading them to the prepared nest scrapes.

Pairing is monogamous and surviving mates from previous years frequently reunite on the same territory. Four eggs are the norm, with incubation duties being shared by both sexes. During incubation the “off duty” adult may join with others to forage on mudflats and in shallow water some distance from the nest. Around the area of the nest however, perhaps to reduce the possibility of attracting predators, other sandpipers and their young are actively driven away. As is usual among birds with precocial young, the incubation period is relatively long, a full three weeks. Typically, all the eggs hatch on the same day, with the young remaining on the nest, brooded by the adults, while hatching is underway. As the young hatch, the adults remove and carry away the conspicuous eggshell fragments.

Newly hatched young possess a prominent yolk sack that helps sustain them through the first days of life. The young feed on insects and other invertebrates primarily captured on land or the water surface, and the adults lead them from the nest to suitable feeding habitat up to hundreds of yards away. Both nests and young are vulnerable to predators, including foxes, Jaegers, and Sandhill Cranes. The adults employ a number of alarm calls and distraction displays in response to these while the cryptically colored young freeze in place. Females typically depart the brood first, sometimes at hatching, more often around a week later. Males typically watch over the rapidly growing young for two weeks after hatching, by which time the young can fly for short distances and also swim.

Within the breeding range, two related and more widely-distributed sandpipers also occur, the Semipalmated Sandpiper (*C. pusilla*) and the Least Sandpiper (*C. minutilla*). All three species exhibit similar breeding behaviors, although the Western Sandpiper averages slightly larger and longer-billed than the Semipalmated and prefers drier areas for nesting, whereas the distinctly smaller Least Sandpiper also breeds across an extensive range south of the tundra.

The sensitive bills of sandpipers contain pressure receptors that aid them in locating hidden prey. In these three species the females have on average somewhat longer bills than the males, feeding more often by probing. These species also obtain a significant portion of their diet by

grazing on biofilm, that layer of microorganisms and algae present on the surface of wet mud. Their feathery tongues are especially adapted for this purpose.

Post-breeding, the majority of the Western Sandpiper population gathers together in huge assemblages along the West Coast of North America. Some birds remain in those areas for the winter, others stage prior to further migration along the coast as far south as Peru. Lesser numbers winter in the Caribbean and along our Eastern and Gulf Coasts and a relative few winter inland, including across our area. Although still abundant, in common with other Arctic shorebirds, Western Sandpiper populations are vulnerable to habitat destruction in critical staging areas and to the possible effects of climate change on the breeding grounds.

*Western Sandpiper photo by Alan D. Wilson, naturepicsonline.com, CC BY SA 3.0.*

Mike.scully@nisd.net

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**SAAS Monthly Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 1 | 7:00 PM | Zoom**  
**Program: Northern Bobwhite Quail**  
**Speaker: John McLaughlin, TPWD**



*I, BS Thurner Hof, CC BY-SA 3.0*

Bob white, bob bob white! Many of us have fond memories of walking in pastures or driving country roads in the evening and hearing the cheery call of bobwhite quails or seeing them running along the sides of gravel roads. Those calls and sightings are rarer now for some obvious reasons like habitat loss, and maybe some less obvious reasons. John McLaughlin, Upland Game Bird Program Leader at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will give an overview of bobwhite quails in Texas and speak about challenges they face and conservation activities.

### About John McLaughlin

John McLaughlin was born and raised in southern New England. He received a B.S. degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University New Hampshire and a M.S. degree in Wildlife Management & Ecology from Texas Tech University. John has travelled the country and worked for a variety of state and federal wildlife agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, among others. He developed a passion for birds early in his career while living in Washington state and soon began working with upland game birds, including the greater sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse. John currently serves as the Upland Game Bird Program Leader for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, focusing on the four species of quail native to Texas. He lives in Lubbock and has been with the agency since 2017.

### Click [Here](#) to Join the Zoom Meeting

Topic: SAAS September 1: Northern Bobwhites

Time: Sep 1, 2022 7:00 PM (Central Time)

Meeting ID: 891 3601 6582

Passcode: 786836

Join Zoom Meeting

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## SAAS Monthly Meeting Thursday, October 6 | 7:00 PM | Zoom

**Program: The Texas Century Club: Using my obsession to benefit science!**

**Speaker: Bill Sain**



Guest speaker Bill Sain will tell us about the [Texas Century Club](#) (TCC), a friendly competition among birders trying to identify 100 species of birds in 100 of the 254 counties in the state of Texas. The TCC goal is to increase the knowledge of the birdlife of Texas by encouraging the exploration of those counties less visited in Texas. This knowledge is lost unless this knowledge is preserved, so the TCC is now configured to display the records as found in eBird.org. If you would like to interact with the TCC community, you can join the Facebook group [here](#).

### About Bill Sain

Bill Sain, a native of Harlingen Texas, began hanging out with birders in 1993. He did not consider himself a birder, though, until a visit to the birding mecca of Cape May, NJ in Oct 1995,

where he bought his first field guide and began learning how to identify birds. His name may be familiar to some of you, as he lived in San Antonio at the time and was a member of SAAS in the late 90's. He served as a Director or officer of Bexar Audubon Society from 1994-2000, including the role of president for the last three years. He was a part of groups who founded the Master Naturalist concept and the Mitchell Lake Wetlands Society (MLWS). He served as Treasurer of MLWS for a year. He also served on the boards of the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the Audubon Council of Texas. In that later role, he chaired a committee that developed a conceptual plan for the current Texas Audubon Society organization and served on the initial Board of Directors of Texas Audubon.

Bill left San Antonio in 2000 and lived in various parts of the US until he retired in 2012 and moved to Alpine, Texas. Since leaving San Antonio, Bill has served on the Board of Trustees of the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm (near Dayton, Ohio) for three years and, more recently, on the board of the American Birding Association from 2014 to 2020. He has led field trips at the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, Davis Mountain Hummingbird Celebration, and the Birding the Border Festival in Del Rio.

Bill's World Life List is 1,269 species. He has birded in 224 Texas Counties and his Texas Life List is 529 species.

**Click [Here](#) to Join the Zoom Meeting**

Topic: SAAS October 6 Program: Texas Century Club

Time: 7:00 PM Central Time

Meeting ID: 837 7504 9683

Passcode: 650236

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### Welcome New Members

Howard Barousse

Georgianne Gale

Judy Liberto

Dennis Moroney

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### SAAS Field Trips

#### The Greenline at Brooks City Base

**Tuesday, September 6, 8:00 AM**

Meet leader Christian Fernandez (210/415-0843) in the parking lot on Sidney Brooks Road. Take I-37 south of downtown to Exit 135 (SE Military Drive). Turn right and go 1.2 miles to S. New Braunfels Avenue and turn left. Go half a mile and take right at the stoplight (Sidney Brooks Road) and go another half mile to the parking lot on the left.

### **Beginners Bird Walk at Judson Nature Trails**

**Saturday, September 10, 8:00 AM**

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 [jntbirding@gmail.com](mailto:jntbirding@gmail.com) to let her know you'll be attending.

### **Crescent Bend Nature Park**

**Sunday, September 18, 8:00 AM**

Meet Sandi Wheeler ([wheels5683@gmail.com](mailto: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.

### **Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary**

**Saturday, September 24, 7:00 PM**

Visit Warbler Woods in the evening. All participants must RSVP to Sandi Wheeler ([Wheels5683@gmail.com](mailto:Wheels5683@gmail.com)) if you plan to attend.

### **New Braunfels Area Parks**

**Thursday, September 29, 8:00 AM**

Meet Lynn Thompson ([lthompson54@satx.rr.com](mailto:lthompson54@satx.rr.com)) in Landa Park at the large parking lot in front of the wading pool on Landa Park Drive at 8:00 AM. This parking area is just before you turn right onto Gazebo Circle Drive. Restrooms are located there as well. From there, we can drive over to Cypress Bend Park, then end at Fischer Park. That will give us three areas that all have water but are in different areas of the city. Bring water, snacks, and bug spray. Hiking shoes are not necessary.

### **Medina River Greenway—Roosevelt Trailhead/Cassin Lake**

**Wednesday October 5, 8:00 AM**

Meet trip leader Zachary Tonzetich ([zachary.tonzetich@gmail.com](mailto:zachary.tonzetich@gmail.com) or (210) 232-3670) at 8 AM at the Roosevelt Trailhead. The trail head is located just south of I-410 on the Eastern side of the intersection of Roosevelt Ave (281 N) and Del Lago Parkway. Parking is somewhat limited so carpooling is advised if possible. Bring water and bug spray.

### **Beginners Bird Walk at Judson Nature Trails**

**Saturday, October 8, 8:00 AM**

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 [jntbirding@gmail.com](mailto:jntbirding@gmail.com) to let her know you'll be attending.

### Crescent Bend Nature Park

**Thursday, October 27, 8:00 AM**

Meet Sandi Wheeler ([wheels5683@gmail.com](mailto: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.

### Haggard Ranch

**Saturday, October 29, 8:00 AM**

Meet Metha Haggard at her ranch in South Bexar County. Go south on I-35 about 4 miles south of Loop 1604. Take exit 137, Shepherd Road. Go left across the bridge and then left on the access road. Drive 0.5 miles to the gate and cattle guard. Close the gate after driving through. Drive straight and go left at the fork to the house. For more information, call Metha 210/622-3886.

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## Native Landscapes for Birds In-person Workshop



The San Antonio Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) will offer the Native Landscapes for Birds workshop at the San Antonio Botanical Garden on Saturday, October 1, 2022 from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. This workshop is part of the NLCP (Native Landscape Certification Program) series and is particularly relevant to birders. The program includes presentations in the morning and a plant walk in the botanical garden after lunch. Registration fee is \$50 for NPSOT members and \$65 for non-members. Further information and a registration link is available online [here](#).

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## 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](mailto:cbsturnbull@hotmail.com).

## Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

Through September 12, [Mitchell Lake Audubon Center](#) is open Tuesday through Thursday, 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM and Friday through Sunday, 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM. From September 16 through February 14,

hours are 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM Friday through Sunday. Thursdays are by appointment only, 48 hours in advance. 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. [REGISTER HERE](#) for bird tours. Find more events [here](#). Visit the MLAC [website](#) or email [mlac@audubon.org](mailto:mlac@audubon.org) or call 210/628-1639.

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## Issues in Birding

We've collected an assortment of current articles that may be of interest to you related to birding and environmental issues.

[October 8, Global Big Day](#)

[Photo Strategies for Getting Close to Birds](#)

[How Birding Has Changed Over the Past 50 Years](#)

[Hummingbird Rediscovered in Colombia](#)

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## Local Birding Locations

### MITCHELL LAKE AUDUBON CENTER

10750 Pleasanton Road

San Antonio, TX 78221

Visit the [MLAC website](#) or email [mlac@audubon.org](mailto:mlac@audubon.org) or call 210/628-1639

### SAN ANTONIO BOTANICAL GARDEN

555 Funston, San Antonio, TX 78209

Visit [www.sabot.org](http://www.sabot.org) or call 210/207-3250

### GOVERNMENT CANYON

12861 Galm Rd, San Antonio, TX 78254

Visit [www.friendsofgc.org](http://www.friendsofgc.org) or call 210/688-9055

### CIBOLO NATURE CENTER

140 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX 78006

Visit [www.cibolo.org](http://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](http://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](mailto:info@saaudubon.org)

[www.saaudubon.org](http://www.saaudubon.org)

### *Officers*

[Dahn Windhorn](#), President

[Zachary Tonzetich](#), Vice President

[Derrick Mims](#), Secretary

[Debra Engler](#), Treasurer

### *Directors at Large*

Gail Nickel

Sandi Wheeler

### *Committee Chairs*

Bird Records, Dodge Engleman [birdreports@saaudubon.org](mailto:birdreports@saaudubon.org)

Education/Outreach [info@saaudubon.org](mailto:info@saaudubon.org)

Field Trips

Historian, Betty Walters

Judson Nature Trails, Barbara Sykes [jntbirding@gmail.com](mailto:jntbirding@gmail.com)

Publicity, Debra Engler [info@saaudubon.org](mailto:info@saaudubon.org)

Newsletter, Lora Reynolds [editor@saaudubon.org](mailto:editor@saaudubon.org)

**TO JOIN SAAS OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, CLICK [HERE](#)**

**San Antonio Audubon Society Membership/Renewal Form**

NEW

RENEWAL

GIFT

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required to receive SAAS newsletters and announcements) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check type of membership you'd like:  Individual/\$20 year  
 Household/\$30 year

If you'd like to donate, please indicate amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Special Projects Fund  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Judson Nature Trails Fund  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ General Operating Fund

Please make check payable to: San Antonio Audubon Society.

Send check to:                      ATTN: Membership  
  San Antonio Audubon Society  
  5150 Broadway  
  San Antonio, TX 78209-5710

Payments can also be made at [saaudubon.org](http://saaudubon.org) by clicking Donate or Membership at top of home page.

**Click [here](#) for online membership form and payment.**

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## **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](mailto:saasforbirds@gmail.com).

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## **San Antonio Audubon Society Newsletter**

Editor: Lora Reynolds

Newsletter Distribution: Lora Reynolds

The newsletter is published bimonthly. Send submissions to [editor@saaudubon.org](mailto:editor@saaudubon.org). Permission is granted to other nonprofit groups to reprint articles, unless otherwise noted. Reprints must refer to the originating issue and give credit to San Antonio Audubon News and the specific author. Copyright © 2022 by the San Antonio Audubon Society.