

Houston Audubon Education Department

March 21 – May 16, 2018 Report to the Board of Directors

- 83 programs or trips/ 3124 youth reached/ 1137 adults reached

HIGHLIGHTS

- BIRD Buddies Class of 2018 wrapped up the year with a great celebration at SBUNC. It is always hard to say goodbye for the summer but those not starting school are anxious to start class again in September. The buddies learned about 26 different birds, made amazing crafts throughout the year, learned 26 songs about the featured birds and had a great time exploring the grounds of the nature center. They all received a certificate, photo collage, CD of the songs and a song book. The BIRD Buddies and their families were also the first to enjoy the completed canopy deck in the forest. It got thumbs up from all and Trey Morris who completed the project received high fives from all the kids.



- Birds of a Feather Junior Ornithology Club from Smith Elementary spent a Saturday at SBUNC deepening their already great knowledge about birds and enjoying some great bird watching on site. We have been a partner with the clubs teacher for many years and look forward to working with more students from Smith in the future.
- The Gathering Place is a program of Interfaith Partners and provides an Alzheimer's Care Team at churches and synagogues around the city. Gathering Place meetings combine physical movement, socialization, music, and other memory-stimulating activity in a safe and comfortable 3.5-hour time block, enabling caregivers to attend to their personal

needs without worry. We have partnered with several churches over the years to make an annual visit during a Gathering Place meeting. It is always a special treat for both the volunteers and the loved ones with dementia to meet and learn about our native birds and their conservation. Dawn continues to nurture the Bird Tales program at several locations across Houston and Katy.



Red-winged Blackbirds and House Finches were the feature birds the last two months with interactive activities and songs about both.

- The Houston Audubon Senior Bus Trips in April and May were hugely successful. We hit the road in April to visit High Island and Bolivar. Most had never visited the sanctuaries before and it was great fun to watch their reactions as we approached the rookery. It was a dim and drizzly day so we had Smith Oaks almost to ourselves. We also were fortunate to see the Pomarine Jaeger at Rollover Pass. In May and under a very hot sun we traveled to Port Arthur and Sabine Pass. It was another great morning of birding at Sabine Woods and Sea Rim State Park and then to avoid the afternoon heat we enjoyed a visit to the Museum of the Gulf



Coast.

- Field Trips that we helped lead included a visit from the Houston Racquet Club to Fiorenza Park, a trip to J J Mayes Wildlife Trace with the 5th graders from Western Academy, and member field trips to Brazos Bend and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park. It is always a pleasure to expose young and old to the joy of birding and the great diversity of birds that can be found in this region. The April Member Field Trippers were also lucky to spot a Lazuli Bunting at the park which was a special treat for all.



- In April, before the record heat set in we were fortunate to receive a new non-releasable Red-tailed Hawk from Wyoming. Winston is still in training but will be a great addition to the education team!

- On April 11, the education team assisted Sarah Flourney with her event at Brasil. This event was hosted by Land, Sea and Sky and was a huge success. These opportunities to share about Bird Friendly Communities and Houston Audubon's mission are vital to garnering local support and future action.
- Another successful Raptor Photography Shoot was held at SBUNC this spring and the photographers were very happy with the resulting photos. Ben Hulsey captured this great shot of Spirit.



- The Green Herons are back for the summer and they are again nesting along Sims Bayou. The center is looking great thanks to a work day from the FFA students at Chavez High School and the completion of the canopy deck and ADA trail leading to it. We have a few more items to tweak and more gardening work ahead but things are really looking good!

- Bird Surveys continue to grow in popularity across the city and these give everyday folks and families a great opportunity to bird with knowledgeable birders. Nesting has begun at the Westpark Rookery and we will keep everyone up to date on happenings over there.



- The education team assisted the Green Jays from Western Academy with their Birdathon teams again this year and both classes had successful days of birding on the coast. This year was also the 7th Annual John James Audubon day at Western Academy. After Mary Anne's presentation about bird conservation and Audubon's legacy she enjoyed

listening the 5th graders give their own presentations about the particular bird they studied. The presentations were memorable to say the least.

- Outreach programs took the education staff and the Birdmobile to places as far



away as Franklin and across the greater Houston region. "Have Birds, Will Travel"



- Celebrating the Year of the Bird at SBUNC!

Despite the current threats to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that is celebrating 100 years this year, the education staff held a special day to honor the Year of the Bird. Families learned all about birds, bird conservation, the history of MBTA and much more. It was a great success and we introduced a whole new audience to Houston Audubon.

- The Education Staff is now heading into a summer full of camps and summer reading programs at libraries. Camps are held at both SBUNC and Yorkshire Academy in west Houston. Thanks for all your support!



Mary Anne Weber &

Dawn Monachino

