



The Naturalist

Celebrating 40 Years of Bird Conservation

September/October 2009

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Houston Audubon Celebrates Forty Years in Conservation!

by Gina Donovan, Executive Director

As I sit in my office looking into the canopy of water oak, mulberry, elm, and beyond into the endless blue sky, I ponder what it must have been like for the astronauts aboard the Apollo 11 to walk on the moon. It was forty years ago, July 20, 1969, when Neil Armstrong spoke those famous words "...one small step for man...one giant leap for mankind." It took visionaries eight years of hard work and determination to realize that phenomenal victory – men on the moon.



Roughly two months after NASA put men on the moon, another phenomenal victory took flight. On September 24, 1969, The Houston Audubon Society was formed by a dedicated group of eighteen men and women who saw the need for environmental education for youth and environmental advocacy for wildlife habitat. Like NASA, Houston Audubon is celebrating its forty-year anniversary! The eighteen member

organizational committee's primary purpose for forming the Houston Audubon Society was "...to strengthen the conservation effort in the Gulf Coast area," as was stated in a preliminary news release dated January 28, 1969. The release also mentioned, "We need only to consider air and water pollution, Galveston Bay, the Big Thicket, and the plight of the Attwater Prairie Chicken to realize that major conservation issues surround us."

With support and cooperation from Houston's Outdoor Nature Club, invitations to Houston Audubon's first organizational meeting were sent far and wide. Among those responding was U.S. Senator Ralph W. Yarborough. The Senator wired a telegram on February 5, 1969, the date of the meeting, wishing success for the initial meeting and continued "success in your endeavors toward conservation of our vital natural environment."

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Membership Meetings

Place: United Way Center
50 Waugh Drive
Time: 7:00 p.m. Social
7:30 p.m. Meeting

September 9, 2009

The Columbia Bottomlands
Speaker: Mike Lange

Michael Lange is a Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mike has been the lead for acquisition of the Columbia Bottomlands and pulling together



the various groups to help acquire land. Houston Audubon, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, and the Texas Ornithological Society have been dedicated participants

in this effort. Industry from Dow Chemical to Reliant Energy has also been supportive. Here is an opportunity to see and hear specifically the details of this habitat/conservation effort. His talk will highlight the importance of the Columbia Bottomlands Forest to migratory birds and other wildlife as well as the Bottomland Forest's unique features, importance, and the efforts to preserve it.

October 14, 2009

Documentary Field Photography:
Osprey Quest & Other Bird Behaviors
Speaker: Mark Bartosik

Award-winning photographer Mark Bartosik's motto is: "... In my time, I fill up the space around me with beautiful animals' worlds and try to document both the unusual behavior and the natural beauty of the specimens as they pass through their time on Earth." By the time of our meeting, Mark's paper about Osprey behavior (including several unknown behaviors documented in photographs) should be already

Ospreys: Mark Bartosik



published, and he will include quite a few photos that will show the audience how truly important photography is when conducting field research. He will also present illustrations of unknown or poorly known bird behaviors. For another opportunity to hear Mark, please note that he will also be the speaker at the October 21st HANPA program (see p. 5).

Find out more about our speakers and their programs as well as links to resources for further information at www.houstonaudubon.org

Houston Audubon Society
is a chapter of the National Audubon Society

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The Naturalist is published bimonthly.

Editor: Susan Billetdeaux

A full color version of *The Naturalist* in PDF format is available on our website.

Naturalist E-News is published monthly.

To receive *The Naturalist* by e-mail, sign up for *Naturalist E-News* on our website.

The Naturalist is made possible by a generous gift from Terry Hershey.

Houston Audubon Celebrates 40 Years in Conservation

(continued from page 1)

Senator Yarborough also stated, "Texas with more species of wild birds than any other state in the union particularly needs an organization of interested persons to give coordination and direction in the fight to preserve these species, and the other natural resources with which Texas is blessed."

The organizational meeting was attended by several local and national dignitaries. National Audubon Society's Executive Vice-President, Charles H. Callison, presented a program on the purposes, activities, and goals of National Audubon Society.

About seven months later, on September 26, 1969, The Houston Audubon Society became official with the signature of Secretary of State Martin Dies, Jr. on the "Certificate of Incorporation." The eleven board positions were held by: Mr. Carl H. Aiken, Mr. Dirk Hagemeyer, Dr. C.E. Hall, Mrs. J.W. "Terry" Hershey, Mrs. Norma Oates, Mr. Harvey Patton (Chairman), Dr. T.E. Pulley, Mr. W.G. Scheibe, Dr. Mary Sears, Dr. Margaret P. Sullivan, and Mr. Armand Yramategui.

Today, Houston Audubon operates basically on the same values and purposes established by its founding fathers which were: to promote

educational, scientific, literary, historical, and charitable purposes; to provide education and instruction in natural science through nature walks, field trips, and seminars, both to its members and through programs in the public school system; to create awareness of conservation problems and to explore solutions for said problems; to promote conservation of wildlife and natural resources through education, maintenance and management of sanctuaries and coordinated activity with governmental conservation agencies.

A rumble of thunder awakens me from my journey back in time and the reality of receiving a much needed rain excites me. As the pitter patter of rain falls on the administration building, I reflect again on Neil Armstrong's words "...one small step for man...one giant leap for mankind." If it weren't for the visionaries of Houston Audubon forty years ago, where would our environment be? Indeed, one small step for Houston Audubon's organizational committee and one giant leap for birds and wildlife habitat.



A New Look for the Houston Audubon Logo

With this issue of *The Naturalist*, Houston Audubon is happy to unveil our new logo. The Yellow-throated Warbler was chosen in 1988 to be Houston Audubon's insignia bird. Ted Eubanks, who was serving as President, wrote in his introduction to the logo, "In the past the Sycamore Warbler, now known as the Yellow-throated Warbler, commonly nested in the broad expanses of cypress swamp that lined our bayous and bays. These swamps are now gone, victims of uncontrolled logging and "reclamation". The only significant cypress swamp that remains in our area, Lake Charlotte, will be destroyed by the construction of the Wallisville Reservoir (and with it the Sycamore Warblers that still nest there)."

The proposed Wallisville Dam on the Trinity River was Houston Audubon's first high-profile advocacy position. We joined a lawsuit in 1971 to stop the dam's construction. An injunction stopped construction of the project in 1973, but litigation continued for many years until the injunction was lifted in 1987. It appeared the battle was lost, but then a magnificent pair of Bald Eagles was discovered nesting in the heart of the project area. As a result, a much smaller reservoir was built, and thousands of acres that had been condemned were designated

a preserve, protecting habitat for the Yellow-throated Warbler and many other species.

As we work to protect birds and wildlife habitat, we currently face new and ongoing challenges to responsibly regulate wind energy, develop long-range sustainability solutions for the Upper Texas Coast, and many more. The Yellow-throated Warbler continues to be a very appropriate symbol for our mission.

Wetland Conservation License Plate

Ducks Unlimited has created a wetland conservation license plate for Texas. Proceeds help support Texas Ducks Unlimited's efforts to conserve and restore wetlands and associated habitats for wildlife. Ordering information is on our website, www.houstonaudubon.org.



High Island Spring 2009

by Winnie Burkett, Sanctuary Manager

After Hurricane Ike came ashore on September 13, 2008, the calls started coming in to the office. "Are the High Island sanctuaries still there?" "Will there be birds?"

The High Island sanctuaries lost trees but not as many as they lost due to Hurricane Humberto on September 13, 2007. Of course, the sanctuaries had fewer trees to lose. The trees in Boy Scout Woods were hit hardest with water oaks and hackberries down and mulberries cracked and broken. Smith Oaks lost a couple of the big oaks in the picnic area, smaller oaks, and hackberries throughout the woods and some limbs off the big oaks in the middle of the woods. Smith Pond was inundated with salt water, killing many of the cypresses and willows that had been planted along the shore. Claybottom Pond, where the Rookery is, lost some trees. Eubanks Woods and the S.E. Gast Red Bay Sanctuary lost trees. As for the birds, well, we didn't see a lot of mortality although undoubtedly there was some. Doves, particularly the big ones, seemed to have been blown away, but other resident land birds were there after the storm, and fall migrants showed up immediately.

Professional tree crews were needed to handle the big, complicated tree work at High Island, and the volunteers cleaned up everything else. It was months of chain sawing, hauling, and burning. Once we got areas cleaned up, we began replanting. Over three hundred trees and shrubs were planted in the sanctuaries during the winter. Altogether more than 2,300 volunteer hours were spent cleaning up and planting. What would we do without volunteers? Please visit the High Island section of our website to find the honor roll of all the High Island Work Day and Kiosk Volunteers. They were magnificent!

As spring approached, the phones continued to ring. "Are the sanctuaries still there?" "Will there be birds?" Too many people only saw pictures of the devastation. Not surprisingly, the media rarely shows what survives. High Island trees and shrubs leafed out providing habitat and food.

Some birders thought that because of the hurricane the birds wouldn't come, but the birds didn't know what happened. They just migrated, and when they reached the Upper Texas Coast, they looked for habitat, and we had lots of habitat ready.

Spring came, and with it came the birds, birders, and our wonderful volunteers. This was the second year of Houston Audubon's partnership with Tropical Birding at High Island, and the partnership has been great fun. Tropical Birding guides spent the spring at High Island, leading free bird walks in Houston Audubon sanctuaries. There were four bird walks every day from March 28 to May 3, and they were all well attended. Having the extra expert birders there seems to result in more unusual bird sightings and more birding energy.



Several Cape May Warblers were seen this year at High Island

Photo: Joanne Karmo

The last couple of years we have started the spring with consistently strong south winds, which is great for migrating birds but not too good for birders, but that was not the case this spring. Cold fronts regularly reached the coast, bringing nice numbers of a good variety of birds.

Activity started late in the Rookery, most likely due to the drought that started before Ike hit and stretched through the spring. Low water levels in Claybottom Pond meant there was less nesting habitat, so there were fewer nests. But those nests produced good numbers of chicks. Low water also attracted a nice variety of shorebirds. All spring Stilt Sandpipers were a sanctuary regular.

The most unusual bird of the spring was a Hooded Oriole that fed in Cape Honeysuckle in a High Island neighbor's yard. Western Tanagers were seen on and off for several weeks, and Black-whiskered Vireos were found on several occasions.

We had fewer spring birders than usual, but birders came from 45 states and 15 foreign countries, and they were not disappointed. Birding was great this spring. The daily reports by our Tropical Birding guides available on our website (www.houstonaudubon.org) in the High Island section give a colorful picture of a wonderful spring.

The full High Island Spring Report, including the bird and volunteer lists, will be available in the High Island section of the website in September.

Birds & Bottomlands

Join us for Houston Audubon's
Birds & Bottomlands Benefit
October 1, 2009 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
at the Omni Houston Hotel



Wood Duck: Greg Lavaty

Houston Audubon will be honoring Outstanding Achievement in Conservation for two landscape-scale conservation projects protecting bottomland forest habitat in Texas. Honorees for the Columbia Bottomlands project on the Upper Texas Coast include: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Trust for Public Land, and Lucie, David, and Emily Todd. Honorees for the Neches River Bottomlands project in East Texas include: former U.S. Congressman Charlie Wilson, Ellen and Buddy Temple, The Conservation Fund, and Texas Conservation Alliance.

We hope you will join us for cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and live jazz music by Jazz Avenue. The silent auction will be open from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with the award ceremony and live auction beginning at 8:00 p.m. For details about purchasing tickets, sponsoring the event, or contributing an item to the auctions, please visit our website at www.houstonaudubon.org.

We offer special thanks to our generous sponsors:

John P. McGovern Foundation (Bald Eagle level); Temple-Inland (Swallow-tailed Kite level); Carolyn & Scott Davis, Bonnie & Richard Donovan, Lynne & Joe Hudson (Great Horned Owl level); Claire & John Caudill, Mary Gwen & Ben Hulse, Terry Hershey, Wendy & Mavis Kelsey, Betsy & Jim Winn, Larry Wright (Pileated Woodpecker level); Blaine Adams & Patrick Falcon, Judy Boyce, Caroline & Charles Callery, Craig Damuth, Marianna & Rufus Duncan, Ann Wier Jones, Virginia & John Elder, Jenny & Jim Elkins, Lettalou Whittington (Belted Kingfisher level).

Sponsors as of July 30, 2009

Bird Counts

Armand Bayou Survey

Leader: Andrew Hamlett
Monthly on the second Saturday

Bolivar Bird Count

This count is currently being retooled. Please check website for updates.

Swifts Over Houston

Leader: Pam Smolen
Weekly on Tuesday evenings

Swifts Over Dayton

Leader: Barbara Tilton
Weekly on Thursday evenings

West 11th Street Park Survey

Leader: Mary Dodson
Monthly on the third Tuesday

Willow Waterhole Survey

Leader: John Schneider
Monthly on the third Saturday

Check www.houstonaudubon.org for details and any last minute updates

Smith Point Hawk Watch

August 15 – November 15

by John Arvin, Research Coordinator at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory's Smith Point Hawk Watch is once again open! The tower has been declared sound, and the tower and environs have been cleaned up nicely. Visitors will notice little change from previous years, except that, so far, there is little in the way of public facilities such as gasoline or groceries available in Smith Point proper. There is one small restaurant which is now open. As always, we encourage visitors seven days a week, and we are especially eager for anyone who is interested in volunteering, preferably on a regular basis, so we can provide our two official hawk counters with a little time off. At the moment heavy cleanup activity continues in the area with lots of heavy truck traffic hauling debris, but that should diminish with time.

For more information, please contact John Arvin at jarvin@gcbo.org or see the GCBO website, www.gcbo.org

Young Professionals

by Andrea Ritchie, Community Relations

In keeping with our efforts to reach all members of the community, Houston Audubon is proud to announce the creation of a young professionals group, The Night Owls. Geared towards introducing birding and area conservation efforts to Houstonians in their twenties and thirties, the group is steadily generating interest and attracting new members. Many of Houston's young professionals have an interest in our natural environment and conservation efforts, but have little idea of what Houston Audubon is and the important work we do

The goal of The Night Owls is to provide a forum where Houston Audubon can connect with these young professionals, while providing fun and relaxed opportunities for learning and networking. The Houston Audubon YP group is set to officially launch on September 10 with



a Happy Hour membership drive at Beaver's restaurant, and is planning birding and kayaking excursions for the upcoming year.

Of particular interest to many young professionals is the new Houston Audubon Facebook page. Created in January 2009, the Houston Audubon Group on Facebook attracted nearly two hundred members during its first month and now boasts over three hundred. Facebook members are able to post questions and pictures of birds, learn about Houston Audubon efforts and events, and connect with other local birding and conservation enthusiasts. The website message board is particularly active with Houstonians seeking advice on how best to protect area birds and habitat. The Houston Audubon Group is free to all Facebook members and can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=57877237455&ref=ts>.

Galveston County Group

The Galveston County Group of Houston Audubon resumes its monthly meeting and field trip schedule beginning in September. Everyone is invited to participate! Meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday at a theater at Moody Gardens. The theater is in the Visitor's Pyramid across from the ticket counter and next to the gift shop. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. with the first half-hour set aside to enjoy

the company of other birders, have your birding questions answered, and find out the latest in local birding. The meeting presentations begin at 7:00 p.m. and last approximately an hour. A field trip is normally scheduled the fourth Saturday of every month. Please check the Houston Audubon website for program speakers and field trip destinations.

For more information contact Alice Anne O'Donell at aaodonel@utmb.edu or Barbara Rapstein at ronryon@comcast.net, 409-789-3811.

Coastal Volunteers

Please note that we ask volunteers to sign a liability waiver for all work days which they can either sign and FAX back to us, or sign on site when they arrive. Forms are available on the Outdoor Volunteer page of our website.

Bolivar Flats Beach Cleanup Saturday, September 26, 9 a.m. – noon

With summer drawing to a close there is always a lot that needs picking up. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Meet at the vehicular barrier. Bags, gloves, and water will be provided. Bring sunscreen and mosquito repellent.

High Island Work Day Saturday, October 10, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

We work from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., but volunteers are welcome whenever they show up. Houston Audubon supplies lunch, water, and some tools. If you have favorite tools, please bring them along. To sign up, please contact Winnie Burkett: wburkett@houstonaudubon.org or 713-932-1639.

Port Bolivar Planting Work Day Tuesday, October 27

A planting work day is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27 at 9 a.m. at the entrance to Fort Travis Seashore Park in Port Bolivar. The land on either side of the entrance road to the park, owned by Houston Audubon, was bulldozed during the Hurricane Ike cleanup. Houston Audubon is partnering with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Galveston Bay Naturalists, but more volunteers are needed. Everyone is welcome to participate!

Fort Travis Seashore Park is on TX Loop 108, Port Bolivar, TX 77650. To sign up or if you have any questions, please contact Flo Hannah: 713-932-1639 or fhannah@houstonaudubon.org

Species Profile Swallow-tailed Kite

by Glenn Olsen

Without a doubt the most stunningly beautiful and graceful raptor in our skies is the Swallow-tailed Kite. The shape of this bird and the color pattern make it easy to identify but more importantly, make it unforgettable. Most often observed flying, the visual image of the shape is that of long pointed wings typical of kites, and a long, deeply forked tail that looks like an open pair of scissors. The color pattern is an all white under body, white axillaries, and white underwing coverts contrasted against a blue-black tail and blue-black primaries and trailing edge of the secondaries.

This species forages on insects on the wing: gliding gracefully, turning majestically, diving swiftly, catching insects in its talons, and eating in flight. During these feeding maneuvers you'll have the opportunity to see that the upper body and wings are all blue-black and only the head is a snow white. What a truly stunning sight! You may also see these birds deftly extracting insects, lizards,



Photo: David McDonald

Swallow-tailed Kite – *Elanoides forficatus*

frogs, etc. from trees, shrubs, or off the ground. Insects, reptiles, and amphibians compose most of their diet.

This kite may be seen in conjunction with Mississippi Kites or Ospreys that also frequent parts of the same habitat. When compared to the Mississippi Kite, the Swallow-tailed Kite looks huge. It is noticeably smaller than the osprey, evidenced primarily in the shape of the wings.

This Neotropical migrant spends the months of our winter as far south as South America. They begin arriving in our area in March. The historical breeding range extended up the Mississippi River as far north as Minnesota. Current breeding range appears to be limited to the states bordering the Gulf, including east Texas,

Houston Audubon Field Trips

Reservations are required for all Houston Audubon field trips. Sign up at the HAS Membership Meeting or contact Skip Almoney (skipalm@aol.com) at 713-524-4285. Remember to bring your binoculars, scope, camera, sunscreen, insect protection, sturdy shoes, hat, raingear, water, and snacks or a lunch if you want to bird into the afternoon. For more information about the field trips and resource links, see the description in the Birding section of our website. Participants, please check the website for any last minute updates.

Baytown Nature Center Saturday, September 26, 8:00 a.m.

The Baytown Nature Center is two connected peninsulas, surrounded by three bays, located on the west side of Baytown. The 450 acres of land will provide a variety of habitat including wetlands, woodlands, and prairie. Our guide will be John Mason, naturalist for the Center, and we will find migrating birds along with resident shorebirds. After lunch, we may finish the trip with a stop at the San Jacinto Park to look for early arrival duck species.

Directions: From the west (Houston) via Interstate 10: Take I-10 East to Baytown Spur 330 (Decker Dr.) exit. This is the second exit after crossing the San Jacinto River Bridge. Take the Bayway Drive exit off of Spur 330 and turn right on Bayway Drive. Proceed on Bayway Drive for approximately two miles to the entrance to the Baytown Nature Center on the right.

Bolivar Peninsula Saturday, October 24, 8:00 a.m.

Tom Kihn will lead the field trip across the Bolivar Peninsula, beginning at the ferry landing with possible morning stops at Frenchtown Road, Lighthouse Ponds, North Jetty, Bolivar Flats, Port Bolivar, Loop 108, Yacht Basin Road, and other locations recovering from the previous hurricanes. We will remain flexible, and our focus will be on shorebirds in the morning and migrants in the afternoon at the High Island sanctuaries. Tom Kihn has led the monthly bird count on Bolivar Flats and has unique knowledge of the habitats on Bolivar Peninsula.

Directions: We will meet at the Bolivar side of the ferry on the south side of highway TX 87. Traveling from Houston, go south on I-45 through Galveston to the Bolivar Ferry. After crossing Galveston Bay on the ferry, look for the parking area on the right side of the road past the ferry landing. Please make every effort to car pool to this event.

HAS Birding Classes

with Glenn Olsen

Beginning Birding

October 22 – November 7, 2009

Many people watch birds in their backyards and enjoy these beautiful creatures. Add to your enjoyment by learning to identify them. In this class learn the basics of how to identify birds by family grouping and by individual species. The principles of identification learned will apply to all birds not just those in our backyards. This class consists of two informal classroom meetings and two field trips.

*Details and Registration Form at
www.houstonaudubon.org*

Georgia, and South Carolina on the Atlantic coast. Preferred habitat seems to be swamps, river bottomlands, and pine fringes along flood plains. A.C. Bent reports that nests are located near the tops of tall pines, cottonwoods, sycamores, cypresses, and a few others. Estimates range from 800 to 1,200 breeding pairs in North America with about 65% of these breeding in Florida. So this species is not common in our area.

July through early October is a good time to observe this species during its fall migration southward. Areas around the Trinity River, the Wallisville Lake Project, and Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge are all good places to look for this bird. I promise you, if you see one, you will not forget the sight and experience!!

*Find this profile in the Bird Gallery of our website:
www.houstonaudubon.org*

HANPA

The Houston Audubon Nature Photography Association (HANPA) is an informal photo club open to all nature photographers, whether novice or pro. Meetings are held September – May on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Edith L. Moore Sanctuary library. Cost is \$5.00 at the door.

Upcoming Meetings:

Focus on Composition with Laszlo Perlaky
on September 16

Photographing Bird Behavior with Mark Bartosik
on October 21

*HANPA website:
<http://groups.google.com/group/HANPA>*

In Memoriam Ellen R. Red

On July 16 Houston Audubon lost one of our HAS Heroes. Ellen Red served Houston Audubon over the years as a volunteer, board member, and trusted advisor. She was also an accomplished writer and author. In the 1990s she prepared a presentation about John James Audubon's 19th century visit to Texas which was enthusiastically received over the years by many organizations. Ellen was an avid birder, served as President of the Outdoor Nature Club and annually participated in several Christmas Bird Counts. The consummate mentor to a younger generation of birders and environmentalists, Ellen will be greatly missed by all her friends at Houston Audubon.

Houston Audubon Receives Grants to Help Our Restoration Efforts on the Bolivar Peninsula

The work of restoring habitat on sanctuaries affected by Hurricane Ike is a long-term challenge that Houston Audubon is committed to pursue. We are very grateful for the grants provided by the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, the Madeline & William Smith Foundation, and the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund to assist our efforts.

In July, Ducks Unlimited provided us with generous and expedited assistance through funds made available from Houston Endowment. We were then able to hire The Hooker Company to remove a large amount of building debris which had been deposited in Horseshoe Marsh.

We'd like to extend special thanks to The Hooker Company and owner Gary Hooker, who despite being given an extremely tight and limited time to do the work, did their utmost to respect habitat and wildlife concerns.



The Hooker Company placed orange warning markers around a Killdeer which was nesting on a right-of-way.

Thanks to Houston Audubon's Generous Donors!

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*Donations received and processed by July 16, 2009

Soaring to New Heights, One Wing Flap at a Time

by Mary Anne Weber, Education Director

The past year brought great challenges and changes to the Houston Audubon Education Department. We are still making Hurricane Ike repairs and restoration while looking to the future with high hopes and anticipation.

Despite the storm, we launched our Family Nature Explore Club with great success. Families from near and far gathered once a month to learn together and recreate together. It was so wonderful to watch grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, all together, all experiencing the natural world, all enjoying the great outdoors that Texas offers us every day. September 19 marks the start of the Family Nature Explore Club gatherings for this year. Don't miss out! Call us at the Sims Bayou Urban Nature Center to register and get more information.

The storm also brought changes to the grounds of the nature center. We lost many trees, but we are fortunate to have so many micro-habitats at the center that school groups, summer campers, and visiting families still find lots to discover. The area-wide power outages closed many schools and forced us to cancel some programs and

reschedule others. This pushed our calendar to the overflowing point. This year we are again strongly urging all educators, community group leaders, girl scout troop leaders, home school families, etc., to call us soon, even if you are scheduling into the fall of 2010. We have many programs already on the calendar. Don't miss this opportunity!

Come and meet our amazing education team at the following events: Camp Allen in Navasota (the weekend of September 5-6), Swift Night Out in Bellaire (September 1, 11), and Museum of East Texas in Lufkin (October 24). We have traveled many thousands of miles over the past year, and we are excited about spreading our wings and our bird conservation message to new schools, new groups, and new families in the future. On December 5 we will celebrate our 5th annual "Holiday at the Cabin". Mark your calendars! Scooter will have his tree up, and the line will be long for pictures. We will have a movie on the big screen outside again and lots of treats and great "natural" crafts for the kids. You don't want to miss this special event!

Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary Fall Family Programs

offered by the Audubon Docent Guild

Now that the summer camp season has come to a close, Houston Audubon's Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary (ELMS) is once again offering our environmental education programs for children and families. The 18-acre preserve provides a special place to experience nature in our city, and we hope you'll join us for outdoor family fun this fall.

Preschool Story Hour: Titmouse Club

Titmouse Club is our preschool program for children ages 2½ to 5 years. Through stories, crafts, hands-on activities, and nature walks your children will be inspired with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the natural world around them. Resuming on September 15, Titmouse Club meets on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings through mid-May, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Moore Log Cabin: Saturday Open Houses

Built in 1932, the Moore Log Cabin is a State Historic Landmark and home to Houston Audubon's ELMS education programs. At our Open Houses, families can explore the cabin and learn about the fascinating history and ecology of ELMS. Join us for our first Open House of the fall on Saturday, September 26, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Owl Prowls

Owl Prowls begin with a lively program on these fascinating nighttime hunters, including a chance to meet the Houston Audubon rehabilitated owls

at the Moore Log Cabin. Then we take owl recordings out onto the ELMS wooded trails in hopes of attracting our resident owls who are busy setting up their nesting territories. Owl Prowls are scheduled on November 20, December 18, January 29, and February 26.

Afterschool Nature Explorers Club

Nature Explorers Club is designed for school-age children who are interested in investigating the natural world. Each month, we'll explore a different ecology topic, focusing on our own native plants and animals. We'll make a craft to take home, go on a nature hike, dip-net in the ponds, and get to know the plants and animals of the Bayou City! Nature Explorers Club begins on Thursday, September 17.

Halloween Night Hikes

Get ready for a night of adventure as we learn about life after dark in the ELMS woods! Wear your costume and stop by the cabin for candy, crafts, guided hikes, and nighttime nature activities! This year's Halloween Hikes program will take place on Friday, October 30, 2009.

Guided Tours

We offer guided natural history tours of ELMS for all interested groups. Tour programs include: a guided walk in the woods, lessons on native flora and fauna, pond dip-netting, a tour of the cabin, and an opportunity to meet



Scooter Wants You!

Scooter has many fans. Folks even blog about Scooter. He has his own blog. Scooter along with all the education animals need your help. Please visit our website for the new adoption forms. Please consider "adopting" one of our hard-working education animals. Your name will be proudly displayed on their enclosure during the length of your adoption. These amazing animals bring learning and joy to all. Please consider helping to fund their care!

www.houstonaudubon.org



Join Us for Swift Awareness Events!

Dayton: Thursday, August 27
Whole Foods: Tuesday, September 1
St. Paul's: Friday, September 11

Swift Night Out at Whole Foods Market is co-sponsored by the Nature Discovery Center and Whole Foods Market.

Visit the Swifts Over Houston section of our website for details on all events.

our education animals.

Children's Birthday Parties

Available for children ages 4-10, docent-led birthday programs feature private use of the log cabin for your child's party, a guided hike in the woods, pond dip-netting, nature games, and crafts.

Details at www.houstonaudubon.org
or contact Docent Guild Coordinator
Bethany Foshée at 713-464-4900,
docent@houstonaudubon.org.

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Mission Statement

Houston Audubon Society promotes the conservation and appreciation of birds and wildlife habitat.

The Naturalist

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September/October 2009

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Bulletin Board

August

27 Swift Night Out in Dayton (see website for details)

September

Weekly Pershing/Whole Foods Market Swift Count on Tuesdays

Weekly Dayton Swift Count on Thursdays

Weekly Bayou Buddies on Friday, Sims Nature Center

Weekly Titmouse Club on Tuesday & Wednesday, ELMS

1 Swift Night Out at Whole Foods Market (see website for details)

9 Membership Meeting: *Columbia Bottomlands: Progress & Goals* (see p. 1)

10 Launch of Houston Audubon YP Group (see p. 4)

10 Hawk Migration Class with Glenn Olsen, ELMS

11 Swift Night Out at St. Paul's (see website for details)

12 Hawk Migration Field Trip with Glenn Olsen

12 Armand Bayou Nature Center Survey

15 W. 11th St. Park Bird Survey

16 HANPA, ELMS (see p. 5)

17 Afterschool Nature Explorers Club, ELMS (see p. 7)

19 Family Nature Explore Club, Sims Nature Center

19 Willow Waterhole Survey

23 Galveston County Group Meeting (see p. 4)

26 Bolivar Flats Beach Cleanup (see p. 4)

26 HAS Field Trip: Baytown Nature Center & Wetlands (see p. 5)

26 Galveston County Group Field Trip (see p. 4)

26 Log Cabin Open House, ELMS (see p. 7)

October

1 ***Birds & Bottomlands Benefit***, 6:30 p.m. (see p. 3)

10 High Island Work Day (see p. 4)

10 Armand Bayou Nature Center Survey

14 Membership Meeting: *Documentary Field Photography: Osprey Quest & Other Bird Behaviors* (see p. 1)

17 Family Nature Explore Club: Brazos Bend State Park

17 Willow Waterhole Survey

20 W. 11th St. Park Bird Survey

21 HANPA, ELMS (see p. 5)

21 Galveston County Group Meeting

22 Beginning Birding Class with Glenn Olsen, ELMS

24 Beginning Birding Field Trip

24 HAS Field Trip: Bolivar Peninsula

24 Galveston Group Field Trip

27 Port Bolivar Planting Day (see p. 4)

30 Halloween Night Hikes, ELMS (see p. 7)



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