



San Antonio Audubon Society

AUDUBON NEWS

A Conservation and Birding Club since 1954

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WOOD STORKS by Mike Scully

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Most years my wife and I head to the Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico for the 4th of July, but in this record drought year the forests there were closed to public access. So this year, seeking water ourselves, we headed to the Atchafalaya Swamp of Louisiana. Upon our arrival at our destination just south of St. Martinville, a flock of no less than seven Swallow-tailed Kites swooped low over the road; high above these soared a great flock of perhaps 100 Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*). My initial assumption was that the storks were local breeders, just as the kites likely were. The fact that those storks could not have bred in Louisiana and were almost certainly recent arrivals from the Tropics and Sub-Tropics reflects the specialized habitat requirements of this species.

north locally to Mexico. In North America, the species breeds locally in Florida and in scattered colonies in Georgia and South Carolina. Wood Storks breed colonially in trees upon large platform nests of twigs and sticks. Unlike the monogamous cranes, pair bonds in wood storks endure only for a season. Males arrive at the breeding locales first and defend likely locations in the canopies of large trees. Both sexes help construct the bulky nest and incubate a clutch that may consist of as many as five eggs.



Wood Stork, Brazos Bend State Park
by Nancy Norman

Incubation begins with the first egg. Hatching is asynchronous, which fosters the grim sort of economy common to many bird species; in years of abundance more of the young will survive whereas the smallest and youngest often perish. In part, Wood Stork breeding locales are limited by predation; their eggs and young are vulnerable to marauding raccoons and must be located in areas protected by water. However, such a vulnerability to predation is shared by many other species of water birds that breed across much of the U.S. The main factors limiting the breeding range of Wood Storks in North America are their particular feeding and habitat requirements.

There exists a confusing array of large, long-legged water birds. The familiar herons locate their prey by sight, spearing it using their sharp bills driven by powerfully S-curved necks. Cranes, known for their long term pair-bonds and prolonged fostering of their young, are omnivorous; probing with their sharp, sensitive bills or finding food by sight both on water and dry land. Storks, however, are closely allied to the smaller ibises and spoonbills, and like these feed primarily upon fish and smaller aquatic prey which they capture by sense of touch, most often in muddy water.

Wood Storks capture prey by sweeping the partially open bill through muddy water, snapping down on prey upon contact with the bill. They are large birds, and studies have shown that a breeding pair must capture more than 400 pounds of fish during the two-month interval the young remain in or around the area of the nest. The only circumstance that affords prey densities sufficient for breeding occur when large wetland areas are in the process of drying out, trapping and concentrating large numbers of fish in shallow, muddy pools.

The breeding range of the Wood Stork encompasses much of South America and parts of Central America

Consequently, Wood Storks can breed only in areas where suitable annual rainfall patterns occur, with the further constraint that even while

(Continued on p. 5)

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Please call the trip leaders if you have questions. Last-minute changes to field trips will be posted at saaudubon.org, sent by email through SATX Birds, and announced on the recorded message at 308-6788.

Thursday, September 8, 7:30 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet leader Sandi Wheeler (632-2812) in the parking lot of the park. From SA, take IH-10 E to the FM 1518 exit and go north toward Schertz. Look for a brown sign at Schaefer Road. Turn right and go 3 miles. Bring snacks and water.

Saturday, September 10, 8:00 AM

SAAS Beginners' Bird Walk

Meet leader Georgina Schwartz (342-2073) at the Judson Nature Trails. From Broadway at the 5900 block, turn west on Ogden Street to the stop sign at Greely St. and the sign to the Nature Trails. Turn left, go one block and turn right on Viesca to the parking lot on the left before the swimming pool.

Saturday/Sunday, September 10-11

Upper Texas Coast

Local leader David Sarkozi will take us on a tour of the Upper Texas Coast hotspots. Please contact Sandi Wheeler (Wheels5683@satx.rr.com or 210-632-2812) to reserve your place. The trip will be limited to 15. Cost is \$20.00 per person. This fee is in addition to your food, lodging, and transportation.

Tuesday, September 20, 8:00 AM

Tobin Park

Meet leaders Karen and Jerry Moulder (824-2547) in the parking lot of Tobin Park on Salado Creek, 100 Ira Lee. From Austin Highway heading northeast of Alamo Heights, exit to the right just before the bridge over Salado Creek. The bridge is about 1/4 mile past the Eisenhower Road traffic light. Before the low water crossing, turn left and go under Austin Highway. Tobin Park is on your right.

Thursday, September 22, 8:00 AM and later

Hazel Bazemore County Park Hawk Watch, Corpus Christi

Meet leader Georgina Schwartz (342-2073) any time after 8 AM at the hawk watch. The park is located in the NW corner of Corpus Christi in the community of Calallen. From I-37 S take Exit 14, which is Highway 77 south to Kingsville. Less than one-half mile south of

Highway 77 is FM 624 (Up River Road). Turn west (right) on 624 for 0.7 mile to a traffic light. The entrance is on the right. Follow the road to the entrance, then bear left and follow the signs to the hawk watch. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen, insect repellent, and a chair. The hawk watch runs from the middle of August until November.

Sunday, September 25, 8:00 AM

Avenue A

Meet leader Tim Katafias (557-9915) at the parking lot on Red Oak in Brackenridge Park. Turn north on Red Oak from Mulberry in the park.

Tuesday, October 4, 8:00 AM

Warbler Woods

Meet Sandi Wheeler (632-2812) at Don and Susan Schaezler's (602-8621) sanctuary near Cibolo. Take IH-35 N toward Austin. Take Exit 76, 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. Walk the property or sit by the pond. If you like, bring lunch.

Saturday, October 8, 8:00 AM

SAAS Beginners' Bird Walk

(See info for Sept. 10 walk)

Sunday, October 9, 7:30 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

(See info for Sept. 8 walk)

Thursday, October 27, 8:00 AM

Medina River Natural Area

Meet leader Helen Rejzek (679-7437) in the parking lot of the Natural Area. From Loop 410 South, drive 4.2 miles south on SH 16; the park entrance is on the east side (left) just before the Medina River bridge. Bring snacks and water; lunch at a local restaurant.

Sunday, October 30, 8:00 AM

Calaveras Lake

Meet leader Bill Zwartjes (495-5123) in the large parking lot past the entrance to the lake. Take IH-37 South past the Loop 410 intersection. Take the Highway 181 Exit to Floresville (exits right but loops over). Proceed to Loop 1604. Take 1604 north to Stuart Road. Turn left on Stuart, go a block and turn left into the park. Bring water and snacks; lunch at a local restaurant.

MAKE PLANS NOW FOR SAAS ANNUAL DINNER ON NOV. 3

Join us Thursday, Nov. 3 at 6:30 PM at the La Fonda Oak Hills Mexican Restaurant, 350 Northaven, San Antonio. The speaker will be Moez Ali from Nairobi, Kenya and Tucson, AZ, who will speak about the birds and other wildlife of Kenya and their conservation. Moez is passionate about both!

Tickets are \$22 (includes one soft drink, iced tea or coffee), available for purchase at SAAS meetings and by mail. Cash bar for alcoholic drinks. Mail checks by Friday, Oct. 28th to: San Antonio Audubon Society, 5150 Broadway #257, SAT 78209. Questions, contact Patsy Inglet, SAAS Treasurer, at tpinglet@satx.rr.com or (210) 698-8445. Seating is limited to 80 people; please reserve your place early by purchasing your ticket to avoid disappointment.

Moez will present a slideshow highlighting the diverse birds and wildlife regularly encountered on safari in Kenya's world-famous national parks such as the Maasai Mara, Samburu Game Reserve, Lake Nakuru National Park and Great African Rift Valley.

Moez grew up in Nairobi and was hooked on birds and wildlife since the toddler years while on safaris in



Crowned Cranes

Kenya's world-famous national parks with his naturalist and photographer dad. Most of his early years were spent exploring the African wild—climbing trees with monkeys, studying bird nests, caressing reptiles and learning about all the wildlife he came across while also leading field trips for the East Africa Natural History Society.

He competed in high school tennis in South Africa and traveled all over Africa in search of akalats, boubous, crombecs, drongos and eremomelas before coming to the U.S. in 1999 for college tennis and birding. He completed his biology studies in AL and TN while leading field trips all over the southeastern U.S. He also worked on several bird research projects.

In 2003, Moez moved to Tucson and now birds non-stop. He leads field trips for the Tucson Audubon Society and guides bird tours to Kenya and the Neotropics. He also coordinates research on the birds of southeastern Arizona's Sky Island Mountains and riparian areas for the University of Arizona and the National Park Service.

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON FIELD TRIP RECAPS



Thank you to all who led SAAS field trips and to all who participated. View in-depth field trip reports at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SATXbirds/> and search for them using the message numbers below.

Crescent Bend Nature Park, 6/12

Led by Bill Zwartjes. Reported by Georgina Schwartz. Message #17877. Species: 42. Highlights: Green Kingfisher; Ash-throated, Great Crested, Brown-crested and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers; Blue Grosbeak

Rancho Diana, 6/18

Hosted by Jayne Neal. Reported by Georgina Schwartz. Message #17896. Species: 27. Highlights: Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler

Palmetto State Park, 6/25

Led by Bill Zwartjes. Message #17941. Species: 36. Highlights: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Northern Parula

Crescent Bend Nature Park, 7/5

Led by Sandi Wheeler. Message #17948. Species: 40. Highlights: Eastern Bluebird, Orchard Oriole

Judson Nature Trails, 7/9

Led by Georgina Schwartz. Message #17965. Species: 30. Highlights: Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Swainson's Hawk, Purple Martin

Crescent Bend Nature Park, 8/7

Led by Sandi Wheeler. Message #18038. Species: 35. Highlights: Barred Owl, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Summer Tanager, Northern Parula, Black-and-white Warbler, Least Flycatcher

Judson Nature Trails, 8/13

Led by Georgina Schwartz. Message #18052. Species: 27. Highlights: Great Horned Owl, Painted Bunting

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON MONTHLY MEETINGS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 • 7:00 PM
LION'S FIELD • 2809 BROADWAY

Troy Murphy, PhD: The Evolution of Ornamentation in Female Birds

Dr. Troy Murphy is an assistant professor of Behavioral Ecology and Ornithology at Trinity University. Troy will discuss his research program, which focuses on the evolution of animal communication in birds, with specific focus on understanding how selection can favor ornamental traits in females. He will also summarize fascinating research done by his colleagues on the evolution of birds from their dinosaur ancestors.

Mitchell Lake Fall Wildlife Festival and Plant Sale

Saturday • Oct. 22 • 9 AM - 4 PM

Join us for this fun FREE day of nature activities and exhibits for the whole family! Highlights include a raptor show, hayrides, kids' crafts and more. SAAS is staffing an education outreach booth. Contact Patsy Inglet (tpinglet@satx.rr.com or 210-698-8445) if you would like to help.

Welcome New SAAS Members!

Joan Bishop, 3005 Hiawatha, Spring Branch, TX 78070-3942, Phone: 830-885-6885

Betty Dunn, 118 Pleasant Valley Dr., Boerne, TX 78006-5646, Phone: 830-336-2855

Cassie Hagar, 8123 N. New Braunfels Ave., Apt N, San Antonio, TX 78209-2153

Mike and Lisa Hufstetler, 26639 Donna Elaine, San Antonio, TX 78261-2102

Laird & Carol Ingham, 216 Voigt Dr., Hollywood Park, TX 78232-1128

Edith McAlanis, 22027 Advantage Run, San Antonio, TX 78258-7837, Phone: 210-481-3750

WHICH ORIOLE IS IT?

Don't miss this very interesting article on the differential diagnosis of orioles.

www.utopianature.com/ORIOLES.html

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6 • 7:00 PM**
LION'S FIELD • 2809 BROADWAY

Ron Huffman, PhD: Bird Watching in India

Dr. Ron Huffman worked as a Research Pharmacologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio for 31 years. In 1999 he told his boss that work was interfering with his bird watching and he was going to retire. Since then he has been traveling the world to see birds, with four trips to different parts of India. His talk will focus on his recent trip to western India. Ron has been a member of SAAS since 1981.

**** (ARRIVE EARLY: SAAS USED BOOK SALE!)**

DONATE GOODS TO WRR IN BOERNE

Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation's resale shop in Boerne, the Squirrel's Nest, helps WRR carry out their mission of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife. High quality **donations** are always needed, such as furniture, rugs, decorative items, artwork, jewelry, household items, and clothing in clean, good condition. They accept almost anything except possibly used out-of-date computer equipment.

Location: 255 S. Main Street in downtown Boerne
Hours: 10 AM - 5 PM Tuesday - Saturday

OTHER BIRDING EVENTS

Cibolo Nature Center

Visit www.cibolo.org for info or call 830-249-4616. Located at 140 City Park Road, Boerne, TX 78006

Boerne Birders: Saturday, Sept. 10, 8 - 10 AM at CNC, led by Jane Henry. Saturday, Oct. 15, 8 - 10 AM at Joshua Springs County Park, led by Sue Wiedenfield.

San Antonio Botanical Garden

Visit www.sabot.org or call 210-207-3250. Located at 555 Funston, SATX 78209

Beginners' Bird Walk: Saturday, Sept. 17; Saturday, Oct. 15. 9 AM. Free to SABG members, \$7 non-members.

Rockport Hummingbird Festival

Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 15-18. Calendar of events: www.rockporthummingbird.com

Wood Storks *(Continued from p. 1)*

water levels are necessarily falling, the breeding colony itself must remain inundated and inaccessible to predators. Foraging adults can travel more than 30 miles from the colony in search of food, but even in the most suitable locales too much or too little rain in any given year will result in a general loss of nestlings to starvation.

Young Wood Storks may remain in or around the nest for up to two months, returning periodically for a further three weeks to be fed by their parents. Away from the colony, the young must fend for themselves, eventually joining wandering post-breeding flocks. Florida birds generally move up the Atlantic Coastal Plain after breeding, while many Mexican and Central American birds move north to our Gulf Coast. It is at this season storks are most often reported here, descending in numbers upon muddy pools drying out in the summer heat.

To contact Mike, email Mike.Scully@nisd.net

Put YOUR Stamp of Approval on Bird Habitat Conservation

YOUR SAAS Board of Directors is making it easier for you as an SAAS member to support bird habitat conservation. How? By making it very convenient for each member to buy



and display the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp—traditionally called the “Duck Stamp.”

We will have the 2011-2012 stamp available for purchase at each general meeting from September through February—saving you a trip to the Post Office or retail outlets that sell the stamps. We will also have a plastic display holder for the stamp for sale so you can easily show your support and encourage others to do so. The cost is \$16 for the \$15 stamp (to cover handling expenses and provide SAAS with a small return); the stamp with the display holder will be only \$17.

Why buy one? The sale of Duck Stamps has generated a huge portion of the funds used to acquire critical Refuge System habitats in the lower 48 states

since 1934. All of us outdoor recreationists who enjoy wildlife and natural landscapes can thank those who have already purchased stamps over the decades, for they have contributed over \$700 million and protected 5.3 million acres of habitat for wildlife and future generations.

Out of every dollar, 98 cents (\$14.70 of \$15.00) goes to acquisition and related cost evaluation of land for the Refuge System. A stamp is a pass for free entry for an entire year for a vehicle full of people at all Federal Wildlife Refuges that charge for admission—a real bargain if ever there was one and a good reason to carry the stamp with you at all times.

The stamp is probably the best-kept secret in all of bird conservation. Displaying the stamp on our binoculars or field bag is a great way to initiate conservation conversations—a great opportunity for us to spread the good word about this small but significant way each person can help with conservation.

SA Wins Birdiest City/ Birdiest County Contest

by Mike Creese

SAAS participated in the Birdiest City/Birdiest County event on April 29 and 30 and May 1, counting species in San Antonio and Bexar County. We won in our categories: Large City, Inland, Central, and Large County, Inland Central with 200 species in the city and 200 in the county.

Revisions Approved for SAAS Constitution and By-Laws

The members present at the regular August meeting of the San Antonio Audubon Society voted without opposition to approve a revised constitution and associated by-laws recommended by the SAAS Board of Directors. The newly approved constitution can be found on the SAAS web site at www.saaudubon.org. This new constitution was the result of a process that began in early February when a committee was formed to recommend changes. Committee members Debra Engler, Mariann Golden, Richard Grant, Alan Kuentz and Sandi Wheeler analyzed multiple proposals before submitting a consensus document to the SAAS Board in March. The Board approved the revised version after discussion at three board meetings. The efforts of all those who played a part in this much needed update are appreciated.

JUDSON NATURE TRAILS REPORT

by Shirley Bartels

While my husband, Dick, and I were doing a few jobs at the Judson Nature Trails recently, we found out



Knox Miller and Robert Browning

that Knox Miller and Robert Browning, both Alamo Heights citizens, have nearly finished cutting up all the trees and large logs that have been causing jams in the creek. They had help from Charles Miller (no relation to Knox).

They have already witnessed that all their work behind the dam has paid off and have now finished the length of the creek up to the big trash pile that has us all baffled as to what to do about it.

A few weeks ago there was enough rain north of town to wash all the cuttings to the dam. The City of San Antonio sent trucks to pick up all of it and they took away ten truckloads—tons of brush and trees they had cut. They are working on the last site that needs to be dug out and maybe after the next rain we can begin to have better drainage the full length of the creek. This was the only time there has been running water in the creek this summer.

We are amazed at all the work these fellows had done and thought that we should let people know.

Two members of the Alamo Heights Public Works crew, Alfred Diaz and Richard Garza, installed the new doggie waste station that was our first purchase with the funds from the Brown Foundation grant.

Alamo Heights will furnish bags and empty it in a timely manner. We are really grateful for the help of these citizens and the good relationship we have with Alamo Heights. Thanks so much to everyone.



Alfred Diaz and Richard Garza of Alamo Heights Public Works

OTHER EVENTS

SA NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

To make reservations for the following, call 372-9124 or email peggy.spring@sanantonio.gov.

Nature Walk—Crownridge Canyon

Saturday, Sept. 3, 10 AM – 12:00 Noon. Ron Tullius will identify and talk about trees along the trail and read seven poems at appropriate sites. Bring a filled water bottle for each walker. Hike limit 15 people. Meet near the restrooms. Suggested donation: \$2/person or \$6/family. 7222 Luskey.

Tuna, Nopales and More—Eisenhower Park

Saturday, Sept. 10, 10 AM – 12:00 Noon. Join Patty Leslie Pasztor in a fun exploration of natural fibers, natural foods and other uses of local plants. Suggested donation: \$3/person or \$5/family. Large, gated pavilion, 19399 NW Military Hwy.

Nature Walk—Friedrich Park

Saturday, Oct. 1. 10 AM – 12:00 Noon. We'll look for signs of wildlife as we enjoy all that is going on in nature this fall. It may still be warm enough that each person needs a full water bottle! Suggested donation: \$2/person or \$6/family. Meet at the restrooms. 21395 Miisa.

Welcome to My Web—Eisenhower Park

Saturday, Oct. 8. 7 PM – 8:30 PM. Enjoy this lively investigation of spiders with a brief presentation by Dr. Cary Guffey and a flashlight walk to look for them and their webs along the trail. \$3/person or \$5/family. 19399 NW Military Hwy.

GOVERNMENT CANYON HIKES

Explore Government Canyon with a group. Find Sept. and Oct. hikes at: www.friendsofgc.org

Mitchell Lake

Monthly Birding Tours

No reservation necessary

Every 2nd Sunday: 8:00 AM Sept. 11; Oct. 9
 Every 2nd Tuesday: 8:00 AM Sept. 13; Oct. 11
 Every 3rd Sunday: 8:00 AM Sept. 18; Oct. 16
 Bird count/survey: Every 4th Saturday: 8:00 AM (Sept. 24, Oct. 22)

\$5 for non-members; \$3 for members
 For more information: mlac@audubon.org (210) 628-1639 or www.mitchelllakeaudubon.org

SAAS-Y NOTES

ORDERING SAAS NAME TAGS IS EASY

Do you have an official SAAS name tag to wear for field trips, education outreach events, and general meetings? To buy one, just sign up at a general meeting OR send SAAS a check for \$7 for each name tag to San Antonio Audubon Society, ATTN: NAME TAG, 5150 Broadway #257, San Antonio, TX 78209-5710. Please PRINT the name you would like on each name tag CLEARLY so the manufacturer can reproduce the name correctly. As soon as we get orders for 10 name tags, we will re-order.



REMEMBRANCES

SAAS life member Julia Ann Diehl died in Jacksonville, Florida on June 1. She was 89 years old.

Member Anne Hedgpeth's grandson, Sgt. Glenn Sewell of Live Oak, age 23, was killed in a roadside bomb blast in Iraq on June 13.

Don Tobin, husband of SAAS life member Peggy Tobin, passed away on June 28 at the age of 95.
--Submitted by Georgina Schwartz

SAAS Board of Directors Meetings

Tuesday • September 27 • 6:30 PM
Tuesday • October 25 • 6:30 PM

Meet at Lion's Field, 2809 Broadway. Info: Dahn Windhorn, naturenut7@hotmail.com or 382-5968.

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON NEWS

Editor: Lora Reynolds
Contributing Editor and Mailing: Georgina Schwartz
Mailing Labels: Tom Inglet

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San Antonio Audubon Society

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**SAAS NEEDS YOU
TO VOLUNTEER!**
info@saaudubon.org

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Newsletter, Lora Reynolds ----- editor@saaudubon.org
Website, Bill Collins ----- web@saaudubon.org

SAAS Membership

For those of you still receiving your SAAS newsletter by U.S. Postal Service, the first line of your mailing label includes your membership type and the date your current membership expires. This is the only "notice" you will receive; if your membership expires, we must stop sending you the newsletter. Therefore, please pay attention to the expiry data on the label and renew when appropriate. We want you to continue participating in and supporting SAAS efforts.

If you receive the SAAS newsletter by email, you will receive a membership renewal notice by email. We hope you enjoy receiving the newsletter in color; thank you for helping contain costs.

Although we no longer mail out a printed membership roster to everyone, a PDF copy is available by email from the membership secretary at members@saaudubon.org

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC
5150 BROADWAY #257
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78209-5710

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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We need and appreciate your financial support. Please indicate additional donations below.

Donation: Special Projects Fund \$ _____

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Please make checks payable to: *San Antonio Audubon Society*. Send dues and address changes to:

ATTN MEMBERSHIP

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON SOCIETY

5150 BROADWAY #257

SAN ANTONIO TX 78209-5710

or Online at: <www.saaudubon.org/membership.html>

or E-mail <members@saadubon.org>

Please report bird sightings either online utilizing

the Bird Reporting form at saadubon.org or by calling 210-308-6788.

SAAS MONTHLY MEETINGS (See p. 4)

September 1: Dr. Troy Murphy • October 6: Dr. Ron Huffman

7:00 PM • LION'S FIELD • 2809 BROADWAY