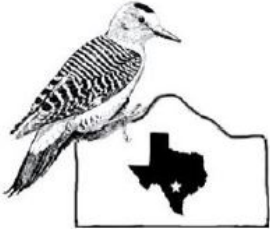


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**San Antonio Audubon Society**  
***AUDUBON NEWS***  
A Conservation and Birding Club since 1954

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Volume 66, Number 5 July/August 2020

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**Inca Doves**

**by Mike Scully ([mike.scully@nisd.net](mailto:mike.scully@nisd.net))**

Technically, the “dog days” of summer begin during the third week of

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however, we should probably be talking about the "sun days" of summer, our summer heat is in place by June as the constellation Taurus rises in the predawn sky and spring migration gives way to the oppressive sun of our long hot summer. Most of our local breeding birds are still singing, of course, but by that time they are well into their annual reproductive cycle. Formerly, in my own neighborhood, one of the characteristic sounds of summer was the repetitive "No Hope!" call of the Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*); the story being that the bird is commenting upon the odds of cooler weather.



Six species of pigeons and doves breed in our area. The Inca Dove and the slightly smaller Common Ground-Dove are the smallest of these, weighing in at less than half the mass of a Mourning Dove. These songbird-sized doves are also our only two species where the males defend songbird-style territories

throughout the breeding season; their persistent calls serve the same function as singing among territorial songbirds. Read the rest of the article [here](#). (*Inca Dove photo by Lora Render.*)

*Online Presentation | Thursday, July 2 @ 7:00 PM*

## [Fireflies of Texas: Glowing, Glowing, Gone](#)

**Presenter: Ben Pfeiffer, Firefly Specialist**

Join us online for this highly educational and fun talk on the types of



fireflies (Lampyridae) in Texas. Ben will be presenting his research on Texas firefly taxa with an emphasis on Central & South Texas fireflies that occur in nearby river basins and riparian areas. Ben will discuss why fireflies flash and

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as how to identify Texas firefly species and discuss specific threats to why fireflies are disappearing in many areas of Texas. He will also talk about how to create a good habitat for fireflies, plants that they love, and gardening tips for encouraging them to visit your backyard.



### **About Ben Pfeiffer**

Ben is founder of Firefly Conservation & Research at [Firefly.org](https://www.firefly.org), a firefly conservation and educational non-profit. He got his start with fireflies in 2009 after hearing about firefly disappearance in parts of the US. The website was created to



educate why fireflies are under threat and on how to help keep fireflies from disappearing. Since then, Firefly.org has

grown in popularity and is currently the Internet's most visited website about fireflies. Ben studied Biology at Texas State University and is a certified Master Naturalist. He is a lifelong 6<sup>th</sup> generation Texan and has spent most of his life working to understand Texas ecology and its unique diversity.

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## **Log-in Information to Watch Ben's Live Presentation**

Topic: San Antonio Audubon Society

Time: Thursday, July 2, 2020 | 7:00 to 7:40 PM Central Time

Join Zoom Meeting [Here](#)

Meeting ID: 791 7280 7223

Password: 2vVNEu

Please mute your microphones and turn off your cameras during the presentation.

## A San Antonio Natural Treasure:

### Phil Hardberger Park

### Presenter: Patsy Kuentz



One of the newest parks in the San Antonio park system, Phil Hardberger Park stands out as a 311-acre natural treasure in the city's rapidly developing North Central area. For decades, the property was part of a much larger Voelcker dairy operation and then cattle ranch. During that period, it was substantially over-grazed and lost many of its original wildlife habitat attributes. The park opened in May of 2010, with various surveys and restoration projects beginning shortly after the City purchased property parcels in 2006 and 2007. As a result, every year more bird species are being added to the Park's bird list. A land bridge over Wurzbach Parkway connecting the two sides of the park is currently under construction with an anticipated October completion.

#### **About Patsy Kuentz**

A San Antonio native, Patsy earned her Bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Hawaii-Manoa Campus and then her M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. Patsy spent much of her career as a regional medical clinic manager in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN and then owned and operated a personal historian business for about twelve years. Returning to San Antonio in 2009 in retirement, Patsy and her husband, Alan, became Texas Master Naturalists in 2010 and enjoy volunteering at Hardberger Park, as well as other natural areas in Bexar County. Patsy represents San Antonio Audubon

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Alan was instrumental in developing the new Wildscape Demonstration Garden at Hardberger Park. (Alan was instrumental in developing the bird water feature at Hardberger Park several years ago.) Together, they lead bird walks in several San Antonio locations, including Hardberger Park, each year. They have also participated in the monthly bird survey led by Georgina Schwartz at Hardberger Park for over 10 years.

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## **Log-in Information to Watch Patsy's Live Presentation**

Topic: San Antonio Audubon Society

Time: Thursday, August 6, 2020 | 7:00 to 8:00 PM Central Time

San Antonio Audubon Society will send an eBlast to members with log-in instructions closer to the date of the presentation.

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*Photo Credits: Red-shouldered Hawk and Eastern Phoebe by Patsy Kuentz*

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## **Welcome New SAAS Members!**

Lilia Keller

Wendy Ohlson

Sonia Rodriguez & Jon Haynes

Lynn Thompson

Jose Tomasino

Amy Turner

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The 2020-2021 Federal Duck Stamp featuring Black-bellied Whistling Ducks will be available for purchase on July 1, 2020, and will be



available until December 31, 2020, or as long as supplies last. Duck Stamps still cost just \$25 (the face value) each. This year, because we are not meeting in person, a small postage and handling charge of \$1 should be added *per*

*order* for as many stamps as you want to

purchase at one time. To purchase the stamps, send your order with the following information:

- Your Name
- Your Mailing Address
- Check made payable to S.A. Audubon Society for the total number of stamps in your order, plus \$1 postage and handling per order

Mail your information and check to:

Georgina Schwartz  
3006 Belvoir Drive  
San Antonio, TX 78230

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service produces the Stamp, which raises approximately \$40 million in sales each year. These crucial dollars are deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, and they go toward the acquisition or lease of habitat in the National Refuge System from willing sellers. Eighty-five years after the Stamp was established, sales of the Duck Stamp to hunters, bird watchers, outdoor enthusiasts, and collectors have raised more than \$1 billion. This amount has gone to conserve over six million acres of wetland and grassland habitat for birds and other wildlife, providing meaningful opportunities to enjoy our National Wildlife Refuge System.

Your Duck Stamp shows that you support Migratory Birds and their Habitats AND it will admit you to any National Wildlife Refuge that charges an entry fee. Get yours soon. We have a limited number.

## **Birding Podcasts Inform and Entertain**

Listen to a variety of voices speaking about birds and birding through podcasts, which are online radio-type programs that you can listen to on your desktop computer, tablet, phone, or laptop. *Bird Watcher's Digest* features three podcasts on their website, which you can access [here](#). Nate Swick, author of "A Beginner's Guide to Birding" and "The ABA Field Guide to Birds of the Carolinas," hosts the American Birding Association's weekly [podcast](#), with new episodes released each Thursday. "For the Birds" is author Laura Erickson's brief, almost daily [podcast](#) from Duluth, Minnesota. Veteran Boston broadcaster Ray Brown hosts "Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds" weekly live and interactive radio show about wild birds and the beauty of nature. Access his program [here](#).



## **Explore the Judson Nature Trails**

July and August are good months to enjoy the Judson Nature Trails (on Viesca next to the Alamo Heights swimming pool; click [here](#) for map), as it provides plentiful shade during the summer heat. Alamo Heights City Ordinance 12-1 states that dogs must be on a leash and no wheeled vehicles other than wheelchairs are allowed, so this is an ideal spot for leisurely walks and summer birding. If you do stop by the trails, observe the wildflower garden in front of the trail house, where you'll usually find Lesser Goldfinches and butterflies, and the feeding station in the back of the house attracts Black-crested Titmice, Carolina Chickadees and the occasional American Robin taking a plunge in the bird bath. Be sure to view the new poster of Judson Nature Trail birds hanging on the exterior wall of one of the buildings on the property. (Photo of



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## **Enhance Your Backyard Birdwatching in Summer**

The thrill of spring migration has passed, but your resident backyard



birds can keep you entertained as they bathe, feed their young, chase each other, and dive bomb squirrels. The City of Austin has some great information about how to attract birds to your yard and what to feed them. Read the article [here](#).

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## **Squirrel Wars: A Recent Episode**

Anyone who has ever installed a backyard bird feeder has quickly become aware that these structures not only lure birds, but that the feeder is a natural squirrel-magnet. Indeed, entire books have been written about "squirrel wars."

You might assume that a former NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory engineer could solve the problem, but as Mark Rober confirmed, this is not so easy.

After leaving NASA, Rober has spent his time creating YouTube videos that explore science and engineering concepts through experiments you probably never attempted in school. After taking up birdwatching as a way to deal with the coronavirus lockdown, he discovered what the rest of us have known for years about squirrels and feeders. He discovered that the "squirrel-proof" feeders that were available on the market were good, but the squirrels were just too smart even for those.

Instead of simply engineering a new and improved bird feeder that could effectively stop squirrels, Rober built an entire obstacle course



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Alas, Rober completely underestimated his opponents. After just a few days of feeder-watching, it was clear that even an ex-NASA engineer was no match for the squirrels. And the story is entertaining to watch.



Click [here](#) to watch the entire 21-minute and totally amusing explanation of his squirrel wars, a video that already has had about 22 million views.

*This article is from the June 2020 issue of [Birding Community E-bulletin](#), published by Paul J. Baicich and Wayne R. Petersen, P.O. Box 404, Oxon Hill, MD 20750.*

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## **[SAAS Officers, Directors & Committee Chairs](#)**

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- Georgina Schwartz, Secretary
- Debra Engler, Treasurer



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- Education/Outreach-----[info@saaudubon.org](mailto:info@saaudubon.org)
- Field Trips
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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 secretary at [saasforbirds@gmail.com](mailto:saasforbirds@gmail.com)

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