

San Antonio Audubon Society
September/October 2021 Newsletter

Carolina Wrens

By Mike Scully (mike.scully@nisd.net)



Carolina Wren Photo by Lora Reynolds

Among the most ubiquitous bird calls around San Antonio are the far-carrying songs of the Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). Even those who have little interest in birds will generally recognize these calls as familiar when listening to a recording; some may have come across a nest of this species in a garden shed or in equipment left outside on a porch or patio.

All but one of the 85 species of wrens within the family *Trogloditidae* occur in the Americas, collectively occupying every sort of habitat other than tundra from Alaska south to Tierra Del Fuego.

The greatest species diversity among wrens occurs in Central America. If one travels south through Mexico and beyond, one may encounter a number of similar chestnut-backed wrens, seemingly variants on a Carolina theme. At one time, 25 Central and South American wren species were grouped with the Carolina Wren in the genus *Thryothorus*. Further DNA studies have since revealed much; the Carolina Wren is now the only species remaining in the genus and it appears to be most closely related to our Bewick's and Marsh Wrens.

Seven subspecies of Carolina Wren collectively occupy a broad range extending from the Mexican states of Tamaulipas and Nueva Leon; north across the eastern two-thirds of Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas; and across Eastern North America from Southern Michigan, Southern Quebec and Massachusetts south to Florida. An additional two subspecies occupy a separate

range across the Yucatan south to Guatemala. As is true of most wrens, Carolina Wrens spend most of their time in dense brush close to the ground, successfully occupying a variety of suitable vegetation types dependent upon location such that the species remains common across most of its range. However, Carolina Wrens are primarily insectivorous at all seasons, and this fact combined with their sedentary, non-migratory habits contribute to the significant mortality among and even extirpation of local populations that have been observed during hard winters across the northern parts of its range.

Carolina Wrens spend most of their lives as a member of a mated pair and in some instances the males acquire a mate before they have acquired a territory. The degree of fidelity to the pair bond is remarkable. Pairs often forage in company and usually remain together until one of them dies. Unlike many songbirds, extra-pair copulation has not been observed. Males are slightly larger than females and carry the responsibility of establishing permanent territories. Only the males sing and they sing all year round, but with the greatest intensity at the onset of the breeding season. Females have a separate "churr" call that can be employed in territorial disputes and which is often given in a sort of duet when her mate is singing. Females that lose their mate may lose their territories to a mated pair before they can acquire a new mate. Songs and calls are learned in the first months of life and, given the sedentary nature of the species, numerous local dialects have arisen.

Both sexes help construct the snug, cup-shaped nest of available plant materials, often incorporating a dome-shaped roof with an opening towards one side. The nest is usually placed rather low to the ground amid dense vegetation or other confined space. Around human habitations, nests may be placed in such places as an old boot left on a shelf, in a flowerpot or even under the hood of an unused automobile.

Four eggs are typical and females alone incubate, sometimes fed by their mate on the nest, but both sexes help raise the young. Homeowners who may be inconvenienced by the placement of a Carolina Wren nest on their property need only wait a short while, as the young leave the nest around 13 days after hatching and a new nest is constructed in a different location for every brood. Fledged young may remain with the parents for up to four weeks before dispersing. Young birds do not overwinter on their parental territories and may acquire a mate of their own as early as their first fall. Despite the overall sedentary nature of the species, it may be dispersing young which account for sightings of individual Carolina Wrens as far afield as Wyoming and Nova Scotia.

SAAS September Monthly Meeting

Thursday, September 2 • 7:00 PM

Program: Dragonflies: Pond Patrol

Presenter: Sam Kieschnick, Urban Wildlife Biologist in Dallas/Fort Worth with Texas Parks and Wildlife



Sam Kieschnick

Beautiful, intricate, active predators throughout their lives, the best natural mosquito control, and numerous in Texas – dragonflies! Sam will lead us in an exploration of these amazing insects. Learn all about their biology, their importance in the ecosystem, and how they do what they do. We'll also talk about how to document these predators and learn how to fill in some of the data gaps of their distribution.

About Sam Kieschnick: Sam is graduate of Tarleton State University with a Master's Degree in genetics of pocket gophers. He has taught at Weatherford College as a professor of general biology, zoology, and botany. Sam has also worked at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas in the herbarium, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History as a science interpreter, the Fort Worth Nature Center as a naturalist, and the City of Mansfield in the Parks and Recreation Department as a nature educator.

Topic: SAAS Monthly Meeting

Time: September 2, 2021, 7:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Click [here](#) to Join the September 2 Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 879 0691 4417

Passcode: 839856

SAAS October Monthly Meeting

Thursday, October 7 • 7:00 PM

Program: Kirchoff Prairie Restoration in Wilson County

Presenter: Don Kirchoff



Don Kirchoff grew up on the family farm near Floresville that his parents purchased in 1954 when he was 10 years old. He and his siblings inherited the farm upon their parents' deaths. Having pursued non-farming careers, Don and his siblings decided to restore the property as much as practical to its original conditions as a tall grass Blackland Prairie. Ten years of restoration efforts have produced astonishing results, including the return of many bird species and other wildlife. The Kirchoff Family Farm, now a restored prairie, received the 2019 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Lone Star Land Steward Award. His presentation describes the process he and siblings experienced and shares some results. Learn more about Kirchoff Family Farm [here](#).

About Don Kirchoff: Don earned a BS in Mathematics from Texas Lutheran University and a Master of Science degree in Physics from University of North Texas. He worked toward a PhD in



Physics at the University of Illinois. Having pursued a business career after graduate school, Don had a lot to learn about restoring farmland to native prairie with the help of government agencies, experts, and private organizations. The Kirchoff Family's "Farm to Native Prairie" philosophy is a working example of how landowners can restore native prairies following many decades of row crop farming and cattle ranching.

Topic: SAAS Monthly Meeting

Time: October 7, 2021, 7:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Click [HERE](#) to Join the October 7 Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 815 8696 6345

Passcode: 035808

Welcome New SAAS Members

Caroline Batenburg
Keith Breen
James Britt Coleman
Carolyn Fagg
Alicia Logue
Joel Michalek
Elie and Susan Rosen
Austin Whaley and Somer Yoko

SAAS Field Trips

Friday, September 3 at 8:00 AM

Pearsall Park

Meet Christian Fernandez (210/415-0843) at the Trailhead located at 4838 Old Pearsall Road. We will be walking along a stretch of the Leon Creek Greenway. Bring water.

Saturday, September 11 at 8:00 AM

Beginners Bird Walk at the Judson Nature Trails

Meet leader Barbara Sykes (jntbirding@gmail.com) 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.

Sunday, September 19 at 8:00 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (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 Schafer 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. Participation requirements will be based on CDC guidelines at the time of the field trip.

Saturday, October 9 at 8:00 AM

Beginners Bird Walk at the Judson Nature Trails

Meet leader Barbara Sykes (jntbirding@gmail.com) 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.

Thursday, October 14 at 8:00 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (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 Schafer 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. Participation requirements will be based on CDC guidelines at the time of the field trip.

Friday, October 22 at 8:00 AM

Converse City Park

Meet Christian Fernandez at the baseball fields at the end of Mesquite Street in Converse City Park. Contact Christian (210/415-0843) for more info.

Issues in Birding

UN Report Affirms the Need for Urgent Action on Climate: The first of three reports finds that the climate is warming at alarming levels, with consequences for communities and for wildlife. Read [more](#).

A Decisive Victory for the Most Important Coastal Law You've Never Heard of: Audubon won a lawsuit to prevent sand mining on protected beaches and plans to expand this powerful policy. Read [more](#).

States Enact Balloon-release Ban to Benefit Birds, Other Wildlife: Four eastern states are stepping up in the fight to reduce balloon litter, which harms birds, turtles, and other wildlife. Read [more](#).

Conservation Groups Press Congress to Restore Migratory Bird Protections: Conservation groups are pushing for passage of a bill in Congress that would revive migratory bird protections dropped during the Trump administration. Read [more](#).

Volunteer to Help Protect Migratory Birds



LIGHTS OUT, TEXAS!

Be a Bird Hero!

Sign up for bird strike surveys
in downtown S.A.

Sept. 7 - Oct. 30
Tues/Thurs/Sat
6:00 to 8:00 AM

bexaraudubon.org

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Please volunteer for downtown surveys this fall to help look for migratory bird casualties due to building strikes. Volunteers are needed from 6:00 to 8:00 AM on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays between September 7 and October 30. Please click [here](#) for more information about signing up.

Save the Date: Nov 17 SAAS/BAS dinner

BIRDS AND ART: The Perfect Combination for an Audubon Fall Event



Artist [Christina Baal](#) will be the featured speaker at the **Audubon Annual Dinner** co-sponsored by San Antonio Audubon Society and Bexar Audubon Society at the San Antonio Zoo Beastro on

Wednesday, November 17, 2021. If you participated in the 2021 Great Texas Biding Classic, you have already seen Christina’s work—the funky-feathered female Belted Kingfisher (“The Fisher Queen”) on the official Texas Birding Classic T-Shirt.

Your \$25 ticket admits you to the Zoo at 5:00 PM for a Happy Hour Cash Bar reception with Christina and a viewing and sale of her artwork—originals, prints, cards, bookmarks, masks, clothing, and stickers—the perfect gifts for the bird lovers on your list.

At 6:00 PM you will enjoy a San Antonio Style Parrilla Dinner: Beef and Chicken or Grilled Vegetable Fajitas, Guacamole, Sour Cream, Pico de Gallo, Fresh Salsa, Warm Flour or Corn Tortillas, Spanish Style Yellow Rice, Charro Beans, Apple Pie, and Water or Iced Tea. After dinner, Christina will talk about her birding adventures and artwork education ventures. Each person who attends will receive a raffle ticket good for prizes at the end of the presentation, and everyone is invited to stay until 9:00 PM to continue shopping.

We will send an eBlast to let you know when online ticket sales begin.

Remembering Bill Lindemann (October 12, 1937 - July 19, 2021)



William (Bill) Lindemann, of Fredericksburg, passed away on July 19, 2021, from complications after heart surgery. Bill was a dear friend and mentor to many and a long-time leader in the native plant community and natural history world across the state. The breadth of his knowledge and expertise included the fields of native plants, birds, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies, and geology as well as being the author of over 1,000 newspaper columns, a talented nature photographer, and sought-after speaker. Full obituary is [here](#) and article about Bill from Native Plant Society can be found [here](#). SAAS member Georgina Schwartz says Bill gave at least one program for SAAS and he gave many bird programs for Texas Ornithological Society and the Rockport Hummingbird Festival.

MITCHELL LAKE AUDUBON CENTER

Summer Hours are through September 12

Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday

7:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Last entry at noon.

Fall/Winter Hours begin September 16

Thursdays by appointment only.

Friday/Saturday/Sunday

8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Last entry at 2:00 PM.

MONTHLY BIRDING TOURS

Pre-register online at MLAC website

September 5, 12, 19, and 26

Every Sunday morning at 8:00 AM

FREE for members | \$10 for Non Members

[Register Here](#)

Beginner Bird Walk

Saturday, August 28, 8 – 10 AM

Saturday, September 25, 8 – 10 AM

Registration Required | FREE for members | \$10 for Non Members

[Register Here](#)

Parking Lot Birding at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

Saturday, September 25, 6 – 7:30 PM

Guest Presenter: Jennifer L. Bristol

In Person - Outdoor | FREE

Registration Required | [Register Here](#)

Join author, Jennifer L. Bristol for a fun evening of birding and discussing her new book, *Parking Lot Birding: A Fun Guide to Discovering Birds in Texas*. The fall migration in Texas is as exciting as the spring migration and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center is the perfect place to observe and experience this annual occurrence. Jennifer will share tales from her book and lead a bird walk through the nature center campus and of course, the parking lots. She will sign books after the program. Books available for preorder when registering or day-of purchase at Nature Gift Shop.

Online Events and Webinars

Intro to Native Plants

Thursday, September 30, 6 -7 pm

Presenter: Corina Solis

Zoom Presentation | Registration Required | FREE

[Register Here](#)

There are few better ways to attract birds to your backyard than by incorporating native plants in your landscape. Join the staff of Mitchell Lake Audubon Center for an introduction to high value native plants in San Antonio. During this beginner level class, we will discuss the benefits of native plants and their benefits for both birds and people! You will come away from this presentation with practical suggestions for plants to incorporate into your landscape in San Antonio, as well as ideas for additional garden features to help create an inviting space for birds. Approved for SAWS Gardenstyle Rewards Points.

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

Texas Pelagics Tour



Texas Pelagics announces a tour on Saturday, October 16th aboard the "Isabella," leaving from South Padre Island.

- 12 hours, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Regular Fare = \$150.00
- Sign-up deadline is Sept 15, 2021; Late Fare = \$190.00

The ISABELLA is an 85' catamaran capable of 16 - 17 knots, with an open lower deck and a large open upper deck with seating to carry up to 49 passengers. Species you might see: Audubon's and Cory's Shearwaters, Leach's and Band-rumped Storm-Petrels, Magnificent Frigatebirds, Masked Booby, Brown Booby, Sooty and Bridled Terns, and Pomarine Jaegers . Click [here](#) to register.

LOCAL BIRDING LOCATIONS

MITCHELL LAKE AUDUBON CENTER

10750 Pleasanton Road
San Antonio, TX 78221

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

SAN ANTONIO BOTANICAL GARDEN

555 Funston, San Antonio, TX 78209
Visit www.sabot.org or call 210/207-3250

GOVERNMENT CANYON

12861 Galm Rd, San Antonio, TX 78254
Visit www.friendsofsgc.org or call 210/688-9055

CIBOLO NATURE CENTER

140 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX 78006
Visit 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
Request permission to visit www.warblerwoods.org/

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

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

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NEW <input type="checkbox"/>	RENEWAL <input type="checkbox"/>	GIFT <input type="checkbox"/>
Name(s) _____		
Address _____		
City/State/Zip _____		
Phone _____		
Email (required to receive SAAS newsletters and announcements) _____		
Please check type of membership you'd like:		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual/\$20 year
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Household/\$30 year
If you'd like to donate, please indicate amount:		
	\$ <input type="text"/>	Special Projects Fund
	\$ <input type="text"/>	Judson Nature Trails Fund
	\$ <input type="text"/>	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 online at saaudubon.org by clicking on Join or Donate at top of home page.		

San Antonio Audubon Society

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