



Volume XXVII, No. 2
March-April 2011

Bexar Tracks

Bexar Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Its primary goals are to promote species and habitat conservation and environmental education in the community.

For the latest news and updates, see www.bexaraudubon.org.

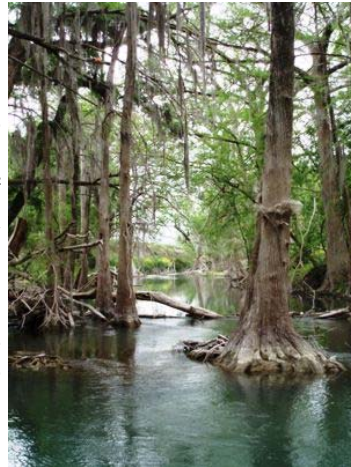
March Field Trip and April Program

No March meeting/program due to Spring Break for many, but we will have a **Planning/Brainstorming** get-together on the 2nd Thursday (March 10th) at 6:30 at **TriPoint!**

We will meet in the cafe there to plan field trips and outings. Please join us—we really want and need your ideas! Please call or email to let us know you are coming: pasztor@ix.netcom.com or 210.837.0577. Hope to see you.

March Field Trip Sunday, March 13, 8:30 AM

Bexar Audubon will offer a **Birding Field Trip** on Sunday, March 13th to **Castroville Regional Park!** This gem of a park is located approximately 35 miles west of San Antonio, on the edge of Castroville along the Medina River, with a great diversity of plants, birds, and butterflies. Take Hwy 90 west out of San Antonio to Castroville. Immediately after the Medina River bridge, take a left on Florence Street. When you turn you'll see Landmark Inn on the left. Follow the signs to the park. We will meet at the parking lot at 8:30 AM. Our leader is Georgina Schwartz. Georgina is a wonderful leader and birder. Easy walking. Contact Patty Pasztor at pasztor@ix.netcom.com or 210.837.0577 for reservations and details.



Bald Cypress along the Medina River
Castroville Regional Park

Mission Verde Sustainability Plan Updates

The City's Office of Environmental Policy has released these updates on Mission Verde, San Antonio's sustainability plan. Advancements cited included:

- An invitation for bid has been posted for a solar installation at the Mission Verde Center.
- The OEP is working on a pilot downtown carshare program based on a recently completed car share study.
- Participation in the Green Shade Tree Rebate Program is increasing. As of early January the number of "treebates" awarded was 796 with another 93 pending.
- The City's five Priuses have been converted to plugins, with mileage reaching 99.9 mpg.
- As of early January, CasaVerde SA had weatherized over 1,515 homes with approved applications that will allow the program to reach its goal of 2,300 homes weatherized with federal stimulus money.
- A 50 kW solar installation is pending at the West Side Senior Center.
- The OEP was seeking City Council approval for an agreement with Bexar County for a San Antonio Food Bank Solar Water Harvesting Project.

More info: www.sanantonio.gov/oep/ or google "Mission Verde San Antonio".

April Program: Thursday, April 21 (3rd Thursday), 6:30 PM Tri Point, 3233 N. St. Mary's

(near 281 & N. St. Mary's); see map on page 5 or online at <http://www.trinitybaptist.org/howtogettotripoint>

Basic Birding with Patsy & Tom Inglet

Do you enjoy watching birds in your own backyard and find birds interesting and beautiful? Would you like to move beyond casual birding and develop more expertise in observing, categorizing, and recognizing our common species—and perhaps even develop bird watching into an engaging hobby? If so, then this class geared for adults is for you. It will help prepare your mind for birding by teaching you *how to see* and *what to look for* before you go into the field.



Patsy & Tom Inglet

Avid birders Tom and Patsy Inglet will share tools, tips, and techniques that will allow you to build your birding skills. From how to find birds to the tools and clues that will help you identify them, this workshop provides the information to get started in birding. Bring your binoculars and a bird field guide if you have them; we have some to loan if you don't. **Class is**

1½ hours. Come let us help you find your wings as a birder!



The President's Corner

- Greg Pasztor -

Thank you to the members of the Bexar Audubon Society for electing me to serve as your President. It's an honor and a privilege to serve an organization with such strong roots in the community and a proven track record serving conservation and environmental education and causes. I take the reins from Tony Wood whose deep roots in the environmental community and knowledge of conservation issues and science leave me some big shoes to fill. BAS is only as strong as its members (some 1,600 strong!) and relies heavily on the Board of Directors who represent the membership. The dedicated Board Members returning this term are Anita Anderson, Susan Hughes, Caryl Swan, Harry Noyes, and Mary Kennedy. Joining the board is Anne Parrish, who also serves as the President of the Mitchell Lake Wetlands Society, and has been a key player in transforming Mitchell Lake Audubon Center into a wonderful education and birding destination. Please join me in thanking them for their efforts on behalf of BAS!

Recently BAS joined other community groups to encourage (successfully!) the acceptance by Texas Parks & Wildlife of the 3K Ranch. The 3K is a gift from the estate of Albert and Bessie Kronkosky and consists of some 3,700 acres just west of Boerne. A rugged, natural Hill Country ranch, the 3K has canyons with bigtooth maples and likely is home to many endemic species of flora and fauna. BAS is also actively supporting efforts by the Land Heritage Institute to improve trails and amenities and the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance to halt pipelining aquifer water from the west until there is a better scientific understanding of the environmental impact.

BAS' education effort has received a boost in the person of Mary Kennedy, who has brought in grants and initiated the *Flying Wild* program and the Audubon Young Birders. Patty Leslie Pasztor has coordinated a wealth of BAS programs and field trips, from bluebirds to Blue Hole to the San Antonio River improvements, all of which, in addition to being fun, help to educate our community. The *Bexar Tracks* newsletter which you are reading has been edited and laid out these past few years by Michele Wood. The Bexar Audubon website has been updated and a comprehensive Nature Calendar is now available all who seek recreation, knowledge, and the healthy respite that nature provides us. These volunteer efforts deserve our thanks and support. You are all welcome to join us in whatever way you can to keep BAS a viable contributor to the health of our community.

www.bexaraudubon.org

OUTING / PROGRAM IDEAS WANTED

Give us your ideas for programs, outings, & other BAS events/meetings, etc. Contact Patty Pasztor, 210.837.0577 or pasztor@ix.netcom.com or call 210.837.0577.

SAVE THESE DATES

Green Spaces Alliance Member Picnic, San Antonio; Saturday, March 26, 3-6 PM. BBQ, beer, music, and good company. Info/registration at www.greensatx.org.

Managing the Eagle Ford Development Workshop, March 15, Mission Verde Center, 1700 Tampico, SA. Information on scientific efforts & new technology being used in shale fracturing in south Texas. More info at www.efdsystems.org.

2011 Farm & Range Forum, April 1-2, *Conserving Our Rural Heritage*; see insert for more information.

Nature Quest Festival in the Concan / Frio River area, April 28-30. Great field trips and talks on Birds, Butterflies, Plants, River Ecology and more! Details & lodging info, contact LeAnn Sharp at 830.966.2320 or check the Bexar Audubon webpage calendar.

Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival in Fredericksburg April 29-May 1; a celebration of natural flight saluting the unique wildlife features of the Texas Hill Country; education & entertainment. <http://www.wingsoverthehills.org/>

Solar Fest 2011, Saturday, May 7, 9 AM—4 PM, Texas's only 100% renewably powered event! Join us for a day full of sun, live music, food, and fun under the live oaks of Maverick Park. More info: www.solarfestsa.com.

Solar San Antonio Annual Luncheon May 19, 11:30 AM at the Pearl Stable; celebrate Solar San Antonio's accomplishments and honor founder and chairman, Bill Sinkin, on his 98th birthday!

Lots more happening in our area this spring; check out Bexar Audubon's calendar, www.bexaraudubon.org.



Urban Wildlife Management and Planning Conference

Austin, Texas 2011

Urban Wildlife Management & Planning Conference

May 22—May 25

(Sunday—Wednesday)

Keynote speakers include Timothy Beatley, Author of "Biophilic Cities: Integrating Nature into Urban Design &

Planning" and Marina Alberti, Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning Studies at University of Washington. Concurrent sessions on topics such as Communicating Across Disciplines, Songbird Conservation & the Built Environment, Feral Animals in urban areas, Urban Ecological Restoration, Building Standards & Structural Ecology, and more! Information on Sunday field trips, speakers, registration: <http://urbanwildlife2011.tpwd.state.tx.us/>



Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

MLAC

10750 Pleasanton Rd.
San Antonio TX 78221
210.628.1639
www.mitchelllakeaudubon.org
*Connecting People
with Nature*



Monthly Birding Tours

No reservation necessary
Every 2nd Tuesday, 2nd
Sunday, and 3rd Sunday,
all at 8 AM.

Bird Count/Survey: Every
4th Saturday, 8 AM.

Birding Tour Fee: \$5 for
nonmembers, \$3 mem-
bers. Info; 210.628.1639
or mlac@audubon.org.

Times may vary due to
season.

About Mitchell Lake

Just south of downtown San Antonio, Mitchell Lake Audubon Center is located on a 1200-acre natural area. This unique and beautiful bird haven consists of the 600-acre Mitchell Lake, 215 acres of wetlands and ponds and 385 acres of upland habitat. Audubon Texas has partnered with the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) to showcase this wonderful natural area.

MLAC's Eckman Named

Top National Audubon Society Educator

The National Audubon Society honored Michelle Eckman, Education Manager at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center in San Antonio, as recipient of the Tamar Chotzen Audubon Educator of the Year award during a meeting of the National Audubon Society Board of Directors at Audubon's Corkscrew Sanctuary. The prestigious award, named for a pioneering Audubon education leader, has been bestowed annually since 2006. It recognizes outstanding commitment, professionalism, and accomplishment in Audubon conservation education. (BAS and SAAS are sponsoring Michelle this summer at **Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week**, at Hog Island Audubon Camp, Maine.) Kudos!

Free Family Program:

Soapberries and Friends: Investigating Plants!

Saturday, March 19, 10 AM—Noon

Investigate soapberries, agave fibers, oak galls and cactus. Fun activities will include making soapy suds, twisting string, making ink and writing with a quill pen and making "bug juice." RSVP 210.628.1639 or mlac@audubon.org.

www.mitchelllakeaudubon.org

Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary Reopens!

Audubon Texas has partnered with the Gorgas Science Foundation of Brownsville, TX and reopened Sabal Palm to the public. We are excited to once again be able to showcase this amazing 527-acre ecosystem, which contains one of the last stands of original sabal palm forest in the United States. The sanctuary is officially designated an Important Bird Area, meaning it has global importance as habitat for the conservation of bird populations, some of which may be endangered or threatened. Read more: <http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/sanctuary-120919-palm-sabal.html>

Phil Hardberger Park

Education Program info/reservations: 210.207.3111 or 210.207.3284. Donations welcome (all donations fund Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy). Programs held near the 13203 Blanco Rd. entrance & parking lot.

Tails on Trails, March 5, 9—11 AM

See Search & Rescue dogs in action, take a walk with the San Antonio Big Dawgs, adopt a dog from Animal Care Services or show off your dog in their latest spring outfit in the Pooch Parade at 10:30 AM.

Snakes Alive, April 2, 9—11 AM

Learn about Texas Native venomous and non-venomous snakes. Join the South Texas Herpetology Assoc. for snakes on display. Hold or touch a friendly snake. Kid friendly craft included.

More info at www.sanaturalareas.org,
www.philhardbergerpark.org or www.sanantonio.gov.

GO NATIVE SAN ANTONIO

Saturday, March 26, 10 AM—2 PM

Land Heritage Institute and the Native Plant Society of San Antonio will co sponsor the 2nd Annual "NATIVE San Antonio", a celebration of all things native in San Antonio, on the grounds of the Land Heritage Institute in south Bexar County on the banks of the Medina River, 1349 Neal Rd. between Appleton & Pleasanton Roads. Native cooking, native plant sales, free native trees (while supply lasts), hay rides, native longhorn cattle, local ranching history and chuck wagon demonstrations, interpretive nature walks, native San Antonio artisans and vendors, hands-on activities, local music, plus education and conservation tips. Family friendly event at San Antonio's only 1,200 acre Living Land Museum. Info: www.landheritageinstitute.org or www.npsot.org/sanantonio.

Watch Out San Antonio, WildFest is Back!



May 6-8, 2011

After a two-year hiatus, **WildFest San Antonio**, San Antonio's only birding and nature festival designed to educate residents and visitors about our unique natural and historical environments, has returned! The three-day festival, produced by SA Parks Foundation, will be held at venues throughout Bexar County, from Medina River Natural Area and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, to Government Canyon and Friedrich Park. All scheduled events will focus on birds, plants, bats, history, archaeology, geology, water and other topics linked to nature and the environment. More information at www.wildfestsanantonio.org.



Community Events

Listings on Saturdays unless otherwise indicated. Check the Nature Calendar at bexaraudubon.org.

First Saturday Nature Walks

Reservations suggested; walks occasionally change. 210.372.9124 or peggy.spring@sanantonio.gov. \$2/person, max \$6/family suggested.

Crownridge Canyon, 7222 Luskey March 5, 10 AM—Noon

Leaving Your Mark is Overrated! A trained 'Leave No Trace' facilitator will lead this spring walk in the canyon. Tips for environmentally friendly hiking & camping; enjoy this Natural Area as it finishes waking up from winter.

Friedrich Park, 21395 Milsa April 2, 10 AM—Noon

Enjoy the fresh vegetation and visit the windmill at Friedrich Park, and a chance to try our new working model of a windmill pump!

MEDINA RIVER NATURAL AREA SECOND SATURDAY PROGRAMS

MRNA 210.207.3111

Mother Earth/Father Sky

March 12, 9—11 AM

Apache Del Rio Intertribal will present an entertaining and spiritual dancing, drumming & storytelling Native American program; craft included.

Celebrate Urban Birds

April 9, 9—11 AM

Join Master Naturalist birding experts to celebrate San Antonio urban birds. Learn to use binoculars and identify birds by their silhouette. Hike to look for birds. Bird craft activity included.

Wildflower Hike

May 14, 9—11 AM

More info on SA Natural Areas: www.santuralareas.org

Government Canyon State Natural Area Hikes, Programs & Events

For more information or reservations for any of the GCSNA programs, 210.688.9055 ext. 291 or reservations@friendsofgc.org. Natural Area entrance fees apply; some programs subject to cancellation. All programs on Saturdays unless otherwise listed.

March 5—Geocaching at Government Canyon SNA

March 5—Our Aquifer, Our Water

Sunday, March 6—First Sunday Haiku Hike

March 12—Hike the Canyon with Friends of GC/Sierra Club

March 19—Explore the Canyon: Knowledgeable guides discuss the flora, fauna, natural and cultural history,

Sunday, March 20—Spring is Here! Hike

More information at www.friendsofgc.org.

Second Saturday Programs

Co-sponsored by Bexar Audubon Society and City of San Antonio

Reservations recommended: 210.372.9124 or 210.564.6400; email peggy.spring@sanantonio.gov. Suggested donation \$3/person or \$5/family.

Neighborhood Birds

Friedrich Park (note location!!)

March 12, 10 AM—Noon

Do you enjoy watching the birds outside the window in your yard squabbling over a seed, splashing in a puddle, or cruising around the flowers? This is your opportunity to **explore your interest in birds** and learn the **basics of binocular use and bird identification**. Bring your family (recommended for children 7 and over) and join Tom and Patsy Inglet for this great program. *You may bring your own binoculars if you wish or we will have a few pair to loan.*

Meeting Snakes

Eisenhower Park

April 9, 10 AM—Noon

Enjoy a beautiful morning in one of San Antonio's Natural Areas while learning about non-venomous and venomous snakes. The program, presented by the South Texas Herpetological Association and various scaly friends, will allow those attending to get up close and personal with several snakes as they learn about the habits and habitats of several of these interesting local reptiles.



San Antonio Audubon Society Meetings

Thursdays, 7 PM, Lion's Field, 2809 Broadway

April 7 — Ben Eldredge from Cibolo Nature Center will provide an introduction to Citizen Science and the research projects that are on-going at the Nature Center located just outside of downtown Boerne.

May 5 — Mike Quinn, entomologist from Austin will give a program on "What Golden-cheeked Warblers Eat". Mike is employed as an entomologist for the Brackenridge Field Laboratory and is the former Invertebrate Biologist with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

SAAS Second Saturday Beginners' Walks

Join **San Antonio Audubon Society** on the second Saturday of the month; start at 8 AM, meet at the Judson Nature Trails next to the Alamo Heights swimming pool, on Viesca street. More information, call 210.342.2073. *Newbies Welcome*

Cibolo Nature Center

140 City Park Dr., Boerne. For more information visit www.cibolo.org/calendar. Pre-registration for workshops, 830.249.4616 or nature@cibolo.org. Except where noted, workshops/seminars on Saturdays, varying fees.

This is just a sampling of activities in March and April at Cibolo; please go online for more information.

March 5—Attracting Birds Workshop Part II: Managing for Game Birds & Song Birds

Tuesday, Mar. 15; Thursday, Mar. 17—CNC Incidental Bird Count Surveys

March 19—Rainwater Harvest Workshop

March 19—Natural Landscape Design Class

April 13, 14, 15—TX Monarch Monitoring Project Training

Saturday/Sunday, April 9-10—Art and Conservation

Exhibit (part of Parade of Artists event)

Friday, April 15—Spring Wildflower Walk



Farmers, Pecan Growers Say Coal Plant Kills Plants

By Ramit Plushnick-masti, Associated Press

Bastrop, TX—Along a stretch of Highway 21, in Texas' pastoral Hill Country, is a vegetative wasteland. Trees are barren, or covered in gray, dying foliage and peeling bark. Fallen, dead limbs litter the ground where pecan growers and ranchers have watched trees die slow, agonizing deaths.

Visible above the horizon is what many plant specialists, environmentalists and scientists believe to be the culprit: the Fayette Power Project—a coal-fired power plant for nearly 30 years has operated mostly without equipment designed to decrease emissions of sulfur dioxide, a component of acid rain.

The plant's operator and the state's environmental regulator deny sulfur dioxide pollution is to blame for the swaths of plant devastation across Central Texas. But evidence collected from the Appalachian Mountains to New Mexico indicates sulfur dioxide pollution kills vegetation, especially pecan trees. Pecan growers in Albany, GA have received millions of dollars in an out-of-court settlement with a power plant... *Read the full story at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101228/ap_on_re_us/us_vegetative_wasteland or google "farmers, pecan growers, coal plants".*

Bexar Audubon Society Contacts

President: Greg Pasztor, —210.824.1235, gpasztor@ix.netcom.com
Vice President: Anita Anderson—210.533.8726; ajandrsn@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer: Caryl Swann—210.653.2860; c.swann@att.net
Secretary: Susan Hughes—210.532.2032; susan@wordwright.com
At-Large: Harry Noyes—210.490.3124; harrynoyes@satx.rr.com
At-Large: Anne Parrish—parishes@att.net
Webmaster: Greg Pasztor—210.824.1235, gpasztor@ix.netcom.com
Programs/Outings: Patty Pasztor—210.824.1235; pasztor@ix.netcom.com
Education Chairperson: Mary Kennedy—mbkenned@sbcglobal.net
Editor: Michele Wood—210.492.4684, editor@bexaraudubon.org

One Environment.
One Simple Way
To Care For It.

Earth Share of Texas
represents leading environmental and conservation organizations in payroll deduction plans across the state.

Earth Share OF TEXAS
Photo J. Griffis Smith/TxDOT

1-800-GREENTX ♦ www.earthshare-texas.org ♦ ESTX@earthshare-texas.org

Earth Share of Texas raises money for environmental and conservation organizations through workplace giving. If your employer participates in such programs, please ask them to add Earth Share to your giving options. By designating the Audubon Foundation of Texas (AFT), Bexar Audubon Society can benefit. BAS receives credit for our support and receives funding annually from AFT. For more information, call, email or log on: 800.GREENTX, ESTX@earthshare-texas.org, or www.earthshare-texas.org.

Spring Break Fun at the San Antonio Botanical Garden

www.sabot.org, 210.207.3250
555 Funston at North New Braunfels

Experience a natural green oasis right here in the city! Visit the San Antonio Botanical Garden during Spring Break for daily children's programs (see list below) and much more. **Spring Break Fun is celebrated March 14-18.**

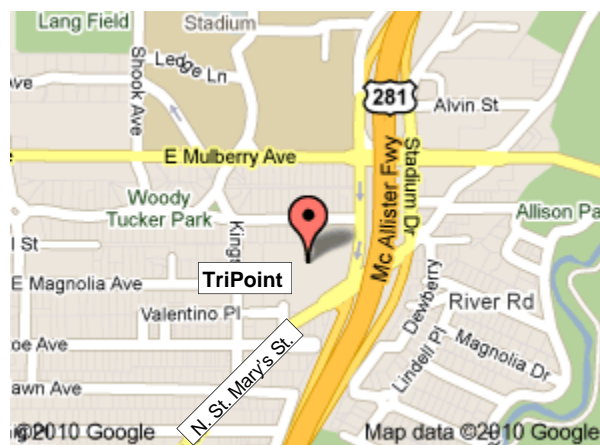
Guests are invited to pack up a blanket and a picnic lunch to enjoy the beauty of nature. View the downtown skyline from the Overlook, get drought-resistant landscaping ideas from Watersaver Garden and Lane, search for our feathered friends through the windows of the Bird Watch and see what's starting to grow in the Children's Vegetable Garden. Bring the entire family—there are things to do for every age. Plus we have ongoing programs and exhibits available with Garden admission, which include Art in the Garden; Beginner's Bird Walks (third Saturday monthly); and Monthly Water Saver Walks (first Friday, third Saturday monthly).

Please go to SABG's website for more information on Spring Break, ongoing programs and exhibits, plus these upcoming events and more: **Viva Botanica** on April 9, and the annual **SAWS Garden Jazz Party**, May 1. www.sabot.org

How Do I.....?

Need some help deciding what flowers, plants or trees to put in your yard? What about perennials? Which fruit trees work best in our area? When should roses be pruned? For answers to these and much more, look to San Antonio Water System's *WaterSaver Newsletter* at <http://www.saws.org/conservation/newsletter/issuearchive.cfm>

April BAS Program at TriPoint, 3233 N. St. Mary's St.





Bexar Audubon Society
PO Box 6084
San Antonio TX 78209-0084

Non-Profit
 Organization
 US Postage Paid
 San Antonio TX
 Permit #167

Bexar Tracks

March-April 2011

Bexar Tracks is the official newsletter of the Bexar Audubon Society, a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. The Chapter's primary goals are to promote species and habitat conservation and environmental education in the community.

Your membership includes National Audubon and Bexar Audubon and subscriptions to both Audubon and Bexar Tracks.



For the latest information on environmental events and happenings throughout the San Antonio community and surrounding areas, check out www.bexaraudubon.org.

Social Networking Site WeLoveBirds.org

Founded one year ago, the social networking partnership between the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is celebrating its first anniversary. WeLoveBirds.org also reaches a wide community of bird lovers through its facebook pages and through its twitter feed (@weluvbirds). WeLoveBirds.org started as a free, interactive online community for bird enthusiasts, offering an open social network of people who are passionate about birds. For more information, or to join the community, go to: www.welovebirds.org

Membership and Support for Your Environmental Voice in Our Community

Bexar Audubon welcomes new members to join Audubon through the chapter. This brings 100 percent of the first year's dues directly back to support local work. The same applies to gift memberships placed through the chapter. Your additional tax deductible donation is greatly appreciated. Bexar Audubon receives only a few thousand dollars each year from National Audubon Society as dues share. The rest we must raise ourselves. Your help is needed, and your donations will be put to good use right here in South Central Texas to provide environmental news and education to the community, including the newsletter, programs, San Antonio Environmental Network Issues Forum, Second Saturday programs, and other activities you may or may not hear about. Individual introductory memberships are \$20; seniors and students join for \$15. Please provide the following information for each personal subscription or gift:

Name: _____

Mailing Address with Zip Code: _____

Phone w/Area Code: _____ e-mail _____

Do you wish to opt out of other mailings by Audubon or those with whom it shares lists? ____ yes ____ no

Make checks payable to "Bexar Audubon Society" and mail to the address at the top of this page.

Enclosed: \$_____ for subscription(s) \$_____ additional donation

NOTE: *Renewals should be sent directly to National Audubon Society.*

NOTE: If you change address or cancel membership, you do NOT need to contact Bexar Audubon but MUST contact National Audubon (and we will automatically get that change when we download labels). Save time and energy by mailing your change of address information to National Audubon Society Membership Data Center, PO Box 52529, Boulder CO 80322-2529; phoning 800.274.4201; or e-mailing CHADD@audubon.org.