



Volume XXVII, No. 3
May-July 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.

May Program and June Outings **The Natural History of the Deep and Punkin Cave Nature Preserve**

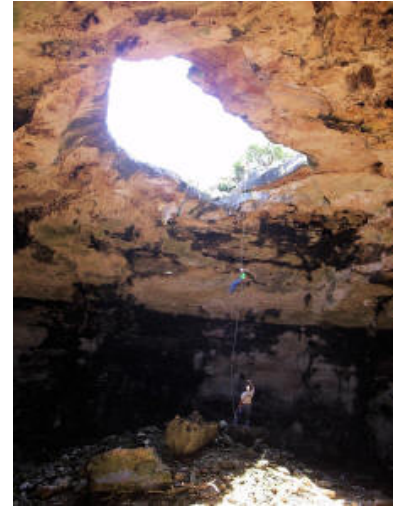
presented by Geary Schindel

May 19th, 6:30 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>

The Texas Cave Management Association purchased the Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve in 2005 with the assistance of Bexar Audubon Society. The 225 acre preserve is located on the Edwards Plateau, about 35 miles west of Rocksprings, TX. This presentation will discuss the geology and biology of these two important cave resources for Texas. Deep and Punkin caves provide wildlife habitat, research, educational, and recreational opportunities.

A nesting pair of Golden Cheek Warblers have been identified on the property and a pair of nesting Great Horned Owls utilize the entrance to Punkin Cave. This year, the owls produced three chicks. There have also been numerous hawks, owls, deer, turtles, snakes, and other animals.

About the Speaker: Geary is the Chief Technical Officer for the Edwards Aquifer Authority in San Antonio, where he directs the research program; his interests extend to all aspects of water quality and quantity in karst aquifers and how they can be applied to better manage the resource. Geary will also be our host for our June cave outing.



Cavers entering main entrance to Punkin Cave; photo by Geary Schindel

OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP JUNE 4-5 **To DEEP & PUNKIN CAVE NATURE PRESERVE!**

We will head out on a 3-hour drive to this Preserve near Carta Valley (between Rock Springs & Del Rio) on Saturday morning, June 4th. Bring a picnic lunch. In the afternoon, Geary will lead us on a walk around the property to look at fossils, flora, fauna, and more. There are Pinyon Pines growing there, and a nice porch to sit on for those who don't wish to hike. We'll also take a peek in and around the entrance to Punkin Cave. Geary and some cavers plan to cook dinner for us Saturday evening! Folks are welcome to stay the night: There is a cabin that sleeps 8 (bunkhouse style in two bedrooms) and camping is available on site. Or choose a motel in Rock Springs or Del Rio (both 1/2 hour away). On Sunday, we'll take an early morning bird walk to help compile a bird list for the Preserve.

\$12 fee includes supper Saturday evening and breakfast Sunday morning. If anyone is interested in exploring inside the cave, Geary can take a few folks in! He has some headlamps and other gear.

Field trip limited to 24 people. Contact Patty Leslie Pasztor for field trip reservations, lodging info and more, 210.837.0577 or pasztor@ix.netcom.com. The Historic Rocksprings Hotel is a possibility for those interested in staying in Rocksprings. Del Rio has many motels/hotels.

JACKSON NATURE PARK

Bexar Audubon Outing
Saturday, June 18th at 8:15 AM

Join us for a Nature Hike at this park between Floresville and Stockdale to discover birds and plants with Master Naturalists Ron Tullius and Eva Fromme. Meet at 8:15 AM at the park; \$1 admission fee. We will begin our walk promptly at 8:30. Bexar Audubon has early access this day (the park normally opens at 9). This is a wonderful park on Cibolo Creek approximately 50 miles south-east of San Antonio. Eva and Ron are delightful and very knowledgeable.

Directions: Take Hwy. 87 east through LaVernia towards Stockdale. Approx. two miles west of Stockdale, take (Wilson) County Road 401 (to the right). The county road number is clearly marked. Follow 401 for 3 miles to the entrance to Jackson Nature Park, on the left-hand side of the road. From SA International Airport the distance to JNP is approximately 54 miles. This 50 acre park, owned by Wilson County and managed by the San Antonio River Authority, is quite diverse with many plant and bird species. Read more about JNP at www.sara-tx.org/parks_and_trails/parks.php. Be sure to bring water, snacks, sunscreen, binoculars, and wear a hat. If you'd like, bring a picnic lunch. Carpooling and other information at www.bexaraudubon.org or call 210.837.0577.



Texas Water Development Board News

TWDB mission: To provide leadership, planning, financial assistance, information, and education for the conservation and responsible development of water for Texas.

"Advancing Water Reuse in Texas" Reports Published

Water reuse, the practice of using water that has already been used, is a key component of the water supply portfolio in Texas. This fact is demonstrated by regional water planning recommendations for water reuse strategies in state water plans. To achieve future supply goals for water reuse strategies, and to ensure the use of reclaimed water in a cost-effective and sustainable manner, an overview on science, technology and public awareness aspects of water reuse needs to be addressed.

The TWDB has recently produced a series of documents under the project "Advancing Water Reuse in Texas." The first document in this series, *History of Water Reuse in Texas*, provides the chronology and historical achievement of water reuse programs in the state. The document identifies major challenges for advancing water reuse programs in Texas. The second document in the series, *State of Technology of Water Reuse*, provides information on technical and regulatory issues of implementing water reuse projects in the state. The third and final document in the series, *Water Reuse Research Agenda*, prepares a research agenda and identifies funding mechanisms that will help advance the implementation of water.

Find out more at www.twdb.state.tx.us.

Texas Water Resources Institute: New Waves

check out online issues at

<http://twri.tamu.edu/news/category/new-waves/>

The Texas Water Resources Institute recently published a new issue of *txH2O*, which is available in print and online. The issue features Texas scientists on the effects of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, saltcedar beetles as a successful biological control, and the development of the Urban Living Laboratory. Other articles include researchers' lake management approaches for golden algae, stakeholders on the importance of involvement in local water issues, and the Texas Forest Service's work to protect water quality through forestry practices. Visit twri.tamu.edu/publications/subscribe.

The Texas Drought Project: An Update on Natural Gas Fracking

The organization Earthworks, through its Texas Oil and Gas Accountability Project—with which the Texas Drought Project is allied—has produced an excellent report about the health effects of natural gas fracking. Entitled "Flowback: How the Texas Natural Gas Boom Affects Health and Safety," the report tells a compelling story about the dangers of this procedure, and attempts to counter all of the positive press it has received. To read the report, go to http://earthworkSACTION.org/PR_TXOGAP-flowback.cfm and click on the icon of "Flowback."

More information at The Texas Drought Project web site, www.texasdroughtproject.org.

TX Town Weighs Risks, Benefits of Nuclear Plant

Excerpted from a story by John Couwels, CNN

March 22, 2011 — Updated 1332 GMT (2132 HKT)

Victoria, Texas (CNN) — This small Texas town is half a world away from the nuclear disaster unfolding in Japan. Nevertheless, the calamity is having a ripple effect. This week, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission held a scheduled two-day public hearing on a nuclear power plant near Victoria. There, Texans for Sound Energy Policy got a chance to voice their opposition on the proposed plant that would be built by electric power giant Exelon Generation.

Those who support the plant repeatedly stated, "Nuclear power is a safe energy source" at the two-day hearing. In addition, supporters argued that the \$16 billion project would add over 750 permanent jobs and 2,500 temporary construction jobs. The money spent on the plant would be nearly five times more than Victoria's yearly budget, said Don Pozzi, an administrative judge and lifetime resident of Victoria County.

In addition to the jobs, he argues the project would help add to the town's coffers through sales taxes and real estate taxes from new housing. That, he says, will help the small town of about 87,000 people continue to grow. And that's exactly what rancher David Huber is afraid of — a larger Victoria with a nuclear power plant. "I've been opposed from the beginning and I'm still opposed," said Huber, 62.

Read the full story: <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/US/03/19/texas.nuclear.plant.concerns/index.html>

Video: One Year After the Oil Spill

A new video shares footage of birds after the oil spill and notes the power of observation and citizen science to advance conservation.

One year ago on April 20th, the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig ruptured, ultimately releasing more than 170 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. As workers scrambled to contain the spill and rescue oiled wildlife, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology sent its multimedia team to Louisiana. They filmed breeding bird colonies affected by the oil and pieced together the larger context of Louisiana's rapidly vanishing wetlands. Visit the oil spill website from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to view the video and more updates and information in the oil spill. Birds.cornell.edu/spill



Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

MLAC

10750 Pleasanton Rd.
San Antonio TX 78221
210.628.1639

www.mitchelllakeaudubon.org



Connecting People with Nature

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.

Some upcoming programs at MLAC:

Basic Birding for Adults

May 7, 8:30-11:30 AM

Do you enjoy watching birds & find birds interesting and beautiful? MLAC Docents Tom & Patsy Inglet share tools, tips, & techniques for you to build your birding skills. Program fee; limited space, RSVP to mlac@audubon.org.

Starry, Starry Night

May 14, 8-10:30 PM

Astronomy Night with the San Antonio Astronomical Association. An evening of star gazing and astronomy. Bring chairs and blankets! Free; space limited, RSVP required.

Medina River Natural Area SECOND SATURDAY PROGRAMS

210.207.3111; suggested donation \$3/person or \$5/family

May 14, 9-11 AM

Wildflower Hike with kid-friendly Mother's Day craft.

June 11, 9-11 AM

Where Have All the Horny Toads Gone?

July 9, 9-11 AM

Bicycle Safety with SA Park Police officers & bicycle maintenance inspection.

www.sanaturalareas.org

Phil Hardberger Park

Education Program information/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.

Bicycle Safety, May 7, 9-11 AM

Going Green, June 4, 9-11 AM

Second Grand Opening! Info on back cover.

May 21, 10 AM- 7 PM

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



UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

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.

WildFest

May 6-8, 2011

WildFest San Antonio

Returns! San Antonio's only birding and nature festival designed to educate residents and visitors about our unique natural and historical environments. The three-day festival 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.



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/>

Great American Backyard Campout

Saturday, June 25, 2011 National Wildlife Federation

www.backyardcampout.org

What if in one night you could help American children lead longer, healthier, happier lives?

On Saturday, June 25th, you can! Register today for the Great American Backyard Campout to open the door and sleep under the stars for our nation's kids. National Wildlife Federation's Great American Backyard Campout is a night of old-fashioned fun outdoors. Telling scary stories, singing silly songs, and eating just one more s'more. It's family fun with a purpose: helping American kids benefit from outdoor time. www.backyardcampout.org.



Community Events

All listings are 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.
Donation of \$2/person, max \$6/family suggested. Not for groups; contact us to schedule a walk for your group.

Family Nature Walk

Eisenhower Park
May 7, 10-11:30 AM



For families with young children, will proceed at a leisurely pace on the paved trails of the park. We'll look for seeds of the plants and after the hike make some Texas sized mosquitoes from devil's claw seed pods. Bring water and maybe mosquito spray.

Nature Walk

Crownridge Canyon
June 4, 10 AM-Noon

The flowers are still blooming, the vines are climbing, the trees and shrubs have fresh leaves (if we have some rain). Master Naturalist Ron Tullius will captivate you with his knowledge of the canyon plants. Bring water!

Sponsored by

San Antonio Natural Areas
sanaturalareas.org

WILD! Weeks

FRIEDRICH PARK

San Antonio Parks & Recreation

Presenting "The Nature Chronicles" for children ages 7-12; June 20-24 or June 27-July 1, 9 AM-12 noon daily.

Call 210.564.6402 or 210.372.9124 for information/registration; get forms at www.sanaturalareas.org.

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.

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.

Fossil Fun Continues

Eisenhower Park
May 14, 10 AM—Noon

Local educators and archaeologist/advocate paleontologists Augie Frkuska, Robert Burleson and Kent Page return to share their knowledge of fossils. Bring your own specimens for help with identification. Learn about local places to hunt for fossils. Sort and screen a pile of fossil laden soil they bring to find some specimens to take home.

Government Canyon State Natural Area

For more information or reservations for any of the GCSNA programs, 210.688.9055 ext. 291 or reservations@friendsofgc.org. Programs can include these topics and more: Haiku Hikes, Mountain Biking, Camping Skills, Ethnobotany, Compass & Orienteering.

More information at
www.friendsofgc.org

Community Garden Applications Accepted Now

Looking to start a community garden? Green Spaces is now accepting starter fund applications through October 1st, pending funding availability. Visit our website for more information on how to apply; www.greensatx.org.

Schaezlers Receive Lone Star Land Steward Award

Don and Susan Schaezler have been selected for the Lone Star Land Steward Award for the Blackland Prairie Ecoregion for 2011. This award is given annually by TPWD in recognition of those who have demonstrated dedicated stewardship of the land through excellence in wildlife habitat management. The Schaezlers are the human inhabitants of Warbler Woods in Cibolo/Schertz. Read more about this special place at WarblerWoods.org.

Mother Nature Network: Texas has most wind power but still manages to lead nation in CO2 emissions. Check out Mother Nature Network's infographic on the United States of Environment at <http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/responsible-living/stories/infographic-united-states-of-the-environment?hpt=Sbin>

Drop by Drop

Eisenhower Park
June 11, 10 AM—Noon



SARA's Matt Driffel demonstrates the value of watersheds and introduces the river critters with his discussion of the San Antonio River Basin. With a scaled model of the river basin and some live macro-invertebrates, he will help us all understand this precious water resource!

Cibolo Nature Center

140 City Park Dr., Boerne. Information:
www.cibolo.org/calendar.

Pre-registration, 830.249.4616 or
nature@cibolo.org or ben@cibolo.org.

Wildlife Field Research

Monday-Saturday, May 2-7

Boerne Birders/Kiehl Park

May 14, 8-10 AM. Meet at Kiehl Park entrance parking lot.

Bird Point Counts

First 3 Tuesdays in May, 8-10 AM
Join the Citizen Scientist movement and help conduct a census of the breeding birds at CNC!

Rainwater Harvest Workshops

May 21 & June 18, 9 AM-Noon
Technological information and practical advice from an expert in the field!

This is just a sampling of upcoming activities at Cibolo Nature Ctr; please go online for more information.



Alamo Area Master Naturalists

Master Naturalists are volunteers dedicated to the conservation, preservation and restoration of our natural resources, promoting ecological education for all ages. Join the Fall 2011 class and become a Master Naturalist!

Learn from leading experts in Texas:

- Bio-diversity
- Hydrology/Edwards Aquifer
- Interpretive Hikes
- Native Plants Urban Systems/Forestry
- Reptiles/ Amphibians
- Aquatic Ecosystems
- Soils Wildlife Management
- Archaeology
- Plant Taxonomy
- Geology
- Birds Ethnobotany
- Schoolyard Habitat
- Plant Ecology
- Impact of Man
- Mammals Insects Ecology
- Threatened/Endangered Species
- Laws/Ethics

Afternoon classes will be held Thursdays, Sept. 8th to Nov. 10th, plus four morning field trips. Applications/information can be found at www.txmn.org/alamo. Applications accepted starting June 1st.

World Resources Institute

The **World Resources Institute** (WRI) is an environmental think tank founded in 1982 based in Washington, D.C. A wealth of worldwide information can be found at www.wri.org.

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

From The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

www.birds.cornell.edu

Great Backyard Bird Count Photos & Trends

With nearly 11.5 million birds counted and 596 species reported, the Great Backyard Bird Count was a great success! Many thanks to everyone who participated. See the photo gallery or read the highlights at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.

Attract Nesting Birds to Your Yard

By setting up a nest box, you can provide a safe place for cavity-nestings birds to raise their families. How do you hang a nest box, and how high up? What are the dimensions of an ideal box? Find out all you need to know from our Nestwatcher's Resource Center:

www.birds.cornell.edu/nestinginfo/downloads.

Citizen Science Opportunity: NestWatch

NestWatch is a nationwide, volunteer-based effort by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology designed to monitor trends in the nesting biology of North America's birds. Citizen science volunteers collect data such as nest site location, species, and number of eggs and young in nests, and submit their data online to NestWatch where it becomes part of an incredibly powerful dataset. This information, accessible to anyone, is vital for studying and predicting the effects of climate and land-use change on birds. **YOU** can be a NestWatcher! More information at secure3.birds.cornell.edu.

2010 Annual Report from Audubon Texas now available at www.tx.audubon.org. You'll find links to this report, as well as stories on brown pelican recovery and much more. Plus Audubon Texas is now on Facebook—"like" AudubonTexas to keep up with the latest news and events.

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.

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





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

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Bexar Tracks

May-July 2011

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



www.bexaraudubon.org

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

The (2nd) Grand Opening of the West Side of Phil Hardberger Park

Saturday May 21st, 10 AM –7 PM

8400 NW Military Hwy (the 200 acre side of Hardberger Park)



Activities and nature-themed presentations, including scheduled interpretive 'themed' walks through the park at set times, which may include bird walks, geology walks, tree walks, plant/ecology walks, bug walks. More information at 210.207.3284, 210.287.8484, www.sanaturalareas.org or www.philhardbergerpark.org.

Like Mary Kennedy always says, "Have fun today — go outside and play!"

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.