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August—October 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.

September Bexar Audubon Program What Do Warblers Eat?

With Mike Quinn, Entomologist

Sept. 15th, 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>

Through photography, Mike Quinn is breathing new life and light into his master's thesis on the Golden-cheeked Warbler's diet. During the summers of 1993-94, Quinn and his cohorts collected some 50,000 insects and other arthropods within the birds' breeding grounds. Since 2010, Quinn has been resurveying similar habitat, but this time photographing the insects.



© Susan Schaeffer www.warblerwoods.com

Mike has an extensive knowledge of the insects of central Texas, as well as a nice collection of photos.

This presentation should interest both insect enthusiasts and bird-lovers. Mike will present one of the most intensive insect surveys conducted in Texas and share what he knows about the Golden-cheeked Warbler's diet.

With wildlife and entomology degrees from Texas A&M, Mike worked as the state invertebrate biologist for TPWD for eight years. Mike has coordinated the Texas Monarch Watch program and co-authored "Milkweed, Monarchs and More: A Field Guide to the Invertebrate Community in the Milkweed Patch". Mike presently conducts insect surveys and does independent consulting. He maintains a website at <http://www.texasento.net/>

October Bexar Audubon Program GHOST BIRD

Thursday, October 20th, TriPoint, 6:30 PM

In 2005, scientists announced that the Ivory-billed woodpecker, a species thought to be extinct for 60 years, had been found in Arkansas swamps. The reappearance of the Ivory-bill was celebrated around the world as the rediscovery of a life-time, prompting the largest recovery effort ever undertaken for a lost species. Millions of dollars poured in from the government while ornithologists and birders flooded the swamps to find the rare bird. Down the road, the town of Brinkley, Arkansas, itself on the brink of extinction, was transformed by the hope, commerce and controversy surrounding their feathered friend. But continued sightings by expert birders only highlighted the mysterious absence of credible evidence. *Ghost Bird* brings the Ivory-bill's blurry rediscovery into focus, revealing our uneasy relationship with nature and the increasing uncertainty of our place within it. Join us for *Ghost Bird*!

"Conserving Our Rural Heritage"

**2011 Farm & Range Forum
October 14-15 in Uvalde**

The 2011 Farm & Range Forum will be held Oct. 14 and 15 in Uvalde, TX, with a focus on "Conserving Our Rural Heritage." Landowners, urban and rural conservationists, and every-one interested in the history and dynamics of the region, its economic and social challenges, and looming water issues are encouraged to participate.



The Forum kicks off Friday afternoon with a field trip to the Harris Ranch, where specialists will lead small groups in examination of recommended range management practices, riparian values and protection, and healthy rangeland plant diversity. Saturday's program includes a range of informative panels as diverse as public benefits of private lands, land fragmentation, ways to maximize the conservation values of rural lands, and an update on estate planning and the legislature. The afternoon session on "Water in the West" looks at new developments in groundwater science, water resource planning, rain enhancement, rivers in peril, and more. Landowners will talk about conservation easements on their property, and we'll learn about the "Barn Again" program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and its tax credit offering for barn restoration. The keynote speaker during Saturday's

(continued on page 2)

San Antonio & Bexar Audubon Holiday Dinner & Program Thursday, November 3rd, 6:30 PM

Last year Bexar Audubon joined San Antonio Audubon for a lovely holiday dinner at the S.A. Zoo. Join us this year at the **La Fonda Oak Hills Mexican Restaurant**, 350 Northhaven, San Antonio. The speaker will be Moez Ali from Nairobi, Kenya and Tucson, AZ, who will speak about the birds 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 at tpinglet@satx.rr.com or 210.698.8445.



The Joy of Sharing Nature

- Greg Pasztor -

President, Bexar Audubon Society

One of the greatest 'little steps' I took in life was some 25 years ago when I joined the **Friends of Friedrich Wilderness Park** and became a "FIG"—a Friedrich Interpretive Guide. A bit apprehensive, I took a series of classes at the park and signed up to take groups of school children on hikes. My initial nervousness gave way quickly on the first hike to the joy of inviting children to think and learn about the natural world. Fast forward to 2011 and the opportunities to enjoy and share nature have multiplied greatly as the San Antonio region has grown. We now have a system of **Natural Areas** and **linear creek parks**. We have **Government Canyon State Natural Area** and the **Land Heritage Institute**. And we are one of the lucky cities to have an **Audubon Center**, with **Mitchell Lake** as one of the premier birding hotspots in the state.

All of this is ours to share, but we must actively support it. Every one of these parks needs volunteers to help with everything from habitat restoration to education. This is where **Bexar Audubon** and many other groups step in and create an active community to work, teach and support the natural world.

There are several excellent opportunities in the next few months that can help you take that first 'little step' to sharing nature and enjoying the satisfaction of giving back to our community. **Mitchell Lake Audubon Center** is beginning a new **docent class** in August. The **Alamo Area Master Naturalists** start a **new training class** in September. The BAS-sponsored **Farm & Range Forum** will be in Uvalde in October. **Green Spaces Alliance** has opportunities to help with community gardens. Information on all of these is available on our website: www.bexar.audubon.org. Maybe you want to start a little slower and take advantage of the many hikes and programs by BAS and other nature oriented organizations that are listed on our website **Nature Calendar**. Take a moment to consider what you can contribute (and learn!).

Mitchell Lake & Mission del Lago Update

- Anne Parrish -

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center has a neighbor to the east, a housing development called Mission del Lago. In 1999 San Antonio granted special tax incentives to the developer to stimulate new housing in the brush land around the Mission del Lago golf course. The first section of roads/services has been installed, and about 300 houses have been built, some of which can be seen from Edwards Tank. This past spring the developer put in a zoning request for higher density to develop the property that is immediately on Mitchell Lake, covering that hillside and lakeside with 1,750 homes. This zoning request passed City Council after being denied in Zoning Court. It appears that our Audubon Center's "feel" is about to change from a wildscape to a view of a subdivision on the shores of Mitchell Lake, a former sewage lagoon and a wildlife refuge since 1973.

Susan Albert, Georgina Schwartz, Iliana Pena, and Anne Parrish have actively pursued solutions to ensure that the wildlife refuge is not harmed by this development. We spoke at zoning meetings to be sure that City Council and Zoning Commissioners were aware of the unique, environmentally-sensitive nature of the property. We met several times with SAWS, Public Works, City Council, and the developer.

Mission del Lago, Ltd. has agreed to shield their light poles and install a wildlife-friendly linear detention pond to prevent any additional storm waters from entering the Mitchell Lake system. The pond will give an additional 50 feet of buffer along with flood zone on the lake. MDL expressed that they want to do the right thing environmentally. Perhaps there is a better way to develop the area instead of carpeting the 422 acres with roads and houses? In the meantime, the poor economy is slowing the market pressures for housing. It is a matter now of watching to make sure that the Center and its wildlife are not negatively impacted by the development on its borders. And that the developer is held to its promises.

Farm & Range Forum *(continued from page 1)*

program is Con Mims, general manager of the Nueces River Authority.

The Farm & Range Forum was developed to foster dialog between rural landowners and urban conservationists, recognizing that in Texas, with well over 90 percent of land in private ownership, habitat protection depends upon the financial ability of landowners to remain on their lands. F&R sponsors and exhibitors are welcome. Contact Courtney Brittain at cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org or Helen Holdsworth at hholdsworth@texas-wildlife.org, or call 800-TEX-WILD (800.839.9453). Advance registration required. Registration forms available at these web sites: greensatx.org, texas-wildlife.org, hillcountryalliance.org, and bexaraudubon.org, or by phone at 800-TEX-WILD. Information: Susan Hughes, susan@greensatx.org or 210.862.1150, or Courtney Brittain, cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org or 800.839.9453.



A great time was had by all on the Bexar Audubon trip to Deep & Punkin' Preserve on June 4-5. More photos: www.bexaraudubon.org.



A Uvalde Pipeline?

What is the Uvalde Pipeline? The investors and promoters behind this investor-owned pipeline for transportation of Edwards Aquifer water from Uvalde to San Antonio believe it to be a reliable and cost effective means of moving Edwards Aquifer water out of Uvalde and Medina counties into San Antonio. But it takes state legislation to allow EAA water to be transported in this manner; why has this proven so difficult?

Con Mims, the Executive Director of the Nueces River Authority, has written an op-ed piece in the *San Antonio Express-News* on this issue. Log onto the link below to read the full opinion piece and find out why Mr. Mims says "the Uvalde pipeline is simply an investment for a California promoter and his backers. With or without lipstick, it is still a pig."

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/article/Uvalde-pipeline-is-still-a-bad-idea-1455185.php#ixzz1RcJTQ46S>

From the Summer Edition of *Catalyst*, a Publication of the Union of Concerned Scientists

Follow the link below to read more.

Fukushima: Can It Happen Here?

Perhaps the better question is, can we *let* it happen? The disaster in Japan has heightened the problems our nuclear industry has in common with Japan's. UCS is bringing a new sense of urgency to our recommendations for making U.S. nuclear power safer.

Global Warming: The Signs Are Everywhere

Global warming is already affecting locales all over the world. A new UCS website illustrates the need to combat climate change by putting Earth's threatened places and ecosystems on the map.

<http://www.ucsusa.org/publications/catalyst/member-issue/catalyst-summer-2011.html>



World Resources Institute WRI Digest

June 2011 check out more at wri.org

Climate Science Research Review Answers Climate Change Questions

With wildfires, floods, tornadoes, and other dramatic weather events making front page news around the world, many people are asking questions about the signs and impacts of a changing climate. With summaries and explanations of recent peer-reviewed research from a host of scientific journals, *Climate Science* is a window into what scientists are discovering about how climate change affects the living things and complex systems of our planet.

Read the full story at www.wri.org/stories/2011/06/climate

Texas Parks & Wildlife has posted a link to the video on **Warbler Woods Bird Sanctuary** (warblerwoods.org), owned by Don & Sue Schaezler, winners of the Lone Star Land Steward Award for Blackland Prairie: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2-PfaVmJD4&feature=related>. Check out this video and all the Land Steward award winners. Then log onto the TPWD website at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/> for more information on all the award winners across the state. Kudos to the Schaezlers and all the Lone Star Land Steward Award winners!

From Natural Resources Defense Council website:

This Green Life

A monthly journal of sorts by Sheryl Eisenberg

JUNE 2011: We've been fighting water pollution for decades and still haven't won. Your driveway's pavement could be part of the problem—and solution.

Permeable Pavement: How to reduce runoff & improve water quality

The trouble with "runoff" is... the story's a bore. There are neither villains involved, nor poster animals at risk nor priceless



scenery at stake. Yet the polluted water that runs off paved surfaces is the greatest threat to water quality in many areas of America today. It also contributes to groundwater depletion. Despite progress made under the Clean Water Act since 1970 in cleaning up our nation's waters, 40 percent of our rivers and 46 percent of our lakes are still too polluted for fishing, swimming or aquatic life. Runoff isn't the only cause, but it is an important one. And you can do something about it.

Read more about permeable paving options and the rest of the story: <http://www.nrdc.org/thisgreenlife/> (June 2011)—Sheryl Eisenberg

Drought, Fracking: Do We Have Enough Water?

What is drilling in the Eagle Ford Shale doing to our water supply? Opinions are many and varied, with answers depending on who's being asked. Read more in this San Antonio Express-News article at mySA.com: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/energy/article/Droughtspurringfrackingconcerns-1450808.php#ixzz1R2u95qj0>

More information on water issues & drought: **The River Systems Institute** at Texas State University in San Marcos: <http://www.rivers.txstate.edu/>

Texas Water Development Board: <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/DATA/drought/index.asp>

Texas Drought Project: <http://texasdroughtproject.org/droughtfacts.html>



Back to Nature

Check the Nature Calendar at bexaraudubon.org for more listings.

First Saturday Nature Walks and Second Saturday Programs

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

Reservations suggested; walks occasionally change. Donations suggested.
More info: 210.372.9124 or 210.564.6400, or peggy.spring@sanantonio.gov.

Bat Bonanza — Eisenhower Park: Aug. 13, 10 AM–Noon

Nature Walk: Trees — Crown Ridge Canyon: Sept. 3, 10 AM–Noon

Tunas, Nopales & More — Eisenhower Park: Sept. 10, 10 AM–Noon

Nature Walk: Animal Signs — Friedrich Park: Oct. 1, 10 AM–Noon

Welcome to My Web — Eisenhower Park: Oct. 8, 7-9 PM

Sponsored by San Antonio Natural Areas, www.sanaturalareas.org

WILD! Wednesdays

At **Friedrich Wilderness Park**, 21395 Milsa: Family oriented, target ages 7–11 yrs; \$5/class, max \$10/family. *Extraordinary Experiences in Nature!*

Water Water Everywhere — Aug. 10, 9:30–11:30 AM

Chompers & Clompers — Aug. 17, 9:30–11:30 AM

Medina River Natural Area Second Saturday Programs

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

Sep. 10, 9–11 AM — **Mussel Watch**

Oct. 8, 9 AM–Noon — **7th Annual Fall Fest**

Sept. 24 & Oct. 29, 8 AM–Noon — **Viva Voluntarios!**

Volunteer Days at MRNA—help beautify your natural area!

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.

Sept. 3, 9–11 AM — **Fall Gardening** w/Charles Bartlett

Oct. 1, 9–11 AM — **Butterfly Beat** w/Monika Maeckle

More info at www.sanaturalareas.org,

www.philhardbergerpark.org or www.sanantonio.gov.

Grass Identification Class

with Dr. Floyd Waller (2 sessions)

Fridays, Sept. 9th & 16th, 9 AM–Noon (class/field sessions)

Learn from THE grass expert, Dr. Floyd Waller. Dr. Waller has a Ph.D. in grass systematics from Texas A&M. Classroom session is at the SoL Center, 300 Bushnell. Field trip is at Crownridge Canyon Natural Area, 7222 Luskey Blvd., San Antonio. Fee/reservations: \$35; contact the SoL Center at 210.732.9927. Class size limited. Approved for Master Naturalist advanced training credit hours.

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. Everyone welcome!

Government Canyon State Natural Area

For more information or reservations for any of the GCSNA programs, 210.688.9055 ext. 291 or reservations@friendsofsgc.org. Programs can include these topics and more: Haiku Hikes, Mountain Biking, Camping Skills, Ethnobotany, Compass & Orienteering. Here's a sampling of what's happening in August:

August 20 — *Explore the Canyon*

August 27 — Family Fun at Government Canyon!

More info: www.friendsofsgc.org

Cibolo Nature Center

140 City Park Dr., Boerne. Information:

www.cibolo.org/calendar.

830.249.4616 or nature@cibolo.org

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

10750 Pleasanton Rd., San Antonio TX 78221

210.628.1639

www.mitchelllakeaudubon.org

Connecting People with Nature

MLAC Docent Training Program

If you enjoy being outdoors, bird-watching, gardening, working with children, or sharing your love of nature with others, then you will feel right at home at Mitchell Lake. Whatever your talents and interests, we have an opportunity for you! Docent training is a 5-week course that will be held every Saturday morning from 9 AM–2 PM starting Aug. 20, 2011. Training includes history of Mitchell Lake, bird and plant identification, wildlife management, nature center procedures, and educational nature interpretation. Cost \$35; lunch provided. Info: Michelle Eckman, Education Manager, 210.628.1639 or meckman@audubon.org.

More at MLAC:

Aug. 6 & 13, 8:30–11:30 AM: **Community Volunteer Days**

Sept. 10, Time TBD: **Best Trees for San Antonio**

Sept. 17, 8:30–11:30 AM: **Kids Birding 101**

Oct. 1, Time TBD: **Native Plant Walk**

Oct. 22, 9 AM–4 PM: **Annual Fall Wildlife Festival and Plant Sale!** Great activities focused on nature for all ages!

San Antonio Audubon Society Programs

Thursdays, 7 PM, Lion's Field, 2809 Broadway
Sept. 1, 7 PM, **Feathered Dinosaurs and the Evolution of Ornamentation in Female Birds**, with Troy Murphy, assistant professor of Behavioral Ecology and Ornithology at Trinity University.

Oct. 6, 7 PM, **Birds of India** with SAAS Member Ron Huffman. More info on SAAS at www.saaudubon.org.



GREEN SPACES ALLIANCE

Picture Your World Youth Photography Workshops

The "Picture Your World" youth photography program will be kicking off the 2011-2012 season on September 25th at the **San Antonio Botanical Gardens**. This year **Green Spaces** will be hosting two *adult* Picture Your World workshops as well — the first being on October 16 at **Government Canyon**. Keep checking the website for updates and more information! You can also view the [list of winners and honorable mentions](#) from this year's contest on-line. Winners will be on display at the Brook Hollow Library. www.greensatx.org

Bring Solar Home

Sign-up for free estimates.



SolarSanAntonio will connect you with three qualified solar installers who will contact you, conduct a site evaluation, and provide you with free solar estimates. Save money with rebates, tax credits, and financing. SolarSanAntonio is here to help! Contact 210.22.SOLAR (76527) or www.solarsanantonio.org.

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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.

Amazing Butterflies Exhibit

San Antonio Botanical Garden

555 Funston at N. New Braunfels, San Antonio

Amazing Butterflies! Explore this interactive maze to learn about the incredible life cycle of butterflies and the surprising challenges they face every day! Adventure through the leaves, move like a caterpillar, discover unusual friendships and avoid predatory wasps, before transforming into a butterfly and taking flight on the zip line. **Grand Opening Weekend:** Sept. 17-18; exhibit continues through January 8, 2012. More information: 210.829.5100 or www.sabot.org.

Alamo Area Master Naturalists

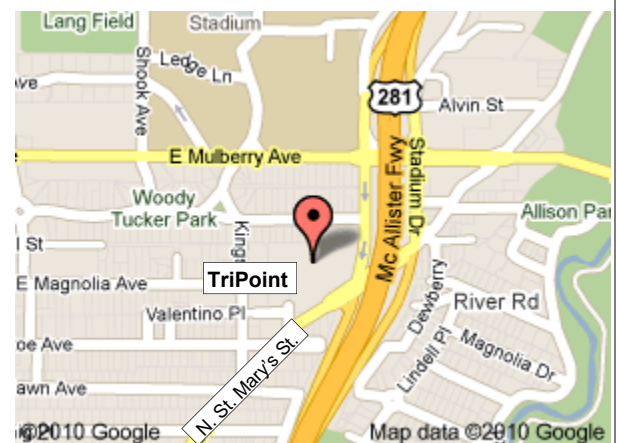
Master Naturalists are volunteers dedicated to the conservation, preservation and restoration of our natural resources, promoting ecological education for all ages. Join the Fall 2011 class and become a Master Naturalist! Afternoon classes will be held Thursdays, Sept. 8th to Nov. 10th, plus four morning field trips. Applications and information at www.txmn.org/alamo.

Does Your Plate Show What Drives You?



With a conservation license plate you make a statement every time you hit the road, while also giving to a cause you care about. So show what drives you! Put a conservation license plate from Texas Parks and Wildlife on your vehicle, motorcycle, RV or boat trailer. Plates cost \$30, and \$22 of every purchase goes into a dedicated account at TPWD to help fund conservation efforts. **Order yours today!** www.conservation-plate.org

September-October BAS Programs 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

Aug-Oct 2011

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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.

GREEN SPACES ALLIANCE 2011 ANNUAL FALL GALA

The 2011 Green Spaces Alliance Gala will be held Thursday, October 13th on the banks of the San Antonio River. This year we will be celebrating the "Picture Your World Program". Green Spaces will be honoring the achievements of the San Antonio River Authority and the River Oversight Committee, with honorary co-chairs including Mayor Emeritus Lila Cockrell and Irby Hightower. Sponsorship and ticket information at www.greensatx.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: _____

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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.