



November 2011

President's Perspective

Finally! A terrific movie for birders! IF it's still around somewhere, plan on seeing "The Big Year" starring Steve Martin, Jack Black and Owen Wilson. This movie came out in October and we had to go to Conroe to see it, but it is definitely worth even a trip to Houston. The movie is based on the book, "THE BIG YEAR: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession", in which journalist Mark Obmascik recounts the 1998 North American Big Year. A big year is a competition between birders to see who can see (or hear) the most species within a single calendar year...and 1998 was one of the biggest! The movie is humorous and heartwarming in addition to the focus on birds. If you've missed it in the theater, think about reading the book while you wait for it to come out on DVD! Carol Reed

Huntsville Audubon

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
P. O. Box 6818
Huntsville, Texas 77340

Our Mission

To increase our community's awareness of the natural world and the need for its preservation, through education and the active enjoyment of birds and other wildlife.

Officers

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Our Website: <http://www.huntsvilleaudubon.org/>

Programs and Events

November Meeting: Our meeting will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2011, at Fire Station #2. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. with a light supper, followed by our meeting and program at 7:00. The main course for our meal will be **TORTILLA BEAN SOUP**, provided by Brenda, Anne and Carol, with board members filling in some essentials. As always, side dishes and desserts are appreciated. **We almost ran out of food in September** thanks to the great attendance, so let's be prepared. Thanks so much for all you do!!

November Program: Our speaker at the meeting will be **Ashley Bogrand**, graduate student at SHSU. Her program will be "Predator recognition in the Carolina Wren." This is a follow-up to a program Ashley gave last year with new information from her more recent research. From Ashley: "Predation is the leading cause of nest failure in birds. This leads to a variety of responses used by birds to prevent predation from occurring. If birds are able to recognize the different types of predators, it could lead to a quicker, more specific reaction that would be more beneficial for survival. We use Carolina Wrens as a model species to study predator recognition and predator specific responses."

November Field Trip: Our field trip this month will be a **birding trip to [Stubblefield Lake Recreation Area](#)**. If you are reading the electronic version of the newsletter, you can follow the hyperlink to learn more about this natural paradise! We plan to meet at **7:00 a.m. in the Walker County Annex parking lot**. There will be more information and a sign-up sheet at the meeting. If you don't plan on carpooling and need directions to Stubblefield, call **Carol at 936-295-3958**.

In case you're wondering why we're starting off the field trip year with a number of local birding trips, there is a method to our madness! Every year after the Christmas Bird Count, I hear several members say they wish they would have had more opportunities to polish their birding skills before the big day, so here you have it

Wear your walking shoes, and bring binoculars and your field guide. There will be a couple of extra pairs of binoculars available for the field trip in case anyone needs them. For more information, call Carol at 295-3958.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking Account \$1,078.79
(\$468 to Workman Publishing for calendars has not cleared yet)

Memorial Conservation Fund \$4,160.65

2011 Christmas Bird Count

Huntsville Audubon will hold the **2011 Dr. Jimmie Long Memorial Christmas Bird Count** on **Saturday, December 17, 2011**. This year will mark the 112th occurrence of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in the United States and the 35th for Huntsville Audubon. National Audubon Society reports that “the Christmas Bird Count’s birth on Christmas Day of 1900 with 27 observers in 25 locations across Canada and the United States the Count has grown to include well over 50,000 counters at 2000 locations each year from above the Arctic Circle to the waters of the Drake Passage off Tierra del Fuego.”

The CBC began as an alternative to the holiday tradition known as the Christmas “Side Hunt”, when competitors would go to the fields and forests to see who could bag the most feathered and furry creatures. Ornithologist Frank Chapman proposed a new holiday tradition, a Christmas bird census, to count the birds instead of shooting them.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey and the Great Backyard Bird Count, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It’s not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. We will divide participants according to ability to cover our reporting area. And remember, we need volunteers of all ability levels, so don’t think that your birding skills are not good enough! **There will be a sign-up sheet at the regular meeting on November 17th or call Carol at 936-295-3958.**

We will meet at the Shipley’s Donuts on Highway 30 at **7:30 am** on Saturday morning, December 17th and divide into teams and assign areas. The Spaghetti Dinner and Count Tally will be held at 6:00 pm at Pauline Blackard’s home at 3819 Spring Drive (Thanks, Pauline!). For more information, please call **Carol at 936-295-3958.**



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