



GULF CROSSINGS

PARTNERING TO SAVE BIRDS AND CLEAN HABITATS

By Amanda Hackney

Owner/Consultant

Black Cat GIS and Biological Services

Back in early 2012, I had just returned to my home state of Texas and had started a new job on the coast. My mentor in Virginia mentioned this biologist that I should meet, some gal that worked on American Oystercatchers (which were one of my first species to love) and knew the area well. And that, after a first meeting to go out on the boat to monitor in West Bay, is how I fell in with Sue Heath and GCBO. (FYI- she was not impressed by my field footwear that day. I had been on the Mid-Atlantic coast working on nice, sandy beaches and was woefully ignorant of Galveston “oyster shell only” terrain.)

I founded Black Cat GIS and Biological in 2016 to provide spatial mapping and field research assistance to nonprofits, governmental agencies, and environmentally related businesses. Black Cat has worked on an incredible variety of projects: from surveying wintering plover, monitoring for endangered species during construction projects, to digging in nasty bayous to collect marine debris and more! I have been incredibly grateful for the opportunities I’ve had, thanks to the amazing conservation community in the Upper Texas coast.

Black Cat has worked with GCBO on several great projects. Most recently we completed a sea level rise, risk analysis for intertidal reef locations where GCBO has been collecting bird use data. An additional project involved mapping reef in the West Galveston Bay area, with GCBO compiling data on shorebird foraging/ roosting activity and the University of Houston completing oyster surveys on identified sites.

Black Cat has been involved in marine debris projects from our first year in business. We are proud to be a member of the Partners in Litter Prevention group, who worked to create a marine debris action plan for the Houston-Galveston area (www.donttrashagoodthing.org/). Currently Black Cat is partnering with HARC and Keep Texas Beautiful on another litter project called Take 2 for Texas (www.take2fortexas.com). We are developing citizen science methodology for rapid assessment of trash for a statewide project as well as conducting shoreline surveys along bayous, streams, and beaches. My interns and I collect and tally every single piece of trash on a 100 foot transect, and one recent survey at the Texas City Dike netted 299 plastic bottle caps in one transect! If the dike is about 5 miles long and we found that many caps every 100 feet of the western facing beach, that could mean over 78,900 bottle caps could be sitting in the sand there!

Black Cat is excited to begin work on a new marine debris project with GCBO and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC). GCBO, ABC and many other stakeholders will work to directly reduce trash accumulating on coastal beaches. This effort will include a strategic, coordinated education and outreach campaign to engage local communities, stakeholders, and natural resource managers whose coastal lands and areas are impacted by trash and plastic pollution.

Map on page 11



Amanda Hackney, owner of Black Cat GIS and Biological Services.

Photo by Susan Heath



Interns Ashley and Dillon sorting trash collected at the Texas City Dike on a transect.

Photo by Amanda Hackney

Masthead photo:
Taylor Bennett holding the first Wilson's Plover chick banded this past season on Matagorda peninsula.

Photo by Morgan Barnes

DIRECTOR'S VIEW

MARTIN HAGNE

Reinventing, adjusting, changing... all words describing the last six months at GCBO. Who would have thought that a pandemic would appear and change our daily lives and work in such major ways! With all the horrible health issues it is causing, the financial and personal stress, the economic downturn, the last six months have made us look at so many facets of our work at GCBO. And it has indeed made us reinvent, adjust, and change. Giving us the opportunity to find ways to still do our work, both in the field and "office", reach all of you and offer programs, and find ways to still stay financially viable.

We are once again back in the field doing most of our normal avian research work. We are taking turns each day working in the headquarters office for at least some presence there, while others are still working from home. Each of our public programs has been postponed to later dates, cancelled, or turned into virtual online events. However, we have been very busy adding new online programs such as Bird Bash back in July, our awesome Bird School for homeschooling (or classrooms), the new online Nature Store and plant sales, and wonderful and fun Educational Videos on YouTube. I must say that the pandemic has "forced" us to be exceptionally creative and innovative, adding all these programs and events using online media... which in turn has allowed us to reach tens of thousands of new GCBO participants, and hopefully supporters.

Another reality is that funding, understandably, is harder to find. Add the near miss Hurricane Laura (near miss for us) that has devastated southwestern Louisiana and parts of southeastern Texas, and resources are slimmer than normal. If you can help out with an extra donation or online store sale we appreciate your support very much! For the Birds!

GCBO ONLINE NATURE STORE

Those who have visited our headquarters in Lake Jackson might already know this, but we have a Nature Store! This little store helps us earn funds to keep our conservation work going and also helps us get our name out there (on the front of T-shirts). But now the Nature Store is even better because it's online. Now you can get your GCBO hats, shirts, patches and more at <https://www.gcbo.org/connect/support-us/nature-store/>.

Check it out!



Show your love for birds and support for GCBO by wearing one of our baseball caps, now available on our online store.

Photo by Celeste Silling



Ruby-throated Hummingbirds with Tropical Salvia, artwork by Cin-Ty Lee, turned into a GCBO T-Shirt.

Shop at our online store!



SAVE A TREE AND SOME \$!

We are trying to go as paperless as we can to save some trees and quite a bit on printing and mailing costs. We would love if you would let us email you instead of slow mailing a hard copy! That includes your future copies of the Gulf Crossings. Please email or call Tricia to say: "Hey, GCBO, please start emailing me things! Here is my email..." Thanks! tpatton@gcbo.org

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CHANGES IN LATITUDE: THE VALLEY MOVES NORTH

BY RON WEEKS, GCBO BOARD SECRETARY



Tropical Kingbird recently found on Quintana Island.

Photo by Melissa Crookshank

The first time I moved to Texas on a temporary work assignment back in 1985, I wasted no time in getting to “the Valley”. Everyone knew that the Rio Grande Valley bordering Mexico was the place that one had to go to get colorful tropical lifers like Great Kiskadee, Green Jay, White-tipped Dove, Couch’s Kingbird, Olive Sparrow, Cave Swallow, Plain Chachalaca, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, and even White-winged Dove. The Upper Texas Coast was where one went to get neotropical migrants at places like High Island and more locally in Brazoria County, Freeport City Park and nearby Quintana Island.

Fast forward to August 1st, 2020...The sun has yet to rise and I am birding a small patch of trees near the north end of the Quintana bridge. I suddenly hear a twittering sound that sounds just like a Tropical Kingbird, a species split from Couch’s Kingbird back in 1983 and now known to be a common Valley resident. I dial up the twittering call on my iPhone and soon I am looking at Brazoria’s first documented Tropical Kingbirds. After alerting the local birding community, others add the bird to their lists and the comment, “It’s about time”, is voiced. The Tropical Kingbird has become the latest of the Valley specialties that now can be seen in the county where GCBO is headquartered.

Prior to the kingbird, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and White-winged Doves have become common nesters. Cave Swallows nest under the Buffalo Camp Bayou bridge near the GCBO headquarters. Juvenile Couch’s Kingbirds and scattered adults were found in Freeport this summer. Great Kiskadee’s have been seen and heard near Demi-John for the last 4 years. White-tipped Doves are now apparently nesting and being heard annually at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge since 2018. And another rare bird, GCBO Executive Director and former Valley resident, Martin Hagne, has moved north and become a local permanent resident.

So just what is going on? The most obvious hypothesis is a warming climate is shifting many species’ ranges northward. One can also argue it is just birds taking advantage of available habitats; after all, species like Cooper’s Hawk, Broad-winged Hawks, and Tree Swallows have expanded their range southward to the Upper Texas Coast during this same period. Whatever the reason(s), it continues. Other species such as Olive Sparrow and Brown-crested Flycatcher have crept around Texas’ Coastal Bend as breeders and should be residents here soon. Green Jays and Audubon’s Orioles might not be far behind as the there appears to be no habitat barrier blocking their way. We’ll just have to keep watching and listening for that next Valley arrival.



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GCBO is a registered charity through Kroger’s Community Rewards Program. This means that you can register your Kroger Plus Card online and select GCBO as the organization of your choice. Every time you use your Kroger Plus Card, Kroger will donate a portion back to GCBO! This is an easy way to support GCBO while you shop – your donations help us continue to protect birds and birding habitat around the Gulf Coast and beyond. To register your Plus Card go to:

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Our charity number is DN782.

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for this year’s Virtual XHX!

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BLACK SKIMMERS IN WEST GALVESTON AND EAST MATAGORDA BAYS

BY SUSAN HEATH

This year we monitored three natural colonies of Black Skimmers, one in West Galveston Bay and two in East Matagorda Bay. Skimmers began arriving at these sites in early April and by late April there were nests in both locations.

In West Galveston Bay, the colony is on a long skinny island called Struve Luci. The skimmers nest on one end which is higher than the rest of the island. This is the most productive colony in that bay and at times is the only colony in that bay. We counted an average of 600 skimmers throughout the season but not all of them were nesters. There is some evidence that one- and two-year old's, that aren't old enough to breed, hang out at colonies through the nesting season. Nests peaked on June 1 at 149 and steadily declined after that. In mid-May, I was approached by a resident that lives along the shoreline near this colony, Kevin Sommers. He had been keeping a watchful eye on the colony and reported that people were going on the island at night to flounder fish and disturbing the birds. I believe this caused many nests to fail in June. With the help of the local game warden, this issue was resolved but the colony barely had time to recover before high tides from Hurricane Hanna washed away the remaining nests and some of the chicks. We estimate only 30 chicks fledged this year compared to over 200 last year.

In East Matagorda Bay, the highest count of adults for both colonies combined was only 200 birds and the highest nest count was 50. The colony at the area known as the Oyster Farm had disturbance issues again from a Great Blue Heron nesting on the island. This caused the birds to abandon the area as they did last year. The colony at Old Gulf Cut seemed to be doing well but we never saw any chicks and then in early August high tides from Hurricane Hanna overwashed the islands. After that the birds abandoned the area so no chicks fledged in East Matagorda Bay at all.

Having only 30 chicks fledge from West Galveston Bay down to East Matagorda Bay is devastating for the Texas skimmer population and this is why we continue to monitor them. This species continues to struggle in natural colonies which makes the Dow Colony all the more important for their survival.



Banded skimmer chick K08.

Photo by Alan Wilde



Two just hatched skimmer chicks.

Photo by Alan Wilde



A skimmer colony in West Galveston Bay.

Photo by Alan Wilde

GCBO BIRDING TRIPS

BY MARTIN HAGNE

Come birding with GCBO, and our Executive Director Martin Hagne! We are having a great time birding, exploring, enjoying some extraordinary scenery, dining on local cuisine, and of course getting great birds! We always hook up with at least one local guide for the best experience. Here are our upcoming destinations, but hurry, our trips are selling out fast!! You can get more information at www.gcbo.org or send Martin an email at mhagne@gcbo.org

Boreal Winter Birding — Duluth, Minnesota
February 3-8, 2021 **SOLD OUT!**

Oregon Birding
June 19-26, 2021 – New Trip - **Spaces still available!**

Southeast Arizona Birding
August 16-23, 2021 – **SOLD OUT!**

Cuba Birding Exploration
October 14-25, 2021 – **SOLD OUT!**

OREGON BIRDING TOUR

Come explore Oregon's beauty and its abundance of diverse birds along with GCBO's Executive Director, Martin Hagne. This wonderful trip includes six full days of birding, and the opportunity to use the beautiful Sister Bend area as our base for at least two-three nights. And for the Central Oregon portion we will visit all of the primary habitats of this sub-region which include montane and sub-montane fir-pine forests, drier pine-juniper forests and the high desert sagebrush steppe, over the first couple days and leave the last day for clean-up of any target species that we may have missed. We will travel in two vans for comfort, guided by two wonderful expert local bird guides. Dave Irons and Shawneen Finnegan live in the Portland area and know Oregon and the southwest birds better than anyone!

Tour Includes:

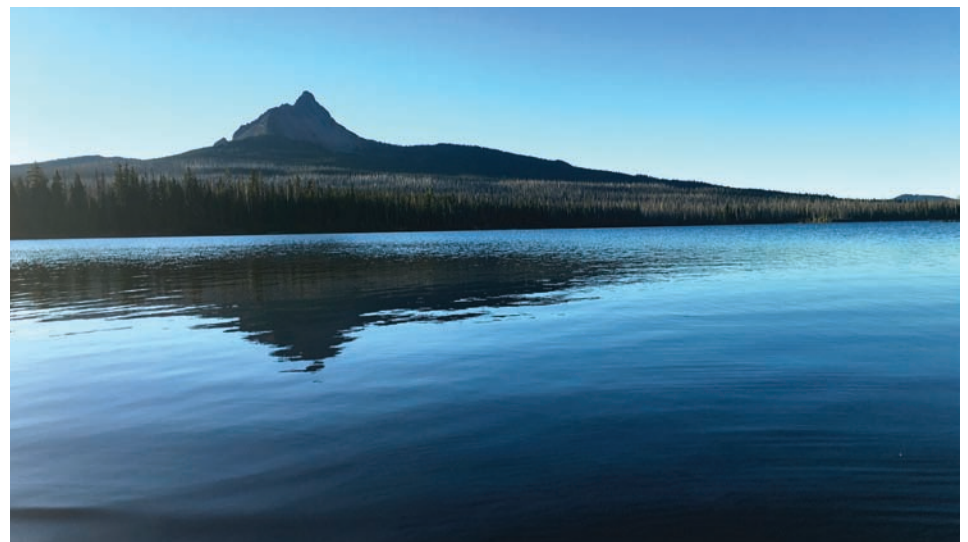
Hotel rooms, van transportation, birding guides, entry fees, and van snacks.

Max Participants: 12

Single: \$1,680.00 (does NOT include airfare or meals/drinks)

Double: \$1,450.00 (does NOT include airfare or meals/drinks)

Photos by Dave Irons



OYSTERCATCHER MIRACLE CHICKS AND MORE

BY SUSAN HEATH

We finished another season of oystercatcher monitoring in early July. This year we monitored birds in Galveston, West Galveston, Bastrop, Drum and East Matagorda Bays which totaled 43 pairs. Despite Covid-19 restrictions we were able to continue monitoring but not on a weekly basis like we usually do. We found 55 nests. Of those, 12 hatched and 22 chicks fledged for a yearly productivity of .58 which is better than average. That's a pretty good year for these birds that struggle to raise their chicks in challenging conditions.

There are always a few good tales to tell by the end of the season and this year is no exception. The first big news is that three pairs fledged three chicks and two of those pairs were on the same island. That is unprecedented in my 10 years of experience. It is unusual for even one pair to fledge three chicks so for three of them to manage it is fantastic. I'm really happy I got to see that!

If you read the Oystercatcher Diaries you will be well acquainted with the antics of FR(ed), a male that I banded in 2015. He's never forgiven me for accidentally catching him a second time when I was trying to catch his mate and he reacts with a lot of fanfare every time we come by to see how he's doing. His original island has eroded away to nothing and he's been moving from island to island trying to find a better spot for years. Finally this year he was able to take over an abandoned territory in a really good spot and he and his unbanded mate fledged two chicks. I'm very happy for him!

Finally, a long time pair, J6 & UF, pulled off a miracle right under my nose. For years, they have tried to nest on a tiny island near Tiki Island and every year their nest gets overwashed because the island is so low. This year they laid their nest early enough in the season that it managed to hatch before there were any high spring tides. I kept my fingers crossed every time we checked on them. Sadly, about two weeks after the nest hatched a high spring tide overwashed the island. When we returned, the adults and chicks were gone. The chicks were far too young to fly so I thought they must have been washed away. The adults did not return to the island and try to nest again though, and that should have been my cue that something was up. Six weeks later Alan Wilde, my main oystercatcher volunteer, was out kayaking and saw UF back on the island with two fledged chicks! How did that happen? The adults must have managed to get the chicks to swim 1/4 mile to one of two larger islands in the area. If they went to the backside of Marker 52, we wouldn't have seen them because we can't get the boat in that area. If they went to North Deer they would have been behind a large breakwater where we wouldn't have seen them either. Neither of these places works for laying a nest but they work fine for raising chicks. It is amazing what these birds do to keep their chicks safe!



UF with two fledged chicks near Tiki Island in June.

Photo by Alan Wilde



Fred and unbanded's chicks.

Photo by Alan Wilde



One of Fred's chicks just after hatching.

Photo by Susan Heath



Texas beaches are riddled with trash. Plastics, metals, and glass litter the sand.

Photo by Celeste Silling

STOPPING PLASTIC LITTER ALONG SHORELINES (SPLASH)

BY CELESTE SILLING

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory has teamed up with the American Bird Conservancy, and Black Cat GIS with grant money from the Environmental Protection Agency¹ for the SPLASH project. Together, we hope to decrease the amount of trash in the marine and beach environments on the Upper Texas Coast.

There is an enormous amount of marine debris in Texas waters and this affects the birds and other wildlife that live in that environment. Many of the shorebirds that we study have been negatively affected by this pollution. For example, the American Oystercatchers that we study have often been found wrapped up in fishing line, which causes damage to the bird and sometimes death.

The SPLASH project has both cleanup and education components. We will be hosting monthly beach and bayou cleanups during which we will also collect trash data. For a long-term effect, we will be educating the public about waste reduction and proper disposal. We hope to raise awareness about what happens to marine debris and the negative effects it has on wildlife.

We hope to bring these lessons into schools and community events, but for now, all lessons will be virtual through our Online Bird School or videos. All of our virtual content is completely free of charge, so check it out and share with a friend! If you are interested in our education programs or volunteering at one of our cleanups, please contact Celeste Silling at csilling@gcbo.org.

¹This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement 01D07120 to American Bird Conservancy. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the EPA endorse trade names or recommend the use of commercial products mentioned in this document.



An American Oystercatcher foot caught in fishing line.

Photo by Alan Wilde

VIRTUAL EVENTS AND VIDEOS

BY CELESTE SILLING

In response to the pandemic, we have made many of our normal events and education programs virtual. Much of this virtual content comes in the form of videos. Gulf Coast Bird Observatory's Youtube channel is now full of educational videos about birds, feeders, conservation, research and more. Our hope with these videos is that people will have fun while learning how to help birds. Our "Bird Window Strikes" video, for example, shows viewers how to easily take care of concussed birds and how to prevent window strikes in the first place.

There are also plenty of birding videos filmed by Sue Heath. These videos are a relaxing look into the lives and behaviors of various birds. For those who don't have these birds in their backyards (or even those who do) it's fun to watch them in the wild.

In place of our normal events such as Xtreme Hummingbird Xravanza and Bird Banding, we have been doing virtual events. This is done through Facebook Live videos. Viewers can watch as we band birds and teach about birds and conservation. We look at the comments section while filming so that we answer any questions out loud, just like at a normal event. The video events are usually 2-4 hours long, but folks can tune in and out as they like. To watch the events live, visit GCBO's Facebook page at the advertised dates and times. Then just click on the live video and enjoy!



Viewers can watch us handle a wide variety of species during Virtual Bird Banding.

Photo by Celeste Silling

LIFE GOES ON FOR BEACH NESTING BIRDS

BY TAYLOR BENNETT

The breeding season was a little different this year due to Covid-19, and the beaches we survey were closed till the end of April. The breeding season officially began on April 24th when we found the first seven nests at Colorado River Mouth Flats (CRMF) on Matagorda Beach and ended August 25th when the last of the Black Skimmer chicks fledged at Dow. The main nesting areas we focused on this year were Bryan Beach, Matagorda Beach, and Dow Chemical Plant A. The main species we monitored were Wilson's Plover, Least Tern, and Black Skimmer.

Disturbance from pipeline construction near Big Flats at Bryan Beach resulted in Wilson's Plovers and Least Terns arriving late. High tides and surges from Tropical Storm Cristobal limited our ability to survey that area as well. We observed five pairs, but no nests, and the Wilson's Plovers were once again unsuccessful for this area.

At Matagorda, Wilson's Plovers nested along Matagorda Peninsula (up to 18 km), CRMF, Three-mile Cut, and Dunes Dr. At CRMF, we managed to find 10 nests and 2 mystery broods (pair with chicks that we were unable to find a nest for). Only two nests ended up hatching. We banded 4 out of 6 chicks; however, only one banded chick fledged for that whole area. We found 11 nests and 12 mystery broods on Matagorda Peninsula. Only 4 nests ended up hatching. We observed 29 chicks and banded 22 of them. Only 6 chicks from Matagorda Peninsula fledged. Three-mile cut and Dunes Dr. were brand new nesting areas for Wilson's Plovers this year. We observed one nest within the Least Tern colony at Dunes Dr. It successfully hatched with two chicks and we were able to band them as well. We located one nest and 2 mystery broods at Three-mile cut. We observed 3 chicks and 2 chicks fledged. Matagorda ended up with a total of 9 fledged chicks with 5 of them banded. We banded a total of 15 adults and 28 chicks.

The Least Terns at Matagorda nested at Three-mile Cut and Dunes Dr. They nested in a completely new area this year at Three-mile Cut. Between the two areas we observed a max of 34 nests. We only observed 7 chicks total which unfortunately didn't make it to fledging. The Dow Least Tern colony only fledged 2 chicks with the highest nest count at 17.

Due to Covid-19, we could not get access to survey the Black Skimmer colony at Dow Plant A in Freeport, Texas. Thankfully we could rely on DOW volunteers to survey for us. According to the data that was collected, they did incredibly well this year. The highest adult count was 1,236 with 96 as the highest nest count observed in one survey. The highest number of fledged chicks observed was 611.

A huge thank you to Morgan Barnes, Susan Heath, Celeste Silling, Ron Weeks, and Keith Wise for helping me out this year.



#30 aka Triton.



Freshly hatched chicks, that are now banded!

Affectionately "named" Janet, this female is protecting her brood.

Photos by Taylor Bennett

GCBO MIGRATIONS—STAFF & BOARD UPDATES

FAREWELL

Denise Kaplan

Denise Kaplan has been our part-time grant writer for about 5 years, but says she is now ready to kick back and just enjoy life and not worry about all those grant deadlines! We were sad to see Denise leave as she has done a wonderful job helping GCBO secure grants for so many projects! She has truly helped GCBO step it up a notch, finding funding for projects, programs, and operating funds. Thankfully she won't go into total hiding... and has kindly offered to occasionally assist us. Denise deserves a lot of praise and many thanks! Thank you for all you have done for GCBO, Denise!

Morgan Barnes

Morgan joined us as our Biology Intern in January assisting with all our avian research projects. Due to the Covid19 situation she stayed with us for two terms and really got involved with so many facets of GCBO. Morgan grew up in Chicago, and majored in Ecology, Behavior and Evolution, with a minor in Conservation Biology at UCLA. After graduating, she worked at the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge, in the Florida Keys removing invasive species, and in Kodiak, Alaska, as an Avian Monitoring Intern. Morgan reported that she enjoyed her time at GCBO, where she saw Whooping Cranes her first day of work. She ultimately plans to attend graduate school, and then enjoy a long career in wildlife conservation.

WELCOME

Karon Smith – Development Director



Welcome to Karon Smith, our new Development Director. Karon was born in Cuero, Texas, and raised in the Rio Grande Valley. She attended the Texas Women's University where she studied Business Management. In 1981 she returned to the "Valley" and worked in the oil and gas industry, later opening an environmental business from 1984 to 2014, implementing new Texas environmental policies and standards. She was involved in establishing and growing several youth organizations and charities, serving as Chairman and Co-Chairman on several boards and fundraising committees for nearly 30 years. Karon has a passion for connecting donors to the causes they care about.

Nicole Ekstrom – Grant Writer

This summer GCBO welcomed Nicole Ekstrom as our grant writer. She is a native of Port Isabel, TX. She left the Rio Grande Valley for approximately fifteen years and recently returned in 2015 to start a family. She received a Bachelor's of Science in Marine Science from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in 2004 and a Master's in Marine Resource Management from Texas A&M University Galveston in 2006. Nicole has fifteen years of experience with grant writing and management, habitat restoration, non-profit management, and designing environmental education programs. Welcome aboard, Nicole!



Brad Lirette – Board Member



We welcomed a new board member last month, Bradford Lirette. Brad is a licensed Professional Engineer with 30+ years of leadership experience in an industrial setting, and a member of Texas Board of Professional Engineers. Since 2013 he has been working with Marathon Petroleum Company as a Technical Services Supervisor. He served in the United States Navy as a Nuclear Trained Electrician -Submarine Qualified. He has also served on the Texas Ornithological Society as a Vice President and Regional Director. Brad gained his degree from the University of Houston as a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering back in 2001. He's a father of three children who willingly travel for birds and adventure. An active birder for 20 years, Brad is here to help us help the birds, and we're glad to have him on board!

Sarah Belles – Biology Intern

We would like to welcome our new intern Sarah Belles to the team! Sarah is from Nacogdoches, Texas but has spent the past four years in Denton at the University of North Texas. Though her graduation ceremony didn't end up being exactly what she imagined, she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Ecology for Environmental Science this year. Many of her professors and teacher's assistants had interests focused in avian research and conservation, which definitely helped shape her love and appreciation for birds. Throughout her college career, she has volunteered at the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area bird banding station and at several locations with The Nature Conservancy. Sarah is excited to start her journey with GCBO and to expand her knowledge and skills.



Our Vision is a healthy ecosystem with abundant space for birds to survive and thrive around the Gulf of Mexico.

OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS, CONTRIBUTORS, AS WELL AS NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

We would like to give special recognition to the following individuals who donated to our programs or gave towards memberships between February 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020.

Thank you for your vital support.

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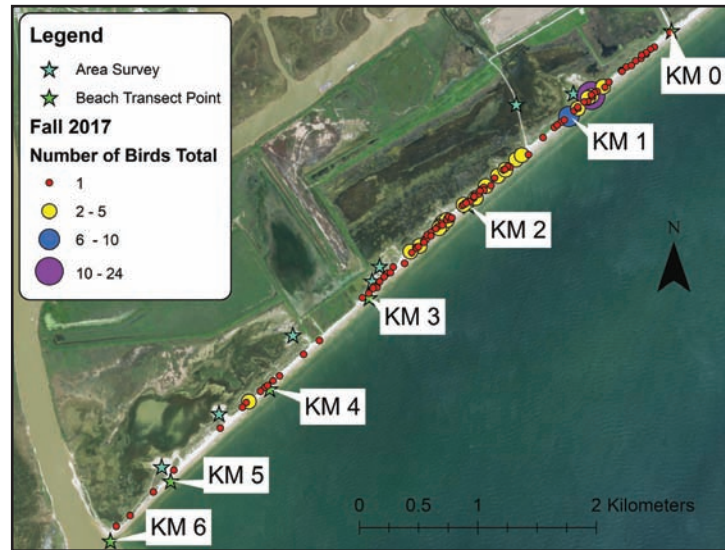
Our volunteers continue to amaze and impress us with their dedication to GCBO and our shared mission. Whatever our needs, there always seem to be someone willing and able to step up and make it happen. From February 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020, volunteers contributed an amazing 2067 hours to the conservation of birds and habitat and to increasing public awareness of the value and need for conservation.

Thank you for all you do for birds on behalf of GCBO!

Bay Abdullah • Bill & Monica Ahlstrom
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PARTNERING TO SAVE BIRDS AND CLEAN HABITATS

(continued from page 1)



Map example from Fall 2017 monitoring wintering plover on Bryan Beach for GCBO. By Amanda Hackney

FLIGHT FOREVER LEGACY CIRCLE

LEAVE A LEGACY...FOR THE BIRDS!

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory formed the "Flight Forever Legacy Circle" to ensure the long-term conservation of our migratory birds and their habitats. Perpetuate your love of birds and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory beyond your lifetime. By making a planned gift – through your will or estate plan, a bequest, a trust, a retirement plan, or an insurance policy – you can create a personal legacy that will have a strong and lasting impact for birds and conservation into the future.

If you have already included Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in your estate plans, we hope you will let us know so that we may honor you in our Legacy Circle membership. Your willingness to be listed as a member encourages others.

However, if you wish to remain anonymous please let us know of your plans on a confidential basis.

Legacy Circle members receive exclusive invitations to special events and trips. If you are considering a Legacy gift, please email or call Martin at GCBO to discuss your plans. 979-480-0999 • mhagne@gcbo.org



Now you can support GCBO through your Amazon shopping and it doesn't cost you a thing. All you have to do is sign up GCBO as your Amazon Smile recipient. Just go to www.smile.amazon.com and enter Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in the charity box. On the next screen click Select next to our name and you're all set.

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299 West Highway 332
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UPCOMING GCBO EVENTS

Save the date for these upcoming GCBO events and check our website and social media for details and changes. www.gcbo.org

Bird Banding:

Held at our headquarters on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 8 to noon, this event allows the public to watch as Robert and Kay Lookingbill band birds. This long-term research project allows us to collect data about local and migratory birds, and it's an excellent opportunity to see birds up close. Learn about birds, why we study them, and why they matter! This event might be held virtually on our Facebook page during COVID times. Upcoming dates: 10/17, 11/21, 12/19, 1/16, 2/20, 3/20.

Smith Point Hawk Watch:

The Hawk Watch at Smith Point began on August 15th at the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area in Smith Point, Texas and will continue through November 30th. 20+ species of raptors will be coming through the area and this is your chance to learn about their southward migrations. This is an amazing sight to see, and you can be a part of it by helping us count birds! This is a free event and volunteers are on site daily from 8 am to 4 pm. to count birds and answer questions.

Experience Auction:

Our Experience Auction will open on November 20 and end on December 11, just in time for Christmas shopping! Our online auction webpage will be stocked with unique experiences and other wonderful products. This year's auction will be tailored to the current global situation, so we've been thinking outside the box. Get your loved ones something they will never forget...or treat yourself! Go online to our website in November and bid while supporting GCBO's many conservation programs!

Our Mission

Protect birds and their habitats
around the Gulf of Mexico and beyond.

Brew on the Bayou:

Previously scheduled for March 21, 2020 and then moved to November 7, Brew has been rescheduled for March 27, 2021. Visitors will sample specialty brews from local breweries as well as wines. This event features live music, food from local food trucks, a live raptor show, pontoon boat rides, and a silent auction. Our beautiful wooded grounds will be lit by torchlight making it a perfect spot to enjoy the brews, the food and the music! \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door.

Spring Fling:

From April 3 through May 8 2021, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory will be hosting our annual Spring Fling at Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. See the wide variety of migratory bird species as they arrive at stopover habitat along the coast! We will have knowledgeable volunteers and staff on hand at Quintana to answer your questions, keep a daily list, and sell water, snacks, and field guides. The event is open from 9 am – 4 pm daily.



YOU CAN REACH US BY EMAIL:

mhagne@gcbo.org
sheath@gcbo.org
tpatton@gcbo.org
tbennett@gcbo.org
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