



# GULF CROSSINGS

TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS  
 CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER  
 PROVIDING EDUCATION, PUBLIC OUTREACH, AND  
 VOLUNTEER SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF OUR AREA'S NATURAL RESOURCES  
 By Mickey Dufilho



The Texas Master Naturalist Program was established in 1998, and the Brazoria County Chapter, Cradle of Texas (COT), was started in 2001. The mission of the program is “to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.” The program is sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

To become a Texas Master Naturalist, each volunteer must successfully complete a 40-hour training program including field and classroom instruction. In subsequent years, members complete at least 8 hours of advanced training and donate 40 hours of volunteer service to maintain their certification.

To carry out the Master Naturalist mission, the chapter establishes a Partnership Agreement with organizations that agree to work with the Chapter to provide support and/or facility resource use. The COT Chapter signed a partnership agreement with GCBO in 2011.



Beach Sweep at Quintana County Park.  
 Photo by Jimmy Salinas

Since that time, Master Naturalist volunteers have aided GCBO in numerous projects including:

- Native Plant Nursery maintenance
- Habitat restoration at GCBO and QNBS
- Construction and maintenance of trails at GCBO and QNBS
- Participation in Christmas Bird Counts, Smith Point Hawk Watch and Spring Fling
- Cleanup days at GCBO and QNBS
- Participation in Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza
- Participation in field surveys, banding or tagging

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Kids Day at Brazos Mall.  
 Photo by Karen Mosis



Brazoria County Summer Library Program – Sea and Shore.  
 Photo by Mary Schwartz

Masthead photo:  
 Brian Kolthammer and  
 David Heinicke installing an upgrade  
 to the Motus tower at TNC's Mad  
 Island Marsh Preserve

# DIRECTOR'S VIEW

MARTIN HAGNE

It finally rained here today after a long absence of any notable rainfall. It seems much of the country has been experiencing drought conditions, record heat, and hot cloudless skies. Habitats normally teeming with the sounds of insects, along with small mammals and reptiles, can often seem so quiet in these times. It is especially noticeable in places without any natural wet habitats such as lakes, ponds, rivers, bayous, marshes, etc. And then I noticed a stark decline of bird species in those places... proof of how everything in nature is somehow attached, dependent, symbiotic, to something else in nature. As John Muir so eloquently spoke... "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." A quote that's often been miss-quoted as... "When you tug at a single thing in nature, we find it attached to the rest of the world." Same meaning, and so very true! Sometimes we all forget that any changes we make in nature will affect something else. Even when we try to do good! There is such a delicate balance between everything in existence! It's something we try to consider here at GCBO when we do our conservation work. We also know that a version of this includes all of you... we can't do this work without you! We are grateful for your so very kind and continued support! Enjoy the rains, I hope they have come your way! And check out our lead story about another of our wonderful partners that help us meet our mission!

## CELEBRATING RAY JOHNSON, GCBO'S FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ray Johnson was hired as GCBO's first Executive Director for the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory Network, which eventually grew into the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. Ray, along with Steve Gast and Jim Stewart, became the founding directors for what later became our current GCBO and a 501(c)3 on its own. There were many dedicated people leading a vision for a bird observatory, rising from the collaborative group of eighth organizations working together in the Upper Texas Coast and Louisiana Chenier Plains. He was tasked with guiding the Texas Nature Conservancy and Houston Audubon's joint partnership, to help start an active observatory. Ray worked tirelessly to establish GCBO as a conservation organization, and began the search for a headquarters location. He was able to secure our first office in the Clear Lake USFWS facility. Ray then established a scientific advisory committee, and worked with Partners in Flight and establish the first GCBO project, mapping the Barataria-Terrebonne wetlands habitats.

Ray labored hard to help GCBO's early years, and when he moved on he left it in good hands with Cecilia Riley, long term GCBO Executive Director (retired), who then took GCBO to the next level and establish its own 501(c)3.

Ray was also a passionate private pilot and an avid bird watcher which took him to many countries. He was a hunter, and a master avian taxidermist with over 30 years' experience, and he donated his collection to Brazosport Museum of Natural Science and several other institutions.

Ray passed away on Aug. 3, 2022, and GCBO owes him a huge debt of gratitude for his dedication to GCBO's early years!



### STAFF

Martin Hagne  
*Executive Director*

Susan Heath  
*Director of Conservation Research*

Tricia Patton  
*Office Manager*

Celeste Silling  
*Education & Outreach Manager*

Taylor Bennett  
*Coastal Biologist*

Joni Flores  
*Development Associate – Grants*

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Gulf Coast Bird Observatory is a 501(c)3  
non-profit organization – Tax ID #76-0553113.

Newsletter Editors: Martin Hagne, Denise Stephens  
Graphic Artist: Susan Chester



Gulf Coast Bird Observatory's **Experience Auction**  
Bidding open Nov 18- Dec 11  
www.GCBO.org

## TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

*(continued from page 1)*

In addition to their work with GCBO, Master Naturalists volunteer throughout the county in multiple venues and activities. For example, we participate in a variety of nature festivals, provide a significant amount of programming for the Brazoria County Library Summer Programs. Volunteers use these public outreach opportunities to educate children and adults about local animals and plants and how to preserve and protect the environment.

- Volunteers also participate in several Citizen Science Projects including:
  - Adopt-A-Loop – COT has adopted The Great Texas Coastal Trail – Upper Texas Coast. Volunteers assist in ensuring that site information along the GTWT is updated and accurate and perform site surveys throughout the year. This information is used by Texas Parks and Wildlife Service to inform visitors about what species to look for when they are at a particular site.
  - COT conducts a monthly Beach Sweep at Quintana Beach where volunteers pick up and record the types of trash collected in Ocean Conservancy's Clean Swell App. This helps scientists and advocates around the world tackle ocean trash on a global scale.
  - Spider Survey of Brazoria County – Members survey various parts of Brazoria County, netting and identifying spider species. Several species new to Brazoria County have been recorded.

Other activities include the removal of invasive Apple Snails at Hudson Woods Unit; trail construction and maintenance at County and State Parks, and Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex; animal support at Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue; hosting at Sea Center Texas and Brazosport Museum of Natural Science; Sea Turtle Patrol; and seed harvesting at Nash Prairie.

Volunteers serve as docents for the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge sponsored Discovery Environmental Education Program at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge for 4th and 7th graders from numerous school districts.

Through 2021, COT members recorded 241,000 volunteer hours. At \$23.00/hour, that equals \$5,543,000 in estimated financial impact for our community since 2001. We know our work with GCBO and other partners has helped our community gain an appreciation for and understanding of natural environments and makes a positive difference in Texas natural resources, now and for the future.

To learn more about Cradle of Texas Master Naturalists, go to <https://txmn.org/tmncot>.



*Bobcat Woods Trail at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.*

*Rebuilt by volunteers.*

*Photo by Mickey Dufilho*

## DOW BLACK SKIMMER UPDATE

BY TAYLOR BENNETT

The Black Skimmer is one of the target species we monitor during beach nesting bird season. We have been fortunate to be able to monitor the Black Skimmer colony at Dow Chemical Plant A in Freeport, Texas since 2015. They nest in large colonies which can be easily disturbed by humans and predators so we count adults, nests and chicks from a safe distance using spotting scopes. We survey the colony until all chicks are fledged. Since 2020, we were not able to survey in person due to Covid-19, but this year we were able to regain access thanks to GCBO board member and volunteer, Michael Heather, who served as our main escort. The first Black Skimmers arrived on the lot on May 4th. Since it was a drought year, the colony was not washed out from rain storms like it has been the past few years. The only rain storm that caused the lot to flood occurred after most



of the chicks had fledged and left. As a result, the colony did fairly well this year, with a high count of adults at 1822 and a max of 415 nests. The number of fledged chicks was 521 with the last chicks fledging on August 23rd. Thank you to Dow for taking good care of the skimmers and the lot, and Michael Heather, Keith Wise, and Levi Patton for escorting and helping us survey this season!

*A group of Black Skimmer adults and chicks cooling off at one of the water troughs at Dow Chemical Plant A, Freeport, TX.*

*Photo taken by Taylor Bennett.*



*Several Black Skimmer adults taking care of their broods of multiple chicks at Dow Chemical Plant A, Freeport, TX.*

*Photo by Michael Heather.*

## BEACH NESTING BIRDS PROJECT 2022

BY TAYLOR BENNETT

This year I was assisted on our Beach Nesting Bird Project by Kenlynn Volz, GCBO biology intern. Through this program we monitor and protect two species of beach nesting birds, the Wilson's Plover and the Least Tern. This year we monitored two sites: Matagorda Beach and Sargent Beach.

At Matagorda, we found Wilson's Plover nesting along Matagorda Peninsula, at Colorado River Mouth Flats (CRMF), and at Three-mile cut. Between these three sites, we observed 23 Wilson's Plover pairs, located 18 nests, and found four mystery broods (pairs with chicks for which we did not locate a nest). Only seven out of 20 chicks survived. We banded nine adults and 11 chicks and equipped nine adults with light-level geolocators to follow their migration. We observed 39 pairs of Least Tern with 91 nests along Matagorda Peninsula and Dunes Dr. and 16 out 36 chicks survived there.

Sargent Beach was divided into two areas: Sargent East and Sargent West. Wilson's Plover and Least Tern were observed nesting on both sides. We observed 35 pairs of Wilson's Plover, located 25 nests, and found 10 mystery broods. Only 16 out of 43 Wilson's Plover chicks survived. We banded 18 adults and 14 chicks and equipped 12 adults with the light-level geolocators. We observed 163 pairs of Least Tern with 431 nests combined and 65 out of 125 chicks survived.

*Least Tern adult protecting its chicks at Dunes Dr.*

*Photo by Taylor Bennett on June 22, 2022 at Matagorda Beach, TX.*



*Kenlynn Volz holding banded Wilson's Plover female (T7) with her banded brood of two chicks held by Taylor Bennett.*

*Photo by Kenlynn Volz on May 17, 2022 at Matagorda Beach, TX.*



# GCBO BIRDING TRIPS

BY MARTIN HAGNE

We offer fabulous and fun experiences while birding with the GCBO! We have several exciting trips lined up each year, and we try to switch them up, and go to places not too many other tour companies go to. We also try to visit the sites of our partners where we have helped conserve land so you can see the work, and birds there. We focus on getting as many species we can on every trip, and we always hire local guides to help us do so. Come join us! A portion of the trip fees goes straight to avian conservation work by GCBO! For more information check our website, or contact Martin at mhagne@gcbo.org



**Oaxaca, Mexico Birding Exploration**  
November 25-Dec. 4, 2022 – **SOLD OUT!**

**Boreal Winter Birding — Duluth, Minnesota**  
February 2024 – Dates and info TBA

**Boreal Winter Birding — Duluth, Minnesota**  
January 31- February 6, 2023 – **SOLD OUT!**  
February 9-14, 2023 – **Only 2 spaces left!**

**Birding Baja Mexico**  
March 2024 - Dates and info TBA

**El Cielo and NE Mexico Birding Trip**  
June 24 - July 1, 2023 - **SOLD OUT!**

**Birding Summer Maine**  
June 2024 – Dates and info TBA

**Cuba Birding Exploration**  
October 12-24, 2023 – **SOLD OUT!**

**Birding Northern Peru and TFFF Trip**  
2024 – Dates and info TBA



# OYSTERCATCHERS MAKE HISTORY!

BY SUSAN HEATH

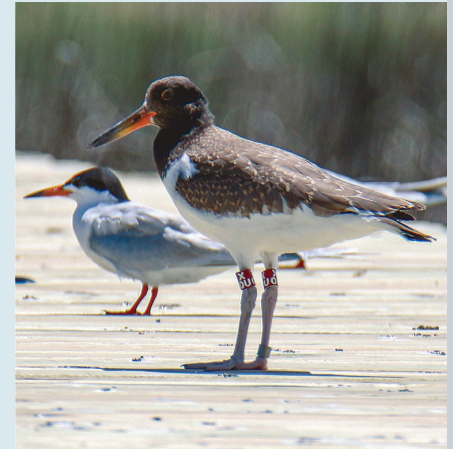
Another season with the oystercatchers has come to an end and thankfully it was a happy ending. We started the season on January 27 when we found the first nest in West Galveston Bay. LT & JA shine again. By the end of February, we had found eight nests and it continued on from there. Overall, we monitored 41 pairs and found 54 nests in West Galveston, Drum, and East Matagorda Bays. There were 37 first nest attempts and 17 re-nest attempts. Twenty-five chicks fledged for an overall productivity of .66 which is above the average of .47.

This season was relatively calm weather wise. There was only one high tide that over washed a couple of nests and those nests were placed poorly anyway. The wind blew 15 to 20 mph out of the south continuously but did not exceed that level long enough to cause problems and there were no tropical storms. Most nest failures were the result of Laughing Gull predation.

This year one pair fledged three chicks, three pairs fledged two chicks, and 15 pairs fledged one chick. One pair in Swan Lake that hasn't fledged a chick since 2013, managed to fledge one this season. Their nesting territory is severely degraded and the only place they have to nest is on the mainland where there are a lot of coyotes. Somehow, they managed to sneak the nest by both us and the coyotes. We did not discover it until the eggs were already hatched and they had two small chicks. In the end they only fledged one chick.

Our oystercatchers made history this year when one pair fledged two chicks but from different nests. American Oystercatchers have never been documented to be double brooded, meaning they fledge chicks from more than one nest in a single season. On South Deer island, F1A & E2A fledged their first chick on April 14 from a one egg nest that we found on February 24th. This chick is banded (X4Y) and it has been hanging around with the gang of youngsters that are too young to breed so we know that it is alive and well. On June 9th we discovered that F1A & E2A had laid a new nest also with one egg. A chick from that egg fledged on August 10th and is banded (X8X). This is worthy of a journal article!

We consulted with Galveston Bay Foundation on an island restoration project in Jones Bay specifically for oystercatchers and learned that project has received funding from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement through the Texas Trustee Implementation Group (TIG). Construction will begin in fall 2023 and I can't wait to see how they like it! We have also been consulting with Audubon Texas about a restoration project at Old Gulf Cut in East Matagorda Bay. The islands there are almost too low for breeding now. Both oystercatcher pairs there over washed on their first nesting attempt. I thought they had given up until in mid-August when I discovered one of the pairs had two small chicks on an island we had not been checking. Oops! Oystercatchers are crafty birds but it is a joy to see them have such a good season!



*LT & JA's chick X0U, the first fledged of 2022.*



*F1A & E2A's famous second chick X8X during banding.*

*Romey Swanson, Barbara Pankratz, and Erin Swanson holding the three chick brood from Swan Lake.*



*Bird Camper Jasmine and her new pet spider.*



*Campers look across the wetlands for hidden birds.*

*Bird Camper Jericho shows off the bird house he made.*

## SUMMER BIRD CAMP 2022

BY CELESTE SILLING

Back in June, we hosted another week of our annual Summer Bird Camp at GCBO, now in its tenth year. Sixteen children spent five days in the forest (and also the air-conditioned classroom) at our headquarters learning about birds and exploring nature.

We packed a lot of activities into those five days, including a visit to the Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue to see rehabilitated wildlife, a field trip to Quintana Beach, and bird banding with the Lookingbills. One of the new activities we added this year was animal tracking. We had the children identify a variety of animal tracks, looking at the shape, size, number of toes, and other variables.

One surprising smash hit was the Golden Orb Weaver spiders that are plentiful on the property. We went on daily nature walks along our trails and half the kids would pick up new spider friends along the way, letting them crawl on their arms and shoulders. Many of them started the week as arachnophobes but were spider lovers by Friday!

As always, we tied up the week with a graduation ceremony, ice cream, and slideshow with photos of all our adventures. We hope that all of our campers had a wonderful time at Bird Camp and we're already looking forward to next year!

A special thanks to all the volunteers and special guests who helped make camp happen: Adam Trujillo, Dana Simon, Ed Barrios, Carol Jones, Andy Dietrich, Kay Lookingbill, Robert Lookingbill, Madi Reed, Ron Reeves, Kathi Reeves, Jackie Hicks, Barbara Yoder, Donald Boulis, and Kim Richardson.



## SPLASH EDUCATION WORK

BY CELESTE SILLING

In partnership with American Bird Conservancy (ABC), Gulf Coast Bird Observatory has been helping to run the SPLASH program. SPLASH (Stopping Plastics and Litter Along Shorelines) is focused on addressing the trash pollution on our shores and creating a cleaner environment for birds, other wildlife, and people. A large part of SPLASH is the education work that we do.

Elizabeth Virgl, the Texas Coastal Education Specialist at ABC, and Celeste Silling, GCBO's Education and Outreach Manager, have been working hard to teach the youth of our area about marine debris. The SPLASH curriculum covers marine debris, how trash travels, how it affects wildlife, and how we can all help mitigate this problem.

Since the SPLASH program started in 2020, we have been working with schools all over the Houston/Galveston region. Our lessons often include a lecture portion followed by a field trip to the beach (or to a grassy area of the school grounds) where students perform a transect to calculate the amount and variety of trash present. These field trips give the students a firsthand look at the marine debris problem, and help them gain field research skills.

If you would like SPLASH to come to your school, feel free to reach out to us! We are always looking to reach new audiences and teach them about this growing problem in our region. To learn more or to contact SPLASH, visit [www.splashtx.org](http://www.splashtx.org) or email Celeste at [csilling@gcbo.org](mailto:csilling@gcbo.org).



*Liz Virgl teaches a group of students from Cleveland Middle School about marine debris.*

*A group of students from Rise Academy clean up Quintana Beach County Park.*

# WILSON'S PLOVER GEOLOCATOR PROJECT YEAR ONE REPORT

BY SUSAN HEATH

In October 2021, we received \$4,500 in funding from the Arthur A. Seeligson Jr. Conservation Fund to purchase 21 light-level geolocators for deployment on adult Wilson's Plovers captured during the breeding season. Light-level geolocators use the time of sunrise and sunset combined with the position of the sun throughout the day to record data continuously, allowing for estimation of a position throughout the life of the device. However, the device must be retrieved from the bird to access the data. Wilson's Plovers are excellent candidates for this technology because they are migratory but return to the same site each year to breed.

Trend data suggests that Wilson's Plover populations are in decline due to human-caused disturbance and habitat loss. This species is listed as high concern in the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan and is considered a surrogate species for other beach nesting birds by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the U.S., they are mostly absent during the non-breeding season but we do not have good data on where they spend the winter.

Texas supports 31% of the estimated U.S. population of Wilson's Plovers and we have been monitoring them for five breeding seasons in conjunction with American Bird Conservancy, Houston Audubon, and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program. This team of organizations has color banded approximately 545 Wilson's Plovers but we have received only five reports of banded birds on the wintering grounds in Central America. This gives us a hint of where they winter but isn't enough data to conclusively pinpoint their entire range.

Knowledge of migratory connectivity – the geographic linking of individuals or populations between different annual life cycle stages – is essential for effective conservation decision making because it allows all threats the population experiences throughout the annual cycle to be assessed and managed.

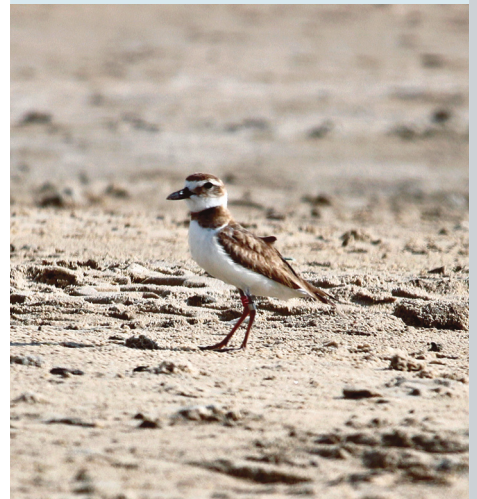
We have been monitoring nesting Wilson's Plovers in Brazoria and Matagorda Counties from April through July each year since 2016. As part of this monitoring we band adults with coded color bands so we can tell individuals apart. This year we deployed all the geolocators on adults in Matagorda County in April and May during the normal banding process. We used a leg-loop harness made of Teflon ribbon to hold the geocator on the bird's back where it will be exposed to the sun.

When the birds return to breed in 2023, we hope to locate all plovers with geolocators and retrap them to retrieve the devices. Once the data is retrieved, we can process it to determine the migratory route of the bird and the general location of where it spent the winter. Very exciting! Stay tuned.



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](http://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.

AmazonSmile offers the same shopping features as [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate part of the purchase price to GCBO. You can use your existing [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) account on AmazonSmile if you have one, or create a new account if you don't.



*Wilson's Plover T7 sports a geocator on its back on the beach.*

*Photo by Taylor Bennett*



*A geocator on the back of an adult Wilson's Plover.*

*Photo by Taylor Bennett*



## GCBO MIGRATIONS—STAFF & BOARD UPDATES

### FAREWELLS

#### Nicole Ekstom – Grant Writer

We want to say a heartfelt thank you to Nicole Ekstom, who has left GCBO after being our grant writer and doing a most wonderful job securing grant funds for GCBO. We wish Nicole the best in her new endeavor as the Executive Director of another conservation non-profit, a long-held dream of hers! Thank you!

#### Adam Trujillo – Education Intern

As our Education Intern, Adam worked with Celeste with all things education and outreach, and did an excellent job! He also got to help out with some office duties, grounds work, and since he is interested in all avian things... field research!

#### Kenlynn Volz – Avian Biology Intern

Research Intern Kenlynn worked with Taylor and Sue assisting with all of our avian research field work, data entry, some outreach work, and so much more! She also helped us in the office, the nursery, and all-around duties here at GCBO.

Thank you all for your hard and dedicated work while here at GCBO! We wish you a bright future helping birds!

### WELCOME

#### Joni Flores – Development Associate- Grants

We want to welcome Joni Flores to the GCBO team, as our new grant writer. Joni has enjoyed more than 35 years working in the nonprofit sector. Her career includes environmental work for state and federal agencies, the City of Victoria (Texas) and in environmentally focused nonprofits. Joni became interested in grant writing while serving as a grants evaluator for the EPA which led to a busy consulting practice for 30 years. Her services include forming nonprofit corporations, grant writing, and providing training and mentoring to Boards and other Leaders on marketing, communication and strategic planning. Joni lives on Matagorda Bay with her husband Al where she enjoys fishing, gardening, cooking and quiet time.



#### Alexandra Percy - Avian Biology Intern



Alexandra (Alex) Percy graduated last year from Albion College, a small liberal arts school in Michigan, with a degree in both Biology and Geology with a minor in GIS. She has worked in Alaska, South Carolina, and Florida, and most recently at White Oak Conservation in Florida, where she interned with Florida Grasshopper Sparrows, and banded more than 50 sparrows. Alex enjoys hiking and taking her kayak on the river. She also enjoys birding and fishing. Recent hobbies that she has picked up in the last year are line dancing and climbing in hopes to climb and dance across the US on a road trip one day. Needle pointing and painting ceramics are also enjoyed. She is super thrilled to be at GCBO this fall to assist with the avian research programs, and help in other departments as well.

## 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



### Now When You Shop At Kroger, You Can Support GCBO!

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:

<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>

Our charity number is DN782.

## 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, 2022 and July 31, 2022.*

*Thank you for your vital support.*

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 Wallace Ward • Gloria S Whitehouse • Maureen & Alan Wilde • Johnny & Donna Williams  
 Mike & Tracey Williams • Jim & Betsy Winn • John & Lynn Wright • Barbara Yoder  
 Brian Young • Fred & Kay Zagst

## WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE CORPORATE, FOUNDATION & GOVERNMENT GRANTS

*We are privileged to acknowledge generous support received between February 1, 2022 and July 31, 2022.*

Amazon Smile Foundation  
 American Bird Conservancy  
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 Texas Ornithological Society  
 The Brown Foundation  
 The Wireless Alliance, LLC  
 Town of Quintana  
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
 Veson Nautical  
 Webber LLC

## GCBO VOLUNTEERS: Your Help and Support are Invaluable!

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, 2022 to July 31, 2022, volunteers contributed an amazing 4236.26 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!

Baiyinah Abdullah • Vicki Adams  
 Monica Berry & Bill Ahlstrom • Oron Atkins  
 Donna Bailey • Sharon Barnes • Ed Barrios  
 Pedro Becquer-Ramos • Hailey Bentley  
 Allan & Brigid Berger  
 William & Evangeline Bondurant • Don Boulis  
 Laura, Jessica & Michael Bradham  
 Patty Brinkmeyer • Henrietta Childers  
 Aeris Clarkson • Teresa Cox  
 Melissa Crookshank • Andy Dietrich  
 Mickey & Sam Dufilho • Elena Duran  
 Tad Finnell • Cindy Freeman • Bob Friedrichs  
 Laura Geiser • Christopher Gilbert  
 Cindy Goodrum • Cindy Grandjean  
 Jean Greenhalgh • Angela Griffin  
 Allan Guevara • Amanda Hackney  
 Michael Heather • Elisha & Elizabeth Hehir  
 David & Linda Heinicke  
 Matt & Kayla Hendricks • Jackie & Jim Hicks  
 Yicheng Hu • Pat Jeffreys • Margo & Bill Johnson  
 Jill & Liberty Johse • Carol Jones  
 Kyle & Anne Jones • Vicki & Larry Kirby  
 Chris Kneupper • Jan & Kevin Kolk  
 Brian & Jennifer Kolthammer • Lingxun Kong  
 Rich Kostecke • Glen Lindeman • Brad Lirette  
 Molly Lohse • Robert & Kay Lookingbill  
 Brenda Martin • Madison McDiarmid  
 Sharon & Mel McKey • Georgia Monnerat  
 Tom Morris • Shannon Morrison  
 Lisa & Hearty Myers • Debbie & Jim Nance  
 Emily Neale • Barbara Pankratz • Levi Patton  
 Kathy Pittman • Russell Pope • Janet Price  
 Madi Reed • Kathleen & Ronald Reeves  
 Ken Rheingans • Kim & C. Scott Richardson  
 Bill & Michelle Rose  
 Lisa Ruthven & Joaquin Rubalcava  
 Tom & Karyn Schmitz • Mary Schwartz  
 Brooks Short • Sciobhan Short • Joellen Snow  
 Michele Stallard • Brenda Stitt  
 Romey & Erin Swanson • Thomas Taroni  
 Sheila Tepper • Regina Tippet • Janet Townsend  
 Sheryl & Harold Travis • Micol Treoldi  
 Adam Trujillo • Linda Ulmer • Michael Valdez  
 Kenlynn Volz • Beverly Walton • Ron Weeks  
 Craig & Sheri Weisiger • Deborah Wendt  
 Bob Whitmarsh • Maureen & Alan Wilde  
 Robin & Keith Wise • Janey Woodley  
 John Wright • Barbara Yoder

## GCBO's RV VOLUNTEERS ARE WONDERFUL!

BY MARTIN HAGNE

We are very grateful for the special group of folks that travel the country to volunteer along the way. There have been some great volunteers staying here at GCBO in our RV spot, helping us with the grounds, maintenance, events, and so much more.

Ron and Kathy Reeves spent mid-May through mid-August with us. They were a huge help taking care of so many things here, and we are so thankful to them!

Harold and Sheryl Travis, and along with Lily, are coming back once again, and will be here from mid-September through December of this year.

They have all become great friends, and we thank them all so very much!!



Ron & Kathy  
Reeves



Harold & Sheryl,  
with Lily

## 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

### Brew on the Bayou 2023



Save the Date!

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 5:00-9:00 PM

• Beer & Wine Tasting	• Live Music	Gulf Coast Bird Observatory 299 Hwy 332 West Lake Jackson TX 77566
• Pontoon Boat Rides	• Silent Auction	
• Birds of Prey Show	• Food Trucks	

## Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Inc.

299 West Highway 332  
Lake Jackson, Texas 77566  
(979) 480-0999

Visit our web site at <http://www.gcbo.org>



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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](http://www.gcbo.org)

### Bird Banding at GCBO

Come join us on every 3rd Saturday of every month from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon at the GCBO headquarters to watch as we band birds on site. This is a long-term research project that collects data about local and migratory birds, and an excellent opportunity to see birds up close and learn about the birds of our community. This is a great experience for the whole family!

### Smith Point Hawk Watch

The Hawk Watch at Smith Point continues through November 30th at the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area in Smith Point, Texas. Come see 20+ species of raptors swirling through the sky and learn about their southward migrations. This is one of the great spectacles of the natural world – come help us count some awesome birds! It's free to attend and volunteers are on site daily from 8 am to 4 pm.

### GCBO Experiences Auction

Our online auctions are a fun way to support our mission and programs, while you get to go on awesome nature experiences or enjoy some fine items! Bid early and often for the chance to shadow our researchers out in the bay, go on birding tours with experts, spend the weekend at a peaceful nature resort, and more. Bidding begins November 18 and runs until December 11, but you can view all of the items now on our website.

### Our Mission

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



Funding for this newsletter has been generously provided by Phillips 66.



### Brew on the Bayou

On March 25 2023, come sample and enjoy specialty brews and wines from local breweries and wineries. Listen to live music, grab a bite to eat from local food trucks and check out some hot one-of-a-kind items at our 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! Additional highlights include a birds of prey show with live raptors and pontoon rides on the bayou. Tickets are \$20 in advance on our website or \$25 at the door. We hope to see you there!



### Winter Sparrows of the Upper Texas Coast Class with Bob Friedrichs

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory is pleased to host our next Bird ID Class: Winter Sparrows of the Upper Texas Coast in January of 2023. Date TBA. In this class, Bob will give an in-depth look at the fascinating and sometimes frustrating sparrows that inhabit our upper coast counties in the winter. Classes consist of identification lessons on zoom, followed by an in-person field trip. This is a great opportunity to learn about sparrows, how to identify them, and where to find them in the wild. Enrollment is \$200 and you can register in advance on our website. Your class fee goes directly to help saving birds through our conservation work!

### You Can Reach Us By Email:

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