



GULF CROSSINGS

Working Together To Protect The Columbia Bottomlands

By Jeff Weigel, Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Nature Conservancy

Just this past December, The Nature Conservancy closed on a purchase of 505 beautiful acres of bottomland hardwood forest on the east bank of the Brazos River southeast of West Columbia. Coupled with an adjacent 176 acres acquired in September 2015, these acres now form the Brazos Woods Preserve, a haven for dozens of species of resident and migratory songbirds that nest in or pass through the Columbia Bottomlands region of Texas. A short drive west takes you to the 1,656-acre San Bernard Woods Preserve, purchased in February 2016. At both sites, TNC is working to restore native forests damaged by clearing and overgrazing and seeking collaborations with the local community and organizations to provide education and research opportunities.

What made this possible? Good science, incredible partnerships, fantastic donors and perhaps a bit of luck. The science has long been known; for decades the Columbia Bottomlands have popped out as a hemispheric hotspot for songbirds migrating both north and south. More than thirty years ago the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recognized the need for increased protection and restoration and began acquiring forested tracts. Now more than 35,000 acres, sprinkled across the landscape like islands in an archipelago, have been saved as part of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. The goal is to acquire, block up, and connect where possible an additional 35,000 acres.

In 1994, a small – 23 acres – tract called the Brazoria Palms was one of the early purchases in this effort, purchased by TNC and transferred to the USFWS. TNC only returned to the Columbia Bottomlands in 2011, when we established the Nash Prairie Preserve, the largest and best condition, coastal prairie remnant (and a whole other story) known. Then, spurred by a generous 2013 gift of \$8,100,000 dollars from Houston-based BHP Billiton Petroleum, a division of the Australian parent company BHP Billiton, TNC began looking for important forest tracts to conserve. Here is where the luck came in.

Continued on page 3



TNC's Brazos Woods Preserve is a wonderful haven for wildlife and native plants.

Photo by The Nature Conservancy



Giant-sized Live Oaks, among several other species of oak, grace the Brazos Woods Preserve.

Photo by The Nature Conservancy

Masthead photo: The ever-watchful Great Blue Heron is a familiar face on the Gulf Coast.

By Kaitlyn Braddock

director's View

Martin Hagne

Time flies when you are having fun caring for nature! I cannot believe it has been over two years since I first stepped into this role here at the GCBO. Every day has been an honor. Every day has given me a feeling of accomplishing something to help bird conservation. Every day has made me proud of the staff, volunteers, and partners for all they do. And, every day has given me new hope and appreciation for all the support the GCBO receives from you, our members, donors, and supporters! While not every day, many days have also been a struggle. Personally, I believe those struggles make both me and the organization stronger. Although they set us back a bit, and many times often tire us out, we do learn and we gain a new forward momentum. And so, with all of this, the GCBO keeps moving, gaining, and strengthening our resolve, and programs, to do what needs to be done to conserve birds and their habitats. Thank you for being a part of all this!

As for struggles, we had a major setback recently with our 4x4 work truck, and you can see on page 3 how you can help. But as I mentioned above, this has made us review the way we conduct some of our work and will eventually make us do things better. There have been way more successes in the past year than setbacks, that's for sure. Please enjoy reading, in the pages of this issue of Gulf Crossings, about some of the many programs and projects that are ongoing.

Just as spring is around the corner, so is spring migration. The busiest field season for the GCBO staff, and we are looking forward towards gaining new understandings of the intricate ways birds migrate, breed, and live their lives. The more information we can learn, the more new bits of knowledge we can gain, gives us more and new ways to help the avian community thrive, and hopefully in some cases bounce back from obstacles we humans have placed there. Our role as a conservation organization is just that, to learn and see how bird populations are doing ... and then pass that information on to those organizations that can help fix the issues they are facing. We recently chose a GCBO "tag line"... and I think it says it all: FOR THE BIRDS! I'm truly humbled to be part of such a mission, and so very happy to have you along with us! Enjoy the birds!

Some random gcbo moments This Winter...



Martin Hagne releasing a Black Rosy-Finch on a recent GCBO Experience Auction trip



Rita and Mark, winners of the Raptor Banding Experience Trip, with a Red-tailed Hawk

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Newsletter Editors: Martin Hagne, Denise Stephens

We need a biT of helP Please

By Martin Hagne

Last year, thanks to the very generous support of Freeport LNG and McRee Ford, we were able to purchase a brand new Ford 4x4 truck to assist with our conservation efforts. It has been a great addition, allowing us to get into some pretty challenging places to perform work, including shorebird surveys along the entire Matagorda Peninsula.

Unfortunately, by no fault of the truck, and yes there is a long story that we won't go into here...we had to send our beloved truck to the shop for a totally new engine. McRee Ford has been awesome with helping us get it back on the road, but we are left with a hefty bill that was not planned for in our budget.

I'm reaching out to all of you for any support you can give. The amount owed for the engine replacement was \$9,500, of which \$2,000 has already been generously donated, leaving \$7,500 for us to raise. I truly appreciate any amount you can help us with! Thank you!

Donations can be made by:

- Mailing a check (for truck repairs) to:
Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
299 Hwy 332 West
Lake Jackson, TX 77566
- Call Tricia with a credit card at 979-480-0999
- Make a donation on our website: www.gcbo.org and click the DONATE! button

Working Together To ProtecT The Columbia boTTomlands

(continued from page 1)

By early 2014, TNC had mapped out and investigated dozens of potential tracts for possible purchase. Offers were made (and refused), others were sold to higher bidders, some were not for sale. We were beginning to feel a bit desperate, with funds pledged but no land acquired. One Friday afternoon, Lauren Lederle, a TNC staffer and expert mapper working on the project, made a move. No doubt exasperated by my many requests for updated 'mappage' (TNC in-house term for maps), she employed a highly scientific technique known as "random googling", punching in the words "land for sale in West Columbia, Texas". And out came a real estate listing for a beautiful, 176-acre parcel with all the ingredients: Brazos River frontage, both intact and restorable forest, wetlands, and proximity to West Columbia. Better yet, the asking price had just been reduced.

TNC moved quickly to acquire this tract, then followed up the next year with San Bernard Woods. This brings us back to the 505-acre Brazos Woods addition. Using BHP's generous gift as match, TNC in 2017 was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the North America Wetlands Conservation Council. Additional support came from the Cradle of Texas Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, the Malcolm C. Damuth Foundation, Stephen and Donna Bing, TNC Arkansas, the David L. Crowell Estate and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. All made it possible for us to purchase this important tract.

The funds provided by GCBO are especially meaningful to us, as TNC was among the eight Founding Partners of this organization, now in its 22nd year of conducting important research, providing outstanding education and outreach, and engaging with local communities across the Gulf. We now extend our invitation to the Brazos Woods Preserve and Pavilion Dedication, to be held Saturday, April 6 from 9 to 3. Come out and see what you have helped protect! For more information, e-mail me at jweigel@tnc.org.



The Nature
Conservancy 
Texas

Loggerhead Shrikes in Trouble

By Susan A. Heath, Ph.D.

The Loggerhead Shrike range includes most of the U.S., the southern parts of central Canada and most of Mexico. The northern populations are migratory while the southern birds are resident. I call them a mini-raptor because they eat live prey including insects and small birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Their habit of impaling prey on thorns and barbed-wire fences has earned them the nickname “butcherbird”. With their ability to capture and carry prey equal to their own weight, they are a force to be reckoned with but also one to be admired. Unfortunately, this species has undergone one of the most persistent and drastic population declines of any North American passerine. This is likely due to changes in human land-use practices, pesticide use, and competition from other species that are more tolerant of human-induced changes.

Over the life of the Breeding Bird Survey (50 years), Loggerhead Shrike populations have declined 79%. This species is listed as endangered, threatened or as a species of concern across a large portion of its range. Along the Gulf Coast shrikes are still common and our resident breeding population is augmented by northern migrants during winter. To support conservation of the species as a whole, the GCBO along with several partners hope to monitor shrikes during the winter to determine whether wintering migrant shrikes are forced into sub-quality habitat by resident birds which can maintain their territories year round. Research in other species has demonstrated that poor winter habitat quality affects bird fitness which then carries over to poor productivity the following spring.

We are proposing to monitor shrikes during the winter using either radio transmitters or nanotags so we can track their movements using a handheld VHF antenna or our Motus tower network. This will tell us their approximate winter territory size and also allow us to analyze the habitat they are utilizing. Once the data has been collected, we can compare territory size and habitat characteristics between residents and migrants to see if there are any differences. You might ask how we can tell the difference between a migrant shrike and a resident shrike and that is a good question. The answer is that we can't just by looking at them. We have to pluck some feathers and send them off for genetic and stable isotope analyses. These tests will help us separate the two but that means we have to follow a lot of shrikes to make sure we have data on both residents and migrants since we don't know which are which while we are tracking them.

Through this project, we hope to obtain much needed information on Loggerhead Shrike usage of the Gulf Coast prairie habitat which can then be utilized to support conservation for the species throughout its range. Once we better understand the dynamics between

migrant and resident Loggerhead Shrike populations, we can begin to tease out necessary conservation actions to better support both the migratory population that have undergone significant declines and the resident population before it follows suit. Additionally, we will have gained significant knowledge about the origin of migratory shrikes along the Texas coast which will further support conservation actions for the species as a whole.



Loggerhead Shrike AA poses just after banding on the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge.

Photo by Jennifer Wilson



A Loggerhead Shrike with its grasshopper prey impaled on a barb-wired fence.

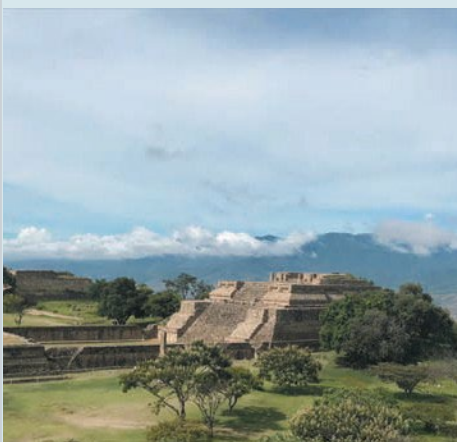
Photo by Greg Lavaty

GCBO Director of Conservation Research Susan Heath holds shrike AF after a successful capture and banding.

Photo by Jennifer Wilson

We have had some great trips
in 2018 and 2019 so far!

Oaxaca, Mexico - September 2018



Duluth, MN – January 2019



gcbo birding TriPs

By Martin Hagne

Come birding with GCBO, and our Executive Director Martin Hagne! Since we started offering birding trips again last year we have had full trips. Everyone is having a great time birding, exploring, enjoying some extraordinary scenery, dining on local cuisine, and just having a fun time! We always hook up with at least one local guide for the best experience. And now Martin has laid out some wonderful destinations for 2020! Final plans are not all in place, but please keep your eyes open for more details on these and other upcoming trips. If you want to be placed on a list for more info as soon as it is out, send Martin an email at mhagne@gcbo.org.

UPCOMING TRIPS IN 2020:

Duluth, MN in January 2020

We will repeat this popular trip again! We had a great time exploring the snow-covered Sax Zim Bog and northern forests of the Duluth area this year, with breathtaking views of Great Gray Owl, Snowy Owl, Northern Hawk-Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Boreal Chickadee, Evening Grosbeak, and all the other boreal species one expects to see! Dates and Costs TBA.

SE Arizona in July 2020

Southeast Arizona is legendary in the birding world as one of the must visit places for some very special birds and scenery! Elegant Trogons, Montezuma Quail, Arizona Woodpecker, Red-faced Warbler, Abert's Towhee, Bridled Titmouse, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Gilded Flicker, a dozen or more hummingbirds, not to mention the night birds! Just a very small sampling of the diverse birdlife living in the desert and mountainous canyons. Bird such famous sites as the Chiricahua Mountains, Patagonia, and Madera Canyon. Dates and Costs TBA.

Cuba in Fall of 2020

The GCBO has been working with partners in Cuba since 2005 on various avian research projects such as a hawk watch and a migratory bird banding station. With these relationships, travel with GCBO staff and our Cuban ornithological partners to visits research sites, and bird the fabulous Cuban avian diversity. Experience the rich Cuban culture, along with the local birds. Dates and Costs TBA.

Oaxaca, Mexico TBA

We hope to offer this fabulous birding and cultural trip again in 2020. Look for dates and more info soon!



inTernshiP Program is in full SWing

By Susan a. heath, Ph.D.

We have been very lucky to have two great interns working with us over the fall, winter, and early spring. From August through mid-November, Amelia Grider joined us to help with research projects and office work. Amelia is a recent graduate from Auburn University with a degree in Marine Biology, but I think we might have pushed her over into the bird world a bit! Amelia helped me with monitoring shorebird use of intertidal reefs for our U.S. Fish and Wildlife funded Intertidal Reef study. On that project she got her first taste of driving a boat, but judging from her enthusiasm I don't think it will be her last. She also helped out with our Nonbreeding Shorebirds Project, especially monitoring the 22 mile stretch of Matagorda Peninsula. She was a whiz with the camera getting photos of all the banded shorebirds on the beach and then proved herself invaluable by entering all that data. In the office she helped Tricia immensely with filing, entering volunteer hours, and running errands. Finally, she helped Chris Kneupper with the watering duties in the nursery before the rains came. Amelia has moved on to a position as a field technician with Mississippi State University and as you can see from the photo, she's having a lot of fun!

In January, Kaitlyn Braddock joined us and she will be here through mid-May. Kaitie is a recent graduate of Texas Tech University (go Red Raiders!) with a degree in biology. She grew up in the area, so she is very familiar with the GCBO and everything we do. Kaitie is helping with tasks similar to what Amelia performed, but will have the advantage of being here during the start of the breeding season when all the exciting stuff happens. So far she has shown herself to be a great spotter of birds on reefs during the intertidal reef surveys and is also great at taking data. She has excellent camera skills that we will put to good use as well. I can't wait to get an oystercatcher in her hands. Who doesn't love that?! She is putting her graphic artist skills to work designing a new t-shirt for Quintana Spring Fling using artwork from Dennis Shepler. There's no end to the things she can help with and we are looking forward to utilizing all of her unique skills.

Kaitie on Struve Luci Island helping to install bird nesting signs.

Photo by Susan Heath



Kaitie holding a Cooper's Hawk caught by Robert and Kay Lookingbill on Follett's Island.

Photo by Kay Lookingbill



Amelia laying out transects in the mud at her new job as a field technician with Mississippi State University.

Photo by Spencer Weitzel

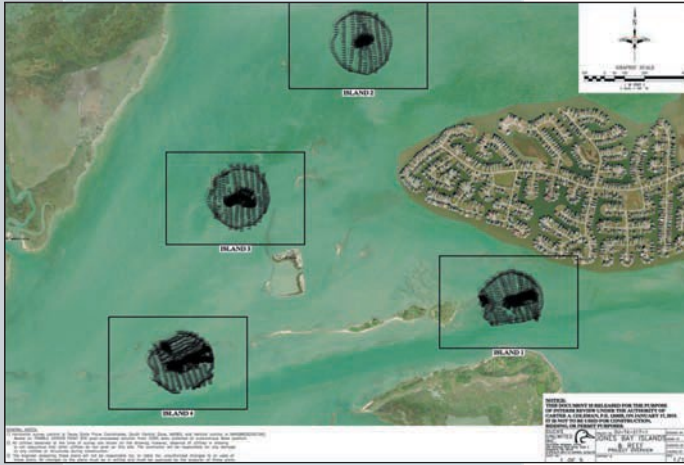


Amelia taking photos of banded birds along Matagorda Peninsula.

Photo by Robin Bjork

American Oystercatcher Island Restoration in Jones Bay

By Susan a. heath, Ph.D.



A topographic map of bathymetric surveys in Jones Bay.

Courtesy Ducks Unlimited

Our observations of American Oystercatchers over the last eight years have shown us they prefer to nest on small bay islands and this is where they have the best productivity. The small islands where they nest are often composed of intertidal shell reefs formed by oyster accretion, winnowing of historic shell deposits, or dredged material placement sites, which are many decades old. Ecosystem changes associated with man-made structures, navigation channel modifications and sediment management practices (e.g. dredge placement), have in many cases eliminated the processes which kept these islands in place. As a result, these sites are disappearing due to erosion, reduced oyster shell recruitment, and relative sea level rise which is greatly affecting oystercatcher productivity. When we began our study in 2011, there were seven pairs of oystercatchers nesting in Jones Bay on six small islands. Productivity for these pairs were 100% (each pair fledged one chick). In 2017, there were only three nesting pairs remaining in this bay and none fledged a chick. A GIS analysis of Jones Bay from 2009 to 2015 showed reductions in island sizes, ranging from 1% to nearly 60%, over only this short six year period. In the three years following this analysis, further reductions have been dramatic rendering three of the original six islands unsuitable for oystercatcher nesting. The GCBO has teamed up with the Galveston Bay Foundation and Ducks Unlimited to restore some of these small islands in Jones Bay. The ecological surveys are complete and we are working on island design now, as well as fundraising for the construction. If these islands are successful we hope to use this process to restore oystercatcher nesting habitat on other parts of the Texas coast.

gcbo Chosen for Endangered Species Monitoring during Rollover Pass Closure

By Susan a. heath, Ph.D.

In 1955, the Texas Game and Fish Commission (now Texas Parks and Wildlife Department) cut a pass through the Bolivar Peninsula at its narrowest point. This connected the Gulf of Mexico with Rollover Bay and was intended to improve water quality and salinity in the bay, help with fish migration, and improve local fishing conditions. In subsequent years, Rollover Pass became one of Texas's most popular fishing locations. Unfortunately, it also created a number of problems. The pass eroded significantly after only a few years and retaining walls had to be installed to keep erosion at bay. The retaining walls then required repair after every major storm. Studies have shown that this pass causes significant beach erosion farther down the coast resulting in the need for beach replenishment and causes sediment to be deposited into the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway which then requires dredging. All of these issues cause an unnecessary cost burden to the public. Additionally, the pass allows too much salt water to enter the bay which results in increased salinity levels which damages oyster and fish habitat.

Closure of Rollover Pass was authorized by the Texas Legislature and Governor Rick Perry in 2009 and work is scheduled to begin this year. Because endangered birds and turtles may be present on the beach during this work, monitoring is required to ensure these species are not impacted. The GCBO was chosen by Brizo Construction to provide an endangered species monitor to perform hourly surveys during construction, to ensure endangered birds and turtles have not entered the construction area. The exact start date for this project is unknown at this time but it is expected to last approximately five months.



Rollover Pass is located on the Bolivar Peninsula on the upper Texas coast.

Kid's Summer bird CamP 2019

By EMMA Shelley

Our Kid's Summer Bird Camp is a nature day camp where children become conservationists, citizen scientists and ecologists as they explore the outdoors and learn about the variety of birds that call the Gulf Coast home. Each day of this hands-on ecology camp teaches kids about the science behind birds and their ecosystems through interactive and fun-filled activities. Students will learn what birds eat by going on insect hunts, practice bird identification in the field by using binoculars, learn the basics of bird anatomy through drawing, and watch professional banders catch and band birds right here at the GCBO. From nature journaling to visiting a wildlife rehabilitation center, and from playing games to conducting their own mini-research project, the range of activities will keep campers invested and interested the entire time!

The goal of Bird Camp is to develop a connection between kids and nature and a love for our ecosystems. By focusing on birds, which are abundant and easily observable, campers will be encouraged to think like scientists and to answer questions through watching, exploring and learning. Campers will have safe, supervised access to our 34-acre wooded property and will have an adventurous time getting in touch with the outdoors and learning through discovery!

Camp is geared for children ages 8-11 and will run from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, Monday through Friday, June 3rd – 7th, 2019. The fee is \$150.00 per child, application forms and more detailed information will be available on our website. Please call 979-480-0999 with questions.

gcbo Spring fling 2019

By Martin hagne

Migration is heating up on the Gulf Coast. Two times a year billions of birds swarm across the globe, traveling thousands of miles as they migrate between breeding and wintering grounds, stopping in route to refuel and rest at coastal stopover sites. Every year this spectacle attracts hordes of local and out-of-town birders who descend upon these stopover sites throughout the migration corridor along the Gulf Coast. At GCBO, we manage our own patches of stopover habitat, the bird sanctuaries at Quintana, just ten miles south of our Lake Jackson headquarters. Because there are few visitor services in the small community of Quintana, we host a month-long Spring Fling Visitor Station each April. GCBO volunteers assist with bird identification, provide local information and bird checklists, sell snacks and field guides, t-shirts and hats, and post a daily bird list. Come and find out what April brings!



Scanning the skies!



Searching for birds.

Photos by Juliana Moore

The Spring Fling Visitor Station operates daily as listed below.

Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary

Quintana, Texas

April 6th to May 5th 2019

9:00am – 4:00pm

www.gcbo.org

gcbo migraTions–sTaff & board UPdaTes



Bob Friedrichs



Michael Heather

WELCOME

Bob Friedrichs – Board Member

Robert (Bob) Friedrichs and his wife Ruth live in Palacios, Texas. Bob holds a BS in Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University. His 34-year career with Chevron included a variety of management positions. Now retired, Bob and Ruth enjoy traveling around North America in their RV, most recently driving their motorhome to Alaska (and back!) for some awesome sightseeing and birding. Bob is an outdoor enthusiast, conservationist and avid birder. He started birding at age 13 in Victoria, Texas. Bob compiles two Christmas Bird Counts, and spends most of his time in the field conducting tours and surveying birds. Bob currently helps monitor American Oystercatchers in Matagorda and Lavaca Bays with GCBO.

Michael Heather – Board Member

Michael Heather retired from The Dow Chemical Co. in 2004 after 30 yrs. of service and returned to Southern Brazoria County, Texas from Midland, Michigan where he spent the last 11 years of his career. During his time with Dow, Michael held several leadership positions. In 2005, Michael began volunteering with Habitat for Humanity of Southern Brazoria County, and as a 13-year volunteer he has filled several roles with the organization, including Board Chairman, and Executive Director. Aside from birding regularly at Quintana and Lafitte’s Cove, Michael has birded in Costa Rico, Kenya and Botswana. Now he rarely travels anywhere without his binoculars.

FAREWELLS

Emma Shelly – Education & Outreach Manager

Aloha Emma! We were sad to learn that Emma Shelly was leaving GCBO for a new opportunity back in her native Hawaii at the end of January. We are, however, excited that she was able to return close to home and teach about the Hawaiian environment!

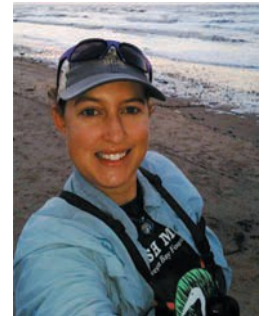
Emma took GCBO’s education programs and made some big and wonderful additions that have been very well received by teachers and visitors, such as Project Soar which she created from scratch, added many fun features to our Kid’s Summer Bird Camp, and so much more! We wish her the very best back in Hawaii, and hope to hear updates.

Bill Baker – Board Member

Bill rejoined the GCBO Board in 2018, he had previously served 13 years on the Board of Directors. Unfortunately Bill found himself as busy in retirement as in work! He respectfully had to step down due to family obligations, but has joined our Advisory Board to still help out. Thank you for all you do Bill!

Taylor Bennett – Shorebird Technician

Taylor was born and raised in Virginia and grew up in Virginia Beach. She moved to Texas about five years ago. Taylor graduated from Old Dominion University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology concentrating in Marine Biology in 2013. She is very passionate about all biology, and for six years has interned and worked for organizations such as the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Audubon Texas. Her main focus was conservation for endangered and threatened species, while working with organisms from microscopic invertebrates such as Roswell spring snails to mammals such as the Mexican gray wolf. Most of her work has involved birds, including marsh, wading, waterfowl, raptors, and even Lesser-prairie Chickens and Sandhill Cranes. She is excited to be a part of the GCBO’s non-breeding and breeding shorebird projects along the Texas coast because of her big love for shorebirds.



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<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 August 1, 2018 and January 31, 2019. Thank you for your vital support.

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We graTefully acknoWledge CorPorate, foundaTion & goVernmenT granTs

We are privileged to acknowledge generous support received between August 1, 2018 and January 31, 2019.

Amazon Smile Foundation
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 Audubon Outdoor Club of CC
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 Brazoria County Democratic Party
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 The Brown Foundation
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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 August 1, 2018 to January 31, 2019 volunteers contributed an amazing 2770 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!

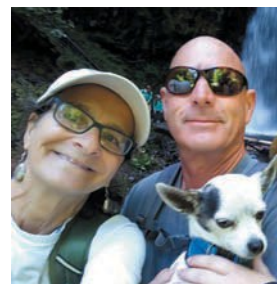
James Amos • Jeff Andress • Evan Andress
Oron Atkins • Bob Baez • Ed Barrios
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Ruth Friedrichs • Giselle Garcia
Denise & Robert Gotcher • Elianna Gray
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Veda Hackell • Amanda Hackney
Sara Harrison • Michael Heather
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Glenn Olsen • Mary Ann Ottinger
Denise Pegoda • David Plunkett
Warren Pruess • Art Ramirez • Kim Richardson
Lin & Johnny Richey • Pete & Peggy Romfh
Mark Sargent • Andy Sargent
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Ron Weeks • Carole Wenny Susan
Whitmer • John Whittle
Tracey & Mike Williams • Adriana Williams
Jennifer Wilson • Darlene & Danielle Winkler
Robin & Keith Wise • Tyler Wise

gcbo rV VolunTeers TraVel To Work!

By Martin hagne

There are a very special group of folks that travel the country in their RV's and volunteer along the way. Often called RV Hosts, they volunteer from a few weeks to several months at state parks, national parks and refuges, campgrounds, and other beautiful places. GCBO has an RV parking spot on property that can accommodate one couple at a time, and we have had some wonderful folks helping us the past few years!

Our past three couples, from last year to our current ones, have helped us with so many projects here at our Lake Jackson headquarters, the Quintana preserves, and in the field. They do it all, from landscaping, to mowing, trail trimming, building bird feeders, painting, and nursery work! Not to mention the office and program help! We truly appreciate them for all they do! Want to give it a shot? Check out our website for more information! www.gcbo.org



Above: Greg & Carol
Left: James & Janet
Right: Joel & Janet
with Horace

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

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



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.

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

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

“Hold The Date” for upcoming GCBO Events, check our website for details and any changes. www.gcbo.org.

Spring Fling at Quintana

Saturday, April 6th is the start of GCBO’s Spring Fling at Quintana Sanctuaries, Quintana, TX. From April 6th to May 5th you can birdwatch as thousands of migratory songbirds arrive at stopover habitat along the coast. GCBO volunteers and staff will host at the site from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm daily and provide local birding information, bird checklists, sell snacks and drink as well as t-shirts, bird field guides, and much more! They will post the daily bird list on the whiteboard and help identify birds! More info at: www.gcbo.org

GCBO Birding Trips

See page 5 for the descriptions and times of our upcoming birding trips. We are excited to host these amazing opportunities to go birding in some famous locations, both foreign and domestic.

Summer Bird Camp

GCBO’s Summer Bird Camp is a nature day camp where children become conservationists, citizen scientists and ecologists as they explore outdoors and learn about the variety of birds that call the Gulf Coast home. Each day of this hands-on ecology camp teaches kids about the science behind birds and their ecosystems through interactive and fun-filled activities. Camp is geared for kids ages 8-11 and will run from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm for the full week of June 3-7, 2019. The fee is \$150/child and application forms and more detailed information will be available on our website soon.

Our Mission

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

Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza

September is the peak of Ruby-throated Hummingbird migration as they head south for the winter. Stop by GCBO on Saturday, September 14th and Saturday, September 21st, for our annual Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza – where you’ll get a fantastic look at these birds as we band and release them right on site. Also featured are guest speakers, activities for kids, symbolic hummingbird adoptions, a native plant sale and booths from other local environmental organizations. XHX runs from 8:00 am-12:00 noon both days. There is a \$5 entry fee for adults, kids 12 and under are free.

Smith Point Hawk Watch

The Hawk Watch will be held every day from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, August 15th through November 30th 2019 at the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area in Smith Point, TX. Come see 20+ species of raptors and learn about the southward migration of millions of raptors, one of the great spectacles of the natural world. It’s your chance to help us count some awesome birds!

Bird Banding

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



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



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