



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2012

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The weather did not stop our annual Independence Day bicycle parade on June 30. Attendance was a little smaller than in years past but 40 plus folks enjoyed a moist ride at BBSP. The couple that rode in their 11th parade last year made their 12th this year.

Diane Carpenter and Dave Armstrong have been appointed to serve on the Nomination Committee. Our four officers include a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Officers may serve for two terms. If you would like to place your name in nomination, please contact Diane or Dave prior to the August meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the August meeting, and the vote will be taken at the September General Meeting.

During the last month two of our volunteers have lost their spouses. Bob Haynes' wife Eleanor passed away after a long illness. Cathy Nevotti's husband David was in an accident which took his life while on a mission trip in the Ukraine. Please keep Cathy, Bob and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

Offie Walker

In this issue...

President's Report.	1
Special Meeting Time.	1
July Meeting Notes.	2
Staff reports.	3
BBEEC Task Force Report.	4
Eco-Explorers.	5
In Sympathy.	5
Election.	5
Upcoming Events.	6
Thank you.	6
Grand Parkway Hearing.	6
Congratulations.	7
Nature Center Report.	8
Help Needed.	9
Maintenance Report.	9
Dung Beetle Research.	10
Wood Stork.	11

REMINDER: AUGUST 11 MEETINGS, SPECIAL TIME AND PLACE

BBSP Dining Hall

- 12:30 PM: Budget Committee meeting, followed by Executive Committee.
- 2:00 PM: Dessert Tasting Sign up on the regular web calendar to bring a dessert.
- 2:30 PM: General Meeting (This change is for August only.)**

Agenda includes a guest speaker from Texans for State Parks, and reports from the Nominating Committee and the BBEEC Steering Committee.
Come and be a part of the decision-making process.

JULY MEETING NOTES

reported by Anna Dell Williamson

(Ed. Note: These meeting notes are a summary of the meeting. They are not the official minutes, which are posted in the volunteer lounge.)

President Offie Walker called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, July 14, 2012. There were 13 volunteers and 3 staff members present. We began the meeting with a moment of silence in memory of Bob Haynes' wife Esther and Cathy Nevotti's husband David, who both passed away last week.

Offie thanked the members who brought dinner: Judy and Offie Walker for ham, Cindy Peterson for pasta salad, Hannah Meddaugh for dessert. The minutes of the June meeting were approved as posted.

Reports:

Budget report: Nancy Lynn Jones, Comptroller, brought the budget report.

Steve Killian suggested we have a donation box available at public programs to increase donation opportunities. Future reports for the Gift Shop will divide revenue by cash and credit card sales, and will also show credit card processing fees.

Budget Requests: The following budget expenditures were reported:

Steve Killian: Back Woods repellent bug spray and a park pass to the owner of property at the north end of the park. Staff and work crews occasionally need to access the park through her property.

Jeff Orsak: Belt for Gator repair.

The following requests were presented and approved:

Chuck Duplant, wood and hardware to rebuild boardwalk to ephemeral pond platform.

Steve Killian: Limestone gravel for trail building and maintenance of trail system for the Prairie Trail and maybe others.

The organization passed a resolution to authorize Treasurer Bob Kowalewski to close out a CD up for renewal and to put the funds in the new building fund.

Nominating Committee: Elections are coming up, and **Diane Carpenter** and **Dave Armstrong** have agreed to serve as the Nominating Committee. Contact one of them if you are interested in an office. Two officers, President Offie Walker and Vice-President Mary Lockwood, have served two terms and ineligible for re-election. Treasurer Bob Kowalewski and Secretary Belinda DiMarcello have served one term each and are eligible for re-election. Nominations will be announced in August, and the election will be September.

Gift Shop: Beth Debenport reported that last month was the best June ever. Diane Carpenter presented a PowerPoint program showing the number of cash transactions and credit card transactions, and the dollar amount of cash and credit sales. High ticket items are selling better. One new product to watch for is "mood pencils".

Wood Yard: Wood sales have been good and there has been lots of work in the wood yard by volunteers. We are getting a good return on the wood.

Memorials: Cindy Peterson will send cards to Bob Haynes and Cathy Nevotti.

Outreach: Judy Strauss reported that there are two outreach events on the calendar. Both are Rosenberg Nights Out, with vendors and booths, on July 21, honoring police officers and firefighters, and on August 18. This is the first time we've been asked to participate. Please sign up on the events calendar and select times you are available. Your help is appreciated.

Training: Anna Dell Williamson reported that we have 19 trainees in the September class so far, and one pending.

BBEEC Program Development Task Force: Hannah Meddaugh brought a report on the Task Force progress, which is published elsewhere in the newsletter.

Announcements:

Bruce Williamson announced that the organization is invited to his and Anna Dell's 50th wedding anniversary celebration on August 25, in the Dining Hall. There will be an informal drop-in reception from 2 PM to 5 PM, followed by an informal dinner at 5:30. Dinner will be catered by The Jay in Needville, and you are asked to RSVP if you are coming to dinner. An invitation will be sent to the membership list soon.

Offie Walker reminded is that the August meeting will be at 2:30 in the afternoon, preceded by dessert at 2:00. The new logo for the BBEEC will be presented. The Budget Committee will meet at 12:30 PM, followed immediately by the Executive Committee meeting. All meetings are open to the membership. Only official members of the committees have a vote. We will have a skeleton crew working in the Nature Center. The meeting was adjourned.

STAFF REPORTS

STEVE KILLIAN, PARK SUPERINTENDENT



Steve has been out for his son's graduation and vacation. To recap the spring, March, 2012, was the biggest month to date, until April came along and became the biggest month ever. May was very good, and June was a record month.

Recent activities include the following:

- ✓ Staff built the Creekwood Lake Short Loop trail and the Creekwood Lake long Loop Trail. The archaeological research must be done before they are open to the public. The Americorps crew was integral in building the two trails.
- ✓ Staff is continuing work on the Prairie Trail, which puts visitors out in middle of the prairie. Flowers have been stunning. The trail is open, but not quite finished. It has been pre-cleared archeologically. Temporary signs are up, and we are developing trail maps and map panels to assist visitors without maps. Americorps also did trail trimming.
- ✓ The Texas Department of Criminal Justice inmate crew continues to do work taking down dead tallow trees. Jim Calvert is treating trees and the crew of six is taking them down.
- ✓ We have negotiated a lease to access park property on the north.

Melissa Moody, Assistant Office Manger/Gift Shop Manager, has taken a job at Inks Lake. She has done great things with the Gift Shop, expanded floor space, added more cabinets and shelving, and doubled what we can display. We can't hold vacant positions and will be hiring an Assistant Office Manager/Gift Shop manager, hopefully soon. We will be looking for someone with retail experience.

Lake Texana has been closed to the public based on budgetary issues. The Lavaca-Navidad River Authority took it over. The land belongs to them and will roll in to camping facilities. The TPWD Budget is still gloomy. We need to push the points that state parks are good investments, and improve the health and well-being of Texas citizens.

We are looking for **volunteers to work at Headquarters** on weekends, assisting with fee collection. We're going to be short-handed going into the fall. We are also looking for **volunteers to work with JT on spraying exotic vegetation**. Work will start next week, Mon-Thu, and will be done early mornings.

The Park budget is down for next year, and we are thankful for the BBSPVO. We are still pushing for the BBEEC, which will be a world class center here.



DAVID HEINICKE, INTERPRETIVE RANGER/ LAW ENFORCEMENT

Sharon was out at the park during the week. She is off the crutches, still has a boot on her foot and has four more weeks of therapy. She hopes to be back in August.

The Nursery has 37 alligator eggs from Creekfield, and 12 rat snake eggs. We expect them to hatch mid-August. When hatching starts, we will notify all the volunteers by email to come out.

The 2012 **Independence Day Bike Parade** was the smallest, shortest, and wettest. Twenty-five bikes and two segways continued the parade in spite of the pouring rain.

Doris Mager, the bird lady, notified us that her cara-cara died today. She is seeking permission to have it stuffed and is asking for donations to fund the stuffing. An envelope will be on David's desk if you would like to contribute. She is planning to come back to BBSP in February if her health is good.

Thanks to all the volunteers for **program help** in Sharon's absence. Jerry Carpenter, Rick Dashnau, Tom Prentiss, Carrie Sample and others have helped fill cover the programs.

The **Dung Beetle project** was not too successful last month, with only 21 beetles. The group will try again soon. Recent rain may have helped.

Cord Eversol has discovered 42 nests in the park, and there are probably more that he haven't been able to get to. He will provide GPS information and set up remote cameras. He is putting together maps with all locations. Some are in good viewable spots.

BBEEC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE REPORT

by Hannah Meddaugh

The BBEEC Program Development Task Force is currently working on several projects:

- **BBSP Research Database:** Thanks to David's contact with TPWD, we've received over one hundred emails regarding research projects carried out at BBSP. Our goal is to create a database describing all research done at BBSP, to put on our web where people can see a list of projects, authors and institutions, with a summary of findings and any publications/presentations. We are currently sorting the emails to identify projects, people and institutions. Any help is very welcome.
- **BBEEC Exhibit Design:** We are putting together an organized list of all the exhibit suggestions we received. Exhibits are classified thematically as aquatic, prairie, or woodland. The idea is that in the BBEEC the thematic areas will smoothly merge into one another as they do in nature, through transition zones, and each specific exhibit will reside in the area that best suits it – for example, alligator exhibits in aquatic. Since TPWD will have a major role in the actual exhibit design, we will await their input before doing more with the exhibits.
- **BBSP Water Study:** This will be a long-term, longitudinal project of conducting water samples and tests from various bodies of water inside BBSP. We are developing an educational component that will encourage participation by school groups, but will not depend on them for sustainment. The basic monthly water tests will be conducted by BBSP volunteers. As a corollary to this project, we have also researched weather stations for the park. The station will provide basic weather data which the park currently lacks, as well as providing supporting data such as rainfall and temperature averages for the water study.

Any and all help is always welcome with these projects, or let us know if you have a new idea that you think falls under the mission of growing the conservation and education activities of BBSPVO, in support and anticipation of the future BBEEC. Easiest contact is Hannah Meddaugh meddaugh@bcm.edu , 832-423-9743. The projects most in need of support right now are the research database and the water study.

ECO-EXPLORERS REPORT

by Carrie Sample

Eco-Explorers finished the summer as a huge success, with 100 youngsters joining in on the fun. Many thanks, again, to all of the volunteers, and to **David Heinicke** and **Ted Stevens**, who helped make this summer so great! The volunteers who helped were: **Diane** and **Jerry Carpenter**, **Barb Tucker** with her 2 grandsons, **Mary Lockwood**, **Suzie Gann**, **Kent and Debbie Fewell**, **Rebecca Sykes**, **Barbara Willy**, **Jaci Elliot** and **Ethan Hoover**.

A special thanks to **Mary Anne Weber**, Houston Audubon, who came twice - once for the Tadpoles and once for the Eco-Explorers. Her programs are always so well received!

If you did not get to participate this year, perhaps you will be able to help next! If anyone would like to present or help present a certain topic, let me know!!!

IN SYMPATHY

**Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to volunteers
Cathy Nevotti and Bob Haynes.**

Cathy's husband David died in a tragic accident during an international mission trip to Ukraine. His memorial service was July 18.

Bob lost his wife Eleanor after a long illness. Her memorial service will be held August 18, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. at St John's Anglican Church, 5227 Skinner Lane, Richmond, Texas.

ELECTION COMING UP

The BBSPVO election of officers will be in September. The Nominating Committee will be looking for candidates for the four elected officers, President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President and Vice-President have both served two terms and may not be re-elected. If you are interested in running for office, contact Diane Carpenter or Dave Armstrong.

The slate of officers will be announced at the August meeting and nominations may be made from the floor at that time. You must have the member's permission to nominate them for an office. The election will be at the September meeting and the new officers will take office October 1.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 11	NOTE CHANGE IN TIME AND PLACE FOR AUGUST ONLY Budget and Executive Meetings, 12:30 PM, Dining Hall Regular Business Meeting, 2:30 PM (Desserts at 2:00 PM), Dining Hall
August 18	Outreach: Rosenberg Night Out, sign up on Special Events Calendar
September 3	Labor Day, Nature Center open 9:00 - 5:00
September 8	New Volunteer Training Orientation, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM. Potluck Sandwich Lunch with new VITs, 11:45 AM. (Sign up to bring food.) Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
September 15	New Volunteer Training, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
September 22	New Volunteer Training, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



- ☺ to the members who brought the meeting dinner: **Judy and Offie Walker, Cindy Peterson, Hannah Meddaugh.**
- ☺ to all the volunteers for **program help** in Sharon's absence.
- ☺ to all who helped with the **Eco-Explorers** program this summer: **David Heinicke, Ted Stevens, Mary Anne Weber** (Houston Audubon), and volunteers **Diane and Jerry Carpenter, Barb Tucker** with her 2 grandsons, **Mary Lockwood, Suzie Gann, Kent and Debbie Fewell, Rebecca Sykes, Barbara Willy, Jaci Elliot** and **Ethan Hoover.**
- ☺ to members of the Gift Shop Committee who are working hard to implement the new GS Point of Sale program, change the displays, add new inventory and train the cashiers: **Leigh Allen, Diane Carpenter, Beth Debenport, Debbie and Kent Fewell, Holly Haynes, Nancy Lynn Jones, Judy Strauss, Anna Dell Williamson, and Barbara Willy.**
- ☺ to the **weekday Nature Center and Gift Shop workers.** You do make a big difference in the services we offer the public. Since January 2012 through July, at least 51 individuals have signed up for weekday shifts, plus even more have worked on Monday holidays, Spring Break, etc.

GRAND PARKWAY (SH99) SEGMENT B NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND PUBLIC HEARING

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on June 29, 2012, announcing the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), dated June 6, 2012, for Segment B of the Grand Parkway (State Highway 99), from SH 288 to IH 45 (S). The DEIS addresses potential environmental impacts of the construction and operation of Segment B of the Grand Parkway. The FHWA, in association with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Grand Parkway Association (GPA) will hold one Public Hearing over two nights to solicit comments relating to environmental issues presented in the DEIS. Identical information will be presented both nights; it will not be necessary to attend both nights. The locations are handicapped accessible.

Tuesday, August 21, 2012
Alvin High School
802 South Johnson Street, Alvin, TX 77511

Thursday, August 23, 2012
Johnnie Arolfo Civic Center-Ballroom
400 West Walker Street, League City, TX 77573

6-7 p.m. Review informational displays, ask questions, sign up to make comments
7:00 p.m. Public Hearing, including a brief presentation discussing an overview of the document and its findings

To view a map of the proposed routes, go to www.grandpky.com and click on "Segments", "Segment B". Under the map will be a link to "Notice of Segment B Public Hearing", which will get you more details on how to make oral or written comments. All interested persons are invited to comment on the DEIS.



CONGRATULATIONS



AUGUST

BIRTHDAYS

Sylvia Carrillo (Staff)
Jim Gilliam (Staff)
Eddy Grizzaffi
Lara Malone
Frank Seay

ANNIVERSARIES

Ray and Dana Anderson
Jim and Lorena Calvert
Ron and Margaret Morrison
Laszlo and Lexi Perlaky
Frank and Stacey Seay
Bruce and Anna Dell Williamson

SEPTEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

Gary Bialas (Staff)
Jim Calvert
Ron Dearman
Allen Elster (Staff)
Barry Eversole (Staff)
Frank Gregg (Emeritus)
Christian Guzman

Holly Haynes
Linda Oden Heinicke
Patty Henry
Tina Ibarra (Staff)
Mike Manley
Sammie Miller
Paige O'Neal

ANNIVERSARIES

Dave and Gay Armstrong
Jaci Elliott
Kent and Debbie Fewell
Eddy and Sam Grizzaffi
Jim and Patricia Hiatt
Don and Marilyn Vossler

BE SURE TO ATTEND THE AUGUST 11 MEETING

SPECIAL TIME: 2:30 PM

SPECIAL PLACE: DINING HALL

DESSERT AT 2:00 PM

NATURE CENTER REPORT JUNE/JULY 2012

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for June 1-30, and July 1-31, 2012. Early June was busy, but later on, heat and rain slowed down visitation.

PROGRAMS	TOTALS JUNE	TOTALS JULY
NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE June 2012- 5,881 July 2012- 4,771 June 2011- 4,939 July 2011- 5,469 June 2010- 6,070 July 2010- 4,683 June 2009- 6,068 July 2009- 4,298 June 2008- 5,109 July 2008- 4,484 June 2007- 4,025 July 2007- 2,825	Saturdays (5) -2288 High, 633 (6/2) Trails Day Average: 458	Saturdays (4) - 1576 High, 479 (6/21) Average: 394
	Sundays (4) – 1384 High, 465 (6/3) Average: 346	Sundays (5) – 1149 High, 334 (7/29) Average: 230
	Weekdays (21) - 2209 High,177 (6/21) Average: 105	Weekdays (22) - 2220 High, 253 (7/18) Average: 110
CREEKFIELD HIKES (5, 10)	40	58
CHILDREN'S STORY TIME (3,4)	88	61
WILDLIFE VIEWING (3)	94	
SNAKE(5, 4)	166	148
ALLIGATOR (4, 2)	115	37
SPECIAL HIKES (5, 2)	131	18
OUTREACH (1, 2)	560	127
BIRD HIKES (3,)	29	
OTHER PROGRAMS (9): Owls, photo walk, pond life, sundial, leave no trace, videos, strange meals and tracks	104	66
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	1,321	515
VOLUNTEER HOURS (Reflects only NC-related and reported maintenance hours, not total vol hours.)	INTERPRETATION = 768 MAINTENANCE = 126 TOTAL HOURS = 894	INTERPRETATION = 1,190 MAINTENANCE = 185 TOTAL HOURS = 1375
PARK ATTENDANCE	Total 15,476 Day use 11,729 (76%) Overnight 3,747 (24%) NC Visitors 5,881 (38%)	Total 12,427 Day use 10,284 (83%) Overnight 2,143 (17%) NC Visitors 4,771 (38%)

HELP NEEDED

We are very grateful for help in the Nature Center and Gift Shop on weekdays. Many thanks to the volunteers who regularly work during the week. However, we are getting busier in both of these areas, and we need more volunteers available to assure that we can stay open when the "regulars" are unable to work for any reason. We are looking for people who would be willing to help out on weekdays and make sure that the Nature Center and Gift Shop are covered.

The NC is open daily, 11-3, and at least one person is needed. The GS is open daily, 11-3, when there is a trained volunteer to open it. Training for the Gift Shop on opening, closing and taking credit cards is available weekdays. If there is no volunteer working in the NC, the GS volunteer must cover it first. When this happens, the GS is usually closed. Please contact Anna Dell Williamson, 281-485-2843 or <awilliamson4@comcast.net> for more information.

MAINTENANCE REPORT - JUNE/JULY, 2012

Total hours - June, 126; July, 185

Wood Yard:

Split, bundled, stacked and delivered wood to kiosks
Remove 200 Loop wood kiosk gates

Mowing and Landscaping:

Helped rangers clear dead tallow trees on Mile Stretch
Cleared downed trees at Hale Lake Picnic Area, power company right of way, Nature Center, Creekfield Lake Trail, 40-Acre Lake Trail, Headquarters
Did maintenance on Pocket Prairie
Cleaned around Spider oak and one other oak
Push off brush piles with tractor

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Trimmed Red Buckeye Trail, Creekfield Lake (training)
Put gravel on new Prairie Trail

Equipment Maintenance:

Bought and stocked blades for wood chipper
Bought oil filters for Gators, wood chipper and tractor
Repaired lawn mower
Worked on leaky hose on wood splitter
Took wood splitter to shop to replace leaky hoses

Pest Control:

Set and checked hog traps
Dig up invasive grass (Deep Root Sedge) on Creekfield Forest Trail
Mow area so it could be sprayed for invasives

DUTY CALLS FOR DUNG BEETLE RESEARCH AT BBSP

by Hannah Meddaugh



Surely among our most dedicated volunteers at BBSP is the lowly rainbow scarab dung beetle, *Phaneus triangularis*, commonly known as Texas Black Phanaeus. These tidy black beetles labor day and night to keep our park clean. You may have seen them before. If not, you've certainly enjoyed the fruits of their work. Inevitably along our trails, the inevitable occurs, creating a hazard to hikers. But soon the beetles appear, converging on the scene of the "accident." Working quickly, each beetle burrows directly under the dung and pulls a piece down into a hole. Or, if the dung is on hard-packed trail, they roll balls off into the woods. The dung provides home and sustenance for the beetle's developing larvae, as they hatch from eggs laid directly on the dung. And the trail is left pristine.

You may not have given dung beetles much thought beyond this point. But one researcher has spent a lot of time with them, and he's found even more amazing facts about their fascinating lives. That's thanks in part to our very own park. Beginning in 2009 and continuing this year, David Heinicke and Brazos Bend volunteers worked with Dr. J. Mark Rowland of the University of New Mexico to collect the dung beetles needed for his research.

The process is simple: fill small cups with soapy dishwater (if dead beetles are required) or soil (if live are) and place cups in holes level with the ground. A small platform supported by toothpicks above the cup contains the bait, courtesy of pigs. Beetles can't resist the delicious aroma wafting across the forest floor. They make a bee-line (beetle-line?) for the buffet and fall straight into the cup. Within a few hours of placing your traps, you have yourself some dung beetles.

In 2008, BBSP collected several hundred beetles, shipping them live via USPS to Dr. Rowland's lab, where they took up residence in a large observation tank. With the data gathered from these beetles as well as two other beetle species, Drs. Rowland and Douglas J. Emlen published a 2009 paper in the prestigious journal *Science** on their surprising findings.

Male dung beetles often grow a large horn on their head, similar to a rhino's horn. They use the horn to keep other males away from breeding females. But not all males develop a large horn. Some grow a small horn. Others don't grow a horn at all. The reason turns out not to be "just" genetics. How the genes affect the horn's growth depends directly on the larval beetle's environment. A healthy male larva with lots of food grows quickly. Once the larva reaches a certain size threshold, its genes tell it to grow a horn as an adult. If it reaches a second size threshold, its genes say to grow a large horn instead of a small one. If it doesn't grow large enough to reach each threshold, on the other hand, the beetle ends up with a small horn, or even no horn at all. You wind up with a population of male beetles with three different forms - large horn, no horn, and in-between. And it's all decided by the effect the larva's environment has on its genes.

This was the first time anyone had found three different body types in animals resulting from two environmentally-influenced thresholds. Now it's 2012, and Dr. Rowland is trying to find how important this male "weaponry" really is to breeding, and how the benefits compare with the costs of growing and maintaining it.

For example, the fact that even male beetles with no horn persist in the population suggests that sometimes it pays off to not waste your energy growing a horn. If you can't grow a big horn, don't play a game you're sure to lose. Instead, change the rules. A male with no horn, for example, looks just like a female. Properly disguised, the hornless male may walk right past the big male to the females, and not waste a bit of energy fighting.

BBSP has been happy to again help collecting beetles for the next phase of Dr. Rowland's work. On the beautiful but hot morning of June 27th, David Heinicke and a group of volunteers hiked out to set traps along Red Buckeye trail. 10 traps were placed a few feet from the trail, along a 50 yard stretch. Several hours later, they returned to collect the traps and count the beetles. This strategy yielded a few hundred beetles back in 2009, but this time only 21 beetles showed up for the party. Possibly the lack of rains combined with the desiccating heat hampered beetle activity. No doubt there is a doctoral thesis in there somewhere!

A lot more beetles will be needed to support Dr. Rowland's current project. We are hopeful that with the recent rains the beetle population and activity levels will receive a boost. Another collecting trip will be planned sometime in the next few months. Keep your eyes peeled for an email, and don't miss your chance to participate for a close encounter with these fascinating insects.

* Rowland, JM and Emlen, DJ. Two thresholds, three male forms result in facultative male trimorphism in beetles. *Science* 6 February 2009: Vol. 323 no. 5915 pp. 773-776.

WHAT'S THAT BIRD???

Wood Stork



Scientific Name: *Mycteria Americana*; also Known as Wood Ibis, Flint Head.

Appearance: Large, white body with black flight and tail feathers, its long legs are extended behind the tail in flight. A bald, black head with long, pale yellow, curved down bill that can reach up to 9 inches in length.

Habitat: Prefer the wetlands or marsh; they can feed or nest in fresh or salt water.

Range: Gulf Coast (including Texas) to Southeastern U.S. Some are found in Mexico and year round in South America.

Wood Storks get their name from the rough looking skin around their head, which looks strikingly similar to the bark of trees. Adult wood storks are about 3.3 feet tall and their wing span can reach over 5 feet. Average weight is about 7 lbs. Their weight prevents them from flying long distances, but they are known to be great acrobats when descending, performing marvelous turns, dives, and roles. They are one of the largest wading birds in North America and the only stork found in United States.

They are considered endangered due to the loss of habitat and change in land use and water levels. Wood Storks depend on wetlands for nesting and feeding, and they are also subject to predation by raccoons, snakes, and crows. Their diet consists of fish, crayfish, amphibians, and even young alligators and snakes. They feed by submerging their beaks about two to three inches in the water and feeling for fish passing by. They are able to startle their prey out of their hiding places by stirring the water with their feet.

They are found singly (by themselves) or in groups of fewer than 10; they prefer to come together in colonies during breeding season. Nests are built near the top of trees or shrubs, as high as 100 feet. Females lay up to five eggs and both parents help incubate the eggs. Eggs hatch after 30 days and both parents feed and care for the young. The young fledge – able to fly/leave the nest – in 50 to 55 days. You can spot a juvenile wood stork by the pearly colored bill, and their heads are covered in white down.

Information Sources

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Service, U. F. (2005). *Species Account/Biologue - Wood Stork*. Retrieved July 19, 2012, from North Florida Ecological Services Office: <http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/Species-Accounts/PDFVersions/Wood-stork-2005.pdf>

Society, L. R. (2012). Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*). Retrieved July 19, 2012, from Species Profile: www.lakeregion.net/species_profile/woodstork.html

Photo courtesy of Let there be light (Andy) via Flickr

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife

21901 FM 762

Needville, TX 77461

☆☆☆☆☆

NEXT MEETING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 2012

2:30 PM, DINING HALL

Desserts at 2:00 PM

Note different time and place

FIRST CLASS MAIL



REGULAR VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Creekfield Hikes	Every Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 AM, led by volunteers
Photo Hikes	First Saturday of each month
Volunteer meeting	Second Saturday of each month at 5:30 PM, supper at 5:00 PM
Bird Hikes	See schedule in calendar

BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS

President:	Offie Walker
Vice-President:	Mary Lockwood
Secretary	Belinda DiMarcello
Treasurer:	Bob Kowalewski
Past-President:	Carrie Sample
Comptroller:	Nancy Lynn Jones

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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The **Brazos Bend Bunch Bugle** is the newsletter of the Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization, A.K.A. The Brazos Bend Bunch. It is distributed monthly to volunteers through the BBSPVO web site. For further information on this newsletter or the volunteer program, contact David Heinicke or Sharon Hanzik at Brazos Bend State Park, phone 979-553-5101.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are the opinions of the author of the article and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization nor of BBSP administration. The deadline for Newsletter contributions is the Saturday following the monthly meeting, if mailed to Anna Dell Williamson, or at the meeting if delivered to the park. (E-mail address: <awilliamson4@comcast.net> or <newsletter@brazosbend.org>. Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.

**IN THE END, WE WILL CONSERVE ONLY WHAT WE
LOVE,
WE WILL LOVE ONLY WHAT WE UNDERSTAND,
WE WILL UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT.**

**BABA DIOUM, SENEGAL
AFRICAN CONSERVATIONIST**