

August 22, 2001

The *Brown Pelican*



The Newsletter of the Coastal Bend Audubon Society

PROPOSITION 8 WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR TAXES IT WILL INCREASE WILDLIFE FUNDING **Vote Nov. 6, 2001**

Proposition 8 is one of 19 ballot items that Texas voters will consider on Nov. 6. It would authorize up to \$100 million over the next six years for repairs and improvements at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) sites, including state parks, wildlife management areas, and fish hatcheries. Voters may be confused because the Proposition 8 language does not mention TPWD, and there are four other bond proposals on the ballot. The Proposition 8 ballot language will read:

“The constitutional amendment authorizing the issuance of up to \$850 million in bonds payable from the general revenues of the state for construction and repair projects and for the purchase of needed equipment.”

The state budget includes debt service to pay for the bonds, so Proposition 8 WILL NOT increase taxes. Those individuals concerned with conservation should inform others about Proposition 8 and what it would mean for Texas conservation. For more information see the TPWD web page <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/prop8/>

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Next Month:

Fall hawk migration and discussion about long-term weather patterns in South Texas (tentative)

Water Woes Becoming World-wide

Water scarcity issues are pervasive, and becoming a more significant problem throughout Texas, the country, and entire world. More often than not, safeguards to protect wildlife and essential habitat are left out of planning decisions that provide water for people. Although the press is starting to recognize the negative consequences that poor water

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planning decisions have on wildlife and wildlife habitat across the state, our decision-makers need to be reminded and informed. Regional water planning in Texas is supposed to ensure that as we plan for increased water needs, sufficient safeguards will be recommended and implemented in order to protect the environment and our wildlife heritage.

Regional water plans are presently being incorporated into the "State Water Plan" and will be released to the public for comment in September. The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) reviewed the regional water plans for Texas and reached the conclusion that the planning process has failed to take the necessary steps to safeguard wildlife. The NWF anticipates that instead of a balanced "State Water Plan" which includes provisions to protect instream flows and wildlife and wildlife habitat, the "plan" will recommend a building frenzy, including multi-billion dollar dams, hundreds of miles of pipelines, and reservoirs which will flood farms, ranches, precious wildlife habitat and bottomland hardwood forests.

In Texas, the NWF's efforts to protect and restore water quality focus on the development and enforcement of strong state water quality (Continued Water Woes page 2)

This Month's

Speaker:

David Durham

Subject:

A pictorial view of South Africa.

Location:

Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History
1900 N. Chaparral

Time:

1st Tuesday of the month
7:00 pm.

Business meeting to follow speaker.

Refreshments available.

All members and the general public are invited!

Other NWF Water Related News

On June 20, 2001 conservationists in Texas testified at the Texas Water Development Board, demanding sufficient quality and quantity of water for wildlife. Eleven conservationists spoke at the meeting. Historically, water management decisions in Texas have ignored water needs for wildlife and wildlife habitat. These decisions have led to degraded or dry streams, loss of riverine wetlands and bottomland hardwood forest habitats, and a decrease in estuarine productivity. Environmental water needs are not legally recognized in Texas, and water management decisions threaten to drain our rivers dry and degrade our vital and fragile estuaries. To counter this threat, NWF is educating, empowering, and mobilizing citizen conservationists to send a message to key decision-makers to demand that the environment is included in the water management

Water Woes (continued from page 1)

standards. NWF works with anglers, recreational business interests, and other conservation groups advocating for greater protection for wetlands, rivers, lakes and streams, bottomland hardwood forests, and coastal habitats. NWF's Gulf States Natural Resource Center is also working with their state affiliate, the Texas Committee on Natural Resources, and other state level environmental groups to promote environmentally and economically sound water supply management.

Hawk Watch 2001 Overhead

The annual hawk watch at Hazel Bazemore County Park began with a flurry on August 15 with 356 hawks counted. As if that weren't enough, August 16th started out with an American Swallow-tailed Kite! Peak fall migration days bring well over 100,000 raptors. Season totals can run as high as half a million! Hazel Bazemore County Park has been the site of raptor migration counts since the 1970's. In 1997, Hawk Watch International sponsored the first 3-month standardized count for the fall raptor migration. Celebration of Flight is an annual four day event with programs which include hawk identification, raptor migration, the use of satellite telemetry to track hawks, and the purpose of hawk watches. This year **live raptor demonstrations** will be conducted by **Last Chance Forever**. For more information contact Joel Simon at (361) 241-2617.

Celebration of Flight is scheduled for Sept.27-30.

equation and recognized as a legitimate water user and deserving of permanent protection. **The Coastal Bend Bays Foundation will host David Moldal, the National Wildlife Federation Regional Organizer for TX & OK, to speak about this subject on Sept. 10, 2001 at 5:30 PM on the Texas A&M University campus in the NRC Building room #1003.** Please call the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation at (361) 882-5624 for more information. Please contact the NWF and your local resource managers and politicians to find out how you can help promote economically and environmentally sound water management in Texas and prevent the waste of our tax dollars and irreplaceable wildlife heritage. Modified from Texas Water for Wildlife list-serve and NWF Texas Water for Wildlife. For more info. see <http://www.nwf.org/texaswaterforwildlife/>

Walk Through The Wetlands at Bay Fest 2001

Bay Fest 2001 will feature *Walk Through The Wetlands* an interactive wetland display designed to interest and educate people about coastal wetlands. The display, sponsored by the **Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program** and the **Port Industries of Corpus Christi** will be set-up in Adventure Bay on the barge dock on Sept. 22 & 23 from 12:00 to 6:00pm. The display allows people of all ages and abilities to explore and learn about the plants and animals that inhabit wetlands. Trained volunteer interpreters will be available at interactive learning stations within the display to guide visitors through the exhibit and share some of their knowledge of the various aspects of wetlands. **Admittance is free and open to everyone!**

What's Up Around Texas

Hummer/Bird Celebration

Rockport, TX; Sept. 13-16, 2001
Bird banding demonstrations, trips to see pelagic species, evening speakers, and nature workshops.
Contact: Rockport-Fulton Area Chamber of Commerce, 404 Broadway, Rockport, TX 78382. 800-826-6441.
www.rockport-fulton.org

Davis Mountains Birding Roundup

Fort Davis, TX; September, 2001
Seminars, viewings and socials. Joint event with the Texas Ornithological Society and Nature Conservancy of Texas.
Contact: Davis Mountains State Park 915-426-3897

Texas Butterfly Festival

Mission, TX; Oct. 19-21, 2001
Internationally renowned speakers and expert guided field trips, EXPO, children's activities and more --over 260 species!
Contact: Greater Mission Chamber of Commerce, 220 East 9th Street, Mission, TX 78572. 800-580-2700
www.texasbutterfly.com

Texas Ornithological Society Meeting

Prude Ranch in the Davis Mountains Sept. 6-8, 2001
Contact: Prude Ranch 800-458-6232
or TOS at <http://www.texasbirds.org/>

TPWD Announces Proposed Changes to Migratory Bird Rules

Texas Parks and Wildlife is currently taking public comment on proposed changes to the 2001-2002 Migratory Game Bird Proclamation, which includes sandhill crane, ducks, coots and geese hunting. The TPW Commission will make the final decision on these regulations at its Aug. 30 public hearing in Austin. Contact TPWD at (800) 792-1112 or view on line at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news/news/010820a.htm> for more information.

2001 Birding Classic

Just in case you haven't heard yet! The 2001 Birding Classic was very successful. At the end of the week, the first, second, and third place winning teams that competed all week long chose conservation wildlife habitat projects to receive \$25,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000, respectively. The Classic helps bring about bird habitat conservation, increases public awareness of Texas bird diversity, and promotes community nature tourism development. Through the efforts of the Birding Classic, more birds and more birders are expected to flock to Texas, so don't miss out on next year's event—April 2002.

WINNING TEAMS Central Coast—Adult Division

1. Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program

Richard Gibbons, Gene Blacklock, Dave Bouchard

Species Seen: 196

2. The Archeopteryx

Gardner Campbell, Charles Brower, Jim Renfro

Species Seen: 155

3. CVB Chachalacas, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Leah Pummill, Karen Benson, Kendal Keyes

Species Seen: 118

Bird Notes — Texas Central Coast

- Fall migration is on schedule. A variety of shorebirds and perching birds have appeared at sites where water is available.
- During the summer Michael Marsden of Rockport spotted a Masked Duck in a fresh water pond in the Rockport/Fulton area. The duck stayed in the area for about 2 weeks
- An exhausted Leach's Storm-Petrel was found on the beach in Port Aransas but rehabilitators were unable to save it.
- Considering the dry weather conditions this year, colonial waterbirds had a fairly productive year.
- Update on species diversity & density for four annual breeding bird surveys:

CC Botanical Gardens, territorial male count-fair

Mc Mullen Co., east roadside count USFW protocol-fair

Mc Mullen Co., west roadside count USFW protocol-poor

Nueces Co., roadside USFW protocol-fair

Please report any unusual sightings to Gene Blacklock at 361-882-7232 or 361-885-6247.

Local Workshops, Classes, and Tours

For more information about events listed contact Cynthia Womack at 361 729-6887 or e-mail her at kstrl@interconnect.net

Shorebirds of Late Summer and Early Fall

Aug. 22 & 25, 2001, Fulton Elementary School, Fulton/Rockport

Bird Identification 101

Sept. 10-Dec. 08, 2001, Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens

Bird Identification 101

Sept. 12-Dec. 19, 2001, Fulton Elementary School, Fulton/Rockport

Notes from North Bay Sanctuary

by Bill Schmidt

April 20, 2001 mid-morning

Wildflowers in decline except for Verbena and Horse-mint. Prickly Pear now becoming full golden bloom. Vegetation crawling up the new berms at our pond extension.

May 17, 2001 10:00-11:30am

Water level at the pond down approx. 20 inches. Wildflowers gone except for Horsemint. Very limited bird activity except for Cattle Egrets and male Great-tailed Grackles. They are almost always present year 'round. Roads and trails need mowing.

June 4, 2001 10:00-11:00am

Checked on mowing which was done well. One Fulvous whistling duck took off from along side the road. Here is a fauna first: on the road to our Irene Dewees tower a pretty good sized turtle, about 7x11 inches. It apparently came from the ranch pond and was going for cover so please slow down when you travel on the N/S road all along the fence. I did not see our resident hawk but his regurgitations on the upper part of the tower are evidence of his presence. A strong breeze, temp. 87 degrees.

June 11, 2001

Sunny, light breeze. Lots of small songbird activity. Our resident Fulvous whistling duck took off when I approached our pond. Recent rains did not help the water level much. Another super special: when I reached the middle of our pond road a white-tailed doe crossed over quickly. This is the first time in seven years that I saw a deer in our refuge. Roger told me about a year ago when he was mowing the periphery at the NE corner he stirred up some deer. I discussed this with neighbors who confirmed Roger's observation. Their opinion: due to development in the Rockport area these animals are crowded out there and go in our direction. I concur.

Bill is available to let members and guests in to the sanctuary. Please call him at (361) 776-7039. Please be courteous and punctual and remember that he is a volunteer who has graciously offered to provide this service for us.

El Cielo — Spring Survey

The report is still not yet complete, but has been promised to us for the September newsletter. Sorry for the delay!

Birds of the Davis Mountains

Sept. 19-23, 2001, Davis Mountains State Park

Hawks in Flight

Sept. 26-29, 2001, Fulton Elementary School, Fulton/Rockport

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Regular meetings:

1st Tuesday of the month at 6:45 pm at the
Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History



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This newsletter is compiled/written and published monthly. Articles of interest are gathered from various sources and compiled by the editor, volunteers, and/or contributing authors. All contributions and comments are welcomed.

The Coastal Bend Audubon Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and bird habitat and to education in the Coastal Bend. The organization is supported by contributions from local memberships and from the national Audubon Society.

We are actively seeking new members.

We can help steer the course of growth and change in our community if we work together towards education. Please contact us at (361) 885-6209 about getting involved!

I would like to become a member of to the National Audubon Society,
Coastal Bend Chapter W-13.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

If you are already a member and would like to make a tax deductible contribution, please circle the category you would like your contribution applied to:

1. general fund - to be used as needed
2. education activities
3. sanctuary maintenance

The membership dues schedule is as follows:

Student/Senior	\$15
Introductory/1 year	\$20
2 year	\$30
Basic	\$35
Lifetime Individual	\$1000
Lifetime Dual	\$1500

Your membership entitles you to the National Audubon Magazine, local chapter membership, and other benefits. To join the National Audubon Society, Coastal Bend Chapter, please send this completed form and your check, payable to "National Audubon Society Chapter W-13" to Coastal Bend Audubon Society, P.O. Box 4793, Corpus Christi, TX 78469.