



San Antonio Audubon Society

AUDUBON NEWS

A Conservation and Birding Club since 1954

Volume 63, Number 4

July/August 2017

Buff-bellied Hummingbird By Mike Scully

By June, the doldrums of our birding year have descended upon us. June is a month of lasts—the last few late spring migrants, the last Purple Martin dawn songs and a lull in the singing of even our permanent residents. Up in the Hill Country, by June many Golden-cheeked Warblers are already departing. In short, there won't be much to see around here until July, when southbound Arctic shorebirds mingle with wandering Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks amid the sweltering heat-shimmers on our local mudflats. Perhaps June is a good reason to visit the Coastal Bend, where sea breezes moderate temperatures and where one can find birds that rarely make it to Bexar County; species such as the White-tailed Hawk, Great Kiskadee, Olive Sparrow, Green Jay and Buff-bellied Hummingbird.

The genetic sequencing revolution that has re-arranged all our bird books has not yet been thoroughly applied to the hummingbirds. All authorities agree that the more than 35 hummingbirds currently in the genus *Amazilia* to which the Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*A. yucatanensis*) belongs will at some point be divided.



Buff-bellied Hummingbird
by Lora Render

It does seem likely though that the Buff-bellied and the six species closest to it will get to remain *Amazilia sp.* as this particular clade includes the actual *Amazilia* Hummingbird (*A. amazilia*) of Peru and Ecuador. Among these related species, the Buff-bellied has the northernmost distribution, possibly resident as a breeding bird in

Texas as far north as the Aransas Wildlife Refuge and Port Lavaca. To the south, the range of this species extends down the Caribbean Slope of Mexico to include all of the Yucatan Peninsula south to Belize. In addition, in recent years increasing numbers of Buff-bellieds have been found wintering along our Gulf Coast as far east as Alabama.

All of the more than 320 known species of hummingbirds practice a polygynous mating system wherein males engage in courting displays but take no part in raising their young. The females alone construct the compact, bowl-shaped nest to contain a usual two eggs and the females alone feed the young. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that many hummingbirds, including twelve of the fourteen species whose normal breeding range extends into the United States, exhibit a pronounced sexual dimorphism, especially in regard to bright reflective colors present on the throats of adult males. Typically, the males of these species engage in prominent aerial courtship displays consisting mostly of dives and swoops from a conspicuous perch.

In many other hummingbird species, such as our Buff-bellied and Violet-crowned Hummingbirds, the two sexes more closely resemble each other. Why the ranges of relatively monomorphic hummingbird species do not extend further into Temperate Zones is a topic best left to evolutionary biologists. As one might guess, in several hummingbird species where the sexes resemble each other, the males advertise for mates by way of loud and distinctive songs as much or more than they do by aerial displays.

Very little is known about the behavior of the Buff-bellied Hummingbird, especially for that fraction of the total population that occurs here in the US. Like the closely

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SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON CALENDAR: JULY/AUGUST

Please call the trip leaders if you have questions. Last-minute changes to field trips will be posted at saaudubon.org, www.facebook.com/saaudubon/ or sent by email via SATXBirds. Please arrive early.

Saturday, July 8, 7:30 AM

SAAS Beginners' Bird Walk

Meet leader Georgina Schwartz (210/342-2073) at the Judson Nature Trails, 246 Viesca Street. We have some binocs to lend out and you don't have to be a beginner to come on this walk. From the 5900 block of Broadway, turn west on Ogden Street and drive to the stop sign at Greeley Street. You'll see sign to Judson Nature Trails. Turn left, go one block and turn right on Viesca, then into parking lot on left.

Saturday, July 15, 8:00 AM

Victoria Riverside Park/Invista Wetlands

Meet leader Chris Bailey (210/621-3025) at the duck pond in Victoria's Riverside Park. The trip is limited to 12, so please call Chris for info and to sign up.

Tuesday, July 18, 7:30 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmail.com) in the parking lot of the park. From San Antonio, take IH-10 east to the FM 1518 exit and go north toward Schertz. Look for a brown park sign at Schafer Road. Turn right and go 3 miles to the park. Entrance will be on your left before Cibolo Creek. Bring water.

Tuesday July 25, 7:30 AM

Crownridge Canyon Natural Area

Meet leader Karen Moulder (210/824-2547) at Crownridge Canyon for a walk around this shady park. To access the park, take I-10 West beyond Loop 1604 and exit to Camp Bullis Rd. Go left under the expressway and go to Luskey Street. Turn right into the park. Bring drinking water.

Saturday, August 12, 7:30 AM

SAAS Beginners' Bird Walk

Please see directions for July 8 walk.

Saturday, August 12, 6:00 PM

Government Canyon Meteor Showers

Join us to watch the meteor showers after dark. Bring a picnic supper and a lounge chair and go to the day use/picnic area in Parking Lot C. Entry fees apply

and your park pass can pay for your whole carload. After 6:30, you must use the self-pay station for entry. We can stay until 11 PM. The new nature playscape is now open. Call Georgina at 210/342-2073 for more info. The address is 12861 Galm Rd.

Thursday, August 17, 7:30 AM

Warbler Woods

Meet Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmail.com) for a dog days of summer trip to Don and Susan Schaezler's bird sanctuary at 19349 Old Wiederstein Rd. Bring drinking water and snacks. Your contributions are gratefully accepted at the sign-in box and be sure to leave your checklists. Directions to Warbler Woods are at warblerwoods.org under the header Contact/Visitor.

Sunday, August 27, 7:30 AM

Crescent Bend Nature Park

Meet Sandi Wheeler (wheels5683@gmail.com) at Crescent Bend Nature Park. See July 18 field trip for directions to this park. Bring drinking water.

MITCHELL LAKE MONTHLY BIRDING TOURS

No reservation necessary

1st Sunday: July 2 & August 6, 7:30 AM

2nd Sunday: July 9 & August 13, 7:30 AM

2nd Tuesday: July 11 & August 8, 7:30 AM

3rd Sunday: July 16 & August 20, 7:30 AM

4th Sunday: July 23 & August 27, 8:00 AM

\$8 for non-members; Free for members

Visit <http://mitchelllake.audubon.org/events> or email mlac@audubon.org or 210/628-1639

Public entry hours for Mitchell Lake Audubon

Center are different for July and August:

Tuesday - Thursday: 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM Noon

Friday and Saturday: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Sunday: 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

CIBOLO NATURE CENTER

Visit www.cibolo.org to view the calendar of events or call 830/249-4614.

Located at 140 City Park Rd., Boerne, TX 78006

SAAS FIELD TRIP RECAPS

View in-depth field trip reports at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SATXbirds/> and search using the message numbers below.

Castroville Regional Park, 4/15

Led by Desi D'Orsogna. Message #24676. Species: 33. Highlights: Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole, Audubon's Oriole.

Warbler Woods, 4/18

Led by Sandi Wheeler; hosted by Don and Susan Schaezler. Message #24678. Species: 34. Highlights: Nashville Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Indigo Bunting.

Crescent Bend Nature Park, 4/23

Led by Sandi Wheeler. Message #24682. Species: 31. Highlights: Lesser Nighthawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Indigo Bunting.

Live Oak City Park, 4/26

Led by Bill Zwartjes. Species: 50. Highlights: Barred Owl, Eastern Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat.

Avenue A, 5/2

Led by Lora Reynolds. Message #24704. Species: 36. Highlights: Wood Duck, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, American White Pelicans.

South Llano River State Park, 5/6

Led by Helen Rejzek and Rhandy Helton. Message #24714. Species: 39. Highlights: Black-capped Vireo, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Painted Bunting. Saw Varied Bunting at Easter Pageant Hill.



Varied Bunting by Lila Theis

Judson Nature Trails, 5/13

Led by Georgina Schwartz. Message #24734. Species: 24. Highlights: Little Blue Heron, Yellow Warbler.

Crescent Bend Nature Park, 5/16

Led by Sandi Wheeler. Message #24742. Species: 32. Highlights: American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, indigo Bunting.

Salado Creek Greenway, 5/30

Led by Barbara Scott Gore and Margie Zumbahl. Message #24771. Highlights: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Crested Flycatcher.

Judson Nature Trails, 6/10

Led by Georgina Schwartz. Message #24788. Species: 22. Highlights: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Crested Caracara, Western Kingbird.

Support Bolivar Peninsula Nature Trail

The Governor's office and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) are currently accepting public comments on the draft RESTORE Act project list. The Bolivar Peninsula Nature Trail is on that list, but they need to hear that the project matters. Please send a short email of support for the **Bolivar Peninsula Nature Trail** by 5:00 PM on Friday, June 30, 2017 to: comments@tceq.texas.gov

SA Young Birders Win 2017 Great Texas Birding Classic

The **San Antonio Young Birders Club** Junior and Senior Chickadees, both sponsored by the Texas Ornithology Society, won First Place in their age group and region in the 2017 Great Texas Birding Classic. Both teams birded the Land Heritage Institute in the morning and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center in the afternoon; both teams beat their species count for the 2016 Great Birding Classic. The Junior Chickadee Team, ages 8-13, was led by Captain Craig Davis (13); Eric Buhler (8), Andres Flores (9), Elias Flores (12), Pilar Valdez (12), and Ella Baldwin (12) recorded 76 species. The Senior Chickadee Team, ages 14-18, was led by Captain Delaney Kempf (17); Alaina Blue (17), Marlys Baldwin (16), Jordan Rochlitz (14), and Marie Johnson (13) recorded 86 species. Congratulations to these fine young birders!

SAAS MEETINGS CALENDAR

Thursday, July 6 • 7:00 PM
San Antonio Zoo Education Center
“BAT CHAT”
Coco Brennan, SAAS Member

Coco Brennan, SAAS member and Texas Master Naturalist, will hold a “Bat Chat” for SAAS and Bexar Audubon on July 6, 2017 at the San Antonio Zoo Education Center. Historically, bats have had a bad reputation. They are the subjects of a lot of myths that Coco will bust; then she will talk about the many benefits bats provide humans, threats to bats and what we can do to help bats. She will talk about bats in general, then Mexican Freetail bats specifically as they are the most common in our area and are the denizens of the Bracken Cave, which is just down the road!



Bracken Cave Preserve is owned and managed by Bat Conservation International. Bracken Cave is the summer home of more than 15 million Mexican free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), making it the world's largest bat colony and one of the largest concentration of mammals on earth. The emergence of these millions of bats, as they spiral out of the cave at dusk for their nightly insect hunt, is an unforgettable sight.

2018 DUCK STAMPS: Buy your 2018 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation “Duck” Stamp at the July meeting. Just \$25 to aid conservation efforts!

Thursday, August 3 • 7:00 PM
San Antonio Zoo Education Center
One of a Kind—Monotypic
Families of Birds
David Sarkozi, TOS Past President

Monotypic families are those families of birds represented by only a single species. There's just something compelling about birds that don't fit into any of the "standard" bird categories. Harpy Eagles, Marvelous Spatuletails, and Paradise Tanagers are fantastic, sure, but they are also very interesting members of larger familiar groups: the hawks, the hummingbirds, the tanagers. If you were going to describe a Scarlet Macaw, you would say "it's a really colorful parrot." But how would you describe a Kagu, or a Hoatzin, or a Bornean Bristlehead? These birds have no other living close relatives; they are distinct enough to be placed not just in their own genus but in their own family. By definition, these birds are some of the most unique and exotic species in the world, although some of them live right here in North America.



Come learn a little about these strange and interesting species from David Sarkozi, a resident of the Upper Texas Coast and owner of KoziBirding Tours. He is past-president of the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) and served on the board for 16 years. David has been organizing and leading trips across Texas and in Central America for more than 15 years. With a special interest in Belize, he has made close to 30 trips there.

Rockport/Fulton 29th Annual HummerBird Celebration
September 14-17, 2017 www.rockporthummingbird.com

Join us for the 29th annual HummerBird Celebration in the coastal Texas towns of Rockport and Fulton. This event celebrates the spectacular fall Migration of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, the stars of the show. Other probable sightings are Rufous, Black-chinned, and Buff-bellied Hummingbirds. The Celebration offers something for everyone, from backyard birders to more experienced birders who can expand their knowledge of birds. Topics and activities are available to meet every interest: birds, hummingbirds, butterflies, and habitat development in your own backyard. Advance online registration is recommended, but not required. It will guarantee a date and time for bus and boat tours, and field trips. Special arrangements can be made for those who don't have online capabilities by calling the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce prior to Sept. 1. Special groups of 10 or more are also encouraged to email tourism@1rockport.org. For lodging and dining information, visit the RockportFulton Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center at 319 Broadway, Rockport, TX 78382 or go to www.rockport-fulton.org or call 361/729-6445.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Continued from p. 1*)

related and better-studied Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*A. tzacati*) of Central America, the Buff-bellied Hummingbird appears to be a habitat generalist, able to adapt to changes in the landscape. Also as in the Rufous-tailed, the Buff-bellied Hummingbird is notably aggressive when defending nectar sources and, at around 5 grams in mass, is able to displace smaller species such as Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbirds.

A relatively loud and distinctive song is characteristic of advertising male Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds. Accounts vary as to the nature and frequency of Buff-bellied Hummingbird songs, but a long and emphatic series of chip notes was recorded from a singing male in the Yucatan.

Despite the unwary nature of this species, I can find scant reference to singing Buff-bellied males observed here in the United States. Combined with the difficulty experienced by field researchers when attempting to locate nests, there is uncertainty about what proportion of the local population actually breeds here. The few nests that have been located were similar in construction to nests found in Mexico, placed in a fork of a horizontal branch three to ten feet above the ground. Two broods per year have been observed in Mexico.

Contact Mike at: mike.scully@nisd.net

GOVERNMENT CANYON HIKES

Visit the website for info about the many hikes and programs offered monthly at Government Canyon. Natural Area fees apply. Reservations are required for most activities: www.friendsofsgc.org or 210/688-9055

SAN ANTONIO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Visit www.sabot.org or call 210/207-3250. Located at 555 Funston, San Antonio, TX 78209.

Bird Walks: Third Saturday bird walks led by guides will not take place in June, July or August.

Free to SABG members; \$10 non-members

WELCOME NEW SAAS MEMBERS!

Sam Asvestas
P. O. Box 12885
San Antonio, TX 78212
210/833-3320

Patrick Chipman & Yaxi Liu
10206 Rafter O Trail
Helotes, TX 78023
573/368-8128

Kate & Kyp Cordts
5615 Encino Park Road
San Antonio, TX 78240
210/885-7265

Kenley Hetzel
3613 Denison Dam
San Antonio, TX 78253
720/837-4148

Michael & Sarah Humphrey
9605 W. US Highway 90, Lot 368
San Antonio, TX 78245
210/387-5534

Dina Perry
26202 Dancing Bear
San Antonio, TX 78260
210/663-2386

Peter Ravdin
19931 Encino Royale Street
San Antonio, TX 78259
210/215-9779

Ashley Salas
7770 Pipers Lane
San Antonio, TX 78251
832/729-6029

Tony Villareal & Tony Reyes
2075 Chinaberry Lane
New Braunfels, TX 78130
210/865-6447

Prescient Words:

"How rich will we be when we have converted all our forests, our soil, our water resources, and our minerals into cash?"—Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, 1938, Pulitzer Prize winning political cartoonist and designer of the first Duck Stamp.

Bottles, Behavior, and Bucks: How we drink our water by Paul J. Baicich, Great Birding Projects

In 1991, the U.S. crossed a dietary, market, and cultural barrier: salsa bested ketchup for the first time, with ketchup outsold by \$40 million in retail stores. At the time and in the words of David Weiss, head of Packaged Facts Inc., "the taste for salsa is as mainstream as apple pie." This was a cultural curiosity, something reflecting our corresponding changes in demographics, taste, and diet.

Last year, a quarter century later, another barrier was broken: bottled-water consumption in the U.S. reached 39.3 gallons per capita, while carbonated soft drinks fell to 38.5 gallons. This marked the first time that soda was knocked off the top position, according to the Beverage Marketing Corporation.

While the salsa/ketchup shift had a curious and even positive feel to it, the bottled-water/soda change leaves many folks scratching their heads. It is a shift in consumption that decades ago would have seemed unthinkable: consumers buying a packaged version of something they could get virtually for free from the tap.

Of course, there are rival motivations pulling consumers. On the one hand, there are consumer concerns about the effects of artificial sugar and sweeteners. On the other hand, public dismay over possible water contamination has helped boost growing demand for bottled water.

But let's look at what much of the public does not know, at least about bottled water.

When the public buys bottled water, it is often drinking the very same water that comes out of the tap. For the most part, bottled water is no safer or cleaner than tap water. About 45% of bottled water brands are sourced from the municipal water supply, the same source as what you may get at your kitchen sink.

When the public buys bottled water, many of the very same soda companies benefit. More than a quarter of bottled water revenue last year was shared by the soda giants Coca-Cola Co. and PepsiCo, selling Dasani and Aquafina respectively. (Both companies claim that their water is filtered for purity using a "state-of-the-art" process.)

And, if you thought it was just a replay of the Coke vs. Pepsi battle, think again. Nestlé, the largest food company in the world, owns a suite of bottled-water brands with down-home names (e.g., Arrowhead, Deer Park, and Poland Spring). And if you are into higher-end water, try some of the European-based Nestlé options (e.g., the Italian San Pellegrino and the French Perrier). As of two years ago, multinationals like PepsiCo, the Coca-Cola Company, and Nestlé were raking in a combined \$110 billion a year selling bottled water worldwide.

If you are truly hankering for a taste of sweet or a jolt of

caffeine with your cool drink, you can try that soft drink that matches your own taste. If you want water, however, simply bottle you own! Buy a reusable and refillable water bottle for as little as \$1.99, versus \$1.25 for vending-machine water. Those stainless-steel and durable plastic reusable water bottles are everywhere. Besides, under circumstances



when only about 2 of every 10 commercial plastic water bottles are recycled, the use of tough reusable bottles makes even more sense. Today, billions of plastic bottles still wind up in landfills and hundreds of millions end up littering streets, streams, beaches, bays, and the ocean.

Alas, in the U.S. alone, more than half the population drinks bottled water. Paying a premium price for water in bottles is something that is now viewed as "normal" in America. The sale of bottled water here now accounts for about 30% of all liquid refreshment sales, far exceeding the sales of milk and, yes, even beer. Still, the trend can be reversed... if we try.

Read more at:

<http://greatbirdingprojects.com/home.html>

NOTE: SAAS members can buy reusable plastic water bottles at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center for \$3 each and refill them with filtered water free of charge as many times as you want!

SAAS-Y NOTES

SPEAK OUT FOR THE ENDANGERED GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER

The Texas Land Office has filed suit to remove the Golden-cheeked Warbler from the Endangered Species Act (www.glo.texas.gov). Our voices need to be heard. Those of us who belong to the San Antonio birding community should be willing to step up for these amazing birds. Their future depends on our resolve that they have a place to nest and raise their young. Please act now to state your concerns by contacting the following:

Texas Land Commissioner—George P. Bush
(512) 463-5256 or gpb@glo.texas.gov

Brittany Eck, Press Secretary, Texas General Land Office: (512) 463-5708 or Brittany.Eck@glo.texas.gov

Southwest Region US Fish and Wildlife Service—
Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Regional Director,
RDTuggle@fws.gov

SAAS BOARD MEMBER NEEDED

SAAS Board member Javier Montoya is resigning and we are looking for a replacement to fill the rest of his term, which expires at the end of 2018. If you're interested, please contact any board member.

SAAS Board of Directors Meeting Community Meeting Room at the SA Zoo

Thursday • July 27 • 6:00 PM

Thursday • August 24 • 6:00 PM

All are invited. Contact Christine Turnbull for more info: cbsturnbull@hotmail.com

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON NEWS

Editor: Lora Reynolds
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Mailing Labels: Tom Inglet
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San Antonio Audubon Society

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TO VOLUNTEER!**
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SAAS Membership

For those few of you still receiving your SAAS newsletter by U.S. Postal Service, the first line of your mailing label includes your membership type and the date your current membership expires. The date on the label is the only "notice" you will receive; if your membership expires, we must stop sending you the newsletter. Therefore, please pay attention to the expiry data on the label and renew when appropriate. We want you to continue participating in and supporting SAAS efforts.

If you receive the SAAS newsletter by email, you will receive a membership renewal notice by email. You will also have the advantage of receiving the newsletter in color.

Although we no longer mail out a printed membership roster to everyone, a PDF copy is available by email from the membership secretary at members@saaudubon.org

SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC
5150 BROADWAY #257
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78209-5710

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

San Antonio Audubon Society Membership/Renewal Form

New Renewal Gift

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Please be sure your e-mail address is correct.
Your newsletters will be sent via e-mail unless other special arrangements have been made.

Please check box(s): Individual (\$20 per year)
 Household (\$30 per year)

We need and appreciate your financial support. Please indicate additional donations below.

Donation: Special Projects Fund \$ _____

Donation: Judson Trails Fund \$ _____

Donation: General Operating Fund \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: **San Antonio Audubon Society**. Send dues and address changes to:

ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
SAN ANTONIO AUDUBON SOCIETY
5150 BROADWAY #257
SAN ANTONIO TX 78209-5710

Payments can also be made online at: <www.saaudubon.org/membership.html>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR SAAS EVENTS! (See p. 4)
7 PM, Thursday, July 6: Bat Chat with Coco Brennan
7 PM, Thursday, August 3: David Sarkozi, Monotypic Birds