

# BirdCalls

October 1, 2024

*Bastrop County Audubon Society*  
**BCAS Mission; To promote the conservation, restoration, and enjoyment of natural resources and habitats for birds and other wildlife.**



**Meeting: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 at 6:30 (social) and meeting at 7:00 at Bastrop Library.**

**Program: The Buzz on Bees: Exploring Honey Bee Biology, Native Bees, and Pollinator Habitats**



Discover the fascinating world of honey bees and their essential role in pollination! In this presentation, you'll learn about the basic biology and behavior of honey bees, get a brief introduction to Texas native bees, and understand the importance of bees as pollinators. Plus, get practical tips on how to create a pollinator-friendly habitat in your own backyard, using plants and simple structures to attract and support these vital creatures.

Presented by **Courtney Dyer**, owner of Ivory Acres Farm- a small family farm located in Paige, Texas that specializes in cut flowers, local honey, farm fresh eggs, and more! Dyer has a long background in education and began her beekeeping journey in the spring of 2021, shortly after buying land and moving to the Bastrop County area. She dedicates her life to being a lifelong learner and loves sharing knowledge with

others. Dyer also is extremely passionate about purposeful gardening for wildlife and pollinators and recently started a local chapter of Native Plant Society of Texas for Bastrop County.

## President's Perch

October 2024

Welcome to October 2024! It is an excellent time to start using eBird from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. I highly recommend it as a simple way to support bird biology during this time of changing migration patterns. Cornell is sponsoring an October Big Day in support of World Migratory bird day and global Bird Weekend. Just as our Audubon Christmas Bird Counts have been supporting bird research for over 100 years, researchers are now seeking data collected from citizen scientists such as you to fill in bird behaviors at other times of the year. Saturday, October 12 has been designated as the October Big Day for 2024.



You can go to [ebird.org](http://ebird.org) to get the application for your desktop, tablet or cellphone. There is no cost to you and the application is easy to use. See the graphic below for more information.

We are still very much in the middle of Fall Migration. Sunday, I had 17 hummingbirds at my feeders, today I have 5. By the time you read this I may not have any until Spring. There is still a risk to birds migrating at night from our lights. There is an excellent graphic below with a simple explanation of sensible outdoor lighting rules created by professional lighting engineers. We have two wonderful State Parks in our county and neither one of them is a certified Dark Skies park. In fact, there are no designated Dark Skies areas in Texas east of Interstate 35. Wouldn't it be nice if we could change that for the benefit of our birds and State Park visitors.

May the sight and sound of our bird friends bring you happiness every day, Luke Thompson

## LIGHT TO PROTECT THE NIGHT

Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting Practices



**Illuminating**  
ENGINEERING SOCIETY



### USEFUL



#### ALL LIGHT SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE

Before installing or replacing a light, determine if light is needed. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and the environment. Consider using reflective paints or self-luminous markers for signs, curbs, and steps to reduce the need for permanently installed outdoor lighting.

### TARGETED



#### LIGHT SHOULD BE DIRECTED ONLY TO WHERE NEEDED

Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.

### LOW LIGHT LEVELS



#### LIGHT SHOULD BE NO BRIGHTER THAN NECESSARY

Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.

### CONTROLLED



#### Light should be used only when it is useful

Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.

### COLOR



#### USE WARMER COLOR LIGHTS WHERE POSSIBLE

Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed. Use 2700 K

## Events in October

Oct 1, General Meeting. Bastrop Public Library 7:00pm

Oct 5, Smithville Sustainable Home and Garden Show, 10 am to 2 pm at the Railroad Park Pavilion. Join us at the Bastrop Audubon Table.

Oct 11, Little Hike, D. Skarnulis Nature Trail, 293 Rimrock Court in Pecan Park behind Walmart

Oct 12, October Big Day, Wherever you want, any time you want and with anyone you want

Oct 17, Bastrop County Audubon Board Meeting, 6:00pm Bastrop Public Library

Oct 23, Bird City Bastrop committee meeting, 3:30pm Bastrop City Hall

Oct 26, Little Sit, Kerr Center Park, 1308 Walnut Street

## **Book Reviews:** Laws Guide to Drawing Birds and The Backyard Bird Chronicles

Our game camera caught a playgroup of baby bluebirds taking their first baths in our birdbath. The sight was so joyous that I wanted to share it in a painting. I had never drawn or painted a bird and it seemed impossible. Just then I learned of the Laws Guide to Drawing Birds, written and illustrated by John Muir Laws. David Allen Sibley wrote the book's forward and said. "I wish this book had been available to me when I was starting out, because it is filled with tips and tricks that took me decades to learn." With the help of this book, I was able to represent the birdbath playmates. The process of drawing the birds helped me better understand bird parts and movements, and even identify birds more easily. You'll see more in the birds you see after you practice a few exercises in this book!

The Laws Guide encourages field sketching. I tried it and found it impossible. The darn birds just won't stand still. Amy Tan, best known for writing The Joy Luck Club, created a backyard paradise that brought birds in – and kept them there as she sketched them. The author of The Backyard Bird Chronicles, she is also a student of John Muir Laws. The book is a journal of Ms. Tan's birdfeeder birds and includes her beautiful sketches and drawings of California birds and migrants. It's worth having just for the gorgeous drawings, but I also learned interesting things from the journal. When a murder of crows invaded her birds' paradise, she hung a dummy crow upside down on a rail. The crows gathered around, checking for signs of danger. Ms. Tan wondered if they were mourning for a fallen member,

having read that crows do mourn. It worked! The crows stopped coming. Every entry is an interesting day in the life of a birder. Reading the book was like sharing those daily joys and traumas as I watch the birds in my backyard with a good friend.

Final note: For an archive of free drawing classes:

[www.JohnMuirLaws.com](http://www.JohnMuirLaws.com)

Patricia Raine



October Big Day is an opportunity to unite around our shared love of birds. [Last October](#), nearly 36,332 people from 191 countries submitted 83,735 checklists with eBird, demonstrating the power of birds to bring people together. Each year more and more participants join in this global celebration, how many of you will contribute this year?

Wherever you are on 12 October, take a few minutes to join in this global celebration. Participate from anywhere—even from home!

## How to participate

- **Get an eBird account:** eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's contributions into a single massive October Big Day list—while at the same time gathering data to help scientists better understand birds. [Sign up here](#). It's 100% free from start to finish.
- **Watch birds on 12 Oct:** It's that simple. You don't need to be a bird expert or go out all day long, even 10 minutes of birding from home counts. October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You can report what you find from anywhere in the world.
- **Enter what you see and hear in eBird:** You can enter your observations [via our website](#) or download the [free eBird Mobile app](#) to make submitting lists even easier. Please enter your checklists no later than 15 Oct to be included in the results announcement.
- **Watch the results roll in:** During the day, follow along with bird reports from more than 180 countries in real-time on our [October Big Day page](#).

No matter where you go birding on 12 October, have fun, enjoy the birds you find, and share your observations with eBird. Your checklists will help us better understand global bird populations through products like these [animated abundance maps](#) brought to you by eBird Science.

Keep Smithville Beautiful's

# Sustainable Home & Garden Show

"Water for Life"

Free

**Saturday, Oct 5, 2024**  
**10AM - 2PM**

**Railroad Park**  
**Smithville Historic District**  
**100 NW 1st St.**

Join us for a fun, family-friendly day featuring booths, demonstrations, and vendors sharing info on wise water use and conservation, including:

- Capturing and using rainwater
- Low-water gardening
- Composting
- Local river and stream ecosystems

- Sustainable products for sale (plants!)
- Student art show and activities for kids
- Community garage sale + music festival same day

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**SMITHVILLE**  
THE CITY OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

