

 Audubon TEXAS

Bird's Eye View

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo: Golden-cheeked Warbler (Michael Gray)

Great things happen when we all work together! The partnerships we have with so many of you through your memberships, donations, and committed relationships are the heartbeat of our success. Our achievements of 2012 are truly a testament to the power of collaboration.



The year 2012 was a great year for Audubon Texas education. We served 30,000 students and hosted nearly 60,000 total visitors at our Audubon Centers around the state. These centers — Trinity River Audubon Center in Dallas, Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center at Cedar Hill, and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center in San Antonio — are flagships in the national network of Audubon Centers. As Texans, we are proud our state is home to these beautiful places and meaningful conservation education hubs.

We worked steadily to address continued conservation challenges this past year. While the Texas coast is the most popular rest stop for migrating birds in all of North America, the health of this ecosystem is constantly threatened by reduced freshwater inflow and water pollution, erosion, and habitat fragmentation. Audubon Texas continues the tradition we began in 1923 as a reliable steward of environmentally sensitive habitats along the coast and we are grateful for the many partnerships supporting our efforts. Additionally, we are thankful for the tireless support of volunteers and donors that enable this work. This year we maintained and protected colonial waterbird rookeries in every major bay system along the coast — 179 islands in all. With your help, we will grow this impact in the future.

Finally, 2012 has been a year of great change at Audubon Texas. We have many new faces in the Audubon Texas family, including my own. We are forming a new leadership team in 2013 that will welcome a new state director of development and a new director for the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center at Cedar Hill.

We are wrapping up a year of transition coupled with great accomplishment; 2013 holds potential for even more conservation and education success. The future is bright as we honor your support and partnership and our role as a conservation and education leader in the state.

Your partner in Texas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Trusty".

Brian Trusty
Executive Director
Audubon Texas

“We are working to cultivate the next generation of Texas conservationists.”

—Ben Jones,
Center Director,
Trinity River Audubon Center



Audubon Centers and Education

- **Trinity River Audubon Center (TRAC)** in Dallas, now in its fourth year, serves nearly 50,000 guests and over 24,000 students a year. In 2012, TRAC launched a new program, "Conservation Workshop," which engages students in direct conservation action. Through carefully-crafted conservation education programs, students are learning about local threats to birds and other wildlife and engineering solutions to these threats.
- In its first full year of operation, **Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center** at Cedar Hill welcomed over 9,000 visitors, including 3,000 children from 7 school districts.
- **Mitchell Lake Audubon Center** in San Antonio provided over 4,000 students with hands-on education programs, held its first summer science camp for area youth, and began a 5th year of volunteer projects as a Toyota TogetherGreen volunteer site.
- **Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary** is open and operating under a successful partnership with Gorgas Science Foundation. Sabal Palm remains one of the most treasured birding locations in Texas and is serving children and adults who are both residents and visitors to the Rio Grande Valley.



Protecting Texas' Natural Heritage

Chapters and Important Bird Areas

We work with local Audubon chapters to promote conservation efforts across Texas through the identification of Important Bird Areas. Working with public and private landowners, Audubon Texas and local chapters are pinpointing the best remaining habitats for birds. Once critical habitats have been identified, the all-important work of developing and implementing conservation strategies begins.

In April 2011, Audubon Texas awarded a grant to Bexar Audubon Society to facilitate data collection of the Southernmost Edwards Plateau region in northwestern Bexar County. This 12,500-acre area includes mature Ashe Junipers which are vital for nesting success of Golden-cheeked Warblers. Golden-cheeked Warblers migrate from Central America each spring to breed and raise their young in Central Texas, but encroaching development and habitat loss are constant threats to their reproductive success. By identifying areas of critical habitat, we hope to maximize our conservation impact by focusing our efforts on the most vital areas for birds, and raise awareness about their importance.

In summer 2012, the Southernmost Edwards Plateau region was accepted as a Globally-significant Important Bird Area for endangered Golden-cheeked Warblers. This designation brings global attention to Bexar County and the importance of preserving the unique habitat that Golden-cheeked Warblers rely on amidst the continued pressure of development from a growing city. This is an important step in the protection of Golden-cheeked Warblers and other wildlife in this area. Audubon Texas will continue to work with Bexar Audubon Society and state, city and private landowners to protect our great natural heritage.



A list of all 20 Audubon-affiliated chapters can be found on our website at audubontexas.org



Photos: Reddish Egret (Greg Dimijian);
Royal Tern (Alan D. Wilson/naturespicsonline.com)



Coastal Stewardship Program

Our 90-year legacy of protecting birds along the Texas coast has renewed emphasis with the launch of Audubon's new strategic plan. The plan is bringing unprecedented focus to our work as we look at conservation on a "flyway scale" to impact bird populations at a hemispheric level. The Audubon Texas Coastal Stewardship Program is a leader in providing data vital to setting priorities in the Central Flyway, as well as across the five Gulf states. In addition to a new coast-wide conservation plan for rookery islands, Audubon Texas is leading efforts to develop and improve a web-based bird census database that will help us and other conservation partners greatly enhance our understanding of bird populations.

ISLAND HIGHLIGHTS:

Weather patterns in 2012 created many challenges along the coast—several sites experienced washouts due to high tides and storms on the upper- and mid-coast areas. Some species may still be experiencing low populations due to last year's devastating drought, and many ground-nesting birds are having difficulty finding suitable nesting habitat. Erosion continues to seriously threaten many colonies throughout the coast. Audubon, along with partners, is studying possible strategies and resources to help stop and reverse this threat.

However, despite these challenges—and thanks to the efforts of our dedicated staff and volunteers—roughly half of the species populating our three major sites remained stable or increased. On North Deer, Sundown, and Green Islands, several waterbird species had significant population increases during 2012 as compared to 2011: Little Blue Heron averaged an increase of 93%, Reddish Egret increased by 64%, Tricolored Heron by 57%, White Ibis by 62%, and White-faced Ibis by 70%. Major decreases in some ground-nesting species (Black Skimmer and Royal Tern) and shrub-nesting species (Neotropic Cormorant and Snowy Egret) will continue to receive our full attention as we work with chapters, agencies, and other partners to address these declines.



Thank You For Your Annual Support

Gifts received 7/1/2011 – 6/30/2012

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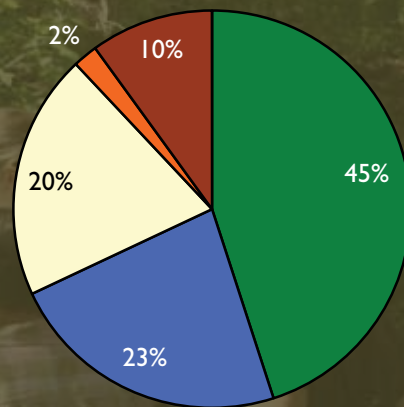
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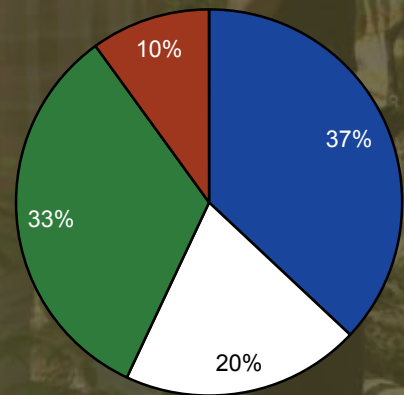
Audubon Texas is deeply grateful for all the generous contributions supporting our work to conserve and restore natural ecosystems and bring environmental education programs to tens of thousands of school children.

As indicated below, we are proud to report 90% of every dollar contributed to Audubon Texas goes directly to conservation and education programs in our state.



Income

- Individuals
- Foundations
- Corporations
- Government Grants
- Earned Income



Expenses

- Education Programs
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To ensure that your planned gift or bequest is specifically designated for Texas programs, it is important to designate "Audubon Texas" as the beneficiary.



Audubon TEXAS

**State Office**

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Jennifer Pearson
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OUR MISSION AND VISION

Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Audubon Texas is the state program of the National Audubon Society, dedicated for 100 years to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. With chapters and partners we protect and manage colonial waterbird populations in every major bay system on the Texas Gulf Coast, identify and conserve the most important sites for birds statewide, and are working to reach 50,000 students annually through conservation education and stewardship action at three urban Audubon Centers.

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