



Migration Celebration

Migration Celebration is an annual spring nature festival presented each spring by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. Many Cradle of Texas Chapter members participate in the planning and execution of the celebration.



This year, Migration Celebration kicks off with a fundraising dinner at Freeport RiverPlace on April 12, followed by a two days of events at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge on April 20-21.

Page 2 - Kickoff Dinner, Friday, April 14
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Volunteers are needed, and participation is approved for Volunteer Hours. This is a good opportunity to rack up some volunteer hours toward certification or recertification!

Volunteer positions are available for a wide variety of interests — everything from assistant cook to parking attendant and tour guide to information booth host. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Ed Barrios, Volunteer Coordinator:

Home: 979-297-1815

Cell: 979-415-4998

Email: ed77566@comcast.net

For more information about volunteering, see the Volunteer Handbook http://migrationcelebration.org/Volunteers/MC_Handbook_2013-V1.pdf

KICKOFF DINNER SCHEDULE

5:30 PM – Doors Open

- Photo Contest Exhibit Opens
- Nature Store Opens
- Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges Booth Opens
- Dinner Ticket Sales begin

6:15 PM – Food Serving Line Opens

- Sage-rubbed smoked pork shoulder or Vegetable lasagna
- Pecan and sausage cornbread stuffing
- Borracho beans
- Salad with apples, cranberries and optional pecans
- Peach cobbler
- Coffee, tea, water

7: 25 – Keynote Speaker

Dr. Felipe Chavez-Ramirez

A presentation by Dr. Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, Director, Conservation Programs at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory,

"Whooping Crane Ecology and Conservation History"

Migration Celebration 2013 Kickoff Fundraiser Friday, April 12 at RiverPlace, Freeport

Keynote Speaker Dr. Felipe Chavez
Director, Conservation Programs
Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

"Whooping Crane Ecology and Conservation History"



It's that time again. The 19th annual Migration Celebration will start with kickoff activities at Freeport RiverPlace on Friday, April 12th starting at 5:30 pm featuring our photo contest submissions.

Our traditional sage-rubbed roasted pork dinner will be served at 6:15, and will be followed by a keynote speech by Felipe Chavez, Director, Conservation Programs, of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory who will address Whooping Crane ecology and conservation history.

We are sure you will find the story of efforts to save the whooping crane to be quite fascinating, especially as told by Felipe, who is a key player in this task.

Members of the Planning Committee will be pleased to supply you with tickets for this year's kickoff events:

\$ 20.00	Adults
\$ 10.00	Children under 13.

Checks should be payable to "Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges" with a note "MC13 Kickoff."

Since 2006, our kickoff events have netted over \$34,000 that has been invested in refuge environmental education and facilities development. With your help, we can build on this legacy.

And yes, half of cost of each ticket can be considered a charitable contribution.

We thank you for your support.
Migration Celebration Planning Committee
Ed Barrios, Ron Bisbee, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Sarah Heller, Sandy Henderson, Phil Huxford, Donna Jablecki, Shane Kasson, Neal McLain, Denis Mudderman, David Plunkett, Krissy Plunkett, Tom Schneider, Ravi Singhania, Tom Taroni, Torry Tvedt,

—Marty Cornell



Dr. Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, is Director of Conservation Programs at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Lake Jackson, Texas. He is a member of the Graduate Faculty, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He has a Ph.D. and MSc degrees in Wildlife Ecology from Texas A&M University, College Station and a BS in Biology and Wildlife Management from Sul Ross State University in Alpine Texas.

His work experience includes: Executive Director of the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, Coordinator of the Chihuahua Desert Ecoregion Program for the World Wildlife Fund; Assistant Professor of Avian Ecology at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and the Department of Animal and Wildlife Sciences at Texas A&M University-Kingsville; lecturer in Wildlife Sciences in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at Texas A&M University.

He has lectured at college senior and graduate level courses in topics including: techniques of wildlife management, animal ecology, ecology of arid lands, avian ecology, community and ecosystem function and management, and wildlife habitat ecology. His research has focused on ecology and conservation issues of North American Cranes especially Whooping Crane, Sandhill and Cuban Sandhill Crane.

He is a member of the US-Canada Whooping Crane Recovery Team, and a member the World Conservation Union's IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC) Crane Specialist Group. He has published more than 40 scientific articles and presented more than 50 talks at invited seminars and professional meetings related to ecology and conservation of birds.

ANNUAL MIGRATION CELEBRATION APRIL 20 & 21

Events at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge

Migration Celebration begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 20 and at noon on Sunday, April 21. Following is a brief list of activities; please visit <http://tmn-cot.org/> for details. All activities are free, although some advance registration is required.

Saturday schedule

9 a.m. – 6 p.m.: Information booth open

9 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.: Sign up: marsh buggy, Bobcat Woods, Moccasin Pond van tours; San Bernard Oak walking tour; kayaking on Cedar Lake Creek, and other Amazing Adventures.

9 a.m. - Noon: Bird banding demonstration

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.:

Children's Discovery Program: bow hunting, bug sweeping, butterfly encounter, fire-fighting, fish casting with rod and reel, nature studies with microscope, pond life, live critters.

Coastal expo: crab marsh, discovery boxes, fish prints, touch tank, beach goodies, fish rubbing.

Junior Naturalist Program

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Exhibits Building: exhibits, photo contest exhibit, nature store, bake sale.

9:30 a.m. & 5:15 p.m.: Birds of Prey shows

11 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.: Food service available.

11 p.m. – noon: Reptile Identification and Ecology presentation by Curtis Jones.

1 p.m. – 2 p.m.: Reptile Identification and Ecology presentation by Marc Ealy.

4 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Rocket netting demonstration.

Sunday schedule

Noon - 5:15 p.m.: Information booth and sign up: marsh buggy tours, Moccasin Pond tours, kayaking on Cedar Lake Creek, San Bernard Oak interpretative tour, guided nature walk Bobcat Woods and other Amazing Adventures.

Noon - 4 p.m.: Children's Discovery Program: (See Saturday schedule).

Coastal expo: (See Saturday schedule).

Junior Naturalist Program.

Exhibits Building: exhibits, photo contest exhibit, nature store, bake sale (begins 12:30).

12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.: Food service available.

1:30 p.m. & 4:15 p.m.: Birds of Prey shows.

2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.: Reptile Identification and Ecology presentation by Curtis Jones.

4 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.: Rocket netting demonstration.

Consider being a volunteer

Migration Celebration is organized and run by the Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. It happens with the help and dedication of numerous volunteers and many volunteer opportunities are available.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help, should call Ed Barrios, volunteer coordinator

979-297-1815 (h)

979-415-4998 (c)

barrios@refugefriends.org.

BE A NATURALIST PHOTOGRAPHER ENTER THE 2013 MIGRATION CELEBRATION PHOTO CONTEST

By Denis Mudderman

It's once again time to look through your photos from the last year for outstanding entries to the 2013 Migration Celebration photo contest.

Each year's contest has had great participation from Cradle of Texas chapter members. Contest rules and categories are the same as last year. Three general categories: "Wildlife", "Birds", and "Nature Photography as Art" can include photos from anywhere in the world. The four Texas Mid-coast categories "Wildlife", "Birds", "Plant Life", and "Habitats and Ecosystems" are restricted to photos taken in the local six counties.

We are still separately recognizing photos taken on any of the units of Texas Mid-coast Complex NWR. Rules and forms are on the migration celebration website (<http://www.migrationcelebration.org>)

Last year's Best of Show photo was a Red-necked Phalarope (Page 5) Photographed in the process of eating an insect taken by Tim Timmis. Contest judges Kathy Adams Clarke and Larry Ditto (who are judging again this year) noted that the bird's poise corresponds to classic John James Audubon bird paintings.

Despite all the wonderful award winning photos, my favorite was a photo by Monica Berry that didn't place in award ribbons. I love photos that communicate emotion or a message, even if that message is humorous. The photo shows a Dickcissel standing on the side white line of the road to the Discovery Center at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. The photo calls out for a caption. One can imagine the bird is maybe tired of migrating and looking to hitchhike. Maybe it's looking to catch a ride over to San Bernard for the Migration Celebration?

Another great emotion photo was a family of Black Skimmers taken by Jackie Hicks. Looking closely one will see a baby under one parent's wing and the other parent with a fish or something in its bill. With so many skilled photographers, there is considerable competition, especially in the bird categories. Jackie's photo was awarded a honorable mention.

The purposes of the Migration Celebration should resonate with any naturalist-photographer. First, the contest and judging offers a challenge for the naturalist photographer to capture perfect images of wildlife and plants. Migration Celebration contest award winners are at the same level of national nature photography contests.



**"Why Did the Mockingbird
Cross the Road?"**

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*)

Photo: Monica Berry

Second, the collection of photos is a fantastically effective outreach and educational tool to the public of the wonders of nature, and for our contest, national wildlife refuges and other natural areas. We are continually looking for ways to expand our exhibit of photos.

Finally, the photo contest offers a collection of photos that can be used by the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges or the Texas Mid-coast Complex NWR on websites, interpretive panels, or publications. For example, a photo of two Sandhill cranes in flight by Carl Henry didn't win any ribbons, but is the perfect photo for a birding interpretive panel being developed for the information kiosk on FM 2004 by the Brazoria NWR field office.

Having a collection of photos for such purposes is one reason that we started to require photo files two years ago.

So be a naturalist photographer and enter your great photos in the 2013 contest.



"The Family Unit" Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)
Photo: Jackie Hicks

More photos on next page...

More Photos From the 2012 Photo Contest

**“Fly Catcher“**

Wilson's Phalarope
(*Phalaropus tricolor*)
Photo: Tim Timmis

Best of Show

**“Wing Man“**

Sandhill Crane
(*Grus canadensis*)
Photo: Carl Henry