

**ORNITHOLOGY 101 IN SOUTH TEXAS
A LEARN-ABOUT-BIRDS WORKSHOP**

FEBRUARY 6–11, 2018

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By Denver Holt

Our previous Ornithology 101 workshops were held in November. We moved our 2018 workshop to February to avoid the extremely hot temperatures of November. We got our wish, as it was cold and rainy the first day, and then just cool with sprinkles for the rest of the class.

At our opening get-acquainted dinner we discussed the workshop and its objectives. At our first lecture the next morning we reviewed the fossil record of birds and their evolution, as indicated from morphology and more recent molecular techniques. We covered the numbers of bird orders, families, and species in the world. We then reviewed technical terms of bird topography and feather types for use in identifying species.

Each morning thereafter, we began with a review of various aspects of bird ecology. We paid particular attention to bird flight and its evolution, and bird bills, as the most important adaptations allowing birds to exploit every habitat in the world. While in the field we continually emphasized how flight gave birds the ability to spread to every habitat, and how vegetation influenced the evolution of bills, allowing birds to exploit food resources and thrive in every habitat known. By visiting a number of different habitats, we were better able to understand bird diversity.

We discussed various forms of flight such as pumping the wings, soaring, gliding, hovering, and kiting. We also discussed flightless birds. We reviewed the avian skeleton and its evolution to allow flight. And we delved into the musculature that generates bird flight. We discussed migration ecology emphasizing the “hows” and “whys” of migration.

We discussed bird color from the brilliantly colored Altamira Oriole and Northern Cardinal to the extremely difficult to see camouflage-colored Common Pauraque. We broke down color into those influenced by pigments and those influenced by feather structure. We discussed color, color pattern, and unusual markings or feathers in the evolution of social signaling for a variety of reasons.

We addressed bird anatomy and physiology. Why do birds have such high body temperature? How do birds breathe and what is the function of air sacs? We reviewed reproduction biology and the making of an egg. We discussed egg physiology and the developing embryo to hatching and the chick.

For our final evening program, we wove together all we had learned and discussed about ornithology and applied those topics to a group of birds—owls.

BIRDS:

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	
Waterfowl	Anatidae	
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>	
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	
Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>	
Cinnamon Teal	<i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	X
American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>	X
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	X
Mottled Duck	<i>Anas fulvigula</i>	X
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	X
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	X
Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>	
Redhead	<i>Aythya americana</i>	X
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	X
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	X
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	
Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	
Guans, Chachalacas & Curassows	Cracidae	
Plain Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis vetula</i>	X
Grebes	Podicipedidae	
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	X
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	X
Pigeons and Doves	Columbidae	
Rock Pigeon (I)	<i>Columba livia</i>	X
Eurasian Collared-Dove (I)	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	X
Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>	X
Common Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	X
White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>	
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	X
Cuckoos	Cuculidae	
Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	
Nightjars	Caprimulgidae	
Common Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>	X
Hummingbirds	Trochilidae	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	
Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	
Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	
Buff-bellied Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia yucatanensis</i>	X
Rails, Gallinules and Coots	Rallidae	
Clapper Rail	<i>Rallus crepitans</i>	
Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	
Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	X
American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	X
Cranes	Gruidae	

Sandhill Crane	<i>Antigone canadensis</i>	
Stilts and Avocets	Recurvirostridae	
Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	X
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	X
Oystercatchers	Haematopodidae	
American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	
Plovers and Lapwings	Charadriidae	
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	X
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	X
Sandpipers and Allies	Scolopacidae	
Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	
Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	X
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	X
Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	X
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	X
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	X
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	X
Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	X
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>	X
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	X
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	
Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	X
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	X
Gulls, Terns and Skimmers	Laridae	
Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	X
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	X
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	X
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	X
Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	X
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	X
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	
Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>	X
Cormorants	Phalacrocoracidae	
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	X
Anhinga	Anhingidae	
Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	
Pelicans	Pelecanidae	
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	X
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	X
Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns	Ardeidae	
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	X
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	X

Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	X
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	X
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	X
Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	X
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	X
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	X
Ibises and Spoonbills	Threskiornithidae	
White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	X
White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	
Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>	X
New World Vultures	Cathartidae	
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	X
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	X
Osprey	Pandionidae	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	X
Hawks, Eagles and Kites	Accipitridae	
Hook-billed Kite	<i>Chondrohierax uncinatus</i>	
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	X
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	X
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	X
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	X
Harris's Hawk	<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>	X
White-tailed Hawk	<i>Geranoaetus albicaudatus</i>	X
Gray Hawk	<i>Buteo plagiatus</i>	X
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	X
Barn-Owls	Tytonidae	
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	
Owls	Strigidae	
Eastern Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops asio</i>	
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	
Kingfishers	Alcedinidae	
Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle torquata</i>	
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	
Woodpeckers	Picidae	
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes aurifrons</i>	X
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>	X
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	
Falcons and Caracaras	Falconidae	
Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>	X
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	X
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	X
Applomado Falcon (I)	<i>Falco femoralis</i>	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	X

African & New World Parrots	Psittacidae	
Green Parakeet (I)	<i>Psittacara holochlorus</i>	
Red-crowned Parrot (I)	<i>Amazona viridigenalis</i>	
Tyrant Flycatchers	Tyrannidae	
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	X
Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	X
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	X
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	X
Couch's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus couchii</i>	
Shrikes	Laniidae	
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	X
Vireos	Vireonidae	
White-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>	X
Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	
Crows, Jays and Magpies	Corvidae	
Green Jay	<i>Cyanocorax yncas</i>	X
Chihuahuan Raven	<i>Corvus cryptoleucus</i>	
Larks	Alaudidae	
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	
Swallows	Hirundinidae	
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	X
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	
Chickadees and Tits	Paridae	
Black-crested Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus atricristatus</i>	X
Penduline-Tits	Remizidae	
Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>	
Wrens	Troglodytidae	
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	X
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	
Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	X
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	
Gnatcatchers	Poliopitidae	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliopitila caerulea</i>	X
Kinglets	Regulidae	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	X
Thrushes and Allies	Turdidae	
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	
Clay-colored Thrush	<i>Turdus grayi</i>	
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	
Mockingbirds and Thrashers	Mimidae	
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	
Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	X
Long-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma longirostre</i>	X
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	X
Starlings	Sturnidae	
European Starling (I)	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	X

Waxwings	Bombycillidae	
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	
Old World Sparrows	Passeridae	
House Sparrow (I)	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X
Wagtails and Pipits	Motacillidae	
American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	X
Siskins, Crossbills and Allies	Fringillidae	
House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	
New World Sparrows	Passerellidae	
Olive Sparrow	<i>Arremonops rufivirgatus</i>	
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	
Lark Bunting	<i>Calamospiza melanocorys</i>	
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	X
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	X
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	
Troupials and Allies	Icteridae	
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	
Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	X
Altamira Oriole	<i>Icterus gularis</i>	X
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	X
Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	
Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	X
New World Warblers	Parulidae	
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis celata</i>	X
Nashville Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>	X
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	X
Northern Parula	<i>Setophaga americana</i>	
Tropical Parula	<i>Setophaga pitayumi</i>	
Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	
Pine Warbler	<i>Setophaga pinus</i>	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	X
Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>	
Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>	
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	X
Cardinals and Allies	Cardinalidae	
Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>	
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	X
Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>	
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>	
Painted Bunting	<i>Passerina ciris</i>	

MAMMALS		
Opossums		
Virginia Opossum	<i>Didelphus virginiana</i>	
Armadillos		
Nine-banded Armadillo	<i>Dasyypus novemcinctus</i>	
Squirrels, Prairie Dogs & Marmots		
Eastern Fox Squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger</i>	x
Mexican Ground-Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus mexicanus</i>	
Nutria		
Nutria (I)	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>	x
Rabbits & Hares		
Eastern Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>	
Desert Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>	
Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>	
Cats		
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>	
Dogs		
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	
Skunks		
Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	
Raccoons		
Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	
Pigs		
Wild Boar (Feral Pig)	<i>Sus Scrofa</i>	
Peccaries		
Collared Peccary	<i>Pecari tajacu</i>	
Deer		
White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	
ADDITIONS		
Burrowing Owl		x
Cliff Swallow		x
Eastern Bluebird		x
American Alligator		x
Red-eared Slider (turtle)		x