

Q4-20

The Friends
of Balcones Canyonlands
National Wildlife Refuge

FALL NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

THIS ISSUE

Warbler Notes Takes Flight!

A New Trail to Hike

Refuge Spotlight



UPCOMING EVENT

The annual Friends meeting will be conducted via a Zoom videoconference on October 31 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Even with the pandemic and widespread closings, trails at the Refuge have remained open and the staff has been very busy. Refuge staff is looking forward to the Annual Meeting so they can share with Members the improvements and upgrades to the Refuge access areas as well as discussing plans for the future of the Refuge.

Working closely with the Refuge staff, the Board of FOBCNWR has developed a comprehensive long-range plan with focuses on conservation and stewardship projects, increasing public outreach, and growing membership. Friends will receive an email before the Annual Meeting with more information.

'THE WARBLERS' NOTES' TAKES FLIGHT

Welcome to the debut issue of 'The Warblers' Notes.' We are excited to present it as a freshened quarterly newsletter intended to inform Friends by highlighting programs, opportunities, and activities of the Friends of Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge.

We invite you to provide feedback on 'The Warblers' Notes,' letting us know what you think and sharing your ideas as to topics for future issues.

Drop us a line at newsletter@friendsofbalcones.org.



NEW QUARRY CANYON TRAIL OPENS

The new Quarry Trail has opened to rave reviews. Rated as 'Difficult,' the new trail is .6 miles long and features elevated views of an old quarry located at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge. A spacious parking area helps makes the new trailhead a hot destination even as cooler Fall weather makes the experience more inviting.

A sign at the trailhead provide both a map of the trail and an illustration of some of the flora and fauna that call the Refuge home. They include the North American porcupine, Mountain Laurel, Escarpment Black Cherry, Gulf Coast toad and Cedar Sage.



OUR VERY OWN FIRE CREW! TAKING A BREAK AFTER CREATING A FIRE BREAK.

Did you know the refuge has a fire crew? They help to manage and restore our natural woodlands and grasslands through carefully controlled prescribed burns. They then monitor and study the effects on our oak juniper woodlands 30 square meters at a time. With the previous winter burns, that's over 1300 plots! Earlier this spring they were fighting fires in Texas, Crocket County, and this summer in Travis County. Right now, this brave crew is in California and Oregon helping to fight some of the largest fires in history! They are awesome!

IT'S BIRDING'S GLOBAL BIG WEEKEND!



Examples of birds that overwinter in our area: Kestrel, Yellow-rumped warbler and spotted towhee sparrow (photos courtesy of allaboutbirds.com)

The weekend of October 17 and 18 promises to be an exciting time in the world of birding. It's peak time for migrating birds, so birders from around the world are joining together for a major birding event called Global Bird Weekend. Birders from over 70 countries have already registered. They will be birding from backyards, from their parks, from boats, and even on road trips. Sightings will be logged on the bird reporting app/website, eBird, hosted by Cornell University.

The trails at Doeskin and Warbler Vista are all open so get out to the Refuge, bring your binoculars and your bird guide, download the apps eBird and Merlin Bird ID, and come check out who might be winging their way back to their wintering grounds in Central and South America. With 98.5 percent of the neotropical birds migrating through Texas, you may be surprised what—or who—you find. Help birders surpass 2019's record of 20,000 participants, 42,700 checklists and more than 6,700 species seen. Hope to "see you out there in the wild!"



The Friends of Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge is joining the Giving Tuesday movement. Scheduled this year for December 1, 2020, Giving Tuesday is an opportunity for people around the world to use their individual power of generosity to remain connected with and support their communities.

People can demonstrate their generosity in a variety of ways during Giving Tuesday – whether it's helping a neighbor, advocating for an issue sharing a skill, or giving to causes, everyone has something to give and every act of generosity counts. Please demonstrate your generosity to the Friends by donating, volunteering, or by just bringing some friends out to the Refuge to enjoy the wild outdoors.



Kestrel, yellow-rumped warbler, spotted towhee, golden-fronted woodpecker -- perfect winter Texans!

Have a topic you want to read about in the next newsletter? Send a suggestion to: newsletter@friendsofbalcones.org