



April 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to the Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FOSANA) e-newsletter! We share natural areas news, the Friends' efforts, and opportunities to get involved in volunteering or educational programs at San Antonio's natural areas parks. Please check our website, www.fosana.org, for periodic updates and program information.

Birds to Look for in the Natural Areas: Painted Bunting



(photograph by David Holle, eBird.org)

Spring is here, and while winter storm Uri changed plant and animal patterns, migratory birds are still on the move. So far, staff have noted the arrival of a couple of spring and summer residents including our beloved Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-and-white Warbler. One Texas jewel that arrives a bit later is the Painted Bunting, usually landing in April. The male Painted Bunting is one of the most colorful birds in the world with striking blue, green, and red plumage. It is thought that migratory birds, like this bunting, are more likely to be sexually dimorphic (male and females look different) than permanent residents. Scientists believe this is because females arrive on breeding grounds after males and tend to choose the most brilliantly colored mate, therefore passing on those genetics. Nonetheless, it's hard to find a male Painted Bunting whose plumage doesn't impress. Their song however, is slightly less exciting, described as a series of short, musical phrases of thin, sweet, high-pitched notes lasting about two seconds (All About Birds, 2019). Once you become familiar with their song, you will notice that they sing all day long. It's almost as if they know how beautiful they are, alluring attention from others for as long as there is light in the day. Thankfully, it is not difficult to locate these gems throughout the city and you'll find them at most of our Natural Areas. Get your binoculars ready for their arrival, because this bird is not one to miss.

Happy birding,
Casey Cowan, CWB
Parks Naturalist

Education Programs

Tomorrow (Saturday)! Batty Bats with Southern Wildlife Rehab

10:00 a.m-11:00 a.m. | Saturday, March 27 | ZOOM

Did you know bats are similar to humans? Bats give live birth, provide milk to their young, and their wings are comparable to our hands. In fact, bats are more biologically similar to primates than mice—how cool is that? Learn all about BATS this month and why they're an important part of the ecosystem!

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN US ON ZOOM](#)

Meeting ID: 943 0738 3980

Passcode: batty bats

BIPOC GIRLS: PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

SATURDAY, APRIL 17
10:00 A.M-11:30 A.M.
ZOOM

Registration at [FOSANA.org](https://www.fosana.org)

For more information email
nicole.mcleod@santantonio.gov



BIPOC Girls: Perspectives on Environmental Education

10:00 a.m-11:30 a.m. | Saturday, April 17 | ZOOM

Hear from youth female leaders on environmental education and learn how their grassroots approach to education benefits and uplifts marginalized communities. While these young women are working toward equity and social justice through their passion for the planet, they host a podcast, attend school, and write books. Danielle (Indigenous) and Vinaya (Indian) are both youth environmental activists who use STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) to help students discover their true potential as Earth innovators and changemakers and advocate for other minorities like themselves.

Suggested donation: \$3

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Animal Friends with Learn Nature

10:00 a.m-11:00 a.m. | Saturday, April 10 | ZOOM

ZOOM with us at Friedrich Wilderness Park and learn about animal adaptations! Meet some of your animal friends with the Learn Nature crew—Rip the baby snake, her big friends Rapheal and Racket, and Tessa and Ursula the playful rats, Teddy and Elvis Toad, and more!

Rather see the animals in person? We have limited availability for social distanced seating at the Friedrich Park Outdoor Classroom! Email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov to secure your spot in advance. Very limited seating available. Suggested donation: \$3 per person, or \$5 per family.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Geology Walk at Friedrich Wilderness Park

10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Saturday, May 1 | Friedrich Wilderness Park

Enjoy a morning walk with Geologist Bob Hixon through the picturesque trail of Friedrich Wilderness Park to discuss the local limestone features as well as plant identification. Along the way, discover the many wonders of the park such as the karst feature along Water Trail, and other hill country habitat. Note: Limited number of spaces available. Masks and temperature checks required. Suggested donation: \$3 per person.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



San Antonio is officially a Bird City Community!

Did you know San Antonio is officially designated as a [Bird City](#)? Through the dedication of many committed volunteers and the support of [Bexar Audubon](#) and [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#), as well as other partners, San Antonio became an official Bird City community in February 2021, and continuing through December 2023. The primary purpose behind this initiative is to protect birds and their natural habitats. This comes at a time when many people are turning to nature as a place for respite and finding a deeper appreciation for nature when social distancing has become the new normal.

This community-focused certification program builds awareness on factors that impact bird communities such as the importance of using native plants, habitat loss and fragmentation, preservation and restoration of natural plant communities. While most value their green spaces and parks, Bird City takes this to the next level, encouraging schools, organizations, and communities to work together to become more involved in building awareness and appreciation for birds. Moreover, as many researchers have noted, birding communities boost tourism which generates more money in the local economy, thereby [economically](#) benefiting the community. Take a look at the recent San Antonio Report's [article](#) outlining the application advantages and challenges.

With over 400 documented bird species in Bexar County, the Natural Areas are home to the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo. While the Golden-cheeked warbler remains a federally listed endangered species, the Black-capped Vireo was delisted in 2018. Although it no longer nests at Friedrich Wilderness Park in recent years, it has been seen along the Mission Reach area in 2020. Perhaps it goes without saying, San Antonio has always been a bird community in many ways, but having an official designation is just another reason to keep working toward public awareness and promoting environmental stewardship and protecting our green spaces.



Cedar waxwings in San Antonio this winter.

Are you connected to San Antonio Natural Areas on social media?

You can like us on [Facebook](#).

Find us on [Instagram](#) @sanaturalareas.

Are you a member of Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FoSANA)?

Please support FoSANA on the preservation and educational outreach of natural areas around San Antonio by joining or renewing your membership [online](#) today.

Your membership this year will help us continue to

- offer over 400 environmental programs for families and adults at the Natural Areas.
- serve over 14,000 families and adults through education and outreach programs.
- coordinate over 400 volunteer programs and 7,500 volunteer hours supported trail maintenance, habitat conservation and restoration, and native landscapes and gardens.

Plus, when you renew your membership, you'll receive our monthly newsletter that provides updates on natural areas happenings and timely information on upcoming events. Should you need any assistance or have any questions or comments about your membership, please feel free to email us at friendsofsanaturalareas@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
FoSANA Board

Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas is dedicated to promoting stewardship of San Antonio's Natural Areas, and to the understanding and appreciation of nature through educational and scientific programs.

For the latest updates and activities, please visit FOSANA.org.

[Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas Website](#)
