

Destinations: The Birds of Broadacres

By Elaine Matte Mut

Wild birds in the Houston area have found a comfortable spot to raise a family close to downtown Houston. The care that Broadacres residents have given to the iconic live oak tree-lined esplanades over the past 80 plus years has resulted in a pop-up rookery for great Egrets (Large white), Snowy Egrets (small with yellow feet), Black-Crowned Night Herons and Yellow-Crowned Night Herons. Recently, Broadacres resident Franci Neely graciously hosted a neighborhood gathering so that residents could learn about the exotic avian residents.

With the coordination assistance by BOCA resident



Houston Audubon's Director of Education Mary Anne Weber with an owl for BOCA residents to meet. Photo by Elaine Matte Mut.

Doris Heard, herself a birder and Audubon member, the Houston Audubon's Director of Education, Mary Anne Weber, helped residents see the nesting birds up close through a scope and provided

the gathering with information about local birds and how we can help support these creatures who are so vital to humans in the ecosystem.

She also brought some of

Rare Male Eurasian Wigeon Spotted at Katy Prairie Preserve

A rare male Eurasian Wigeon, which normally breeds in the northernmost areas of Europe and Asia, has been sighted on the Katy Prairie Conservancy's (KPC) Indiangrass Preserve in a wetland pond next to its field office on Hebert Road. The

and I've talked with people who drove from as far as Kerrville and Austin just to get a glimpse of this striking duck. It's possible we've now had up to 200 birders check out Indiangrass Preserve over the last several days in hopes of seeing our Eurasian

er an uncommon visitor on the mid-Atlantic and Pacific coasts and a rare visitor to the rest of the United States, except for the Four Corners and the southern Appalachians.

The Katy Prairie is known as a birder's paradise with more than 300 species of birds having been observed there. The 20,000 acres of lands protected by KPC are recognized as a Global Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The tallgrass prairies, ranchlands,



sighting has generated intense excitement among area birders, who first spotted this member of the dabbling duck genus *Mareca*, late last week.

"This handsome fellow is creating quite a stir in the birding community," says Bob Honig, a member of KPC's Advisory Board and an avid birder himself, who first spotted the bird. "It has a vivid orange-red head and a forehead that appears blazing gold especially when the sun hits it.

"Word spread quickly,

Wigeon."

The Eurasian Wigeon is the Old World counterpart of North America's American Wigeon. It is strongly migratory and winters farther south than its breeding range, including southern Asia and Africa. In Great Britain and Ireland, the Eurasian Wigeon is common as a winter visitor but scarce as a breeding bird in Scotland, the Lake District and the Pennines.

In the United States, the Eurasian Wigeon is consid-

farmlands, wetlands, forests and riparian zones provide vital habitat for a highly diverse group of birds, including numerous species of conservation concern — for example, grassland species such as Long-billed Curlew, Henslow's Sparrow and Northern Bobwhite — plus raptors, water birds and other upland species.

"Bird watching is a hugely popular hobby and pastime in this country," says Honig. "We hope more people will

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A Snowy Egret with mating plumage peers at a BOCA photographer. Photo by Ed Novotny.

her live, feathered ambassadors seldom seen up close.

Last year more than 120 nests were built by black- and yellow-crowned Night-Herons and Great Egrets. Snowy Egrets are new to the neighborhood, but are increasing their numbers as well.

At the Movies
with Martin Duran

WorldFest Houston

Starting this Friday, April 20, through Sunday, April 29, the WorldFest Houston International Independent Film Festival will take place. For the 51st edition of WorldFest, they have a new venue, the Cinemark Memorial City theatres.

Kicking off WorldFest will be Ethan Hawke's "Blaze." In the film, which has numerous ties to the Lone Star state, Ben Dickey portrays the late country musician Blaze Foley. While he was born in Arkansas, Foley grew up in Texas. He was killed in Austin in 1989, at the age of 39. Sam Rockwell, Richard Linklater, Steve Zahn and Kris Kristofferson also star. Hawke, who will attend, received his first award at WorldFest way back in 1993, with a short titled "Straight to One!"

WorldFest Founder Hunter Todd states of this year's festival: "We are tremendously excited about this major move forward for our 51st WorldFest. Both Cinemark and Memorial City itself will provide superb facilities, and a wonderful theater staff and exceptional convenience to an outstanding new demographic for our festival. This move is tantamount to a move to a new city. We look forward to showing our festival goes the luxury of this theater and to another 50 years with our new festival partners, Memorial City and Cinemark."

Kathleen Haney, WorldFest Artistic and Program Director adds, "We are so delighted at our new venue of Memorial City Cinemark Theatres and all the great possibilities it offers and are adding a free show of children's programming in the mall play area's outdoor screen."

WorldFest is the largest film and video competition in the world in terms of number of actual category entries, with more than 4,300 category entries received in 2017. There are 200 sub-categories for competition, allowing each film to compete in its own individual genre

Ticket prices start at \$7.50 for matinee shows, \$12.50 for evening premieres, and goes all the way up to the VIP Platinum Pass for \$1,000. The VIP Platinum Pass includes admission to all films, all receptions, entrance to the Festival Club, where you can meet filmmakers and stars, nine Film Industry Master Class Seminars, Closing Day Festivities and more. There are also passes for \$100, \$200 and \$500 available.

For more information and to purchase tickets online visit <https://worldfest.org> or call (713) 965-9955.

Happy viewing!

Discovery Green Hosts Earth Day Houston

Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney Street, continues its Spring 2018 Season with Earth Day Houston on Sunday, April 22, from noon-6 p.m.

Discovery Green's citywide Earth Day celebration is designed to educate, inspire and encourage action. The event features displays, exhibits and booths on topics ranging from alternative energy to recycling methods, plus a foodie farmers market, kids activities and more.

Earth Day Houston will also include Earth Talks from local environmentalists Mayor Sylvester Turner, NASA, youth leaders and more. Guests can enjoy a special edition of Canned Acoustica featuring Fat Tony, Hogan & Moss, Max Flinn, Arthur Yoria, The Broken Spokes, Heapin' Helpin' and Giant Kitty.

Earth Day Houston advances the park's mission of providing free, environmentally conscious programming and eco-friendly operations.

The event is free to attend. Please visit www.discoverygreen.com for additional information.