

2010 RGVBF Seminars & Keynotes

>Wednesday, 10 November

SHOREBIRD ID – Class Session (Fee \$7)

3:00p – 4:30p

Take your shorebird ID skills to the next level using an impression-based approach paired with field mark analysis. Explore common shorebird ID challenges with photographic examples using digitized, side-by-side comparisons. Several photos from Kevin's upcoming book *Birding by Impression* will show how this approach also works with other bird families. This seminar covers topics helpful for both the advanced and beginner.

!Note: Best paired with the field trip by the same name, see Field Trips above. Limited space is available in both the class and field sessions of this special offering.



Kevin Karlson, one of the authors of the acclaimed *The Shorebird Book*, is currently finishing his new book, *Birding by Impression*, which is scheduled for release in the Roger Tory Peterson Reference Series either fall 2011 or spring 2012. This book shares an approach to bird identification that encourages an initial field evaluation utilizing impressions, then supplemented by traditional ID methods. For more Kevin Karlson bio, see Field Trips above and How the Experts Do It ID Panel, below.

>Thursday, 11 November

INTRO to BIRDING in SPANISH (Free !)

10:30a – 11:30a

In this informative seminar, given completely in Spanish, discover the fun and excitement of birding in our unique region. Topics will include general identification tips, field techniques, best times for birding, basic optics, as well as bird feeders, homemade water drippers, and how to find good locations for these to help you attract a variety of birds to your garden.

En este seminario informativo, dado completamente en español, descubran la alegría y la emoción de observar aves en nuestra región incomparable. Se incluirán entre los temas de discusión recomendaciones generales para identificación, técnicas de campo, las horas óptimas para observar aves, equipo básico de óptica, y también comederos para aves, goteros caseros de agua, y cómo encontrar lugares ideales para estos-todo esto para ayudarle a usted atraer una variedad de aves a su jardín.



Benito Trevino is a botanist and naturalist who has dedicated his life's work to the preservation and conservation of native plants, as well as the wildlife, history, and culture of the Rio Grande Valley. He owns and operates Rancho Lomitas Native Plant Nursery, located just north of Rio Grande City, where in guided trailer tours, participants learn about unique edible, medicinal, and poisonous plants.

VALLEY RAPTORS (Fee \$7)

1:30p – 3:00p

South Texas boasts many special neotropical species, and resident raptors figure mightily among these. Pair that with this area's migration super-highway, and the result is a year-round raptor richness. This seminar will cover field marks, behavior, distribution, and all things needed for more effective birds of prey ID.

!Note: Best paired with the field trip by the same name, see Field Trips above.



Bill Clark, author of *Hawks of North America* in the Peterson Field Guide series and *Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*, is a long-standing name in the U.S. and world raptor scene. His banding and research has spanned decades. It is a testament to the singular nature of the Valley that he now calls it home. ([Back to Top](#))

BIRDING by EAR – Class Session (Fee \$7)

3:00p – 4:00p

For many birders, both beginning and experienced, attempting to learn bird sounds can be a daunting, if not seemingly impossible, task. So many species and so much variation—where does one start? This springboard workshop will get you going by taking an analytical approach and focusing on helpful techniques for remembering bird sounds. Birds likely to be heard during the Festival will be the reference standards, but also touched upon will be a review of a few of those hoped-for rarities.

!Note: Best paired with the field trip by the same name, see Field Trips above. Limited space is available in both the class and field sessions of this special offering.



Michael O'Brien is justly famous in the birding world, as an author (*The Shorebird Guide*), artist (*Peterson Field Guide*), leader (Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours). And, if all that isn't enough, he's also famous for his ears (*Flight Calls of Migratory Birds CD*).

TROPICAL TOPICS: NEOTROPICAL BIRD ID and BIRTH OF A BIRDBOOK (Fee \$7)

3:30p-5:00p ~ *A double offering in one talk slot!*

NEOTROPICAL BIRD ID WORKSHOP

South in our hemisphere lies the most diverse avifaunal region of the world—over 3,700 species. This workshop is the right first step in tackling that overwhelming, but fascinating task of a tropical species base of knowledge. Learn ID skills of silhouette, field marks, posture, size, habitat, behavior, and vocalization.



Carlos Bethancourt was born and raised in the forests around the Canal Zone. He studied ornithology in the U.S., and is currently senior bird guide at Panama's famous Canopy Tower. Carlos has traveled extensively birding and promoting eco-tourism, and his reputation, prowess, and passion grows.

BIRTH OF A BIRD BOOK

In 1981 Steve Howell crossed from Texas into Mexico and entered a new and wonderful world of birds. Fourteen years later, the classic *A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America* was published, co-authored and illustrated by Sophie Webb. What made him devote his years to such an undertaking? What did he discover and where did he go? Was it fun? In this talk, Steve will share insights into the rich birdlife of Mexico as well as tales of the trials involved in the writing and illustrating of a bird book.



Steve N. G. Howell is an international bird tour leader with WINGS, a Research Associate at PRBO Conservation Science, and a widely published author. He recently finished the *Peterson Reference Guide to Molt in North American Birds* and is working on a photographic guide to North American albatrosses and petrels. When not in the field, he is trying to be in the field.

MARIPOSA ROAD – A BUTTERFLY BIG YEAR (Fee \$10)

6:15p

If you know of Bob's work, you'll be excited to meet him. If you don't know of his work, we'll be excited to introduce you. We're all pretty familiar with Big Years in birding, but don't miss this remarkable account of Bob's race to see the 800 U.S. butterfly species. Part road-trip travelogue, part natural history, Bob will tell stories from his book of the same name of the adventures experienced in his ancient Honda with his even older Leitz binoculars. And yes, the Valley was part of it all. His talk will be followed by questions and answers after which he will sign his book.



Robert Michael Pyle credentials and experience could fill pages, ranging from a doctorate in Ecology and Environmental Studies from Yale, Ranger-Naturalist for Sequoia National Park and in Papua New Guinea, founder of the international Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, and author of fifteen award-winning books, including *Wintergreen*, *The Thunder Tree*, *Where Bigfoot Walks*, *Chasing Monarchs*, as well as *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies* and several other standard butterfly works. *Mariposa Road: the First Butterfly Big Year* is his newest work, published just this year by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

>Friday, 12 November

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES: GREAT BIRDING MADE EVEN BETTER (Fee \$7)

2:00p – 3:00p

For birders, National Wildlife Refuges offer spectacular destinations where birds can often be found in lavish abundance or spectacular diversity. In this talk, Paul Baicich will cover first, a brief summary of the role of refuges in our American bird conservation history, and second, a lengthier journey across the country, stressing some of the “most-wanted birds” to be found on these very refuges, and third, the ways that refuges are striving to become better birding destinations for us all.



Paul J. Baicich has an active and abiding interest in conservation and studies in the breeding biology of North American birds, co-authoring *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds*. Also, during his years with the American Birding Association, he edited 14 of their *ABA Birdfinding Guides*, edited *Birding*, ABA’s bi-monthly magazine, and served as ABA’s Director of Conservation and Public Policy. Recently, Paul has been serving as a consultant for the National Wildlife Refuge System, and co-edits the popular monthly *Birding Community E-bulletin*.

BIRD CALLING (Fee \$7)

3:30p – 4:30p

Ever tried to screech like a hawk, hoot like an owl, or caw like a crow? We all have. Bird calling can give you a window into a bird’s world. In this workshop you will actually practice the methods of imitating birds. Used correctly, this can be an in-field tool, and included is a discussion of where and when to use it. Bring drinking water—as you will be stretching your vocal chords into new and humorous areas. Another thing to bring—the ability to laugh at yourself!



Nicole Perretta has been birding and bird calling for 30 years. She can imitate 158 bird calls and has performed on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Nicole teaches bird calling workshops throughout the western United States, has worked professionally as an aviculturist, and is a bird illustrator. Her work has been published in a variety of books and ornithological journals.

The MAKING of BIRDING ADVENTURES TV (Fee \$10)

6:15p

Join BATV host, James Currie, as he takes you on a journey of discovery that delves into the making of a nationally-televised birding show. Featuring exceptional video footage of remarkable birds, far-off destinations, and colorful personalities, James' talk outlines the ins and outs and challenges of filming the world's birds—from the Rio Grande Valley to Suriname to Costa Rica and Australia. Enjoy tales of fascinating discoveries and pressing (?) conservation, and laugh at the lighter side of birding.



James Currie, native of South Africa, is the host and producer of the popular show, Birding Adventures TV. Previously, he led wildlife and birding tours for years and his ongoing passion for birding and remote cultures has taken him to Central and South America, Fiji, Australia, North America, Africa, Europe, Madagascar and Iceland, to name just a few. He is a contributor to several publications, including the acclaimed *Southern African Birdfinder*. James holds degrees in African Languages and Sustainable Environmental Management, and worked as the Managing Director of the Africa Foundation, a non-profit organization that directs its efforts towards the uplifting of communities that surround wildlife areas in Africa. Currently, James lives with his family in Florida.

>Saturday, 13 November

BIRDS and KIDS: 'HOODS, CITIES, TOWERS (Fee \$7)

1:00p – 2:00p

Ever ask or been asked the question, 'How do we get kids interested in birding?' Our cities are jackpots for real-life study in youth education and bird conservation—from getting kids out birding and into nature to 'naturalizing' distressed neighborhoods to pulling the plug on night lights in skyscrapers to cleaning up parks and shorelines. Jen uses her home of Cleveland, Ohio, as an example to show the realistic things that we can do to create sparks in kids, as well as the accompanying dilemmas and victories that we collectively meet in keeping the birding candle lit.



Jennifer Brumfield (our 2010 Festival Artist) is Field Naturalist and Artist/Designer for Cleveland Metroparks, birding tour guide for Tropical Birding, and freelance Bird Illustrator. Her work is featured in Cape May Bird Observatory publications, ABA's *Birding*, *The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Northeast Ohio*, as well as field guides to the flora and fauna of Cleveland Metroparks. Jen's interest in wildlife sparked at age 4, and it has drawn her across the globe, from Egypt to Ecuador, Belize to California, and Canada to Florida. Today she energetically combines her passions for extreme birding, field studies, outdoor education, and detailed scientific illustration into a truly "wild" career.

HOW THE EXPERTS DO IT: A PHOTO ID PANEL (Fee \$7)

2:30p – 4:30p

Did you ever wonder how the experts identify birds so quickly? Want to get into their heads and 'see' their thought processes? Come to this interactive ID discussion and follow along as four experts identify photos of birds from both the Rio Grande Valley and North America. Bring your field guide, notepad, and try your own luck as well. Not intended to trick the experts, but to bring to light their different ID approaches in a very informative, fresh way. Don't miss this incredible opportunity to learn a lot, and laugh a lot.



Kevin Karlson is well-suited to moderate this ID Panel, bringing together his considerable photography skills and his work on his upcoming book, *Birding by*

Impression (part of the Peterson Field Guide Series). He is one of the authors of the acclaimed *The Shorebird Guide*, former photo editor for *North American Birds*, and current writer of the ID column for *WildBird* magazine. Kevin calls Cape May, NJ home, but is a long-time leader and proponent for the RGVBF.

GREAT SOUTH TEXAS BIRDING QUIZ SHOW (Free!)

6:15p

Sponsored by:



Its back—bigger and better—for an encore performance! This offering was so popular last year, we just had to do it again. Join quizmaster Jeffrey Gordon and special guests for a multimedia hour of birding trivia and friendly (and perhaps fierce) competition that will have you laughing, cheering, and maybe even learning a little about the birds of South Texas and around the world. Not to mention seeing a different side of some of your favorite birding personalities, authors, and trip leaders. The quiz will be designed to allow for lots of audience participation and interaction. In fact, you are welcome to send suggested questions to info@rgvbirdfest.com. Please include the words “Quiz Show,” in the subject line. Do not miss this fun offering, made free by the generous support of *Eagle Optics*.



Jeffrey A. Gordon is a writer, naturalist, and frequent speaker at birding and nature festivals across the country. He serves as Field Editor for *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and has worked as an interpretive naturalist at national parks including Yosemite and Acadia, and at the Valley's own Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. He spent 12 years leading birding tours worldwide for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and authored 11 of the chapters in *Identify Yourself: The 50 Most Common Birding Identification Challenges*. For more information on Jeff's activities, visit www.jeffreyagordon.com.