

Confluence

Artist: Jane Kim, Ink Dwell studio

Medium: Acrylic and latex

Year: 2021



Confluence tells the 12-month story of Houston's migratory birds. The name refers both to the mural's location at the confluence of two of the city's bayous and the manner in which hundreds of species of birds flock to the Houston area in the spring.

At the center are six species represented in both their spring breeding plumage and their non-breeding plumage. Only the males change color, to impress potential mates. The right side of the mural is composed of three species that winter in Houston. The left side features three species that arrive in the spring to breed. A map of Houston's bayous serves as the backdrop, bringing movement and energy to the work. The mural celebrates the importance that diversity—in both wildlife and people—plays in making Houston a special place.

Long-Distance Migratory Species

Twice yearly, long-distance boreal migrants following one of four North American flyways briefly stop in Houston to rest and refuel. Breeding in North America and wintering in Central and South America, these birds travel thousands of miles—often at night—before and after visiting Houston. Some cross the entire Gulf of Mexico in one non-stop journey.

Breeding Plumage (Spring)



Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*)

Blackburnian Warblers are the only North American warbler with a fiery-orange throat which, along with their distinctive black triangular facial pattern, are unmistakable during breeding season. They mainly feed on insects in the forest canopy.



Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*)

Chestnut-sided Warblers prefer foraging for insects in saplings, shrubs, and areas where small trees have begun to regenerate after a disturbance such as a fire or logging. Their breeding plumage is crisp grey and white with a striking yellow crown and vibrant chestnut flanks.



Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*)

Breeding Magnolia Warblers develop a black necklace with long tassels, a black mask, and a striking white wing patch. These warblers also sport a black and white undertail pattern that's unmistakable regardless of sex or season.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are stocky, medium-sized songbirds with large, triangular bills. The black and white males develop a brilliant red chevron extending from the black throat down the middle of the breast.



Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)

During breeding season, the males sport bright red feathers and jet-black wings. After breeding, the males molt to an olive-yellow color similar to the females, but retain their dark wings. Despite their dazzling color, these birds are often difficult to spot as they forage high in trees, hunting for insects.



Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)

The most widespread species of their genus, male Yellow Warblers develop chestnut streaks on the breast. Yellow Warblers prefer riparian areas consisting of mainly willows or densely wooded mangrove swamps, but will often frequent urban orchards or parks as well.

Non-breeding Plumage (Fall)



Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)

These tiny jewels are mighty travelers, many crossing the Gulf of Mexico in a single 900-mile flight. The most common hummingbird east of the Mississippi river, it is a solitary species known for fiercely defending its territory with spectacular aerial displays.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

This elegant, marsh dwelling heron is the official bird of Houston. Look for their smooth grey-blue body and the glossy, pale yellow crown. They can often be seen in the city's streets and rain-soaked neighborhoods, with many nesting right by downtown.



Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

Found throughout the Southeast, Mississippi Kites often hunt together and nest colonially in stands of trees in city parks and even golf courses, before wintering in South America.

Winter Species

For some birds, Houston is south. Medium-distance migrants winter in the Southeastern United States and Mexico before leaving again for their breeding grounds in Canada and the Northern United States.



American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

The American Kestrel is North America's smallest falcon. With a colorful slate-blue head contrasted by a ruddy and black tail, they can be seen perched on wires and poles, or hovering in place, keenly watching and waiting for the right moment to swoop down for prey.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)

If you've ever seen neatly organized, horizontal rows of shallow holes in tree bark, you are likely seeing the work of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. These woodpeckers lap up the leaking sap and any trapped insects using their highly specialized tongue.



Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

Cedar Waxwings are a visual treat with their silky, airbrushed feathers and spunky crest on their heads. During the production of this mural, hundreds of Cedar Waxwings gathered at this site to feed on the newly sprouted berries along the bayou.



A project of this scale is a team effort and we could not have done this without the hard work, steady hands, and good humor of our production team: Danza Davis, Ash Ferlito, Catie Michel, Chelsea Roberts, and Anh Ha Bui. This artwork was made possible through the generous support of Laura and Tom Bacon to celebrate Bayou Greenways 2020 and the efforts of the following partners:



INK DWELL