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**HummerBird Celebration goes ALL virtual due to COVID 19 concerns**

*Sept. 17-20 event will feature Virtual All Festival Pass for speakers and banding demonstrations; add-ons include virtual Hummer Home tours, photography class, and vendor auction.*

ROCKPORT, Texas (July 31, 2020) — With the recent rise in COVID-19 cases throughout Texas, the HummerBird Celebration Committee and staff have made the decision to go all virtual for this year's HummerBird Celebration Sept. 17-20.

“Our staff and committee have worked diligently to modify the event and to make the HummerBird Celebration available via the Zoom video conferencing platform. We will maintain the quality programming patrons have come to expect” said Melody Waggoner, Chair of the 32nd Annual HummerBird Celebration. “In an effort to keep everyone safe, we believe it is best to do an all virtual event this year in view of the steadily increasing number of COVID-19 cases throughout Texas. It was a very difficult decision, but one that we felt was necessary given the circumstances.”

Since its inaugural fall event in 1988, the HummerBird Celebration has become one of the largest and most celebrated annual birding events in the U.S. with more than 3,000 attendees from all over the United States with some international participants each year.

To access information regarding our virtual celebration, go to [www.rockport-fulton.org](http://www.rockport-fulton.org) and click on HummerBird Celebration in the Event Calendar. There will be six speaker programs/lectures for an All Virtual Pass fee of \$20 and a series of add-ons are available as well. You register and a Zoom link will be sent to you the week of the event. Also included is a merchandise store where the 32nd Annual HummerBird Celebration T-Shirt can be purchased, among other items. There will also be an auction link released closer to the event with items from our vendors available for auction.

**About the HummerBird Celebration - 1988-2020 ~ The HummerBird Story**

The event was founded in the late 1980s by local part-time resident Betty Baker, Wildlife expert Jesse Grantham and others. Their idea was to create an event as a means of celebrating the spectacular fall migration of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as they pass through the Rockport-Fulton area on their way south to their winter homes in Mexico and beyond. This magnificent occurrence was first documented

by the famous Texas birdwatcher Connie Hagar of Rockport. The hummingbirds pause here each fall to prepare for the most arduous leg of their migration. Upon leaving here, they will fly non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico, an incredible journey of some 800 plus miles. While here, they must eat enough to increase their body fat up to 50% which will be used to fuel their continued migration. In 1995, Texas Parks and Wildlife Officials observed our Hummer Home sites and later created the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail unveiling the first sign of site #50 at the Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary. In 2011, a local venue tax was allowed to fund Aransas Pathways; a project creating, protecting and maintaining birding along with history, kayak, bike and hike sites and trails throughout the county. The legacy of the HummerBird Celebration has created such an important footprint for Aransas County and serves as a great example to all.

### **About the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce**

The Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce, recently awarded its 5-star rating by the US Chamber of Commerce for the third consecutive time, is proud to be working diligently in the revitalization of the economy and rebuilding Rockport-Fulton after the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey. The outpouring of support and assistance by people in our community, near and afar has been a true showing of American pride. It is with extreme gratitude that we are able to present this festival to our loyal attendees and hummingbird and birding enthusiasts in a virtual form.

The Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center is located at 319 Broadway St. in Downtown Rockport and is open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm. For more information call (361) 729-6445 or visit [www.rockport-fulton.org](http://www.rockport-fulton.org) or Facebook @visitrockportfulton and @rockportfultonchamber.

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