

Eskimo Curlew Sightings *and* The Memorial Sculpture Location

The last fully-documented sighting of the Eskimo Curlew (ESCU) in North America occurred in 1962 in west Galveston. That year's sightings are supported by photographs which are the only known photos of Eskimo Curlew ever taken in the wild anywhere in the world.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Why was Galveston Island State Park chosen as the home for the Eskimo Curlew Memorial Sculpture?

GINTC's Site Selection Committee used specific criteria, such as public access and parking availability, in selecting GISP. Please see the full criteria list below.

Why does GINTC state the last Eskimo Curlew in North America was seen in west Galveston in 1962?

While there have been many reported sightings of ESCU after 1962, it is not within GINTC's mission or skill set to evaluate the credibility of ESCU reports. There is, however, an organization in Texas which is charged with that responsibility and that is the Texas Bird Records Committee (TBRC) of the Texas Ornithological Society. Therefore, as a bird-related nature organization within the State of Texas, GINTC aligns its ESCU statements with the State experts on the subject, the TBRC.

The last ESCU sightings accepted by the TBRC are 2 individuals seen in Galveston in late March 1962¹ and documented with photos taken by Donald Bleitz². Photos render these sightings unambiguous and unassailable.

GINTC's position is also greatly supported by this quote³ from Jon Dunn, the co-author of National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*:

Long ago I came to the conclusion that in establishing the last date for a now-extinct bird, use one with proven evidence. So, for the Eskimo Curlew, that would be March 1962 for North America (Galveston Island, Texas, photos)² and 04 September 1963 for the world (Barbados, specimen.)⁴

Footnotes:

1. Texas Bird Records Committee, last accepted ESCU record and documentation: 24 Mar – 15 Apr 1962 (2) Galveston Is., GAL (TPRF 790) (AB:16:431; Pettingel 1967; Oberholser 1974)

TPRF is the Texas Photo Reference File of TBRC.
2. The photographs of the ESCU taken by Donald Bleitz on Galveston Island in March 1962 are in the collection of the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo, CA. Several of these photos can be found online, including one at the TBRC website. These are the only known photos of ESCU ever taken in the wild anywhere in the world. See also, Bleitz, Donald. "Photographing the Eskimo Curlew." *Western Bird Bander*, v. 37, July 1962, pp. 42-45.
3. Dunn, Jon L. "Re: Quote." Message to Sara Bettencourt. 01 Dec 2019. E-mail.
4. This specimen collected in Barbados after it had been shot, is known as ANSP, specimen #169796. ANSP is the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, USA. Fine color photos of the specimen are reproduced (plate 55-57) in Buckley (2009). Full citation: Buckley, P.A., E. B. Massiah, M. B. Hutt, F. G. Buckley and H.F. Hutt. 2009. The Birds of Barbados. BOU Checklist No 24.

Memorial Sculpture Location

Purpose of the Sculpture

- To raise awareness and promote action; and
- To remind us of how precious our natural resources are and of our duty to prevent further extinction.

In the words of the sculptor, Todd McGrain:

The sculpture is an invitation to explore parts of our natural heritage that have vanished and to join the effort to help fend off the callousness of forgetting. Forgetting is another kind of extinction.

Site Selection Criteria

- **A Sense of Place** – connection, meaning, context
- **Public Access**
- **Traffic, built-in audience**
- **Parking**
- **Docents, guides, rangers, staff, field trip leaders**
- **Security**
- **Long-term stewardship possibilities**