

THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 36, NO. 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING 2016

...to foster a greater knowledge of birds and to promote conservation of all natural resources

FOUNDED 1952



IN THIS ISSUE

3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Anne G. Miller

4

AOS WINTER MEETING REPORT WIND AND COLD—OH MY!

*by Harry Dean, Ken Hare,
Anne Miller, & Bob Reed*

5

AOS WINTER MEETING MINUTES OF THE AOS BOARD MEETING

by Ken Ward

8

AOS SPRING MEETING COMPLETE MEETING AND FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

by Anne Miller

10

AOS SPRING MEETING MEET THE SPEAKER AVIAN INVADERS: BAFFLING BIRDERS AND BEDEVILING BIOTAS

by Kimball Garrett

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 1325, DAUPHIN ISLAND, AL 36528-1325

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT.....Anne G. Miller
 VICE PRESIDENT.....Harry Dean
 TREASURER.....Elberta Reid
 SECRETARY.....Ken Ward
 IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT.....Ken Ward

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

TENNESSEE VALLEY.....Damien Simbeck, Ken Ward
 MOUNTAIN REGION.....Alison Glascock, Stan Hamilton
 COASTAL PLAIN.....Annabel Markle, Don Self
 GULF COASTMike Wilson
 NORTHWEST FLORIDA.....Lucy Duncan

EDITORS

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE.....Tom Haggerty
 THE YELLOWHAMMER.....Robert Reed
 ALABAMA BIRD RECORDS.....Greg Jackson
 NORTHWEST FLORIDA BIRD RECORDS....Bob Duncan
 AOS ARCHIVES CURATOR.....Scot Duncan

COMMITTEES

CONSERVATION

Greg Harber
 Scot Duncan, Damien Simbeck

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Larry Gardella
 Stan Hamilton, Floyd Sherrod, Mike Wilson

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Bianca J. Allen

SLIDES

Tom Haggerty

BIRD RECORDS

Steve McConnell, *Secretary*
 Ben Garmon, Dwight Cooley, Andrew Haffenden,
 Jim Holmes, Steve McConnell, John Trent,
 Jake Walker

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Lisa Gardner
 Annabel Markle

SOCIAL MEDIA

Carrie Threadgill

ONLINE SERVICES

Kathy Hicks
 Jeannie McCollum, Chris Price

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Tom Haggerty

THE YELLOWHAMMER

Robert Reed
 Robin McDonald

CENSUSING

Greg Jackson
 Bob Duncan, Geoff Hill,
 Steve McConnell, Eric Soehren,
 Bill Summerour

EDUCATION

Shirley Farrell
 Carol Alford, Stan and Dana Hamilton,
 Don Self

FIELD TRIPS

Andrew Haffenden

DAN C. HOLLIMAN RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Greg Harber
 Scot Duncan, Catherine Rideout, Eric Soehren

MEETINGS

Rufina Ward
 Charlotte Fanz, Priscilla Tubbs, Mike Wilson

THIS IS A WAKE-UP CALL. MOST AOS members know how important it is for us to contribute our bird sightings to eBird, but too few of us are doing it. Sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, eBird compiles records of bird sightings from birders and ornithologists around the world. The database is now one of the world's largest biodiversity resources for scientists, educators and conservation managers. In the month of May 2015, more than 9.5 million bird sightings were reported from around the world!

Unfortunately the eBird database of bird occurrences in Alabama is incomplete, because Alabama is under-reported compared to many other states. This is a serious problem, as the eBird database is being used to decide conservation priorities nation-wide.

Membership in eBird offers huge advantages to birders. Besides enabling you to contribute your sightings to science and conservation, eBird keeps all of your lists for you, and provides various ways of analyzing your data. Also, eBird offers birders access to detailed information about the distribution and migratory behavior of individual bird species. Recently, eBird produced an animated map called 'Mesmerizing Migration' which shows the month-by-month movements of 118 species of migratory birds as they travel from North America to Central and South America and back, revealing patterns of bird migration that were mysteries only a few years ago. If you haven't already seen this map, you can find it at allaboutbirds.org. You can join eBird (free) at ebird.org. Once you've joined, I highly recommend Cornell's free eBird app, which makes it easy to file reports from the field.

The Alabama Birding Trails system also deserves more support from Alabama's birders. This network of birding trail sites in every Alabama county provides a boost to our state's economy from out-of-state birding tourism while also serving Alabama birders. The birding trails system quite literally puts birding on the map, making more Alabamians aware of birding as a mainstream activity worth learning about and enjoying. It is an essential element in building broad support for the protection of birds.



AOS member John Trent, of the Alabama Department of Conservation, has entered all of the Alabama Birding Trail sites into the eBird database as 'hotspots', which makes them easy to locate when you want to report your sightings. However, many of these sites are rarely reported to eBird, so the database does not reflect the actual bird populations at the sites.

In the coming year, AOS will be asking members to 'Adopt a Birding Trail Site'. Participants will commit to filing eBird reports from their chosen birding trail site or sites at least once for each season of the year. We hope to cover every region of the state. This will help build the bird lists for

the various sites, and will also be a practical way of increasing the number of eBird reports from Alabama. If you'd like to participate, you can begin at the birding trails website (alabamabirdingtrails.com) by selecting from the sites in your area. If you're interested in participating, please contact me by email, and I'll add your name to the list.

Alabama's birding trails offer a great way to explore Alabama while enjoying your favorite outdoor activity. Now, thanks to eBird, you also have a chance to contribute to science and conservation at the same time. If AOS members around the state will take part in this initiative, we can use our birding skills to support the Alabama Birding Trails while helping to protect the birds we all love.

Thanks for the Stories

THE YELLOWHAMMER MUST BE PRINTED IN FOUR-PAGE INCREMENTS. Thus we are always in need of your articles, both short and longer, to make the pages come out right.

If you have an article, story, or amusing incident you would like to share, *please* send it to the Editor. Electronic versions are much easier to copy and paste, but send them by snail mail or paper airplane if you need to. The addresses are on the back cover.

Please send other articles about your birding adventures, trips, yard sightings, or just short vignettes that were interesting, different, or amusing.

AOS WINTER MEETING, JANUARY 22-24, 2016

Wind and Cold—Oh My!

By HARRY DEAN, KEN HARE, ANNE MILLER, AND BOB REED



IRDERS ARE A PERSISTENT LOT. AOS MET AT LAKE-point State Park Lodge on January 22-24, 2016. Those who traveled Friday arrived to temperatures in the low 60s! But as the clock

began its descent past noon, the temperatures went south with it. By 3 pm, the temperature was a cold, breezy 45 and still falling. Even though the forecast had the rains ceasing by noon, the clouds didn't get the memo, and the mizzle continued all afternoon. On the way to Eufaula, we passed several deer, including two bucks with huge racks. I hope they hide from the hunters.

The Friday night workshop on sparrow identification at our winter meeting demonstrated how much you can learn from a really dynamic and skilled instructor. Our keynote speaker, Charlie Muise, has obviously thought deeply about how to help birders improve their skills, and he offered strategies for learning sparrows that can make a real difference in the field. The most basic advice he gave was to start by thoroughly studying Song Sparrows, since they are frequently seen, and being one of our larger sparrows, can be used to compare size as well as field marks and behavior. His message was: don't just look at Song Sparrows, study them! Keep studying them. Look at features like shape of head (round, with a slight central peak, which he referred to as 'bullet-headed'), and don't just rely on seeing the breast spot, since it may not show up if the feathers are ruffled. "When you really know Song Sparrows," says Charlie, "then you have a standard you can use for comparison when identifying unfamiliar species."

There were several field trips Saturday, including the Kennedy, Houston, and Upland Units of Eufaula NWR. Charlie and others led a trip to parts of the Houston and Upland units. The roads in the Houston unit were significantly damaged by the Christmas flooding where water had flowed across the roads, removing parts of them and depositing tons of plastic and other detritus, including several basketballs, which unfortunately served well as handy points of refer-

ence in describing bird locations. Highlights of this field trip were nine fly-over White Ibis, three White Pelicans, enough Bald Eagles that they were reported as "another eagle," *hohum*, two Greater White-fronted Geese on the lake shore near the marina, and several puddle duck species. Allen and mother Tracey Muise accompanied us. At one point Charlie announced Blue-winged Teal in the scope. Son Allen took a peek and reminded his Dad that all he saw were Ring-necked Ducks. Allen is going to be a heck of a birder.

Pat and I went over to the Molnar unit when the field trip was over. We saw the usual complement of woodland birds, including Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers, Blue-headed Vireo, Hermit Thrush, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, towhees, cardinals, and many Ruby-crowned Kinglets, at least 30. Pat observed a Ruby-crowned Kinglet foraging on the ground, something neither of us had ever seen before. The wind had lain, and the walk was very enjoyable.

Harry Dean continues the story. Led by Mark Jackson, Eufaula State Park Manager, eleven intrepid birders went on a three-hour tour of the state park and the refuge nature trail. The actual weather conditions were nothing like the forecast from the day before, in a bad way. The temperature hovered around 35 degrees and the incessant wind was blowing 15 to 20 miles per hour with occasional higher gusts. Apparently, the birds don't enjoy that kind of weather either. Mark did an outstanding job of leading us to various areas within the park. We really had to work hard to pull out a few birds in the picnic area and campground. One open grassy area in the campground held 30 or more Chipping Sparrows. We were also treated to an aerial display by three Bald Eagles.

A stop at the state park treatment ponds gave good looks at large numbers of Bufflehead and Northern Shovelers. There were a few Gadwall and Lesser Scaup mixed in as well. The wind and cold followed us to the Eufaula NWR nature drive. We made several stops at viewing areas, but, like the weather, the birds still would not cooperate. There were some looks at

a Northern Harrier and some distant soaring Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks. At one viewpoint, several Eastern Towhees posed in the open with good light; of course the camera was in the car. We returned to the lodge around lunch time. The very unofficial tally for this trip was 37 species. Once again, a huge thanks to Mark Jackson for taking his time on a very cold day to lead this trip and at least provide an opportunity to see some birds.

The very interesting Saturday evening program by AOS speaker and birding expert Charlie Muise was on the importance of periodic prescribed burning of certain grassland habitats. He demonstrated that after burning is overdue by only one year, nesting success is reduced. One statement he made intrigued me more than the others. I quote it as closely as I remember. "Every action of man in nature has positive and negative consequences. Always consider what the results will look like in 20 years."

Ken Hare picks up the story. On Sunday morning, Charlie led eight birders into the Bradley Unit of Eufaula NWR, a

section located in Stewart County, Georgia. It was 24 degrees when the group left their vehicles for the walk. Because of high water and roads damaged from flooding, we could not take our vehicles behind the gate at the unit.

The walkers had to turn back before completing the round trip because of water over the roadway, but still managed to see 68 species during a three-mile walk.

Ring-Necked Ducks were a common species, with about 300 spotted. Also among the species seen were about 120 Shovelers, three Redheads, 16 White Ibis, and 45 Pied-Billed Grebes. Two Bald Eagles were spotted, as well as Red-Headed and Pileated Woodpeckers and an Orange-Crowned Warbler.

Usually one of the highlights of the walk is the chance to see a pair of Barn Owls in two unused silos, but high water and the cold made it impossible to approach the base of the silos.

Seeing our AOS friends is always a highlight of every meeting, and this was no exception. See you all in April on beautiful Dauphin Island.

LAKEPOINT STATE PARK, EUFAULA, JANUARY 23, 2016

Minutes of the AOS Board Meeting

By KEN WARD, *Secretary*



HE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ALABAMA Ornithological Society met on Saturday, January 23, 2016, at Lakepoint Resort State Park. President Anne G. Miller called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the fall 2015 board meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Rufina Ward presented an informal financial report. AOS has been losing funds over the past three years, but the difference between income and expenditures has grown steadily smaller over that time. For the second half of 2015, the difference was only -\$10. AOS also has a CD in reserve of approximately \$26,000. These funds were received from members contributing through lifetime memberships. It was agreed that these funds are out of reach until the CD

matures in 2018, because the penalties for early withdrawal are too high. However, the treasurer was asked to find out if the interest on the CD is accessible without paying a penalty. Funds are badly needed to update website and administrative software, and Larry Gardella agreed to lead an effort to seek a grant for this purpose.

The board discussed ways to reduce expenses related to printing and distributing *The Yellowhammer*. It was decided that new members should be automatically registered to receive *The Yellowhammer* in the online edition. The board discussed, but did not act on a small extra fee for any new member who wishes to receive the print edition. Renewing members will also be offered a choice of switching to the online edition or of paying a small surcharge to cover the cost of receiving the print edition. It was agreed by the board that non-renewing members should continue to receive *The Yel-*

lowhammer for one additional year, on the assumption that they intend to renew eventually. However, to resolve confusion it was agreed that late-renewing members who renew their membership before October 1 will be credited with membership for the current year. Dues received after October 1 will be credited to the next year's membership.

Other ways of saving money were also discussed, including setting a limit on costs related to keynote speakers for the thrice-yearly meetings. The board agreed to take up this subject again at the spring board meeting. It was also agreed that the treasurer will provide a full financial report for each board meeting, rather than twice annually, as is the current practice.

As usual, donations for the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary were solicited from registrants for the AOS fall meeting, and donations in the amount of \$691 were sent to Mary Porter, with a list of the donors.

Executive Committee: President Anne Miller summarized the informal executive committee meeting held in Cullman in December, and attended by Ken and Rufina Ward, Anne Miller and Harry Dean. Following discussion, the board voted to approve the following motions:

- The board voted to transfer some of the treasurer's duties to a new membership services committee, to be chaired by Bianca J. Allen. Duties of the new committee will include mailing out dues notices and reminders to members, sending acknowledgments to all donors, and providing a full membership list to the board on a regular basis. It was agreed that the membership list should be kept strictly confidential.
- The board voted that AOS should sign up for a standard business PayPal account to allow members to make online payments for membership dues and meeting registration, as well as to facilitate charitable donations.
- The board voted to establish an ad hoc committee to assist the Treasurer with registration at all meetings.
- The board also voted to establish a social media committee, to be chaired by Carrie Threadgill, with responsibilities for managing the AOS Facebook page and the AOS Yahoo Group ALBirds. The duties of the public relations committee were broadened, and Lisa Gardner was approved as chair. The AOS website will continue to be managed by the online services committee, chaired by Kathy Hicks. The three committees are expected to work together closely to improve AOS outreach to potential new members.

Conservation Committee: Greg Harber presented, and the board approved, a statement condemning occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by armed individuals, and supporting their removal from the refuge.

Other Business: Annabelle Markle suggested establishing a petty cash fund for the treasurer to facilitate small reimbursements. It was agreed that such a fund should be set up. There was no DIBS report. It was noted that there were no applicants for Holliman research awards this past year. Meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.

New Members

Randy and Kathy White

A. H. "Rick" Woodward III

Ben and Evelyn Thompson

Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions

Summer 2016 May 10, 2016

Fall 2016 August 10, 2016

Winter 2016 November 10, 2016

Upcoming Meetings

THIRD FRIDAY—April 15-17, 2016

Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

SECOND FRIDAY—October 14-16, 2016

Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

FOURTH FRIDAY—January 27-29, 2017

Winter Meeting, TBA

2016 AOS Winter Meeting Compilation List Lakepoint State Park, January 22–24

NOTEWORTHY BIRDS OF THE winter meeting weekend included White Ibis and Bald Eagle.

Greater White-fronted

Goose

Snow Goose

Canada Goose

Gadwall

American Widgeon

Mallard

Blue-winged Teal

Northern Shoveler

Northern Pintail

Green-winged Teal

Redhead

Ring-necked Duck

Lesser Scaup

Bufflehead

Hooded Merganser

Ruddy Duck

Double-crested

Cormorant

Anhinga

American White Pelican

Great Blue Heron

Great Egret

Little Blue Heron

White Ibis

Black Vulture

Turkey Vulture

Osprey

Bald Eagle

Northern Harrier

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Cooper's Hawk

Red-shouldered Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

Common Gallinule

American Coot

Killdeer

Spotted Sandpiper

Greater Yellowlegs

Least Sandpiper

Wilson's Snipe

Ring-billed Gull

Herring Gull

Rock Pigeon

Mourning Dove

Common Ground-Dove

Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Downy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

Pileated Woodpecker

American Kestrel

Eastern Phoebe

White-eyed Vireo

Yellow-throated Vireo

Blue-headed Vireo

Blue Jay

American Crow

Fish Crow

Carolina Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

Brown-headed Nuthatch

Winter Wren

Sedge Wren

Carolina Wren

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Eastern Bluebird

Hermit Thrush

American Robin

Gray Catbird

Brown Thrasher

Northern Mockingbird

European Starling

Cedar Waxwing

Orange-crowned Warbler

Common Yellowthroat

Palm Warbler

Pine Warbler

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Eastern Towhee

Chipping Sparrow

Field Sparrow

Vesper Sparrow

Savannah Sparrow

Song Sparrow

Lincoln's Sparrow

Swamp Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow

Northern Cardinal

Red-winged Blackbird

Eastern Meadowlark

Common Grackle

House Finch

Pine Siskin

American Goldfinch

House Sparrow

All reported sightings will be accepted and published in *The Yellowhammer*. However, the meeting compilation list in *The Yellowhammer* is not an official record. Species that are **boldfaced**, or listed in the Hypothetical section of the AOS Field Card, must be supported by complete written details and submitted to, and accepted by, the Records Committee to become an official AOS record. *Italicized species* usually need written details but these may be brief. Out of season and locally rare birds should also be documented. Refer to the front page of the AOS Field Card for additional details.

Visions of the Black Belt

LONG-TIME AOS MEMBER AND YELLOWHAMMER DESIGNER Robin McDonald is the co-author of a new book, *Visions of the Black Belt: A Cultural Survey of the Heart of Alabama* (University of Alabama Press). *Visions* is a large-format book with almost 400 of Robin's photographs of the places and people that make the Black Belt region unique. It is available through online booksellers and in local book shops.

Electronic Yellowhammer?

IT COSTS WELL OVER A DOLLAR AND A HALF TO PRINT AND MAIL *The Yellowhammer*. We are delivering, on a totally voluntary basis, *The Yellowhammer* via the Internet. If you would like to receive your *Yellowhammer*, in color, electronically, as a PDF file, please email the editor at BobReed1987@gmail.com.

AOS SPRING MEETING, APRIL 15-17, 2016

AOS Spring Meeting Schedule

To register for the AOS spring meeting, fill out the form below, or visit the AOS website www.aosbirds.org

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016

- 7:00 a.m. Field Trip (*Field trip details on facing page*)
 4:00 p.m. Registration
 6:00 p.m. Social Hour (*non-alcoholic beverages only*)
 6:30 p.m. Potluck Supper (*Please bring a dish to share!*)
 Bring your favorite appetizer for the social hour or a main-course dish for supper or a dessert or all of the above!
 7:15 p.m. Workshop with Kimball Garrett: *My Favorite Misidentifications: Some Pointers on Avoiding Birding Bloopers*
 8:30 p.m. Adjourn
 Location: Registration, Pot Luck Supper and Workshop Meeting Hall of the United Methodist Church 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island, AL 36528

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

- 7:00 a.m. Field Trip 1: Exploring Dauphin Island with Kimball Garrett
 Field Trip 2: Birds of Pelican Bay Peninsula with Andrew Haffenden
 (*Field trip details on facing page*)
 12:30 p.m. Lunch: Join us for lunch at the home of John and Jennie Stowers
 2:00 p.m. Board Meeting
 Meeting Hall of the UMC Church, 302 Key St.

Saturday Evening: Banquet and Keynote Speaker

- Location: Meeting Hall of the United Methodist Church 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island, AL 36528
 6:00 p.m. Social Hour (*Please note that only non-alcoholic beverages will be available.*)
 6:30 p.m. Banquet
 7:30 p.m. Keynote Speaker Kimball Garrett: *Avian Invaders: Baffling Birders and Bedeviling Biotas*

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

- 7:00 a.m. Field Trip to Fort Morgan with Andrew Haffenden
 (*Field trip details on facing page*)
 12:00 p.m. Compilation
 Hosted by Ann McLaurin and Lynne Fitzgerald
 Across the street from the Goat Trees

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations on Dauphin Island are limited, so be sure to make reservations early.

Websites

www.gulfinfo.com
www.dauphinisland.chamber.com

Motels

Gulf Breeze Motel: 251-861-7344 or 1-800-286-0296
 Harbor Lights Motel: 1-800-286-0296

Rentals

Boardwalk Realty, Inc.: 877-861-3992
 Dauphin Island Real Estate: (888) 707-6444
 Tyson Real Estate: (251) 861-8312
 Pickett Real Estate: (800) 861-3646
 Island Real Estate: (877) 219-7392
 ACP Real Estate, Inc.: (866) 861-3331
 Air BnB has lots of rentals: www.airbnb.com

Camping

Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board:
 251-861-2742 (fully equipped for both camper and tent camping)

Note: Until further notice, the banquet is limited to the first 95 registrants.

AOS Spring Meeting Field Trips

Friday Morning, April 15

Field Trip to Splinter Hill Bog, Historic Blakeley State Park, and Meaher State Park with Kimball Garrett

Trip Leader: Andrew Haffenden

Meeting Time: 7:00 a.m.

Meeting Place: Methodist Church Meeting Hall, 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island

Andrew Haffenden and Kimball Garrett, AOS keynote speaker, will share their birding skills as we visit a number of sites in Baldwin County. We'll start at Splinter Hill Bog, among acres of blooming pitcher plants of several species, where we'll have a chance to see Bachman's Sparrows, among many other bird species. Then we'll move on to Historic Blakeley State Park, where we'll bird among ancient live oaks draped with Spanish moss, and observe gulls, terns, eagles and ospreys on the Tensaw River. Our next stop (around 12:30 p.m.), is at Felix's Fish Camp Grill on the Causeway, where you can bird from the deck overlooking Mobile Bay while you eat some of the best seafood in Mobile. After lunch we'll backtrack a short distance along the Causeway to Meaher State Park to observe birds from the boardwalk through wetlands along the shoreline of Mobile Bay. We should see shorebirds and waders as well as gulls, terns, etc. We'll head back to Dauphin Island by 3 p.m. Those coming south this morning can meet us at Exit 45 on I-65 at 8.40 a.m., and those staying in Tillman's Corner can meet at us at Walmart. Please email Andrew at andrew@natasp.com if you plan to attend so any last minute changes can be sent to you.

Saturday Morning, April 16

Field Trip 1

Exploring Dauphin Island with Kimball Garrett

Trip Leader: Stan Hamilton

Meeting Time: 7:00 a.m.

Explore the varied habitats of Dauphin Island with Stan Hamilton and Kimball Garrett, AOS Keynote Speaker. We'll bird along the beach and around Fort Gaines, the Shell Mounds, Audubon Bird Sanctuary, the airport, etc., concentrating on neotropical migrants.

Field Trip 2

Birds of Pelican Bay Peninsula

Trip Leader: Andrew Haffenden

Meeting Time: 7:00 a.m.

Join DI resident and world nature travel specialist Andrew Haffenden to explore the birds along one of Dauphin Island's richest bird habitats, the shoreline of Pelican Bay Peninsula, formerly a separate island, and now a spit of land attached to Dauphin Island. Viewing is best on the beach a little later than for land birds, so we'll begin with a quick trip to the Shell Mounds before heading to the beach at about 8:30 (for late sleepers, you can join the tour at 8:30 a.m. at the Public Beach parking lot next to the schoolhouse). Expect to see and learn about a variety of plovers and sandpipers, as well as wading birds such as Reddish Egrets, and a variety of gulls and terns.

Sunday Morning, April 17

Field Trip to Fort Morgan

Trip Leader: Andrew Haffenden

Meeting Time: 7:30 a.m.

Historic Fort Morgan is located on Mobile Point the end of the Fort Morgan Peninsula, and is considered the equal of Dauphin Island as a birding destination for spring and fall migrants. We'll take the scenic 40-minute ferry ride across the mouth of Mobile Bay to Fort Morgan. (Round trip: \$5 for pedestrians, \$30 for cars with 1 passenger, plus \$4.50 for each additional passenger), leaving the dock at 8:00 a.m. We'll explore the grounds around the Fort, and also the adjacent marsh, looking for migrants, including rarities such as the Brown-crested Flycatcher that was seen during the fall AOS field trip with Jon Dunn. We'll return to Dauphin Island in time for Compilation at noon.

Note: All field trips meet at the Methodist Church Meeting Hall, 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island.

A O S SPRING MEETING, APRIL 15–17, 2016

Meet the Speaker: Kimball Garrett

KIMBALL GARRETT *has been the Ornithology Collections Manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County since 1982. He grew up in southern California, and co-authored the definitive book on that region with Jon Dunn in 1981 as well as a popular guide to southern California birds (with Jon Dunn and Brian Small) in 2006 followed by a guide to the birds of northern California (with Dave Quady, Dunn and Small) in 2015. He was also Jon Dunn's co-author on the Peterson Field Guide to Warblers of North America, published in 1997. He has been a member of Western Field Ornithologists since its 1970 inception and served as its president from 1996 to 1999. He has also spent over 20 years as a member of the California Bird Records Committee, and has been a member of the American Birding Associations Checklist Committee as well. He has co-edited the Southern California regional report for North American Birds with Guy McCaskie since 2000. He is a fellow of the American Ornithologists Union.*

An avid birder since childhood, Kimball has long enjoyed teaching the joys and skills of birding through his talks to Audubon chapters, birding organizations and nature festivals. Through his work with the Natural History Museum, NAB, WFO, ABA, eBird and other endeavors, he considers it especially important to foster a strong link between the birding community and the field of scientific ornithology. Kimball lives in Tujunga, California, with his wife (and fellow ornithologist) Kathy Molina, two dogs, and a modest yard list of 120 bird species.

Friday Evening Discussion

My Favorite Misidentifications: Some Pointers on Avoiding Birder's Bloopers

Understanding and embracing how and why we misidentify birds in the field (come on, admit it—we ALL do it!) can lead to better birding. Whether because of the “the single field mark syndrome,” failing to appreciate variation within species, or lacking an understanding of basic status and distribution, there are consistent reasons why we sometimes fail in our goal of correctly identifying every bird we encounter.

All are encouraged to participate and share their own birding lowlights as we work through the reasons we are sometimes challenged in the field and strive to improve our skills.

Saturday Evening Keynote Talk

Avian Invaders: Baffling Birders and Bedeviling Biotas

Globalization, an expanding human impact on the environment, and the continuing trend of human migration to urban regions is resulting in the establishment of more and more naturalized non-native bird populations throughout the world. While purposeful avian introductions for sport hunting, aesthetics and presumed ecological services have declined, we increasingly see the establishment of bird species imported for the pet trade. Florida and southern California are certainly ground zero for such introductions in North America, but few places are immune from the impacts of naturalized birds.

The roster of non-native birds with well-established populations in North America goes far beyond the list of species admitted to the ABA checklist and various state and provincial checklists. Rock Pigeons, European Starlings, and House Sparrows are familiar throughout the continent—and in less than three decades the Eurasian Collared-Dove has joined them in their ubiquity. But consider that over 20 species of parrots breed in the ABA area, that our wetlands are now home to such waterbirds as Swampheens, Egyptian Geese, and Mandarin Ducks, and that our breeding avifauna now includes bulbuls, white-eyes, magpie-jays, munias, mannikins, bishops and whydahs!

In this talk we'll describe the patterns of introduction of non-native bird species in North America, take a close look at some recently established species that are rapidly spreading, and explore both the notion of invasiveness and the very real ecological impacts some of these species are having. We'll also explore the ways in which unfamiliar exotic species can confound birders who must keep up with an ever-growing array of bird neighbors from throughout the world.

AOS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Your Membership Dues Support the Work of the Alabama Ornithological Society

Please check membership category: ☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

Please check membership category: ☐ Student \$10 ☐ Individual \$25 ☐ Family \$40* ☐ Sustaining \$50
☐ Life (individual) \$350 ☐ Life (family*) \$550 *Number of family members _____

Communicating with our members online saves the earth's resources, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and also saves much-needed funds for AOS. Your digital subscription to *The Yellowhammer* and *Alabama Birdlife* will automatically be sent to the email address listed below. To receive print copies of AOS publications instead, please ☐ check here. Mail your completed form and check to:

Elberta Reid, 2616 Mountain Brook Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35223

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email address _____ Phone _____

AOS SPRING MEETING 2016 REGISTRATION FORM

Complete and return to:

Elberta Reid, 2616 Mountain Brook Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35223

Telephone: (205) 879-1935 • E-mail: elbertareid@gmail.com

Please make checks payable to AOS. Checks must be received by April 8, 2016.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone _____

AOS DUES Student: \$10 • Individual: \$25 • Family: \$40 • Sustaining: \$50
 Life (individual): \$350 • Life (family): \$550

Registration @ \$25 per person	\$
Banquet @ \$23 per person	\$
AOS 2016 Dues	\$
DIBS Land Purchase Fund Contribution	\$
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1325
DAUPHIN ISLAND, AL 36528

PRST STD
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 361
BIRMINGHAM, AL

AOS is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Federal EIN: 63-1229959

THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 36, NO. 1 • SPRING 2016

EDITOR.....Bob Reed
DESIGN.....Robin McDonald
ILLUSTRATIONS.....Annabel Markle

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Jane Allen
Greg Harber
Greg Jackson
Carroll Pinckard

The Yellowhammer, the newsletter of the Alabama Ornithological Society, is published four times a year. Editorial Office: 88838 Tallassee Highway, Tallassee, AL 36078. Send articles to be considered for publication to: BobReed1987@gmail.com. Subscriptions to *The Yellowhammer* and *Alabama Birdlife* are included in the AOS annual membership dues. Single copies \$2.00. Complimentary copies available for review and promotional purposes.

Address correspondence concerning membership to:
Elberta Reid, Treasurer
2616 Mountain Brook Parkway,
Birmingham, AL 35223
e-mail: elbertareid@gmail.com

Annual Membership:
Student: \$10 • Individual: \$25 • Family: \$40
Sustaining: \$50 • Life (individual): \$350
Life (family): \$550



AOS ONLINE
<http://www.aosbirds.org>

**Join AOS on
Facebook**

ALABAMA WILDLIFE CENTER
<http://www.awrc.org>

BIRMINGHAM AUDUBON SOCIETY
<http://www.birminghamaudubon.org>

DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES
<http://www.coastalbirding.org>

FRANCIS M. WESTON AUDUBON SOCIETY (PENSACOLA)
<http://www.fmwaudubon.org>

MOBILE BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY
<http://www.mobilebayaudubon.org>

ALABAMA WILDBIRD CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
<http://www.bamabirds.com>

SOUTHEASTERN RAPTOR REHAB CENTER
<http://www.vetmed.auburn.edu/raptor>

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUDUBON
<http://www.tvas.org>