

# THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 34, NO. 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SUMMER 2014

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

FOUNDED 1952



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**H**ELLO EVERYBODY. WELL, SUMMER has arrived in north Alabama, especially over the past couple of weeks, with this sweltering humid weather. Thankfully, we've managed to get enough rain up here to keep things green and verdant, at least for a while longer. Birding up here since the AOS meeting has been excellent, one of our best springs in several years, I'd say. As many of you know, the North Alabama Birdwatchers Society schedules a number of trips during April and May. In particular, our trips to Monte Sano State Park, Bankhead National Forest, Paint Rock Valley and Alabama A&M University's Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station were especially productive, yielding a variety of beautiful returning migrants, notables including Cerulean, Golden-winged and Cape May warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher (Indian Creek Greenway), our regular breeding Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (A&M Farm), etc. Wheeler NWR had a great spring migration count too, lots of birds and great variety (151 species), notables including White-faced Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Black-billed Cuckoo, Upland Sandpiper, Swainson's, Golden-winged, and Wilson's Warblers, etc. All of the areas mentioned here are associated with the North Alabama Birding Trail (<http://www.northalabamabirding-trail.com/>), in case you are not familiar with the area and want to find out more.

Rufina and I were fortunate enough to be invited by a good friend to visit central Maine over the Memorial Day weekend. We flew to Boston, then drove up to Sangerville, a small town fairly close to Bangor and Moosehead Lake. We stayed at an old farmhouse and spent a lot of time hiking through the north woods, birding and naturizing: there were lots of warblers, including one of our favorites, the Black-Throated Blue. We also spent some time at Acadia National Park and Schoodic Bay Peninsula, where we picked up some lifers, including Common Eider, Black Guillemot and Great Black-backed Gull. The area along the coastline here was spectacular in many ways, including especially the rocky shorelines and beaches. The most remarkable thing we saw, at least bird-wise, was encountered by chance, just down the road from the



farmhouse, as we were leaving to return to Boston. I noticed some small birds moving along the edge of the roadside from a distance, which, on first glance, I thought might be Mourning Doves. As we got close we discovered they were, in fact, a mama Woodcock and her babies, all of which quickly disappeared into the brush as we passed. It was a magical trip for us, which we'll never forget; thanks to our friend, Kathy Flanders, for inviting us.

Our AOS Spring meeting, last April on Dauphin Island, was a rousing success. I'd like to thank Maureen Shaffer and Anne Miller for their efficient handling of meeting/banquet arrangements; in particular

we really liked the new table setup, which will hopefully also work well for the larger crowds we'll have in the future. It's gratifying and reassuring to know that DI meeting arrangements are in such good hands, given that Rufina and I can't really get down there until meeting time. Thanks to all who assisted in the set up and restoration of the meeting hall. Thanks also to Rufina for her efficient handling of registration duties and other responsibilities, as Treasurer. As usual, Wilton Caterers did an outstanding job with our banquet meal, which is much appreciated. We also of course want to thank DISL for their hospitality in making their facilities available for the meeting, especially the Shelby Center, which provides an excellent venue. I should mention too that we had a very productive silent auction during the meeting, managed by our Education Committee chair, Shirley Farrell, which raised over \$600 in support of committee activities.

I want to thank our banquet speaker, Keith Pardieck, manager of the Breeding Bird Survey Program with the United States Geological Survey, who gave an excellent overview of the BBS, followed by a nice discussion of the importance of the data collected over the roughly 50 years breeding bird surveys have been conducted. Keith really enjoyed himself, and I want to express my appreciation to those of you who spent some time showing him around (especially you, Andrew). David and Berta Pylant were able to secure a nice place to stay for the meeting on the island, and their hospitality in inviting Rufina, myself and Keith to stay with them is much appreciated; we really enjoyed ourselves.

The stars of the meeting, of course, were the birds, who really outdid themselves this time. The meeting list had over 200 species, the highest it's been in some time. Notables included Cape May and Golden-Winged Warblers, Black-billed Cuckoo, Red Knot, Common Tern, American Bittern, numerous Painted Buntings, Clay-colored Sparrow, Rufous Hummingbird, nesting Great-Horned Owls using an Osprey platform, several Merlins, etc. The variety and diversity of species were remarkable. The compilation was a perfect ending for the weekend. As we were pulling together the list, we got to watch Painted Buntings in our hosts' (Lynne Fitzgerald and Ann McLaurin) yard and got buzzed by a migrating Chuck-will's-widow.

Our fall meeting at DI is of course a ways off, so I won't talk much about it here. However, I will mention that our speaker is going to be Greg Miller. Greg is best known as one of the Big Year competitors, along with Sandy Komita and Al Levantin, whose experiences were documented in the non-fiction book, *The Big Year*. As most of you know, the book inspired a major motion picture by the same name, starring Jack Black, Steve Martin and Owen Wilson, which was released in 2011. Greg served as Bird Consultant for the movie. I am sure Greg will have an entertaining presentation for us, and I'll provide more details in the next *Yellowhammer*.

We hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable rest of the summer; wishing you Good Birding!

## Southern Wonder, Alabama's Surprising Biodiversity By R. Scot Duncan

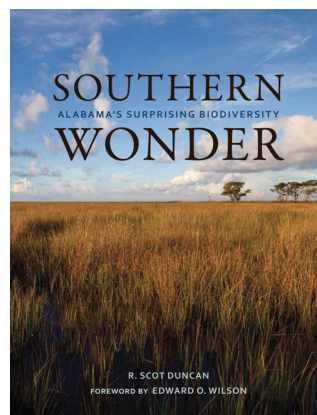
BOOK REVIEW BY BOB REED



THE PREMISE OF SCOT DUNCAN'S BOOK IS CAPTURED in the title; Alabama is the most biologically diverse state east of the Mississippi River. Scot establishes four main reasons for this diversity: warm, moist climate, Alabama's latitude, its rich evolutionary history, and the serendipitous manner in which the state's boundaries were drawn.

Instead of trying to be too scholarly, and the book is clearly a masterful scholarly work, Scot opts instead for making the book exceptionally readable, while maintaining its scholastic integrity.

Starting at the Gulf Coast with a discussion of two of Alabama's beach mice species, and progressing northward in a very methodical way, he describes the biological and geological characteristics of each of 29 level IV ecoregions in Alabama. Not content to do only that, which would be worthwhile indeed, he occasionally takes the reader on hikes through these areas. The best one, in my opinion, was a hike



up and over Double Oak Mountain in Oak Mountain State Park. His extraordinary description of the flora and fauna as he hikes made me want to repeat the hike on my own.

As he reaches the Tennessee line, he describes a tiny hidden ecoregion in northwest Limestone County "where the farm-

land roads depart from their monotonous straightaways and plunge down steep hillsides into narrow, hidden valleys." His description was so enticing that Pat and I had to make a trip to see it.

Of the final two chapters, one looks at the Gulf's waters and the astonishing variety of species that lives in them, and the other looks at the future in light of the many challenges facing the state's biodiversity and environment.

The book is generously peppered with gorgeous pictures of plants, animals, habitats, and landscapes. While there is a one-page map of the level IV ecoregions, the addition of individual maps giving a more precise location of the ecoregion under discussion would make the book more user friendly.

I highly recommend the book to anyone who loves Alabama, its flora and fauna, and who wants to learn more about its rich geologic, geographic, and climatic heritage.

Published by University of Alabama Press, 464 pages.



# Way Up North to Alaska, Part 2

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Part 2 of "Way Up North to Alaska," commences with the departure of the authors and their guide Gavin Bieber from Anchorage, bound for St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea.*



NCE AGAIN, FOG DELAYED our flight plans a bit but we finally made it to St. Paul that afternoon and immediately set about birding on this amazing little island that is a halibut and crab fishing and processing hub (It is often featured on the television show *Deadliest Catch*) as well as a nesting ground for many sea birds and a rest stop for many migratory birds.

We were rewarded that first day on St. Paul with a sighting of a White-tailed Eagle, a vagrant, and a ton of other birds including Rock Sandpipers, Red-faced Cormorants, Red-legged Kittiwakes and Least Auklets.

The next day, our first full day on St. Paul, we explored the varied terrain of the island and saw a huge array of birds, from hordes of auklets and puffins nesting on its cliffs to a Snowy Owl that snatched an auklet up for breakfast right in front of us—quite a spectacular moment—to a rare Asian vagrant, an Eyebrowed Thrush, compliments of Gavin, who lived on St. Paul as a researcher and guide off and on for several years. His eye for birds is rivaled only by his wry sense of humor and many hilarious stories of his birding life, including being mistaken as a relative of pop teen idol Justin Bieber.

Like Nome, the weather on St. Paul was cold, damp, foggy and windy, so we were well prepared clothing-wise. What we were repeatedly reminded of throughout the trip, St. Paul being no exception, was the unpredictable nature of Alaska's weather. Our two-night stay on St. Paul was extended an extra 30 hours (meaning one more night at the Airport Hotel, a clean, cozy, kind of communal accommodation) by fog.

The silver lining to that fog was it afforded us lots more looks at St. Paul's birds as well as its seals, otters, foxes, people



and even the island's compact but gorgeous Russian Orthodox church.

Though the extra time was well spent, members of our group were anxious to get home or, in our case, continue our adventure to the southeastern corner of Alaska where we had planned to spend a night in Denali, then head to the Kenai Peninsula for a boat trip. The added day on St. Paul forced us to cancel our Denali plans, but we managed to get back into Anchorage about 1 a.m. on June 13, grab a few hours of shuteye, then snag our rental car and head toward Seward.

Along the way, we stopped at Potter's Marsh, Tern Lake, and other well-known

birding pull-offs where we saw a number of nice birds and even some moose (we never saw a single bear, darnn it). We also made a stop at the yard of Ava Eads, who lives just outside Seward and draws an amazing variety of feeder birds to her porch and yard, where we hoped to see a Chestnut-backed and/or Boreal Chickadee. Neither of those birds graced us with its presence, so we went on to our hotel in Seward, the Breeze Inn, and, after a fresh seafood dinner in a waterfront restaurant, we tucked in for the night to rest for the coming full day—a nine-hour boat ride in Kenai Fjords National Park followed by a mad dash back to the Anchorage airport for our red-eye flight home.

Among the highlights of our day on the boat were Kittlitz's and Marbled Murrelets and a Rhinoceros Auklet, not to mention great looks at a wide number of other sea and water birds. And all of us, but probably most especially the SOB, marveled at the glaciers, whales, seals, otters and, sheer beauty of the landscape.

Despite the fact that we were in a much warmer part of the state, a heavy blanket of cold fog surrounded us as we set off on the boat that morning and, though the sun came out later in the day, we were grateful, again, for our warm layers of clothing.

Back on the dock after a full day on the water we packed up most of our layers and began the drive back to Anchorage. We had just enough time to stop once more at Ava's where she and her friend Lynn, greeted us warmly, called up a few chickadees and regaled us with tales of the multigenerational bird families that visit her feeders each year. We never saw the chickadees or a Violet-green Swallow rumored to be in her yard, but we experienced some true Alaskan warmth and hospitality, one of the many human highlights of the trip.

Early in the morning on June 16 our big silver bird landed back in Atlanta. We were tired to the bone, rather glad to feel the heat of an Atlanta June day on our skin and truly reeling with all we had seen and experienced in Alaska.

For Lorna and Katie, this was a first-in-a-lifetime trip to Alaska. For Kevin it was a third visit, but the first time he had gone with binoculars rather than fishing rods and a bicycle. For all of us it was a trip we will never forget and one we can highly recommend to birders and SOBs alike.

As a final aside and comment on preparedness: We recommend that anyone who wants to bird Alaska plan thoroughly, find a guide who really knows Alaska and pack as lightly as possible while still taking along your binocs, a bird guide, a scope and all those layers. Keep in mind that Alaska—or at least everywhere we went in Alaska, does have washing machines and driers, so you don't need a fresh change of clothes for every day. Finally, take along a big supply of patience—it may be needed as you wait for birds, weather and planes and it does not take up any room in your luggage!

And one last note: Our experience with WINGS was great. Gavin and Jon were both extremely knowledgeable about the birds as well as hotels, eating establishments, etc., which in those less touristy parts of Alaska are vital bits of information. While Seward and Anchorage were easy to manage without a professional guide, we would not have been able to make it to many of the sites in the western parts of Alaska or seen so many amazing birds without Jon and Gavin. Thus, we would strongly recommend finding a professional, ethical bird tour group to take you to some of the more remote and protected areas of the state. It's not inexpensive, but for us it was well worth the expense.

If you have questions about this trip or want to contact the authors for further insights or recommendations contact Lorna at [jjal@att.net](mailto:jjal@att.net) or Kevin at [kevin@kevinjacksonmd.com](mailto:kevin@kevinjacksonmd.com).

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### *New Members*

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Tab, Rebekah and Martin Choate

Vicki and David Dodd

Lydia Johnson

Erskine Ashbee

Joseph Miller

Mike Carson and Susan Baum

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### *Memorials*

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Jennie and John Stowers made a donation to DIBS  
in memory of Mary Virginia Brown

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### *Electronic Yellowhammer?*

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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](mailto:BobReed1987@gmail.com).

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### *Thanks for the Stories*

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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. We have been using input from the editor only because those are all we have at the moment.

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 are interesting, different, or amusing.

A O S SPRING MEETING, APRIL 18-20, 2014

# Minutes of the AOS Board Meeting

By PAT REED, *Secretary*

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WAS HELD ON April 19, 2014 at Dauphin Island, Alabama. President Ken Ward called the meeting to order, and it was determined a quorum was present. The minutes of the January 25, 2014 meeting were approved.

## OFFICER'S REPORT

**Treasurer's Report**—Dr. Rufina Ward stated an updated financial report would be available in the July *Yellowhammer*. She stated 65 registered for the spring meeting.

There was no report from the President or Vice-President.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Conservation Committee**—Greg Harber has written to the Bureau of Land Management encouraging them to properly manage the Greater Sage Grouse habitat they have under their purview by adopting conservation alternatives to ensure sustainable management and to conserve the species, including limiting future development and creating protected areas. (Copy of this letter attached to the original minutes.)

Mr. Harber also reported he has written a letter to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Sally Jewell, regarding the siting guidelines for wind farms. Current guidelines are voluntary; however, there is a need for policy that would determine where wind energy should and should not be developed. A discussion followed regarding wind farms in Alabama, stating that legislation introduced in Alabama did not pass. It was the consensus that AOS should be ready to submit comments if and when it should become necessary. (Copy of this letter attached to the original minutes.)

**Membership Committee**—Larry Gardella stated the idea of writing all members has not happened; however, he tries to get in touch with people through ALBirds. Dr. Ward stated half of the membership has not renewed and suggested send-

ing post cards to those who have not renewed. A discussion followed on ways to handle this situation.

**Publications Committee**—Anabel Markle reported this committee has been abolished; however she has quite an inventory of tee shirts in sizes that do not sell and inquired as to the need of a new AOS tee shirt. A discussion was held on what to do with the tee shirts as the AOS store was closed at the January meeting due to expenses that would be incurred as an official incorporated nonprofit. Larry Gardella moved research be done as to setting up a donation premium schedule. The move was approved.

**Meetings Committee**—Anne Miller stated she received several compliments for the set-up on Friday night.

**Alabama Bird Records Committee**—Steve McConnell reported the Alabama Bird Records Committee met with five members present. Jim Holmes, John Trent and Steve McConnell were added. Three records were reviewed, and several issues were discussed including exotics coming into the state and what the policy of the records committee should be. He also stated e-birds is most helpful collecting data on exotics.

**Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary**—The Board will meet on Sunday, April 20. There are several pieces of property available that will be discussed.

## NEW BUSINESS

Greg Jackson reported a meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 21 at Fort Morgan with Mike Bailey, the current director and others, and that he is encouraged by their attitude and support thus far.

Bianca Allen read a note from Matthew Capp of the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board expressing appreciation for the generosity of AOS in support of the protection of the Audubon Bird Sanctuary and Cadillac Square. (Correspondence attached to original minutes.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

AOS SPRING MEETING, APRIL 18-20, 2014

# Spring Meeting Report

By GREG HARBER



BIRDING ON DAUPHIN ISLAND CAN BE DIFFICULT at times and this spring's AOS meeting was a case study reflecting the reasons why this is so. It's not that there weren't any birds to see (which is sometimes the case), but that there were too many! Allow me to elaborate....

During the weeks leading up to the meeting there were several reports on ALBirds about birds being seen on the island as a result of favorable fallout conditions: weary neotropical migrants encountering inclement weather conditions as they approached our coasts, forcing them to land at the first opportunity—which, fortunately for us, was either Fort Morgan or Dauphin Island. We birders who live in inland Alabama take heart when we read these reports—they whet our appetites for more birds to come as the time for the meeting draws nearer!

Although we did not experience a major fallout the weekend of the meeting, there were enough incoming migrants and “residual birds” from earlier in the week to keep a determined birder on the move. All the favored island hotspots—the East End behind Fort Gaines, the West End, Pelican Island/Peninsula, Shell Mounds Park, Goat Trees Reserve, Airport Marsh and Cadillac Square Park—saw their fair share of bird life typical for the habitats represented at the site.

Some sightings still etched into my memory two months after the fact are brilliantly colored Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, subdued Blue-headed Vireos and actively foraging Bay-breasted and Black-and-white Warblers at Cadillac Square Park that allowed me to approach ridiculously close—handy for photographers, eh? Hummingbirds, Tennessee Warblers and Orchard Orioles were almost a guarantee at any olean-der bush on the island.

A Western Kingbird and Peregrine Falcon at the Audubon Sanctuary were particularly cooperative throughout the weekend, and who could forget the sight of the nestling Great Horned Owls whose parents had built their nest on the Osprey platform there?

Other species of note for the weekend were Rufous Hummingbird, American Bittern, Red Knot, Whimbrel, Glossy Ibis, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Clay-colored and White-crowned Sparrows. Perhaps most emblematic of the delightful array of birds observed during the weekend was a most cooperative Painted Bunting at the Sunday compilation. Not to be outdone, a Chuck-will's-widow flew in at the conclusion of the compilation and perched in the dense understory just long enough to be tallied—and then just as quickly flew away! Final tally for the weekend was a handsome 205 species.

John “Sto” and Jenny Stowers hosted lunch at their house on Saturday. A hot bowl of delicious seafood gumbo and a variety of potluck offerings make for welcome respite and a chance to meet new birders and old friends alike. The view of the Mississippi Sound from their deck is splendid and soothing—liquid relief for the eyes.

Saturday night's Silent Auction netted in excess of \$600 for Shirley Farrell and the Education Committee's programs. Anne Miller and Maureen Shaffer and their crew rolled out another stellar evening banquet, and Keith Pardieck's keynote address about the status and success of the Breeding Bird Survey in Alabama was informative and well received. My thanks to all who contributed to the success of yet another storied AOS Spring Meeting. See you in October.

## Upcoming Meetings

**SECOND FRIDAY**—October 10–12, 2014

Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

**FOURTH FRIDAY**—January 23–25, 2015

Winter Meeting, TBA

**THIRD FRIDAY**—April 17–19, 2015

Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama



## 2014 AOS Spring Meeting Compilation List Dauphin Island, Alabama, April 18–20

**N**OTEWORTHY BIRDS OF THE weekend included Glossy Ibis and Rufous Hummingbird.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck  
Canada Goose  
American Black Duck  
Mallard  
Mottled Duck  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Redhead  
Lesser Scaup  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Wild Turkey  
Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Northern Gannet  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Anhinga  
American White Pelican  
Brown Pelican  
American Bittern  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Snowy Egret  
Little Blue Heron  
Tricolored Heron  
Reddish Egret  
Cattle Egret  
Green Heron  
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron  
White Ibis  
*Glossy Ibis*  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Swallow-tailed Kite  
Mississippi Kite  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Clapper Rail  
Virginia Rail  
Sora  
Common Gallinule  
American Coot  
Black-necked Stilt  
American Avocet  
American Oystercatcher  
Black-bellied Plover

Snowy Plover  
Wilson's Plover  
Semipalmated Plover  
Piping Plover  
Killdeer  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Willet  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Whimbrel  
Marbled Godwit  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Red Knot  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Sanderling  
Dunlin  
Least Sandpiper  
White-rumped Sandpiper  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Semipalmated Sandpiper  
Western Sandpiper  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Long-billed Dowitcher  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Laughing Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Least Tern  
Gull-billed Tern  
Caspian Tern  
Common Tern  
Forster's Tern  
Royal Tern  
Sandwich Tern  
Black Skimmer  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared-Dove  
White-winged Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Common Ground-Dove  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
Black-billed Cuckoo  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Chuck-will's-widow  
Chimney Swift  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
*Rufous Hummingbird*  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker

Pileated Woodpecker  
American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon  
Eastern Wood Pewee  
Acadian Flycatcher  
Eastern Phoebe  
Great Crested Flycatcher  
Western Kingbird  
Eastern Kingbird  
Gray Kingbird  
Loggerhead Shrike  
White-eyed Vireo  
Yellow-throated Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Philadelphia Vireo  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Fish Crow  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow  
N. Rough-winged Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Cave Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
Brown-headed Nuthatch  
House Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Carolina Wren  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
Veery  
Gray-cheeked Thrush  
Swainson's Thrush  
Wood Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Northern Mockingbird  
European Starling  
Cedar Waxwing  
Ovenbird  
Worm-eating Warbler  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Northern Waterthrush  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Blue-winged Warbler  
Black-and-white Warbler  
Prothonotary Warbler  
Swainson's Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Kentucky Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Hooded Warbler

American Redstart  
Cape May Warbler  
Cerulean Warbler  
Northern Parula  
Magnolia Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler  
Yellow Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Prairie Warbler  
Eastern Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
Summer Tanager  
Scarlet Tanager  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Blue Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Painted Bunting  
Dickcissel  
Bobolink  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Common Grackle  
Boat-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Orchard Oriole  
Baltimore Oriole  
House Finch  
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 **bold-faced**, 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.

# On the Maine Road



AT AND I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to take a 4,900 mile road trip to Maine and New Hampshire in May and June of 2014. Four of our target birds were Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Bicknell's Thrush, and Spruce Grouse. We met a Field Guides group in Portland and birded around there on the coast and marshes for a couple of days. The land of 10-20 foot tides makes for some interesting birding, as everything changes twice a day. We motored up to Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park next, where we boarded a very fast catamaran for a pelagic trip out into the Gulf of Maine. The targets were puffins and whales, so the boat was filled with many non-birders. The weather in June was crystal clear, but cold, with the temperature on the water in the mid fifties, without the wind chill of travelling at 25-30 knots.

The puffin target was Petit Manan Island, northeast of Bar Harbor. As we neared the island, the two most prominent birds were the Atlantic Puffins and Razorbills. Two life birds in about 30 seconds. Not bad. Not since our trip to Alaska have we managed anything like it. We tooled around several more islands, looking at what might be hanging around, and found Roseate and Arctic Terns, Northern Gannet, several gulls, but, despite many miles of diligent searching, no whales. Ah, but there's always a next time.

Later on in the week, on the last day of the trip with Field Guides, we had a reser-



vation to ascend Mount Washington, which is just across the line in New Hampshire. To really bird the mountain, you must have a guide from the mountain, who is required to drive, and you must go very early, and be through birding by 8:00 a.m. That is when the road is opened to the public, and there are only very limited pull offs, meaning most of the time, you simply stop in the road, a tad dangerous if others are trying to use the road at the same time. To make matters worse, we were there on a Saturday, so lots of expected traffic, and the day, though clear at lower elevations, was exceptionally windy. Spotting

a bird, even one as large as a thrush, was going to be difficult. Truer words were never spoken; despite modest tape-playing and sixteen eyes, we saw no bird—at least until, at eight sharp, we headed back to the van, in apparent defeat.

And there, just in front of the van, was a Bicknell's Thrush, looking as if to say, "What's all the fuss?" He posed for all of us, moving from stunted tree to stunted tree for perhaps 40 seconds, before disappearing over the road. When we turned around to high-five each other, behind us on the road, in very plain sight, was a Spruce Grouse!

The first person to see it was so surprised, all she could sputter was "b-b-bird!" The bird walked around on the pavement, but you know how picky birders are; we are never satisfied. Someone said, "Come on around; the sun's in our face." So it did, flying right past us and perching on a mossy rock in perfect light (photo left), as though to say,



PHOTO OF MALE SPRUCE GROUSE BY BOB REED

"Satisfied?" Two life birds in about 45 seconds! We had searched miles of good Spruce Grouse habitat, and on this last day we had written that one off. But there it was, in absolutely perfect conditions.

We continued on up the mountain to a real pull-off, where we watched a Blackpoll Warbler sing his heart out. He was a beautiful bird, but a little anticlimactic after the terrific birds five minutes before.

The next day we went to visit a pair of friends in Belgrade, who took us to see a marsh where a pair of Sandhill Cranes were supposedly nesting this year; sure enough we saw two adults and a colt.

I highly recommend the trip to anyone; it's easy, relaxing, and fun. And the lobsters are really good.

### *Creekside Tales*

**M**Y NEIGHBOR ALONG MOORE CREEK FORESTS IN WESTERN Mobile and I have shared discoveries this spring and summer. A loud, rather harsh cry revealed an American Kestrel in the tall trees bordering my backyard. Day after day this suggested to me a mating hunt, or perhaps, like the owls, a hunting-for-prey communication. Marge, my neighbor to the south, and I are hoping to locate a nest.

For many years I listened to Great Horned Owls hooting across my large open yard at night. Polly, my dog, demanded a chance to demolish them. She never succeeded, while I gained a real appreciation of constellations in the night sky.

Further north along the creek forests Ann has made a careful and systematic study of both Great Horned Owls and the subsequent Barred Owls. My friends tell me that owls will eat all the prey in a certain area until it is scarce and then move. They listen for them in their new home territory now.

—Jean Golden, Mobile

### *Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions*

Fall 2014	August 1, 2014
Winter 2014	November 10, 2014
Spring 2015	February 10, 2015

JULY 1, 2013 – DECEMBER 31, 2013

## 2013 AOS Financial Report

By RUFINA WARD, Treasurer

BEGINNING BALANCE : JULY 1, 2013 \$19,224.42

### *Income*

DIBS Contributions	1,746.00
AOS Membership Dues, etc.	2,493.00
Fall Meeting 2013	
Registration	1,600.00
Banquet	1,260.00
AOS Fall Meeting Sales	113.00

TOTAL INCOME \$7,212.00

### *Expenses*

Publications	
TekLinks (hosting website)	75.00
Herald Quick Print ( <i>ALABird</i> )	246.20
Printers & Stationers ( <i>Alabama Birdlife</i> )	2746.73
Litho Plate & Negative ( <i>Yellowhammer</i> )	1007.28
Workshops, Inc. ( <i>Yellowhammer</i> )	431.72
Secretary of State	100.00
DIBS Disbursement	1746.00
Postage	76.40
Images (BBVA charges)	30.00
New Checks	26.57
DISL	1320.00
Fall Meeting	
Wilton Caterer	1769.85
Honorarium	250.00
Rentals (tables, truck)	375.43
Member Refunds (miscellaneous expenses)	477.37
Other	246.00

TOTAL EXPENSES \$10,924.55

ENDING BALANCE: June 30, 2013 \$15,511.87

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