

# THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 35, NO. 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SUMMER 2015

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

FOUNDED 1952



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NEW MEMBERS!

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## ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

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Anne Miller, Maureen Shaffer  
 Charlotte Fanz, Priscilla Tubbs, Mike Wilson



I ALL. I HOPE YOU'VE HAD A nice spring with lots of great birding. It's been memorable, for the second year in a row, up here in North Alabama. Monte Sano State Park was full of birds at the end of April through early May, especially at the overlook and Japanese Garden. We had another excellent spring migration count at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge; shorebirds were exceptional this time around, due in part to a flooded field near the Agricultural Experiment Station in Belle Mina. NABS (North Alabama Birding Society) had its largest crowd of the year at Alabama

A&M University's Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station (WTARS), with our usual set of crowd-pleasers there, including our nesting scissor-tailed flycatchers. We were happy to have the farm manager, Dr. Ernst Cebert, accompany us on our trip. Ernie, an old colleague and friend of ours, is new to this job but is very interested in promoting WTARS as a birding hotspot and in planning management activities to accommodate the bird community there, especially the open country birds of conservation concern that breed on the farm, including Dickcissels, Grasshopper Sparrows and Northern Bobwhite.

Our 2015 AOS Spring meeting went well, albeit under trying circumstances, with the need to change banquet venues on short notice. There has still not been a final decision on where we'll have our meeting activities next fall and beyond. Our local arrangement committee co-chairs, Anne Miller and Maureen Shaffer, will be on Dauphin Island in June, checking on possibilities there and nearby. I think everyone agreed that the best possible situation for AOS would be to have all of our meeting activities (except some of the field trips) on the island, preferably at the same venue. We are not likely to be able to find anything that matches the Shelby Center for convenience, with its location, excellent audio-visual capacity and nice meeting room for our banquet/mixer. However, it probably won't be possible to use Shelby again, without a guarantee that our far-in-advance reservations for Dauphin Island Sea Lab facilities will be honored. I think the banquet at Pelican Reef went reasonably well, given the circumstances, and there have



already been some assurances that some of the problems encountered will be fixed, should we decide to hold a banquet there again. Still, we are going to make every attempt to find an on-island solution before even considering holding some or all of the meeting off the island.

I'd like to thank Maureen Shaffer and Anne Miller for their quick and decisive efforts to find us another banquet venue this spring and in getting things set up at Galathea for the potluck/mixer. Also, thanks to the rest who pitched in and helped with setup and cleanup for the potluck and, especially, for all of the delicious food you guys brought. Thanks

to Gary Alford and Bala Chennupati for the beautiful and interesting slides, which this time included a decidedly international flavor, with birds of Africa and India showcased. As usual, thanks also to Rufina for her efficient handling of registration duties and other responsibilities as treasurer, as well as for help from Jane Allen and Berta Pylant during registration. And, of course, thanks to David and Berta for holding down the fort at Dauphin Island while Rufina and I struggled to get away and down there on time.

I think I speak for all of us in saying how fortunate we were to have Louise Zemaitis join us for the meeting this year. Louise was just outstanding; her presentation on "Birding by Habitat" was excellent and interesting and the field trip she led, emphasizing the same theme, was one of the more memorable ones I have attended. I learned so much from that trip; especially noteworthy was the time we spent on the beach near Fort Gaines watching migrants come in, studying their flight patterns and calls, behavior, etc., which was just fascinating. I will never forget the Merlin feasting on tired migrants; sad, in a way, but a fact of life for just-arriving birds. Louise, thanks so much; you are a delightful person, and we hope you enjoyed yourself as much as we enjoyed having you.

We, of course can't forget the birds and, while not quite as spectacular as the spring 2014 meeting, we did compile an impressive list again (see elsewhere in this publication for the list). The highlight for Rufina and myself came toward the end, in the Audubon Sanctuary, when we encountered a Gray Kingbird and Peregrine Falcon back near the pond. And

of course, the Black-whiskered Vireo (which we did not see), Painted Buntings, variety of warblers and other beautiful songbirds, the usual impressive shorebird variety, etc. added to the great weekend. The weather was tricky but I think we all managed that pretty well.

Otherwise, I should report that the Board voted to provide a \$200 donation to the Alabama Wildlife Foundation, in support of bird-proof window panes for installation at the Alabama Wildlife Center (AWC). Also I want to thank AWC for the really nice door prizes they provided for us. One other important topic that was discussed at the board meeting involved a possible partnership with the International Crane Foundation in support of education and outreach on Whooping Cranes, which have become an important presence in northern Alabama in recent years during the winter. As publicity increases concerning crane presence, there is a need to educate the public for a variety of reasons, among the most important being to better ensure the safety of these magnificent birds. There are also concerns over the need to educate folks, birders and non-birders alike, on how to find and observe cranes in a proper setting without unduly disturbing the cranes or causing problems for private land-owners and such. AOS may have an important role to play in helping to inform and educate, hence the proposed partnership. I will be providing more information as things progress, and your input is, of course, welcome.

I will conclude by giving you a bit of a sneak preview of our upcoming AOS fall meeting, scheduled for October 9-11. Our speaker will be Jon Dunn, who has served as chief consultant for five editions of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and is co-author of the current 6th edition. As most of you know, the National Geographic field guide is among the very best, if not the best, we have for North American birds. Jon has served as a member of the California Bird Records Committee for many years and serves on both the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Taxonomy and the American Birding Association Checklist Committee. He has been with us before, and may lead a field trip/workshop for us, in addition to his banquet presentation. Otherwise, the meeting will include several field trips. Although nothing has been finalized, I would anticipate a trip on the Island, a shorebird trip to either Pelican Peninsula or the west end of the Island, a Friday trip to Grand Bay Peninsula and perhaps a trip to Blakeley Island

on Sunday. Detailed information on the fall meeting will be out on our website sometime this summer and in the fall *Yellowhammer*.

Hope y'all have a safe and enjoyable summer; happy birding.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Due to circumstances beyond my control, there will be no additional trip report other than that which the president wrote. I regret this, but none of my three sources were able to provide one, and Pat and I were unable to attend due to sickness.*

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### *Welcome, New Members!*

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Andrew (Andy) Coleman

Lola and Charles Estes

Carolyn and Stephen Grissett

Phillip, Wes, and Cathy Jarnigan

Deborah Jones

Jean Kerr

Mary Larson

James and Corinne Lauridson

Mary Maxwell

Kim and Steve Nix

Russell Price

Seth Smitherman

Dana and Susanne Timmons

### *Upcoming Meetings*

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**SECOND FRIDAY**—October 9-11, 2015

Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

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**FOURTH FRIDAY**—January 22-24, 2016

Winter Meeting, Lakepoint State Park, Eufaula

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**THIRD FRIDAY**—April 15-17, 2016

Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

## 2015 AOS Spring Meeting Compilation List Dauphin Island, Alabama, April 17–19

**N**OTEWORTHY BIRDS OF THE weekend included Glossy Ibis and Vermilion Flycatcher.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck  
Canada Goose  
Gadwall  
Mallard  
Mottled Duck  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Green-winged Teal  
Redhead  
Lesser Scaup  
Bufflehead  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Magnificent Frigatebird  
Northern Gannet  
Double-crested Cormorant  
American White Pelican  
Brown Pelican  
Least 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  
Bald Eagle  
Cooper's Hawk  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Clapper Rail  
Sora  
Purple Gallinule  
American Coot  
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  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Sanderling  
Dunlin  
Least Sandpiper  
Pectoral 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  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Chimney Swift  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon  
Eastern Wood Pewee  
Acadian Flycatcher  
*Vermilion Flycatcher*

Great Crested Flycatcher  
Eastern Kingbird  
Gray Kingbird  
Loggerhead Shrike  
White-eyed Vireo  
Yellow-throated Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Black-whiskered 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  
Sedge Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Carolina Wren  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
Veery  
Gray-cheeked Thrush  
Swainson's Thrush  
Hermit Thrush  
Wood Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Northern Mockingbird  
European Starling  
Cedar Waxwing  
Ovenbird  
Worm-eating Warbler  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Northern Waterthrush  
Blue-winged Warbler  
Black-and-white Warbler  
Prothonotary Warbler  
Swainson's Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Kentucky Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Hooded Warbler  
American Redstart  
Cape May Warbler  
Cerulean Warbler  
Northern Parula

Bay-breasted Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Yellow Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Yellow-throated Warbler  
Prairie Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Eastern Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Seaside Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Summer Tanager  
Scarlet Tanager  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Blue Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Painted Bunting  
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.

DAUPHIN ISLAND, ALABAMA, APRIL 18, 2015

# Minutes of the AOS Board Meeting

By BIANCA J. ALLEN, *Acting Secretary*



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MET ON SATURDAY, April 18, 2015 at Dauphin Island, Alabama. President Ken Ward called the meeting to order after determining a quorum was present.

## OFFICER REPORTS

**Secretary**—Pat Reed was absent but the minutes to the last meeting on Saturday, January 24, 2015 at Joe Wheeler State Park, Alabama, were submitted via email. The minutes of the meeting were approved.

**Treasurer**—Rufina Ward reported that the \$26,000 was deposited in BVA/Compass bank for a 5-year CD with 2% interest. Rufina Ward and David Pylant are co-signers on the CD. Rufina reported 21 new members since December 2014. She also reported that she has been talking with Katy Blankenhorn, DISL, about getting refunds for the future deposits AOS has made for lodging at DISL. Rufina reported that seventy-one people, including 13 new members, had registered for the meeting.

**Vice President**—David Pylant reported that he has been investigating possible membership management software and that [www.WildApricot.com](http://www.WildApricot.com) seemed to be the best option at this time. It is cloud-based software that includes accepting payments online, meeting notifications, etc. He said it was available on a 30-day free trial basis and includes a “drag and drop” website. He also reported that he had not booked the winter 2016 meeting at Lakepoint State Park yet due to the state budgeting problems that are threatening to close the parks. The board urged him to go ahead and make the reservations so hopefully the meeting could be held there if the budget issues were resolved. He also solicited input on possible new officers for the next two-year term.

**President**—President Ken Ward reported the speaker for the fall meeting will be Jon Dunn.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Conservation**—No report

**Membership**—No report

**Education**—Shirley Farrell reported that Betsy Eagar will be assisting in the Nature Festival on Dauphin Island in June. Shirley also requested that Rufina provide her with a report showing the available funds for the Education Committee

**Meetings**—Anne Miller reported that the banquet with speaker will be held on the bottom floor of the Pelican Reef restaurant. She reported that the Pelican Reef is also willing to provide heavy finger foods for the Friday night session for a price of \$11.60 per person which could be included in the meeting fee. She said she knew people hate leaving the island but right now there were no other choices. She stressed that she and Maureen are not able to do all the labor and spend all the time required for set-up and take-down of the meeting rooms. A suggestion was made that people be asked to comment on the Pelican Reef facilities and food on the back of their name badges so we could have input from the membership. Greg Harber stated that he had measured the distance between the Pelican Reef and Dauphin Island and it was 9.9 miles.

**Alabama Bird Records Committee**—Greg Jackson reported that some votes had been taken recently but he was not prepared to give a report at this time. The committee uses Dropbox on the internet for reviews and voting. Greg shared that he checks eBirds, ALBirds and all the bird counts for records.

**Fort Morgan Management Plan**—Greg Jackson reported that he had met with Mike Bailey, director of Fort Morgan, on Friday. Last April the committee met with Mike Bailey and the people from Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

and wrote a management plan. That management plan was sent to people at Fort Morgan and Bon Secour and was also shared with the Alabama Historical Commission. Bon Secour manages a large part of the Fort Morgan area so they are involved along with the Fort Morgan people. Some revisions to the plan will be made but a few things have already been implemented. It is thought that the middle ground may recover better than originally thought and some things will be allowed to re-generate. The main mission of those involved from Fort Morgan is the historical aspect but they are interested in the natural habitat also.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Ken Ward reported that he had been contacted by the International Crane Foundation. Their representative is making presentations all over Alabama trying to educate the public and encourage crane conservation along with birding ethics. They need volunteers to man booths at different expos in the state. Education is their primary focus. Both Whooping and Sandhill Cranes are included in their efforts.

Ken also reported that the Alabama Nature Center in Millbrook, Alabama had requested financial assistance from AOS to obtain protective windows for the new center. The windows cost \$100 each and there are 150 windows. They provided several nice door prizes for the Saturday night drawing. A motion was made and passed to send a \$200 donation to the Alabama Nature Center.

A motion was also made and passed to erect a bench in recognition of all that John Stowers has done for the organization, its members and the wildlife on the island. This will be accomplished next spring.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

#### Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions

Fall 2015	August 10, 2015
Winter 2015	November 10, 2015
Spring 2015	February 10, 2016

### Membership Dues

**Y**OUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES ON DECEMBER 31 OF THE YEAR printed on your mailing label of this issue. In recent issues of *The Yellowhammer*, I have urged you to check to see if your AOS membership is current. If you are not current, please renew. We want to keep all our friends as members.

You can also help us by spreading the word about AOS to any of your friends who share the goals that AOS has espoused since its founding in 1952. There are two: fostering a greater knowledge of birds and promoting conservation of all natural resources.

Finally, I ask for suggestions from any or all of you on the best ways to reach out to people who want to learn more about birds. You can email me directly at [lgardellabirds@charter.net](mailto:lgardellabirds@charter.net) or put your suggestions on the Albirds listserv. Either way, I would love to hear from you.

—Larry Gardella

### Electronic Yellowhammer?

**I**T 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).

### Thanks for the Stories

**T**HE 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.

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