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

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SECRETARY......................................................Pat Reed
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT......................Bianca J. Allen

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THE YELLOWHAMMER.................Robert Reed
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MEETINGS
Anne Miller, Maureen Shaffer
Charlotte Fanz, Priscilla Tubbs, Mike Wilson
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 landowners 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.

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.

Welcome, New Members!

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

SECOND FRIDAY—October 9-11, 2015
Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

FOURTH FRIDAY—January 22-24, 2016
Winter Meeting, Lakepoint State Park, Eufaula

THIRD FRIDAY—April 15-17, 2016
Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama
2015 AOS Spring Meeting Compilation List
Dauphin Island, Alabama, April 17–19

Noteworthy 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
Veer
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson’s Thrush
Horned Lark
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
Northeastern 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

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Sandwich Tern
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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 italicized 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. Species that are bold-faced, or noted 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.
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 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.

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**Membership Dues**

**Your 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 or put your suggestions on the Albirds listserv. Either way, I would love to hear from you.

—Larry Gardella

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**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.

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**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.