

THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 35, NO. 4 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY WINTER 2015

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

FOUNDED 1952



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ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

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 VICE PRESIDENT.....Harry Dean
 TREASURER.....Rufina Ward
 SECRETARY.....Ken Ward
 IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT.....Ken Ward

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Greg Harber
 Scot Duncan, Catherine Rideout,
 Eric Soehren

MEETINGS

Charlotte Fanz, Priscilla Tubbs,
 Mike Wilson



OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS I HAVE enjoyed working with the board and officers of AOS to organize our meetings, so it didn't seem like too much of a stretch to take on the AOS presidency on short notice, due to the retirement of David Pylant. Many AOS members already know me, through my long-time position as executive director of the Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at Oak Mountain State Park. We assisted AOS by providing our bird records for the Breeding Bird Atlas, but my job as a wildlife rehabilitator demanded all of my time, so I didn't start coming to AOS meetings until after I retired from the Wildlife Center in 2008. I enjoyed the meetings at Dauphin Island so much, I allowed my friend Maureen Shaffer to talk me into becoming co-chair with her of the AOS Meetings Committee in 2013.

As president, AOS meetings will continue to be a major part of my job. I'm looking forward to our winter meeting at Lakepoint Resort State Park and Eufaula NWR, where our speaker will be Charlie Muise, coordinator of the Georgia Important Bird Areas Program. Our fall meeting was one of the best I've attended, thanks to the untiring enthusiasm of our speaker, Jon Dunn, who birded with AOS members all day every day, and who also gave a workshop and the keynote address. We owe special thanks to Dena and Don McKee and Pastor Cecil Jackson and Meetings Committee chair, Maureen Shaffer, for helping us secure our excellent new venue at the United Methodist Church Meeting Hall. It's attractive, comfortable, and very convenient. Lots of other people contributed to make our fall meeting successful, but a few stand out: B. J. Allen and Greg Harber for transporting the AV equipment to and from Birmingham, Susan Barrow and Jean Folsom for helping with table set-up, Sue Moske and Berta Pylant for helping Ken Ward with registration, and Bob and Pat Reed for outstanding help with cleanup. Thanks also to photographers Bala Chennupati and Bob Reed for the Friday night slide show, and to our excellent field trip leaders Andrew Haffenden, Ken Ward, and John Trent.

As I survey the many issues affecting Alabama's birds, one stands out that requires immediate attention. I want to call



on AOS members around the state to support the International Crane Foundation's project to restore the eastern population of Whooping Cranes. Alabama is a key state for migrating and wintering Whooping Cranes, and there is an urgent need to make all Alabamians aware of the importance of appreciating and protecting Whooping Cranes. I'll be working with Greg Harber and the Conservation Committee to determine specific actions our members can take to support this important program. AOS will be participating in the Festival of Cranes at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Decatur on January 9 and 10, 2016. Although plans are not defi-

nite yet, we'll probably have an information booth and will also offer bird walks for visitors. Please contact me if you're able to help in any capacity.

I'm excited by the challenge of working on behalf of AOS members to make our organization stronger and more effective. I'll be carrying on work that is already in progress, for which we all owe our heartfelt thanks to the leadership of our immediate past president, Ken Ward. Many thanks also to Ken and Rufina, for agreeing to serve as secretary and treasurer, and thanks also to Harry Dean, our new vice president. With this experienced team to help me, I hope to honor our long-standing traditions, while enhancing our programs to attract new members who are serious about birds and birding.

AFTERWORD: I wrote my first president's message over the weekend of November 7 and 8, and sent it to the editor, Bob Reed, on Tuesday, November 10. Two days later, my dear friend Maureen Shaffer died unexpectedly, while being treated for cancer.

Maureen has been my birding buddy and indispensable colleague for the past six years. We served together on the boards of AOS and Birmingham Audubon. We had great adventures together scouting the back roads and natural areas of Alabama for the Alabama Birding Trails project. Every year in spring and fall Maureen rented a house on Dauphin Island for the AOS meeting, and we shared it with dear friends like Mike and Joan Russell, Susan Barrow, Jean Folsom and Kathy Freeland. Besides serving as co-chairs of the Meetings

Committee, Maureen and I loved leading AOS field trips to Leroy Hill's Farm to look for Whimbrels, and we loved picking up lunch at Captain Frank's Barbecue Shack in Bayou La Batre that we usually devoured in the park in Coden, overlooking the water. For the past four years we've also shared a cabin with my great-niece Eva Ledvina at the Audubon Mountain Workshop, and Maureen and I participated in Jimmy and Sierra Styles' "Frogging by Ear" workshop in the

Conecuh National Forest, as well as Birmingham Audubon field trips too numerous to count, but rich with memories. Maureen loved the natural world, and she loved so many of her fellow nature lovers, especially birders—a feeling which was recognized and returned by many in the birding community throughout the state. Maureen gave of herself so generously, and all of us who knew her benefited richly, myself most of all.

DAUPHIN ISLAND, OCTOBER 9–11, 2015

Fall Meeting Report

By GREG HARBER



WE BIRDERS ARE A HOPEFUL BUNCH. THE 2015 FALL meeting of the Alabama Ornithological Society began with the hope that birds reported from the coast and at inland sites in the days and weeks prior to the meeting might be found on the island during the weekend. The Roseate Spoonbill reported at the Mud Lakes cooperated, but myriad warblers, tanagers, vireos, and others reported from Huntsville, Birmingham and Montgomery failed to honor their end of the bargain.

Our guest speaker Jon Dunn accompanied the field trips on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to local birding sites, joining AOS members who served as the various trip leaders: Anne G. Miller, Maureen Shaffer, Ken Ward, Andrew Haffenden, and John Trent. Jon was most generous with his time and knowledge all weekend long, sharing identification and bird behavior tips as the opportunities presented themselves. Jon met with many AOS members at lunch on Saturday, and discussed at length the process of the American Ornithological Union, particularly as it relates to changes in bird names and classifications. He made the subject very understandable, and even the slowest of us came away with increased knowledge of the procedures. He also met with the board that afternoon, sharing additional information about building membership within AOS.

Jon's Saturday evening program focused on the wood warblers of the eastern United States, with western species included where appropriate. Jon addressed many of the field marks and natural histories of these warblers, building and reinforcing our identification skills. For example, Jon dem-

onstrated that knowledge of their spring and fall migration routes can help delineate which species we might encounter in the field, helping to narrow the list of candidates as we attempt to identify them.

Sunday's compilation yielded a final tally of 164 species for the weekend, ensuring that even though we may have had fewer birds overall, there was enough variety to appreciate the diversity of the birds we encountered—a point that Jon emphasized throughout the weekend: appreciate the birds in your binoculars first.

Among the highlights: the aforementioned Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, White-rumped Sandpiper, Great Black-backed Gull and a *Myiarchus*-type flycatcher observed at Fort Morgan whose identity may depend on adequate field marks in photographs taken that day.

I encourage all AOS members to attend the winter meeting, scheduled for January 22–24, 2016 at Lakepoint Resort in Eufaula. Winter birding at this state park and the nearby Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge have been fruitful during past meetings, and I expect this meeting will be just as rewarding. Make plans now to attend!

New Members

Marjorie Young

New Life Members

Kevin & Katie Jackson • Ken & Rufina Ward

IN MEMORIAM

A Tribute to Maureen Shaffer



OS MEMBERS ARE SHOCKED AND GRIEVING AT THE sudden death of Maureen Shaffer, who was a diligent worker and indispensable member of the board of directors of the Alabama Ornithological Society. She was currently serving as co-chair of the Meetings Committee, and she frequently led field trips during AOS meetings on Dauphin Island. Maureen was also past president of Birmingham Audubon Society, and was currently serving as chair of the BAS Field Trips and Archives Committees, and active in the Education, Communications, and Conservation Committees. Through her work on the BAS Birding Trails Committee, Maureen made major contributions to the development of the Alabama Birding Trails.

Maureen participated in the Breeding Bird Survey (including nightjar surveys) for many years, and was one of the count leaders in the spring and fall counts in Birmingham. In most years she also participated in Christmas bird counts in Gunterville, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, and Gulf Shores.

Tributes from Maureen's AOS friends around the state have been pouring in. Here are some of them:

Greg Harber:

"Maureen, I shall miss you dearly, and remember you always. My thanks for all that you did for DIBS, and for me personally. May the Good Lord "raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of His hand."

Rufina and Ken Ward:

"Maureen had been so helpful and so generous of her time. I appreciated her assistance when Ken and I couldn't be at Dauphin Island to pick up dorm keys and/or talk to DISL folks. I knew I could always count on her for anything; she was so giving."

Jimmy and Sierra Styles:

"We were so sorry to hear about Maureen's passing. The 'Frogging by Ear' workshop was one of so many wonderful times I feel so fortunate to have spent with her."

Sue Moske:

"I only knew Maureen through AOS meetings, but she seems like an old friend because I've known her so long, at least 25 years. We have truly lost a good person, and a tireless advocate."

Dana and Stan Hamilton:

"She was a very fine person. We knew her first from work and later from birding. She was always kind, generous, and welcoming."

Kathy Freeland:

"Maureen, you were the best of friends. Thank you. I will never see or hear a bird again without feeling your spirit with me."

Pelham Rowan:

"Maureen was one of my favorite people. She always made me feel welcome and appreciated and she always had time for me. Thank you, Maureen, for sharing yourself with me, and everyone."

Ann Gerald:

"I was one of those beginner birders she was so kind to help. I will miss her."

John Imhof:

"An accomplished ornithologist, you shared your knowledge and love of God's creation, particularly birds, so beautifully. Your wit is simply unmatched and you provided me with countless belly laughs. As my Breeding Bird Survey assistant for many years your support was rock solid and much appreciated."

Mike and Joan Russell:

"We shared many wonderful times, especially on Dauphin Island and the Gulf Shores Christmas Bird Count. When everyone else was bundled up in sweaters and coats, there you were in a short-sleeved shirt and sandals, and finally we figured it out: you had such a warm heart!"

DAUPHIN ISLAND, ALABAMA, OCTOBER 10, 2015

Minutes of the AOS Board Meeting

By PAT REED, *Secretary*



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MET ON SATURDAY, October 10, 2015, in the Fellowship Hall of the Dauphin Island United Methodist Church. President Ken Ward called the meeting to order.

President Ward invited Elizabeth Condon, coordinator of Keeping Whooping Cranes Safe, of the International Crane Foundation, to present her program. KWCS is a new project of the Foundation with a goal of reducing human-caused mortality through shooting, which appear to be acts of vandalism. She discussed the objectives of the Foundation and asked for participations from AOS. The board agreed to support the endeavors of the Foundation.

OFFICER'S REPORTS

SECRETARY—Pat Reed thanked Bianca Allen for taking the April minutes in her absence and asked for any corrections. It was noted that Bob Reed, Pat Reed, and Larry Gardella were absent at the April meeting. Noting these corrections Pat moved the April minutes be approved. Upon second the minutes were approved.

TREASURER—The treasurer's report was read by Ken Ward in the absence of the treasurer. The balance at June 30, 2015 was \$10,472.15. The total amount received \$2,576 includes a donation of \$1,000 by Birmingham Audubon Society which was sent to Charlie Muise for the 2015 Bird Banding Class held September 28-October 3, 2015, and \$150 from Charles Brooks Photography.

VICE PRESIDENT—Vice President David Pylant reported on findings regarding membership management and suggested Wild Apricot.com seems to be the best and offers a 30-day free trial. After discussion as to cost and the needs of AOS, Anne Miller moved a committee composed of Larry Gardella, Shirley Farrell, Bob Reed, Rufina Ward, and Maureen Shaffer be appointed to study the needs of AOS and report to the board by January 1, 2016. This was seconded by David Pylant and approved. David reported the winter meeting

is scheduled for Lakepoint State Park in Eufaula with guest speaker Charlie Muise.

PRESIDENT—Ken stated officers were to be elected at this meeting but no one had agreed to serve as treasurer or secretary. He then presented the following slate: for president, Anne Miller; for vice president, Harry Dean; for interim secretary, Ken Ward; and for interim treasurer, Rufina Ward. After discussion he was instructed to present this slate to the membership and ask for nominations from the floor. If none are received then that slate will be as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CONSERVATION—Greg Harber reported the Land and Water Conservation Fund is due for renewal and asked AOS members to contact their representative requesting this be fully funded noting almost every county in Alabama benefits from this fund. He also reported requests for proposals to the Holliman Research Fund will be mailed soon. Scholarship money in the amount of \$2,000 will be approved.

MEMBERSHIP—Larry Gardella discussed ways to increase AOS membership and stated Carrie Threadgill's committee might find ways to assist using Google chat. Also, the website needs to be updated and the educational aspect of AOS emphasized. It was noted ALBirds is the strong point and that it is imperative to keep information timely. Bianca Allen inquired as to the possibility of board members obtaining a membership list in order to help keep the list up-to-date, especially as it relates to member deaths. Bob Reed requested each board member furnish their correct email address on the sign-up sheet.

EDUCATION—Shirley Farrell reported AOS did not participate in the nature festival as planned, but had agreed to provide a booth at the Festival of the Cranes; however, a volunteer would be needed for Friday. Also, AOS continues to be a sponsor of Green Ribbon Schools and Don Self continues to build bird houses to give the winning school and university.

She reported Auburn was the state winner and one of nine in the nation to receive the national award.

MEETINGS—Maureen Shaffer stated the venue at DIUMC has worked well and unless a better venue becomes available, AOS will utilize this facility for the next several years. Also, this venue allows us to use Wilton Caterers, which everyone enjoys. Total occupancy is 100 but only 96 can be seated at the tables, which could present a problem with the spring meeting; therefore, we need to make this known for registration purposes. President Ward suggested it would be helpful if a screen could be found locally and thanked Bianca Allen for bringing the one used at this meeting.

CENSUSING—Greg Jackson reported no new species have been added, leaving the count at 449.

DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARY—Greg Harber reported a marker had been erected at the Goat Tree in honor of John Porter and stated all were pleased that Mr. Porter was well enough to attend the ceremony. He reported there is no property acquisition in the immediate future; however, a discussion is ongoing with a family trying to arrange for DIBS to assume ownership of Sand Island. A question was raised regarding the drip at the Shell Mound. Mr. Harber stated this would be discussed at the meeting tomorrow. It was noted that AOS would be willing to help if needed.

THE YELLOWHAMMER—Bob Reed expressed concern that some are not receiving *The Yellowhammer*, explaining that with the postage being used we do not get returns; however, we do get postal corrections after the fact, but not in time to assure another mailing. While AOS is saving approximately 40% on postage, we are not getting 100% delivery. He presented a possible solution of having print membership and email membership. Also we have reached a minimum for printing, so if we reduce this by any amount the printing cost will not decrease. It appears that we will need to look at raising dues in the near future.

OTHER BUSINESS

Greg Jackson reported on the Fort Morgan Management Plan stating everyone appears to be close to approving the initial plan that covers both the historical and natural habitat aspects and should end up working well for all concerned.

Upon move by Larry Gardella, seconded by Ken Ward, the meeting was adjourned.

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, chairman, Membership Committee

Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions

Spring 2016	February 10, 2016
Summer 2016	May 10, 2016
Fall 2016	August 10, 2016

Upcoming Meetings

FOURTH FRIDAY—January 22-24, 2016

Winter Meeting, Lakepoint State Park

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

2015 AOS Fall Meeting Compilation List Dauphin Island, Alabama, October 9-11

NOTEWORTHY BIRDS OF THE WEEKEND INCLUDED GLOSSY and White-faced Ibises, Great Black-backed Gull, and Vermilion Flycatcher. Count total was 164 species.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck
Canada Goose
Mallard
Mottled Duck
Blue-winged Teal
Green-winged Teal
Northern Bobwhite
Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Anhinga
American White Pelican
Brown Pelican
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Reddish Egret
Cattle Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
White-faced Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Swallow-tailed 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
Purple Gallinule
Common Gallinule
American Coot
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet

American Oystercatcher
Black-bellied Plover
Snowy Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover
Killdeer
Spotted Sandpiper
Greater Yellowlegs
Willet
Lesser Yellowlegs
Whimbrel
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Sanderling
Dunlin
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Wilson's Snipe
Laughing Gull
Franklin's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Royal Tern
Sandwich Tern
Black Skimmer
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Common Ground-Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Vermilion Flycatcher
Western Flycatcher
Gray Flycatcher
Loggerhead Shrike
White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Cliff 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
Wood Thrush
Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Northern Waterthrush
Black-and-white Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
American Redstart
Northern Parula

Magnolia Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Palm Warbler
Pine Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Eastern Towhee
Savannah Sparrow
Nelson's Sparrow
Seaside Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Painted Bunting
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Boat-tailed Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
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.

Shorebird Extravaganza



ANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN to the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival in Jennings, Louisiana. Donna Ditt-

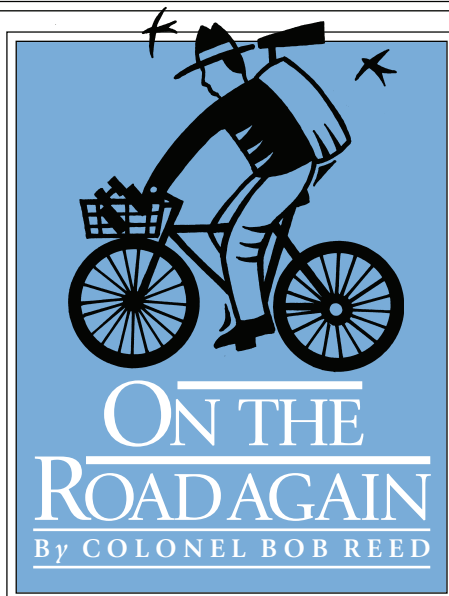
man and Steve Cardiff have decided that one festival a year wasn't enough, so they have now inaugurated the Shorebird Extravaganza in late April, this year April 27-May 1. We arrived late Wednesday, and immediately headed to the Regatta Restaurant in Lake Arthur. The Regatta advertises accommodations for automobiles, boats, and seaplanes, and offers scrumptious food.

Cameron Parish is the home to tens of thousands of wintering ducks, geese, and ibis, not to mention enough western birds such as Crested Caracara, Vermilion Flycatchers and Swainson's Hawks to keep things interesting.

But spring also is a time for an impressive flood of shorebirds on the sod farms and fallow rice fields. In a few minutes on one farm, we had enough Upland Sandpipers that I actually heard someone say, "Oh, it's just another Uppie," a phrase I never expected to hear. In addition, there was an equally impressive array of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Dowitchers, and the like to make for a terrific morning. While some were only visible through scopes, others were in rice fields where rain water was standing, and the birds were almost too close to scope. We studied the sleek White-rumped Sandpipers next to Western and Semi-palmated Sandpipers. We watched flyover flocks of (mostly) White-faced Ibises, and White Ibises, and Ring-billed Gulls, which were heading to and from Mount Trashmore, a waste disposal site.

We watched a Coyote unsuccessfully stalking a Mottled Duck while a Spotted Sandpiper noodled with the roadside mud 20 yards away.

Underneath an I-10 bridge that thundered with traffic, we watched Cave, Cliff, and Barn Swallows carrying food to dependent chicks. It was very instructive to study the different nest styles together.



At Cameron Prairie NWR, we encountered a very cooperative Yellow-billed Cuckoo right next to the boardwalk, both Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Black-necked Stilts, two White-tailed Deer, and dozens of vocal Red-winged Blackbirds.

Heading to Rutherford Beach, we stopped and had a very close Yellow-headed Blackbird flyover, a delightfully posing Least Bittern, a Common Nighthawk perched on the Rutherford Beach sign, and several Wilson's Phalaropes.

A trip down to the beach yielded a Western Kingbird, plus BlackSkimmers, Sanderlings, Dunlin, peeps galore,

many egrets and herons, terns, gulls, several Marbled Godwits, a Long-billed Curlew, American Avocets, rather scruffy looking Black Terns, as well as a few warblers lurking in the palmetto scrub. I saw something that I've never before seen, at least in this magnitude. There was a mound of shells, mostly oyster shells, that was a foot or more deep, and several hundred square feet in size. The shells were well-worn and polished by years of sand and waves, and smooth as pearls.

During lunch at a tiny alfresco diner, a squad of Boat-tailed Grackles was johnnie-on-the-spot to score anything that fell or was blown to the ground. The more aggressive they became, the more we began to feel like we were in a Hitchcock movie.

A family at Willow Island has graciously posted a sign that welcomes birders to their beautiful property, and there we saw Tennessee, Magnolia, Bay-breasted and Black-throated Green Warblers as well as a Bronzed Cowbird.

We went to Atchafalaya NWR on Saturday, where the stars were Prothonotary Warblers perching on the bridge railings as we stood ten feet away, and numerous Pileated Woodpeckers and Mississippi Kites.

The habitat around Jennings is exceptionally varied, and offers a treasure trove of birds. In three days of fairly leisurely birding we identified 139 species. I highly recommend both Jeff Davis and Cameron Parishes, in the spring, fall or winter.

AOS WINTER MEETING, JANUARY 22-24, 2015

Meet the Speaker: Charlie Muise



CHARLIE MUISE IS A FREELANCE/CONSULTANT ECOLOGIST living in the rural Piedmont of Georgia. A life-long lover of reptiles and amphibians, Charlie became addicted to birds thanks to Dr. Dan Holliman, while at Birmingham Southern College. Dr. Holliman took him on his first Christmas bird count. In the ensuing years, Charlie has participated in an average of four CBCs per year in at least 10 states. He has also conducted three to four Breeding Bird Survey routes annually for fifteen years.

Charlie began learning to band birds on a small island off the coast of Maine in 1992; in 2000 he began managing a station and obtained his federal Master Bander permit in 2007. He now bands an average of 90 days per year and has handled approximately 30,000 birds. He was the first to capture and band Northern Saw-whet Owls in Georgia. In addition to a year-round grassland banding station, he operates a breeding-season grassland station and has projects working with Loggerhead Shrikes and Barn Owls. He assists in the running of several other stations and projects.

Having taught many people about bird banding, Charlie recently started teaching formal classes. In 2015 he taught at University of Georgia, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, and Wehle Nature Center.

In addition to conservation and research, he is also a lieutenant for Lamar County Fire and Rescue and works part time for a private ambulance service. Charlie enjoys assisting with prescribed fires, watching wildlife and playing soccer. His wife Tracey and son Allan often help with his projects, sometimes willingly.

Burning and Banding: Conservation and Research in Georgia's Grasslands

Charlie has spent thousands of hours banding grasslands birds. He has caught thousands of sparrows and photographed all species regularly found in the southeastern US. Through this experience, he has noticed mistakes and shortcomings in the general field guides. Charlie believes these problems are the reason many people think that sparrows are

difficult to identify in the field. Charlie's goal is to give tips, making sparrow identification easier for birders of all levels.

Charlie has worked on bird conservation most of his career. Since moving to Georgia he has focused most of his energy on grassland species. In addition to assisting with prescribed fires, he works to control invasive plant species, and in the collection and dispersal of native seeds. Charlie operates two bird banding stations at grassland restoration sites in order to monitor the impact of this restoration on bird populations. He will share the reasoning behind the work, how it is done, and how the birds have responded. He will also share a couple of other bird projects going on in Georgia.

AOS 2016 Winter Meeting Field Trips

Saturday, January 23

7 a.m. Field Trips:

Lakepoint State Park and Eufaula NWR Wildlife Drive, Main Unit. Trip Leader: Mark Jackson, manager, Lakepoint SP

Eufaula NWR, Houston Unit (walking trip)

Trip Leaders: Charlie Muise and Andrew Haffenden

Eufaula NWR, Kennedy Unit (walking trip) Trip Leader: TBA

2 p.m. Field Trip: Eufaula NWR Wildlife Drive, Main Unit, to observe and identify sparrows with Charlie Muise.

Sunday, January 24

7 a.m. Field Trip: Eufaula NWR Bradley Unit

Trip Leaders, Charlie Muise and Andrew Haffenden

Electronic Yellowhammer?

IT COSTS WELL OVER A DOLLAR AND A HALF TO PRINT AND MAIL *The Yellowhammer*. We are delivering, on a 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 WINTER MEETING 2016

Lakepoint Resort State Park, Eufaula, Alabama, January 22–24, 2016

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22

- 4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Registration—Lodge
 5:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Social Hour and Cash Bar—Lodge
 6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. Dinner on your own
 7:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. Sparrow identification workshop
 with Charlie Muise

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23

- 7:00 a.m. Field Trips (see opposite)
 Noon Lunch on your own
 2:00 p.m. Field Trip (see opposite)
 2:30 p.m. Board Meeting—Lodge
 5:30 p.m. Social Hour and Cash Bar—Lodge
 6:30 p.m. Banquet—Lodge
 7:30 p.m. Keynote Speaker—Charlie Muise

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

- 7:00 a.m. Field trip (see opposite)
 12:00 p.m. Compilation—Lodge

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INFORMATION

Lakepoint Resort State Park Lodge
 104 Lakepoint Drive, Eufaula, AL 36027

Contact Information:

Lodge Front Desk: 800-544-5253 (toll free), 334-687-8011

Website: lakepoint.stpklodge@dcnr.alabama.gov

Cost of Rooms: \$69.95 + tax per night for 1-2 people.

Two queen beds per room.

Reservations for this discount rate must be made by
 January 5, 2016 by calling 334-687-8011.

One night's deposit required.

The group number is AOS 3253.

NOTE: Until further notice, spring and fall banquets are limited to the first 100 people.

AOS WINTER MEETING 2016 REGISTRATION FORM

Complete and return to:

Rufina Ward, 1689 Longleaf Drive NW, Huntsville, AL 35806

Telephone: (256) 837-5646 • E-mail: phinken@wowway.com

Please make checks payable to AOS. Checks must be received by January 12, 2016.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

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

Registration @ \$25 per person	\$
Banquet @ \$24 per person	\$
AOS 2016 Dues	\$
DIBS Land Purchase Fund Contribution	\$
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$

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

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Life (family): \$550



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