

THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 37, NO. 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING 2017

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

FOUNDED 1952



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KEVIN KARLSON

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MEETINGS

Rufina Ward
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NOT SO LONG AGO, OURS WAS a continent teeming with birds. Now, a 2016 report from Partners in Flight (partnersinflight.org) confirms that the population of North America’s breeding land birds has dropped by over a billion individuals just since 1970. No matter how you voted in the last election, as an AOS member I’m sure you’ll agree that bird conservation is vitally important, and that the next few years will be critical.

In the days ahead, the U.S. Congress will be voting on issues that directly or indirectly will make an enormous difference to the long-term future of North America’s birdlife.

Congress is currently working on bills to fund the government for the coming year, and spending cuts are almost certain to be adopted. If this happens, important programs protecting birds are likely to receive drastic cuts—programs like the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, the Endangered Species Recovery Program, Farm Bill Conservation Programs and the Environmental Protection Agency Pesticides Program. So much is at stake. Everyone who cares about birds needs to be speaking up now.

You can make a good beginning by signing the American Bird Conservancy’s petition on the ABC website (www.abc-birds.org). The petition provides a good general summary of some of the issues we birders need to be watching closely in the days ahead:

“TOGETHER FOR BIRDS” PETITION

Dear [Administration and Congress],
 We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, represent a broad cross-section of the bird conservation community. We aim to build a dialogue with the new Administration and Congress to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats, which are of fundamental value to the American people.

More than 60 million Americans care deeply about birds, and bird-related recreation contributes more than \$36 billion to our economy. Birds also act as the “canary in the coal



mine” for our environment and provide valuable benefits to society, from pollination to pest control. But birds are in trouble, with many declining in population or facing extinction.

We endorse the following priorities to ensure that birds and their habitats continue to be effectively conserved for the benefit of all Americans. We ask that you please support:

1. THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT: Protect the Act that has helped recover our national bird, the Bald Eagle, and other species in trouble.
2. THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT: Safeguard the only law that exists to

protect most American birds, and support the federal duck stamp, one of the nation’s most successful conservation programs.

3. FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BIRDS: Maintain and grow essential sources of federal support for migratory bird conservation.

4. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY: Ensure that the EPA can continue its vital work to protect people and birds from dangerous pesticides and other toxins.

5. LAND MANAGEMENT FOR BIRDS AND PEOPLE: Ensure that public lands remain public, are properly managed for wildlife, and that recreational access is maintained.

We also acknowledge that many other national and state initiatives are of critical importance to birds, and that citizens and private enterprise can play vital roles in these conservation efforts.

Let’s work together for birds!

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State ZIP]

Conserving the birdlife of North America should not be a partisan issue. It’s up to all of us who care deeply about birds to be strong and active advocates for their protection in the challenging years ahead.

AOS WINTER MEETING, JANUARY 27-29, 2017

Winter 2017 Trip Report

By KEN HARE AND BOB REED



THE WINTER AOS MEETING WAS HELD AT LAKE Guntersville State Park January 27-29, 2017. As expected, the focus was on the huge numbers of wintering ducks and geese to be seen at Lake Guntersville and nearby Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. But we also took time away from the birds to learn more about tracking birding results with eBird, (ebird.org). Marshall Iliff, project leader for eBird, spoke Friday night focusing on how using eBird can help birders and then Saturday on how birders who use eBird in turn help the science of ornithology.

Some participants arrived early enough Friday to bird awhile. One group went to Buck's Pocket State Park, which is currently closed because of state money woes, and which also suffered significant damage from recent flooding. But the birding was good, with many winter passerines including a very inquisitive Winter Wren and several Fox and White-crowned Sparrows.

On Saturday, AOS members could choose among three field trips. Linda Reynolds, one of the state's leading birders, led a group to explore Lake Guntersville State Park. Andrew Haffenden led a group to sites around Lake Guntersville. Meanwhile, Marshall Iliff and Dwight Cooley led a field trip to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Dwight, who recently retired as manager of the refuge, led a group on a driving tour that started at the refuge's observation building, then visited Arrowhead Landing, and then drove through the White Springs Dike area of the refuge.

At the Wheeler observation building, the AOS members saw 450 Sandhill Cranes and one rare Whooping Crane, as well as a flock of Greater White-fronted Geese. While the number of ducks was down from a few weeks ago, the group still spotted Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Green-winged Teal and Ring-necked Ducks. A Bald Eagle sat high in a tree watching for prey.

At Arrowhead Landing, the AOS group was greeted by a raft of some 750 Snow Geese, and careful inspection of the

birds with spotting scopes found several smaller Ross's Geese in the mix. In addition to the ducks seen earlier, the birders were able to add a huge flight of Gadwalls—perhaps 1,800—to their lists for the day, as well as American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers.

The White Springs Dike area provided many of the species already seen, as well as Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads and Ruddy Ducks. Birders spotted a lone American White Pelican, and the abundance of waterfowl attracted several birds of prey, including a Northern Harrier, a Red-shouldered Hawk, several Red-tailed Hawks, and a Bald Eagle.

While watching from the dike, a friendly debate started over whether the Bufflehead or Hooded Merganser was the more attractive and interesting bird. Neil Gilbert, a master's degree candidate at the University of Alabama, conducted an impromptu survey of the birders present, and the Hooded Merganser won easily, 18-10. Neil clearly has a future in research.

After lunch at the Greenbrier, a perennial favorite for birders in the area, Marshall and the group joined with another group led by Ken Ward to visit the "hawk farm." There birders added a Sharp-shinned Hawk to their species count, watching the much smaller bird harass a Bald Eagle.

Linda Reynolds led a group over to the cabin area to visit the Bald Eagle nest, with at least one chick. We stood in one of the original roadways used during the Trail of Tears forced removal of Native Americans over 180 years ago. Cedar Waxwings, woodpeckers, sapsuckers, and sparrows shared the cabin yards. A stop near the campground yielded several duck species, including Canvasbacks, Common Goldeneyes and Redheads, and Horned and Pied-billed Grebes. A stop at Town Creek offered more water birds and Song, Field, Chipping, and Savannah Sparrows.

On Sunday morning, Andrew and Marshall joined forces to lead a field trip to locations around Lake Guntersville, spotting, among many others, Canvasbacks, both Greater and Lesser Scaups, and Rusty Blackbirds.

As we gathered at the Guntersville State Park lodge for compilation, it began to snow! and continued to snow for at least 45 seconds, before the cloud moved on. The final tally of birds was 106, including the Whooping Crane, several of which have been wintering at Wheeler for several years, a wonderful addition to the Alabama birding list. This total

was also a very nice improvement from the 97 species recorded when AOS last met at Lake Guntersville State Park in 2011.

"It was a great event," Iliff said of his time with AOS. "I got to meet great birders from all over Alabama and join them on some really fun field trips. It's always great when you can both see birds and meet interesting people."

Actions of the Winter AOS Board Meeting, January 29, 2017

By KEN WARD, *Secretary*



ATTENDANCE: Bianca Allen, Harry Dean, Robert Duncan, Lucy Duncan, Larry Gardella, Andrew Haffenden, Lisa Gardner, Greg Harber, Anne Miller (presiding), Bob Reed, Elberta Reid, Don Self, Ken Ward (recording), Rufina Ward, Marshall Iliff (guest)

CALL TO ORDER, 1:00 PM

ACTIONS:

1. Fall 2016 AOS Board Meeting minutes (Ken Ward)—*Unanimously approved by the Board.*
2. Treasurer's report (Elberta Reid)—*Unanimously approved by the Board.*
3. Point of Business—Motion made and seconded to authorize \$500 to purchase benches at Fort Morgan, from the AOS general fund, honoring Bob and Martha Sargent—*Unanimously approved by Board.*
4. Point of Business—Holliman Research Fund—Motion made and seconded to fund two proposed studies, at \$1,000 each:

Gary M. Manfready, PhD, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Natural Sciences, Division of Biology, Troy University, Dothan Campus—"A Population Study of *Progne subis* (Purple Martin) in the Wiregrass Region of Alabama."

Ms. Emma Rhodes, graduate student, Department of Biological Sciences, University of South Alabama, Foley, AL—"Age Specific Patterns in Window Mortality in Avian

Populations." *Approved by the Board.* Congratulations to Dr. Manfready and Ms. Rhodes.

OTHER ITEMS:

1. Board consensus was reached to support an initiative in partnership with eBird to increase e-birding in under-reported Alabama counties, through seasonal field trips to selected areas. The collaboration with eBird will enable AOS to reach out to Alabama eBirders who are not AOS members to help with the project. Marshall Iliff (Project Leader, Avian Knowledge Network and eBird, Cornell Lab of Ornithology) was present for the discussion and supports this initiative.
2. Board consensus was reached to support Lucy Duncan's recommendation that AOS should investigate the issue of bird collisions with towers that have steady (nonblinking) lights in Alabama, to determine the scope of the problem and what might be done to address it. Collaboration with Audubon chapters to gather information might be useful.

MEETING ADJOURNED, 2:30 PM

Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions

Summer 2017	June 10, 2017
Fall 2017	August 10, 2017
Winter 2017	November 10, 2017

Meetings Committee Report

By RUFINA WARD, *Chair*



I APOLOGIZE FOR THE INADVERTENT EXCLUSION of the Meetings Committee report from the 2016 winter issue of *The Yellowhammer*; albeit late, our appreciation is as genuine.

We want to acknowledge and thank the following members who assisted in the preparation for and during the 2016 fall meeting: Priscilla Tubbs, Joan and Tom Siegwald, Joan Dixon, Gary Gunnels, Susan Barrow, Jean Folsom, Kathleen Dunlap, and Sue Moske. We also want to recognize spouses who lent their hands: Ken Ward, Allen Tubbs, John Dixon, and Lisa Gardner. Our sincere thanks also go to Andrew Haffenden who generously continues to store and haul our meeting supplies. We also gratefully acknowledge our door prize donors: Sue Moske, Harry Dean, and Anne Miller. Most important, thanks to everyone who attended and brought food for the potluck dinner and helped in the hall restoration; your attendance and participation are the hallmarks of our success.

Please note that Priscilla Tubbs replaced Mike Wilson on the committee beginning last October. Likewise, Susan Barrow replaces Charlotte Fanz who also indicated her intention of stepping down from the committee. The committee is truly grateful to Mike and Charlotte for their service in the past several years. Unlike during winter meetings usually held in state parks where AOS pays for service, membership assistance is critically needed during spring and fall meetings held in Dauphin Island for obvious reasons: we set up and restore meeting halls ourselves. Therefore, we are grateful to everyone who lends a hand.

For the 2017 Winter Meeting, we would like to thank the following: Pam Dean, Kathryn Palmore, Gary Gunnels, and Lisa Gardner for their help with the table cloths, Sue Moske, as in the last several meetings, for donating customized fabric grocery bags (reversible with colorful bird prints), and Andrew Haffenden for towing the stores. Anne Miller took the responsibility of renting audiovisual equipment (microphone, screen, speakers and stands) to reduce cost. We also

thank Annabel Markle (in charge of door prizes) and Susan Barrow for assisting during the program and Ken Ward for his support and help in all that needed attention in preparing for the meetings.

Birds and Barbecue: AOS Plans eBird Field Trips to Little-known Alabama Counties

By ANNE G. MILLER, *President*



AOS WILL LEAD BIRDING TRIPS TO SOME OF THE thirty-six Alabama counties that are currently under-reported on the eBird database. According to an AOS survey (www.aosbirds.org), seventeen counties have fewer than 150 bird species recorded in the eBird database. Counties in every part of the state are on the list, including centrally-located counties like Blount, Bibb, Etowah, Dallas, Walker and Chilton. Some counties, such as Lamar, Fayette, and Choctaw, have had no observations reported to eBird for more than half of the year.

Although Alabama ranks fifth in the nation in biodiversity according to NatureServe (www.natureserve.org), it is ranked 48th on the list of 'Greenest States' by Forbes (www.forbes.com). The eBird database is potentially a valuable tool to encourage protection for Alabama's birds, providing critical information for scientists and conservation agencies. The database is also used by birders around the nation to plan birding trips that bring significant benefits to local economies. Unless the huge gaps in Alabama's eBird database are filled, large parts of the state remain blank spaces on eBird's species occurrence maps for the U.S.

At the 2017 AOS winter meeting, eBird project leader Marshall Iloff made a persuasive case for Alabama's birders to support eBird, and the AOS board of directors initiated a partnership with eBird to fill in the gaps in under-reported counties. Beginning in spring 2017, AOS will invite eBirders throughout the state to participate in seasonal AOS field trips to under-reported counties. AOS members who are not yet active eBirders

are urged to participate. We'll sample the birdlife at Alabama Birding Trail sites and other eBird hotspots in these seldom-birded counties, and we'll also sample the best local cuisine while we're there—with a strong preference for barbecue. Our first field trips will be announced by March 1 on ALBirds, on the AOS Facebook page, and on the AOS website. Join us!

Dan C. Holliman Research Fund Committee Report

By GREG HARBER, *Chair*



HIS YEAR FOUR APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY the December 15, 2016 deadline, requesting financial support from the Dan C. Holliman Research Fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide small grants in support of scientific research projects of an ornithological nature that are clearly applicable to Alabama birds. Priority is given to projects relating to natural history or field biology involving ornithological research, or environmental issues that impact birds, and those performed in Alabama or by individuals or institutions affiliated with Alabama.

Committee members (Scot Duncan, Greg Harber, Catherine Rideout and Eric Soehren) reviewed the grant proposals and, based on the merits of the proposals, a recommendation was made to the AOS board of directors at its recent winter meeting at Lake Guntersville State Park. The committee recommended that AOS provide \$1000 each to:

Gary M. Manfready, Ph.D., College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Natural Sciences, Division of Biology, Troy University Dothan Campus to conduct the study "A Population Study of *Progne subis* (Purple Martin) in the Wiregrass Region of Alabama." and Emma Rhodes, graduate student, Department of Biological Sciences, University of South Alabama, Foley, Alabama, to conduct the study "Age Specific Patterns in Window Mortality in Avian Populations."

The AOS board approved the recommendation of the committee, and the applicants were subsequently notified of their decision.

Dr. Holliman was a long-time member and ardent supporter of AOS. If you would like to learn more about the Dan C. Holliman Research Fund or would like to make a donation to AOS to further enhance the fund's ability to support research on birds in Alabama, please contact Greg Harber, at gharber@mindspring.com.

Donations to the Holliman Scholarship Fund

In honor of Dwight Cooley's retirement
In memory of Ferrell Self
In memory of Fred Cunningham

AOS receives grant from the Edwin L. and Elizabeth L. Skelton Foundation

THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY HAS RECEIVED A generous grant in the amount of \$1,500 from the Edwin L. and Elizabeth L. Skelton Foundation, to be applied to the Dan C. Holliman Research Fund. The purpose of the Dan C. Holliman Research Fund is to provide small grants in support of scientific research projects of an ornithological nature that are clearly applicable to Alabama birds.

2017 Dues Are Due!

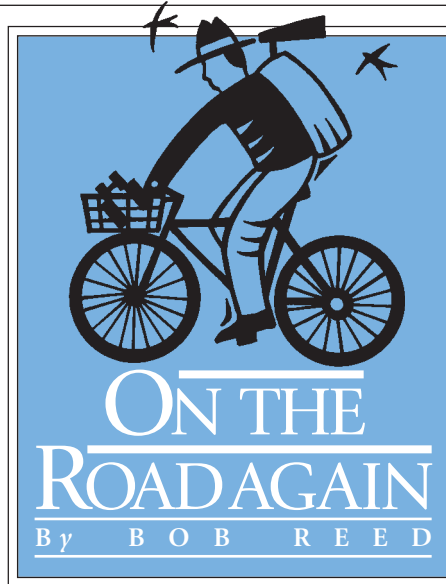
IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR 2017 DUES, PLEASE DO SO. DUES ARE for calendar years, and should be sent to the treasurer, Elberta Reid, at 2616 Mountain Brook Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35223. You can also renew your membership and register online at www.aosbirds.org.

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.

Sax-Zim Bog in the Late Spring

PAT AND I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to drive a big loop of the Midwest during the spring and summer of 2016. After a visit to Chillicothe, Ohio, to see the play *Tecumseh!*, and a visit with friends in Indianapolis, we headed north avoiding the interstates, and stopped at Grayling, Michigan, for the obligatory visit to Mr. and Mrs. Kirtland. They were very accommodating. We joined a small ranger-led group at 7:30 a.m. at Hartwick Pines State Park, and after a brief but informative discussion about the birds of



the area, we headed out to look for the Kirtland family, which was nesting in a jack pine grove as expected. After assembling on a dirt road, we walked around the corner into a power line right of way, and were immediately greeted by father Kirtland singing, not from a pine, but from a 12-foot cherry tree. Everyone got satisfactory but not great looks and pictures. However, further sallies down a couple of paths into the pines yielded several superb opportunities for study and photographic documentation. The Kirtland's Warbler patch was ablaze





OPPOSITE PAGE: A male Kirtland's Warbler sings from a tree at Michigan's Hartwick Pines State Park. ABOVE: Also at Hartwick Pines, a male Evening Grosbeak. RIGHT: Chestnut-sided Warblers were plentiful at Sax-Zims Bog. (Photos by Bob Reed)

in wildflowers such as frostweed and wild columbine, as well as birds such as Common Nighthawk and Grasshopper Sparrow. There are several well-placed bird feeders behind the HPSP Visitors Center, and we got magnificent looks at Evening and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. A nearby lake, think 10,000 lakes, had Common Loons with babies, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ovenbirds, and a nesting-material-gathering Brown Creeper.

Our next destination was the legendary Sax-Zim Bog, in northern Minnesota. The first afternoon in the bog, one out of every three birds was a singing Chestnut-sided Warbler, although there was a nice assortment of Common Ravens, a Bald Eagle that flew right in front of the car, and a Louisiana Waterthrush that taunted us from a roadside bush. White Admiral butterflies were also abundant; we easily saw 200 in the 42 hours we were there.

We had made reservations for a cabin, and were very pleasantly surprised at our accommodations. The day we arrived was very hot; the temperature was 90° or 91°, depend-

ing on which thermometer you believed. The landlady said they had installed a window air conditioner just that day for us, and we were very grateful. As we prepared for bed, the weather turned nasty, and the TV reported a tornado in St. Louis County, which is where we were staying, but not being terribly familiar with the specific geography of the area, we were uncertain as to where it was in relation to us, so we prepared to take shelter in an interior walk-in closet. Fortunately, we did not have to.

Early the next morning we were met by our guide, the young head naturalist for the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, Clinton Nienhaus, who was going to lead us to a breeding Connecticut Warbler. The rain the night before made access to the first two locations problematic, as swimming might have been required, but the third one was good, although at one point the water came in over our high-tops boots, adding about 25 pounds to each foot.

The bird was singing clearly, at what seemed like close range, but if you have ever been to the bog, you know that



close is relative, given that visibility past the road right of way is about three feet. We eased across the ditch and into the bog proper. I had never seen a bog before, although we had seen the soggy tundra several times, and I wasn't sure what to expect. It's very similar to some swamps in Alabama, but without the threat of critters that can chomp you. We stepped, or tried to step, from hummock to hummock, while holding on to whatever vegetation offered a handhold, while simultaneously, and theoretically being very quiet as we, also theoretically, got closer to the very vocal bird. At one point, after perhaps 20 or 30 minutes of slogging—it could have been longer—the Connecticut suddenly ceased all communication, and went into radio silence. I muttered, "Uh-oh," and Clinton quit breathing. But after a little while the warbler couldn't hold it in any longer, and resumed his cheerful song. And Clinton began to breathe again—more or less normally.

I had done what research I could, and Clinton confirmed that the birds prefer to remain near the tops of trees, walking, not hopping, on sturdy branches. But the bird, while obviously close, remained elusive.

Pat saw it first. Then Clinton and I, with her directions, found it, behaving as expected, walking calmly on a one-inch branch. Despite the time of silence before, I never felt like the bird was the least bit concerned about our presence. Perhaps he had just taken a few minutes to have a snack. After watching the bird for 10-15 minutes, we started out of the bog, which took almost as long as coming in.

The next target was a Mourning Warbler. After a restroom break, we headed to where Clinton knew of one that should be accessible even with the high water. This one proved to be easier, and showed himself within 15 feet, without us having to get wetter. A Common Yellowthroat showed up in response to the Mourning Warbler tape, and was quite intent on driving away both the one he could see and the one he could hear. Because of this interaction, we stopped the tape-playing immediately, and allowed everything to return to normal.

As we turned around from these remarkable birds, we spotted an adult Gray Jay, and almost immediately a juvenile bird as well, which sent Clinton into a paroxysm of ecstasy, it being the first confirmation of Gray Jay breeding in the area in recent years.

In addition to these great birds, we also had encounters with Magnolia, Nashville, Pine, Palm, Prairie, Yellow, Yellow-rumped and Black-and-white Warblers, Black-billed Cuckoo,

Sandhill Cranes, Wild Turkey, Northern Harrier, and Lincoln Sparrows, plus many other birds.

Sax-Zim Bog is bigger than I expected; it's roughly 100 square miles of habitat, of which 326 acres have been acquired by Friends of Sax-Zim Bog and protected, ala Dr. John Porter and DIBS. Much of it is farmed by conservation-minded stewards who balance economic necessity with birds and birders, and even provide feeders and other aids for the birds. Much of it is not economically arable, and thus is self-protecting, especially with current wetlands-protecting statutes on the books.

According to the web, black bear, moose, beaver, deer, pine martens, and timber wolves can occasionally be seen, but Clinton said he'd never seen any of these but deer and beaver, and that didn't change while he was with us.

I highly recommend the area for spring and summer birding, and also highly recommend Clinton Nienhaus, who provided a really good experience at a reasonable price.

After leaving Minnesota, we made our way down to Okmulgee, Oklahoma, to the Muscogee (Creek) Indian Festival. On the way, and while there, we saw Painted and Indigo Buntings, many hawks, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and a few Greater Roadrunners. We drove 4600 miles, the vast majority of it on two-lane roads, and we had a ball. As we entered Arkansas, we logged the 48th lower state that we have driven, not flown, to in the past 25 months.

New Members

Paula Andrews • Thelma Braswell • Bettye Boyd
Jane Brunson • William & Janie Campbell • Barbara Fowler
Susan D. Hass • Matt Hunter • Lynne Hurley
Dwight Lammon • Brenda Ortiz • Lyl Parker • Opal Sturgis

Upcoming Meetings

THIRD FRIDAY—April 21-23, 2017
Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island

SECOND FRIDAY—October 13-15, 2017
Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island

FOURTH FRIDAY—January 26-28, 2018
Winter Meeting, Location TBA

*2017 AOS Winter Meeting Compilation List,
Lake Guntersville State Park and Wheeler
National Wildlife Refuge, January 14–16*

NOTEWORTHY BIRDS OF THE WEEKEND INCLUDED WHOOPING Crane. Count total was 106 species.

Greater White-fronted
Goose
Snow Goose
Ross's Goose
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Gadwall
American Wigeon
American Black Duck
Mallard
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
American White Pelican
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Whooping Crane
Killdeer
Greater Yellowlegs
Dunlin
Least Sandpiper
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Forster's Tern
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Great Horned Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Eastern Phoebe
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Horned Lark
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Winter Wren
Carolina Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
American Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
Lapland Longspur
Pine Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Rusty Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird

House Finch
Purple 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 **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.

Stay Connected with AOS!

VISIT WWW.AOSBIRDS.ORG OR OUR FACEBOOK PAGE (scanable code on back cover). Are you moving? Are you changing Internet Service Providers? **Don't forget to send us your updated contact information.** E-mail treasurer@aosbirds.org with your new mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.

*Board Meeting Minutes and
Financial Statements*

DETAILED APPROVED MINUTES AND A CURRENT FINANCIAL statement will be posted on the website.

DAUPHIN ISLAND, ALABAMA, APRIL 21-23, 2017

AOS Spring Meeting Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all activities begin or occur at the Dauphin Island United Methodist Church, 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island, AL 36528

Friday, April 21, 2017

6:45 a.m. Field Trip with Kevin Karlson and Andrew Haffenden—Splinter Hill Bog and Meaher State Park, lunch at Felix's Fish Camp

5:00 p.m. Registration and Social Hour (non-alcoholic beverages only)

6:00 p.m. Potluck Supper

Please bring a dish to share! Bring your favorite appetizer for the social hour or a main-course dish for supper or a dessert or all of the above! Due to the length of the program, please have your food on the table by 6:00 pm.

7:00 p.m. Shorebirds by Impression I.D. Workshop with Kevin Karlson

This interactive indoor workshop shares a different approach to field identification that Kevin calls *Birding by Impression, A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds*, which is the title of his and Dale Rosset's new book in the Roger Tory Peterson Reference Series. Shorebirds are the focus of this workshop, and comparative digitized photos encourage the audience to spot differences between similar species in direct side-by-side comparison. This exciting ID approach concentrates initially on basic impressions of size, body shape, structural features and body motion to form a surprisingly accurate mental picture of every bird seen in the field. Kevin then shows most of the species that can be seen in our area, with comments on how to age, sex or identify them from similar species. This ID approach is similar to the one used in Kevin's bestsell-

ing book *The Shorebird Guide* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006). Test your birding and observation skills by attending this workshop and guessing the correct species using pertinent ID tips that contribute to your opinion.

8:30 p.m. Adjourn

Saturday, April 22, 2017

7:00 a.m. Field Trips

Meeting place: United Methodist Church Parking Lot

Field Trip 1: Birds of Pelican Peninsula with Kevin Karlson and Andrew Haffenden

Field Trip 2: Exploring Dauphin Island

11:30 a.m. Lunch

Join us for lunch at the home of Jennie Stowers

2:00 p.m. AOS Board Meeting

United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

5:30 p.m. Social Hour

(Please note that only non-alcoholic beverages will be available. Donations benefit the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary)

6:15 p.m. Banquet

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

7:15 p.m. Keynote Speaker Kevin Karlson

Birds on the Wind: The Miracle of Migration

This multi-media presentation presents an amazing story of the unbelievable feats that birds perform during their

migrations to and from breeding areas, and also during movements to wintering areas for altitudinal and irruptive migrants. While it contains scientific facts and stories about these superhuman efforts, the stories are told in such a way as to appeal to birders and non-birders alike, with superb photos illustrating the beauty and behavior of our migratory birds. Good news is mixed with bad news as Kevin relates how man has disturbed these movements with forest fragmentation and ill-advised urban building designs, but he also tells how some neotropical songbird migrants have adapted to changing conditions and continue to persevere. This saga contains two musical interludes that allow the audience to enjoy action photos of birds in migration and motion, and a musical ending that will touch your hearts with its positive message. All in all, this show is a celebration of birds and their fascinating lives, with hard-to-believe feats of endurance that some birds undertake every year.

8:30 p.m. Adjourn

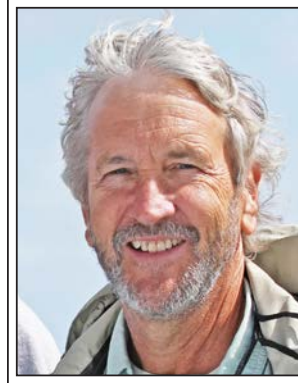
Sunday, April 23, 2017

7:00 a.m. Field Trip with Kevin Karlson and Larry Gardella
Blakeley Island Mud Lakes
Meeting place: United Methodist Church Parking Lot

12:00 p.m. Compilation
Hosted by Ann McLaurin and Lynne Fitzgerald
Across the street from the Goat Trees

Meet the Speaker: Kevin T. Karlson

KEVIN KARLSON IS AN ACCOMPLISHED BIRDER, PROFESSIONAL tour leader and wildlife photographer who has published many bird and nature-related articles for magazines, books, and journals. He is a regular presence at bird and nature festivals in North America, where he gives keynote presentations and workshops on bird identification and appreciation, as well as photo instruction. His photos can be seen in numerous locations, including his website kevinthekarlson.com. Kevin is a co-author of *The Shorebird*



Guide (Houghton Mifflin Co. 2006), and the author/photographer of two photography books titled *The Birds of Cape May* and *Visions: Earth's Elements in Bird and Nature Photography* (Schiffer Publishing, 2010, 2012). His most recent book with wife and co-author Dale Rosselet, *Birding by Impression: A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds*, was released in May 2015 in the Roger Tory Peterson Reference Series at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishers, and his new book with Pete Dunne, *Birds of Prey*, will be released by HMH in April 2017.

Kevin recently produced five photographic laminated foldout guides for Quick Reference Publishing of Florida (*Raptors of Eastern and Western North America* (2012), *Waterfowl of North America* (2013), *Warblers of North America* and *Shorebirds of North America* (2014), and is currently working on *Owls and Nightjars of North America*. A former photo editor for *North American Birds*, he also wrote the "Birder's ID" column and served as an Advisory Board member for *Wild Bird Magazine* from 1992–2012.

Field Trip Details

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL FIELD TRIPS MEET AT THE parking lot of the Dauphin Island United Methodist Church, 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island, AL 36528. **Departure times are not fuzzy; the leaders' vehicle will depart on time.** Outing logistics discussion will start 10 minutes prior to departure time. Carpooling is recommended.

Friday, April 21

Baldwin County Birds and Blooms

Trip Leaders: Keynote Speaker Kevin Karlson and Andrew Haffenden. Meet: 6:30-6:45 a.m., depart: 6:45 a.m.

Kevin and Andrew will share their birding skills as we visit Baldwin County. We'll start at Splinter Hill Bog, among acres of blooming pitcher plants and many sundews. This

bog is one of the largest White-topped Pitcher Plant bogs in America, with four other pitcher plant species also present. Our main birding goal, Bachman's Sparrow, should be singing from exposed perches. Other birds include woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatch, possibly Grasshopper Sparrow and others typical of Longleaf Pine habitat. Next we return to the coast and Meaher State Park to observe birds from the boardwalk in the shallows of Mobile Bay. The park can hold a variety of birds including shorebirds, herons and egrets, gallinules, Boat-tailed Grackle, occasionally Anhinga, Roseate Spoonbill and Groove-billed Ani. Alligators are also regular here. Continuing along the Mobile Causeway, our next stop (around 11:30-11:45) is Felix's Fish Camp Grill on the Causeway, where we can bird from the deck overlooking Mobile Bay while eating some of the best seafood in Alabama. After lunch we return to Dauphin Island, arriving by 3 p.m. in time for the incoming migrants.

NOTE: Those coming south on Friday can meet us at Splinter Hill Bog at 8:30-8:45 a.m., and those staying in Tillman's Corner can meet at us at Walmart. Please email Andrew at andrew@natsp.com if you plan to attend so any last minute changes can be sent to you.

Saturday, April 22

Field Trip 1: Pelican Island

Trip Leaders: Keynote Speaker Kevin Karlson and Andrew Haffenden. Meet: 6:30-6:45 a.m., depart: 7:00 a.m.

Pelican Peninsula, still known as Pelican Island even though this sand spit has been attached to Dauphin Island for 10 years, is a prime location for observing a rich variety of birds. We'll be taking advantage of Kevin's expertise in shorebirds. Many will be in complete or nearly complete breeding plumage, which makes for easy identification once you are shown how. In addition to his knowledge, Kevin is an excellent and engaging teacher, and everyone on this outing will come back much more confident about shorebirds. In addition to the usual plumage points, Kevin will be demonstrating his 'Birding by Impression' method, a technique that is especially useful with this group. In addition to shorebirds we'll see herons and egrets, many species of terns, pelicans and other sea birds. Usually a few ducks will still be around. Rails, sparrows and a variety of other species including Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon are

possible. We'll make a detour on the way to the beach to look for rails and sparrows at the airport. As we want to be early for the rails we will leave at 7 a.m. sharp. Car pooling is preferred so please arrive well before 7 a.m.

Field Trip 2: Birding Highlights of Dauphin Island

Trip Leader: TBA. Meet: 6:30-6:45 a.m., depart: 7:00 a.m.

This tour, led by an experienced island birder, takes us to all the best spots on Dauphin Island for bird activity. We'll start at the Airport, looking for rails and sparrows, then move around, visiting the Shell Mounds, Goat Trees and the nearby DIBS lots for warblers, tanagers, vireos, flycatchers, cuckoos and whoever else is around after arriving the day and evening before. We'll also be looking on a couple of more open areas, especially at Fort Gaines, where ground-preferring birds such as Dickcissels, Bobolinks, Indigo and Painted Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks can often be found. Time at each location will depend on what's been reported and what's around. This is an ideal trip for those new to the island, both newer and experienced birders, and anyone who wants to find out where to go for birds on Dauphin. The tour will end by 11:30 a.m.

Sunday, April 23

Blakeley Island Mud Lakes

Trip Leaders: Kevin Karlson and Larry Gardella.
Meet: 6:30-6:45 a.m., depart: 7:00 a.m.

The Blakeley Island Mud Lakes are among the best wader and shorebird sites in Alabama. We'll walk the roadway system (level, but hot and exposed, and usually buggy) looking into the various retention ponds for American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, herons, ibis—all three Alabama species have been seen here—gallinules and ducks, including Black-bellied Whistling Duck, which breeds here in good numbers. As some birds will be at a distance this will be a good chance to test out the Birding by Impression skills you acquired at the Friday night workshop. Rarities regularly pop up, including Roseate Spoonbill and Yellow-headed Blackbird. There are usually plenty of land birds to keep us interested between ponds. The distance walked is about a mile, with a short uphill-downhill at the start and finish. We'll return to the island in time for compilation at noon.

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