

# THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 39, NO. 3 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY FALL 2019

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

FOUNDED 1952



## IN THIS ISSUE

3

**HARRY'S CORNER**

*by Harry Dean*

4

IN MEMORIAM

**LELA ANN BREWER**

*by Greg Harber*

5

**A PELAGIC TRIP**

*by Bob Reed*

6

**DEEPWATER HORIZON BIRD  
RESTORATION UPDATE**

*by Dr. Amy Hunter, ADCNR*

8

AOS 2019 FALL MEETING

**FALL MEETING SCHEDULE**

9

AOS 2019 FALL MEETING

**FRIDAY NIGHT SOCIAL  
UPDATE**

9

AOS 2019 FALL MEETING

**MEET THE SPEAKER:  
MIKE WEBSTER**

*Cover: Sandhill Crane by  
John James Audubon*

## ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

### OFFICERS

PRESIDENT.....Harry Dean  
 VICE PRESIDENT.....Geoff Hill  
 TREASURER.....Joan Dixon  
 SECRETARY.....Jean Folsom  
 IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT.....Anne G. Miller

### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

TENNESSEE VALLEY.....Damien Simbeck, Ken Ward  
 MOUNTAIN REGION.....Alison Glascock, Stan Hamilton  
 COASTAL PLAIN.....Annabel Markle, Don Self  
 GULF COAST .....Mike Wilson  
 NORTHWEST FLORIDA.....Lucy Duncan

### EDITORS

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE.....Tom Haggerty  
 THE YELLOWHAMMER.....Robert Reed  
 ALABAMA BIRD RECORDS.....Greg Jackson  
 NORTHWEST FLORIDA BIRD RECORDS....Bob Duncan  
 AOS ARCHIVES CURATOR.....Scot Duncan

### COMMITTEES

#### CONSERVATION

Greg Harber  
 Scot Duncan, Damien Simbeck

#### MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Larry Gardella  
 Stan Hamilton, Floyd Sherrod,  
 Mike Wilson

#### SLIDES

Tom Haggerty

#### BIRD RECORDS

Steve McConnell, *Secretary*  
 Andrew Haffenden, Jim Holmes,  
 Howard Horne, Steve McConnell,  
 Damien Simbeck, Dr. Bill Summerour,  
 John Trent, Jake Walker

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Anne G. Miller  
 Annabel Markle, Ken Hare

#### ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Tom Haggerty

#### THE YELLOWHAMMER

Robert Reed  
 Robin McDonald

#### CENSUSING

Greg Jackson  
 Bob Duncan, Geoff Hill,  
 Steve McConnell, Eric Soehren,  
 Dr. Bill Summerour

#### EDUCATION

Dr. Shirley Farrell  
 Carol Alford,  
 Stan and Dana Hamilton,  
 Don Self

#### FIELD TRIPS

Andrew Haffenden

#### DAN C. HOLLIMAN RESEARCH COMMITTEE

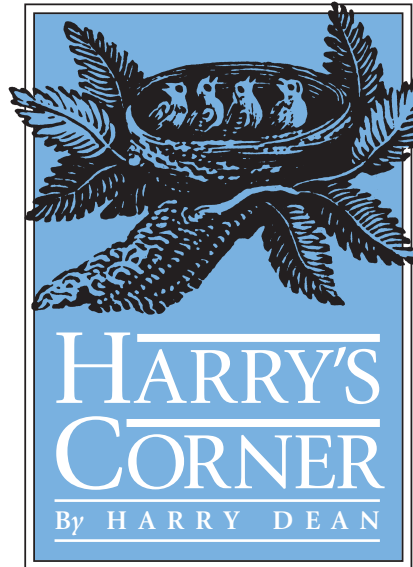
Greg Harber  
 Scot Duncan, Eric Soehren

#### MEETINGS

Kathryn Palmore  
 Dana Timmons, Sue Timmons

**I**T'S THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER. It is hot outside. However I am continuing my summer birding experience. As I have previously mentioned, one of my favorite places is the Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station or simply the "Farm." I don't want to turn this into a trip report but I have to mention a few sightings. I have had better looks at Northern Bobwhite than ever before. I have really enjoyed watching Grasshopper Sparrow, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Kingbird, and Green Heron young being fed by parents and then becoming self sufficient. I also witnessed an epic battle between Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows over ownership of a nest box. Turns out that there were two Tree Swallows in the box that had not fledged. After the swallows fledged, the bluebirds wasted no time in taking over the box. One of my most interesting finds was an Eastern Bluebird couple using a fencepost as a nest site despite having a fancy bluebird box only about 20 feet away. In keeping with the summer theme, you might recall that I discussed possible participation in a summer bird count. I had the opportunity to participate in a count in North Alabama at the end of May. Now you might be saying, wait that's not summer. I assure you it was all perfectly legal. Data collection for the summer count was more detailed than for the Christmas count where only numbers of individuals and species were recorded. There was also a four-hour time limit for completing the quad. Due to the nature of this count, being able to detect and identify birds by ear was key. Now I can recognize the songs, I just can't hear them in the field, at least not the higher frequencies. Despite my occasional frustration, it was a fun experience and we saw/heard some good birds.

It never crossed my mind that I would one day be the president of the Alabama Ornithological Society. I didn't have a platform when I came into office except to not mess things up. I used Harry's Corner to communicate some of my ideas and thoughts about the organization. Besides a constant reminder to pay your dues, there were a few things I wanted to talk about. Some were a result of a recent happen-



ing and some were more strategic. Over the last two years I have encouraged the use of ALBirds to get the word out on rare or unusual sightings. Cell phone calls and eBird, I believe, have resulted in fewer ALBirds reports. I have seen the same trend on TN-Bird. I have noticed a few more postings, and I hope that people will use ALBirds in addition to the other notification means. I brought up the idea of setting birding goals for the year. I started with some pretty easy ones, and, for the most part, I have accomplished what I set out to do. I will confess that my year list still needs some work. In a previous article, I highlighted the specific purposes

of AOS as laid out in the articles of incorporation. This was an effort to reiterate for people why the organization exists and to encourage people to take action on their own in their local area. Hopefully some did. The organization recently fulfilled a big organization level purpose by making a donation to the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries (DIBS) to aid in the purchase of land on Dauphin Island critical to migrant and resident birds. As more and more of the island is under pressure for development, it is crucial that some of this land be preserved. An excellent way to help with this effort is to make regular donations to DIBS.

As always, I am looking forward to the next meeting. I believe we have a very interesting speaker in Mike Webster. He is the director of the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. His talk will focus on studying bird song and behavior in a digital age. Please note that we will be meeting at the Church of the Island (formerly Dauphin Island United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall). As I mentioned in the summer newsletter, there will not be a potluck dinner on Friday night. Instead we will have heavy hors d'oeuvres during the social hour with a per person cost of \$15. It will be catered by the same caterer as our Saturday banquet. If you are interested in this option, please sign up when you register. Look for more information in this issue. There will also be an annual meeting on Saturday night for the purpose of conducting an election of officers.

Well, this is it, as they say, my last Harry's Corner. I will be handing over the golden binoculars and secret password to



Geoff Hill before compilation on Sunday. I can't express my appreciation for the support I have received from all of you these last two years. There is still a lot I don't know about this outfit. There is always a risk of leaving someone out when you start naming names. I do want to especially thank the executive board members: Geoff Hill, Joan Dixon, Jean Folsom, and Anne Miller for being good at what they do and taking care of things. I also want to thank all the committee members for their efforts. AOS is an organization made up of volunteers, and I know there are volunteers who do important tasks, especially leading up to the meetings, whose names are not written down anywhere. You know who you are, and I thank you. We might have set a record for moving the meeting place around these last two years. On more than

one occasion we found out just weeks before the meeting that we would have to move the location. I want to thank our meetings/events person, Kathryn Palmore, for keeping things on track and coordinating alternate locations. Of course I also need to thank the friends of AOS who live and work on Dauphin Island for helping make finding alternate locations possible. Thank you to Bob Reed for being patient (as far as I know) regarding my deliverables, including this one. Bob has served as the *Yellowhammer* editor since 2000 and this will be his 75th issue. AOS definitely has the best newsletter around, in my opinion, thanks to the hard work of Bob Reed and Robin McDonald.

I am looking forward to being your past president.

Good birding.

### *In Memoriam*

THIS PAST SPRING LONGTIME AOS MEMBER LELA ANN BREWER (1926–2019) passed away. Lee, as she was known to her many AOS and Audubon friends, was a regular attendee at AOS meetings on Dauphin Island, and she was always game for a road trip to the winter meetings held farther afield. The slow island pace and pleasant air of the spring and fall meetings suited Lee's quiet demeanor. Lee was active in her church and the Birmingham Audubon Society where she contributed her talents as newsletter editor and chairman of the annual banquet, and to various bird count endeavors—not the least of which was assisting Bob Reid with his point counts in the Bankhead National Forest! I shall cherish one particularly memorable trek in Gulf Creek Canyon atop Chandler Mountain during a Summer Bird Count—at the age of 80!—and her contributions to the AOS Bird Atlas Project were greatly appreciated. Lee's can-do attitude and willingness to help will be remembered, and I will miss a special friend.

—With fond remembrance, Greg Harber

### *Alabama to Allow Sandhill Crane Hunting*

BEGINNING THIS SEPTEMBER, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1916, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will issue permits for the hunting of Sandhill

Cranes. The three-year experimental program will issue permits to 400 hunters annually, with a limit of three birds per permit, for a maximum of 1,200 cranes. Hunters receiving permits will be chosen in a random computer drawing and will be required to pass an on-line exam on species identification and regulations. Hunting will be limited to north Alabama, and will not be permitted in state and federal wildlife refuges. In the eastern United States, only Kentucky and Tennessee also permit Sandhill Crane hunting. Thirteen western states allow Sandhill Crane hunting.

The decision by Alabama wildlife officials was spurred by a steady increase in the crane population, which has grown by an annual average of 16 percent since 2010. The five-year average Sandhill Crane population in Alabama is just over 15,000. The program is part of a Sandhill Crane management plan approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2010.

—Robin McDonald

### *Upcoming Meetings*

**FALL MEETING**—October 11-13, 2019  
Dauphin Island, Alabama

**WINTER MEETING**—January 24-26, 2020  
Auburn, Alabama

**SPRING MEETING**—April 17-19, 2020  
Dauphin Island, Alabama

# A Pelagic Trip

By BOB REED

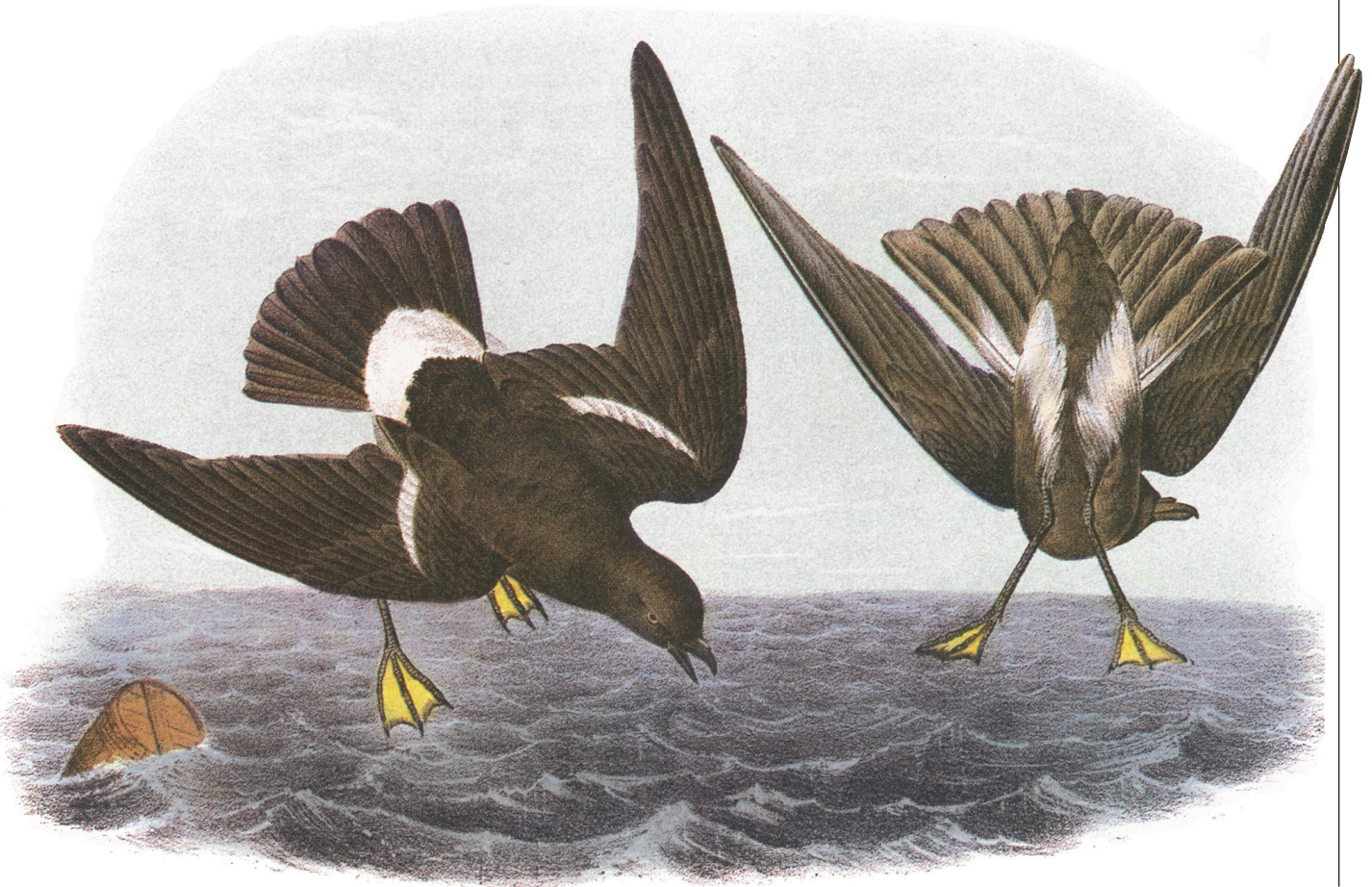
**F**IFTEEN HOPEFUL BIRDERS SHOWED UP AT ZEKE'S Landing Marina in Mobile at dawn on August 10. We loaded coolers, backpacks—and of course binoculars and cameras—into the little boat. There were two storm clouds painted pink by the rising sun, and occasionally lit from within by lightning. Not a terribly encouraging omen. As we motored out of the bay and under the bridge into open water, the first bird of the morning for many of us was a Loggerhead Shrike perched on a piling. We counted at least five Ospreys before the bridge, including one perched on the bridge railing.

The most common bird of the day was easily the Black Tern, followed by Laughing Gulls. One interesting sighting was

a Yellow Warbler flying south at eye level, not obeying the general wisdom of a twilight departure and higher flight altitude.

We headed out into the Gulf of Mexico, our destination being oil rigs about 65 miles south. Once reached, and found wanting for birds (a few gulls and terns being the only avian residents), we continued south, pouring a slick of oil. We then doubled back on the slick and again became hopeful. Our hope was rather short-lived as two Wilson's and one Band-rumped Storm Petrel were our only reward. Two Magnificent Frigatebirds were—magnificent! Not a complete bust, but the trip did not live up to our expectations. However, the best experiences of the day may have been the conversation and camaraderie of the day. As Harriet Wright used to say about the occasional lack of birds, "They have wings, you know."

We all very much appreciated the work that Geoff Hill put into organizing and setting up the trip. There's always next time.



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES

# Deepwater Horizon Bird Restoration Update

By DR. AMY HUNTER, ADCNR Deepwater Horizon Restoration Coordinator



ALABAMA IS AMONG THE RICHEST STATES IN NATURAL resources. With over 4,500 species of plants and animals, a day spent birding in coastal Alabama is one of the most enjoyable ways to enjoy the myriad natural resources our state has to offer. The 2010 explosion and subsequent collapse of the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) mobile drilling unit damaged our natural resources and our way of life. Through the settlement reached with British Petroleum in 2016, Alabama has the opportunity to restore and protect those natural resources.

Through the planning processes associated with the settlement funds, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) is leading the way for restoration in coastal Alabama. Within that restoration process, the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council and the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) provide opportunities for ADCNR to fund and guide projects to replenish and protect Alabama's natural resources. Gulf wide, there is over \$500 million allocated for bird restoration activities!

## THE EFFECTS ON BIRDS

As part of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment, the Deepwater Horizon Trustees evaluated impacts on birds. At least 93 species of birds, including both resident and migratory species and across all five Gulf Coast states, were exposed to DWH oil in multiple northern Gulf of Mexico habitats, including open water, islands, beaches, bays, and marshes.

Laboratory studies showed that exposure to oil led to injuries, including feather damage, abnormal blood attributes, organ damage, and death. Trustee scientists estimate

that between 51,600 and 84,500 birds died because of the DWH oil spill. Although the precise number of birds injured and killed in Alabama is not quantified in the assessment, impacts occurred both as a result of exposure to oil and from the effects of response activities.

It is the responsibility of ADCNR to make use of the DWH funds to restore birds in Alabama. The projects that we have implemented or have committed funding to are listed below.

## ADCNR BIRD RESTORATION EFFORTS

The Alabama Coastal Bird Stewardship Program conserves priority shorebird and coastal water bird populations by establishing a bird stewardship, monitoring, and outreach program in coastal Alabama, where beaches, marshes and islands provide critical nesting, wintering, and migratory stopover habitat for many species of shorebirds and coastal water birds. This project will work to improve the status of bird species of conservation concern through training of volunteers to steward and monitor targeted and other species and their habitat at key nesting sites in the state. Birmingham Audubon Society has carried out this project.

Osprey Restoration in Coastal Alabama funded the installation of five osprey nesting platforms along the coast in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, Alabama, in order to provide enhanced nesting opportunities for piscivorous (fish eating) raptors. The new platforms are located on Dauphin Island, at Delta Port (Codon), at Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, and at Gulf State Park. The Alabama Coastal Foundation implemented this project.

### *Southwestern Coffee Island Habitat Restoration Project—Phase I*

This project will fund planning activities related to the restoration and creation of colonial nesting bird breeding habi-



tat and tidal wetlands along the southwestern shoreline of Coffee Island, located in Mississippi Sound in south Mobile County. Phase 1 proposes funding for two tasks—(1) a synthesis of colonial wading bird and shorebird nesting data in coastal Alabama, and (2) engineering and design and permitting for the restoration of habitat on Coffee Island to evaluate whether the project should be considered for further development in a later plan.

#### ***Colonial Nesting Wading Bird Tracking and Habitat Use Assessment***

This project will initiate monitoring studies expected to inform and enhance future restoration planning for key colonial nesting wading bird species along the Alabama coast that were injured by the DWH oil spill. This project will conduct a telemetry tracking study of the movements of two bird species breeding along the Alabama coast—Tricolored Heron and either Little Blue Heron or White Ibis.

#### ***Comprehensive Program for Enhanced Management of Avian Breeding Habitat Injured by Response in the Florida Panhandle, Alabama, and Mississippi***

This project benefits nesting habitat for beach nesting birds in Florida, and on Department of Interior lands in Alabama and Mississippi. Restoration activities include fencing, predator control, and stewardship around important nesting areas to prevent disturbance.

The Marsh Island (Portersville Bay) Restoration Project involves the creation of salt marsh along Marsh Island, a state-owned island in the Portersville Bay portion of Mississippi



*A juvenile Northern Gannet undergoes washing to remove oil from its plumage following the Deepwater Horizon spill. (Les Stone, International Bird Rescue Research Center/Wikimedia Commons)*

Sound, Alabama. This project restored approximately 50 acres of salt marsh through the placement of a permeable segmented breakwater, the placement of sediments and the planting of native marsh vegetation. Additionally, the breakwater provides protection for the existing 24 acres of Marsh Island, which has been experiencing shoreline loss at the rate of 5 feet to 10 feet per year. Though not specifically considered a bird project, the restored island is utilized extensively by shore birds and colonial nesting waders.

#### ***FUTURE DIRECTION***

Just as we are proud to do our part in responsibly managing all of Alabama's natural resources, ADCNR is extremely pleased with the bird restoration projects planned and implemented in coastal Alabama to date. As planning and project selection continue for upcoming rounds of funding, we feel that our state

is well-positioned to obtain and implement projects funded not just from Alabama's designated restoration funds, but also from regionwide funds that are available to all states.

In order to assist ADCNR in our non-game wildlife work, please consider purchasing a Wildlife Heritage License. The license costs \$11.20 and can be matched 3:1 with federal funds, providing \$44.80 to ADCNR for non-game work. The Wildlife Heritage License can be purchased online at [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com).

For more information on restoration in coastal Alabama please visit [www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/](http://www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/)

Questions about restoration in Alabama may be directed to ADCNR's Deepwater Horizon Restoration Coordinator Dr. Amy Hunter ([amy.hunter@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:amy.hunter@dcnr.alabama.gov)).

AOS FALL MEETING, DAUPHIN ISLAND, OCTOBER 11-13, 2019

# AOS Fall Meeting Schedule



UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL ACTIVITIES BEGIN OR occur at the Church of the Island, 302 Key Street, Dauphin Island, AL 36528. Registration is limited to 90.

To register online for the Fall Meeting, go to:  
[www.aosbirds.org](http://www.aosbirds.org)

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019

- TBD** **Field Trip**—see [www.aosbirds.org](http://www.aosbirds.org) for additional information or email Andrew Haffenden at [andrew@natsp.com](mailto:andrew@natsp.com)
- 5:00 p.m. REGISTRATION**  
 Where: Church of the Island (formerly Dauphin Island United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall)
- 5:45 p.m. Social Hour**  
 Hors d'oeuvres will be available. You must sign up when you register. *See page 10.*
- 6:45 p.m. Announcements**
- 7:00 p.m. Members Photography Slide Show**
- 8:00 p.m. Discussion of Weekend Field Trips**
- 8:30 p.m. Adjourn**

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019

- 7:00 a.m. Field Trip 1:** Exploring Dauphin Island  
**Field Trip 2:** Birds of Pelican Bay Peninsula with Andrew Haffenden
- 11:30 a.m. Potluck Lunch** at the home of Jennie Stowers
- 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting**, Church of the Island
- 5:00 p.m. REGISTRATION, BANQUET, ANNUAL MEETING, AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
 Where: Church of the Island
- 5:30 p.m. Social Hour**
- 6:30 p.m. BANQUET**

**7:15 p.m. Annual Meeting/Announcements**

### 7:30 p.m. KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mike Webster—"Studying Bird Song and Behavior in the Digital Age"

**9:00 p.m. Adjourn**

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019

**7:00 a.m. Field Trip**

### 12:00 p.m. COMPILATION

(Includes all bird sightings in Mobile and Baldwin Counties from noon, Friday, October 11, to noon, Sunday, October 13)  
 Where: At the Goat Trees.

**1:00 p.m. Adjourn**

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations on Dauphin Island are limited, so be sure to make reservations early for AOS meetings.

### Websites:

[www.gulfinfo.com](http://www.gulfinfo.com)  
[www.dauphinisland.chamber.com](http://www.dauphinisland.chamber.com)

### Motels:

Gulf Breeze Motel: 251-861-7344 or 1-800-286-0296

### Rentals:

Boardwalk Realty, Inc.: 877-861-3992  
 Dauphin Island Real Estate: 888-707-6444  
 Tyson Real Estate: 800-865-8312  
 ACP Real Estate, Inc.: 866-861-3311

### Camping:

Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board: 251-861-2742  
 (fully equipped for both camper and tent camping)

Air BnB has lots of rentals! [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)



### *Friday Night Social Update: The Food Without the Potluck*

AS YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW WE WILL BE MEETING AT THE Church of the Island (formerly Dauphin Island United Methodist Church fellowship hall) for our fall AOS meeting. I would also like to tell you about something new we will be doing on Friday evening. Instead of having the traditional potluck, we are having our very own caterer, Charles Wilton, provide hors d'oeuvres for the social.

This decision was made for several reasons. Those of you who have served as the meeting chairman in the past know the tremendous amount of work that is involved and the difficulty finding volunteers to help. Many of our members must travel a considerable distance to attend AOS and bringing a dish is not convenient. And for others who live closer it will eliminate the time and expense involved preparing and transporting a covered dish. We wish to also reduce the amount of garbage we bring onto the island—namely plastic.

As a conservation organization we should make an effort to minimize the use of plastics at our events. The cost to attend the social with hors d'oeuvres is \$15. Many of our members who have faithfully brought covered dishes for the potluck spend at least that amount, plus the time and effort, and \$15 is a fair price for all you can eat and a beverage. Please come enjoy and relax!

Here is the menu:

Boiled shrimp with sauces  
Finger sandwiches—ham and roast beef  
Raw and roasted vegetables with  
hummus and ranch dressing  
Corn and black bean salsa with chips  
Fruit and cheese display  
Dessert squares  
Iced Tea

A cash donation bar will be serving soft drinks. Donations benefit AOS and the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary.

AOS FALL MEETING, DAUPHIN ISLAND, OCTOBER 11-13, 2019

## *Meet the Speaker: Mike Webster*

MIKE WEBSTER is the Robert G. Engel Professor of Ornithology at Cornell University. He is director of the Macaulay Library, the world's largest collection of animal recordings, and is also a faculty member in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior. He does research on the evolution of courtship signals and other behaviors in birds, focusing primarily on fairywrens in Australia and wood warblers in North America.

### *Studying Bird Song and Behavior in the Digital Age*

By MIKE WEBSTER, Cornell University

THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT WE CAN AGREE ON ABOUT BIRDS: they all have feathers, they lay eggs, most of them fly, and the vast majority of them make a fair bit of noise! Birds

are, in fact, much more vocal than are other groups of animals, most of which tend to rely on scents or visual signals (think of mammals and reptiles) rather than sound for communication. In contrast, virtually all birds give calls, which are central to the ways that they interact with each other, and many birds sing beautiful (and sometimes not-so-beautiful) songs. Birds use these songs to attract mates, to defend territories, and to warn off rivals. Because they are such vocal animals—and in fact much more vocal than are most other animals—scientists like me have become interested in the details of why they sing and how they sing, as well as the factors that shape those songs. Moreover, we can use bird songs to monitor their populations without actually “seeing” them.

But how to do that? How can we study bird song? Measuring songs isn't something that can be easily done, like measuring bill or wing length, with a ruler or similar tool. Songs

are waves of energy that happen and then are gone. How can we capture and measure something like that? The answer may seem obvious now: we can record those songs and then take measurements from the recordings. But that “obvious” answer wasn’t always so obvious. In fact, it wasn’t until 1929 that the very first recordings of birds in North America were made. It was in that year that Arthur Allen, founder of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, recorded three birds singing in a city park in Ithaca, New York. Allen was working with some pioneers in the film-making industry who were experimenting with a new, cutting-edge technology: sound-synched film (or “talkies”—remember that films in the early part of the 20th century were silent!). These filmmakers approached Allen to see if he would help them film birds singing. The experiment was a great success, and Allen immediately realized that this approach could be used to capture and document the diversity of animal sounds, particularly birds.

Since that day 90 years ago, the science of recording and studying bird song has come a long way, and we have learned a lot. We now know, for example, how the avian “voice box” (the syrinx) can make the complex sounds that it makes—sounds far more complicated than the sounds that a mammal like you or me can make. We also know that some birds make sound signals not just with their voices, but also with specialized feathers and other structures that are modified to produce sound. We also know how bird song has evolved—that the song of “songbirds” originated in Australia long ago, in an ancestral species in which both males and females sang, and that the descendants of this ancestral species then spread outward across the globe. And we have learned to use the night time calls that migrating birds make to track their movements and protect migratory birds. All of this has been made possible by advances in our ability to record and analyze bird sounds. Similarly, advanced video filming techniques, like high-speed videography, are revealing the subtle details of animal courtship displays, including fast but important movements too rapid to be detected by the human eye.

More than anything else, though, advances in recording technology have opened the world of bird recording to “citizen scientists,” allowing birders to participate in the process. Today, powerful recording devices are small and relatively inexpensive, and even your smart phone can make good bird recordings. Thanks to this, thousands of people across

the globe are now recording birds, and contributing their recordings to places like the Macaulay Library (<https://www.macaulaylibrary.org>) at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. These recordings are used for scientific research, and also for educational tools like Merlin, a phone app that helps people learn to identify birds. Now, less than a century after Arthur Allen made the very first recordings of singing birds, it is easy for any of us to record birds, to learn the subtleties of their communication signals, and to appreciate the beauty of their voices all the more. Who knows what will be possible in another 90 years!

---

### *Emma Mires Wins Membership Contest*

---

AS OF THE END OF THE SPRING CONTEST, ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY had added 29 new members. Some are birders active on eBird and Birding Alabama, some have birded with AOS members (including me), some are students at Auburn, some have joined because of our activity on social media, and others have joined after being urged to do so by their friends. Welcome to all the new members (again, I have tried to send them all a welcoming email) and thank all of you who by their words or actions have helped encourage people to join us.

The contest also was a factor, at least in terms of getting some people who had been thinking about membership to join. Emma Mires, an Auburn student, was the contest winner. She became an AOS member and then got a bunch of her friends to join as well. Emma has decided that she and her friends will have their private guided birding tour at Ruffner Mountain in Birmingham. She is going to do it in September, hoping for a good mix of migrants.

Please keep talking to your friends and colleagues about what you love about AOS and help us continue to grow with new members who share our love of birds.

—Larry Gardella, Membership Chair

### *Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions*

Winter 2019

November 10, 2019

Spring 2020

February 10, 2020

## AOS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

*Your Membership Dues Support the Work of the Alabama Ornithological Society*

Please check membership category: \_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_ Renewing Member

Please check membership category: \_\_\_\_ Student \$10 \_\_\_\_ Individual \$25 \_\_\_\_ Family \$40\* \_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$50  
\_\_\_\_ Life (individual) \$350 \_\_\_\_ Life (family\*) \$550 \*Number of family members \_\_\_\_\_

### **VOLUNTEERS** (check below if interested)

Meeting Setup/Cleanup \_\_\_\_\_ Bookkeeping \_\_\_\_\_ Name Tags \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Communicating with our members online saves the earth's resources, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and also saves much-needed funds for AOS. Your digital subscription to *The Yellowhammer* and *Alabama Birdlife* will automatically be sent to the email address listed below. To receive print copies of AOS publications instead, please \_\_\_\_\_ check here. Mail your completed form and check to:

**Joan Dixon, 1059 Palmetto Street, Mobile, AL 36604**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**YOU CAN ALSO JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE AT [WWW.AOSBIRDS.ORG](http://WWW.AOSBIRDS.ORG)**

## AOS FALL MEETING 2019 REGISTRATION FORM

*Complete and return to:*

**Joan Dixon, 1059 Palmetto Street, Mobile, AL 36604**

Telephone: (251) 605-4276 • Email: [joanwsdixon@gmail.com](mailto:joanwsdixon@gmail.com)

*Please make checks payable to AOS. Checks must be received by October 1, 2019*

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **YOU CAN ALSO REGISTER ONLINE AT [WWW.AOSBIRDS.ORG](http://WWW.AOSBIRDS.ORG)**

Registration @ \$25 per person	\$
Friday Night Hors d'oeuvre Buffet @ \$15 per person	\$
Banquet Buffet @ \$25 per person	\$
<b>2020 DUES</b>	\$
DIBS Land Purchase Fund Contribution	\$
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>	\$



ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
88838 TALLASSEE HIGHWAY  
TALLASSEE, ALABAMA 36078

PRST STD  
U.S.POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 361  
BIRMINGHAM, AL

AOS is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Federal EIN: 63-1229959

## THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 39, NO. 3 • FALL 2019

EDITOR.....Bob Reed  
DESIGN.....Robin McDonald  
ILLUSTRATIONS.....Annabel Markle

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Greg Harber  
Ken Hare  
Greg Jackson  
Ken Ward

*The Yellowhammer*, the newsletter of the Alabama Ornithological Society, is published four times a year. Editorial Office: 88838 Tallassee Highway, Tallassee, AL 36078. Send articles to be considered for publication to: BobReed1987@gmail.com. Subscriptions to *The Yellowhammer* and *Alabama Birdlife* are included in the AOS annual membership dues. Single copies \$2.00. Complimentary copies available for review and promotional purposes.

Address correspondence concerning membership to:  
Joan Dixon, Treasurer  
1059 Palmetto Street,  
Mobile, AL 36604  
e-mail: joanwsdixon@gmail.com

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



### AOS ONLINE

<http://www.aosbirds.org>



Join AOS on  
Facebook

### ALABAMA WILDLIFE CENTER

<http://www.awrc.org>

### BIRMINGHAM AUDUBON SOCIETY

<http://www.birminghamaudubon.org>

### DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES

<http://www.coastalbirding.org>

### FRANCIS M. WESTON AUDUBON SOCIETY (PENSACOLA)

<http://www.fmwaudubon.org>

### MOBILE BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY

<http://www.mobilebayaudubon.org>

### ALABAMA WILDBIRD CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

<http://www.bamabirds.com>

### SOUTHEASTERN RAPTOR REHAB CENTER

<http://www.vetmed.auburn.edu/raptor>

### TENNESSEE VALLEY AUDUBON

<http://www.tvas.org>