

THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 45, NO. 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SUMMER 2025

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

FOUNDED 1952



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THE YELLOWHAMMER

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 Steve McConnell, Eric Soehren,
 Bill Summerour

EDUCATION

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 Stan and Dana Hamilton,
 Don Self

FIELD TRIPS

VACANT

DAN C. HOLLIMAN RESEARCH FUND

Greg Harber
 Scot Duncan, Eric Soehren

MEETINGS

Patsy Russo

THE AOS BOARD HAS FOR a number of years discussed and tried to address the issue of a falling membership and attendance at meetings. While our meeting attendances remain in the upper ranks of state bird organizations US wide, and we are one of the few to operate three meetings per year, they have decreased over the years. The Board has in some ways associated our membership and attendance with birding in the state overall. But is this really the case? Our Articles of Incorporation have as the Society's first purpose promotion of the study and appreciation of birds found in Alabama and Northwest

Florida. Numerous ideas and efforts have been made to increase both membership and attendance, concentrating primarily on younger birders. Our Articles also delineate many other purposes for our Society. I have selected and edited just some here:

(b) To encourage the protection and conservation of birds and the natural areas where they are found;

(c) To engage in educational activities to advance knowledge of birds and their habitats;

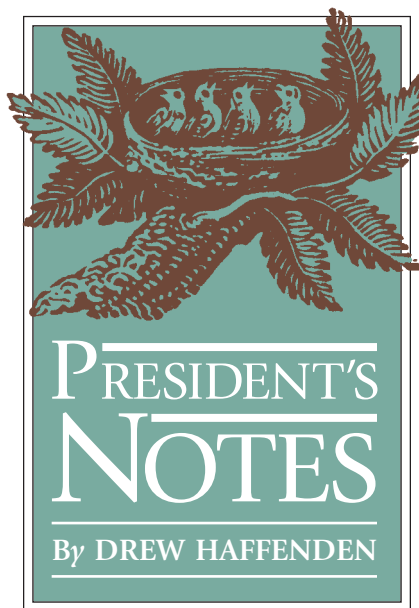
(d) To educate persons in schools and other organizations and groups about birds, natural resources, and conservation;

(e) To encourage, and to engage in, activities directed toward the conservation of birds and protection of their habitats and to advance education about the need for, and means of, conservation of the same;

(g) To acquire nature centers, natural areas, or other real property with habitat critical to migrant or resident birds;

(i) To conduct, or to collaborate in conducting, counts, censuses, and surveys of birds;

(j) To conduct, encourage and support research, studies, and other activities pertaining to all species of birds found in Alabama and northwest Florida and to disseminate information about such research, studies, and other activities; and



(k) To make gifts and other donations of services, personal property, or real property to other organizations and institutions.

The small size and limited funds of AOS cannot cover all these (and other purposes in the Articles) extensively. However, by combining our resources, efforts, funds and the expertise and knowledge of our members, we can leverage our ability to protect and conserve our region's birds. Our Education Committee, headed by VP Shirley Farrell has for a number of years been increasing our reach into Alabama schools via both students and teachers.

Greg Jackson's several censusing programs

and cooperation with eBird addresses (i) above. Our donations to Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. over the years allow us to leverage relatively small but substantial funds to acquire land that we cannot fully fund (e), (g) and (k). New, increasing cooperation with Alabama Audubon, supports article (j). To this end Alabama Audubon staff have led some of our meeting outings and twice provided speakers for meetings; their own outings during the Fort Morgan banding have provided data for our meeting tally and records. This cooperation has introduced a new dynamic to meetings and increased our message to those interested in birds and birding that we have not reached before.

All this speaks to using cooperation to serve the purposes of our Society, even while our membership and meeting attendance remain flat. Given modern social communications and access to information, it is unlikely societies such as ours will return to the previous relevance of being the main source of information available for newer birders and thus having larger membership and meeting attendance. However, as has been seen by us and others, the number of people birding, including younger birders, has increased. At our meetings we have seen new birders maintaining our numbers as we lose older members. So, while we may not be able to grow our membership, with robust cooperation, a small organization such as ours can have an outsized ability to both bring its message to the public and remain a central part of bird conservation in Alabama.

AOS SPRING MEETING, DAUPHIN ISLAND, ALABAMA, APRIL 18-20, 2025

AOS Spring Meeting Report

BY DREW HAFFENDEN & LARRY GARDELLA

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN QUITE A FEW YEARS we had five outings for our Spring meeting, including a new one officially operated as part of the meeting for the first time, a boat trip to the Mobile-Tensaw Delta on Thursday. Others were to Splinter Hill Bog, Around the Island, DI Middle Beach and the Blakely Mud Lakes. I (Drew) thank Scot Duncan, Andrew Lydeard, and Larry Gardella for leading their respective outings. Due to the low number of birds overall, outings were slower than usual, and numbers attending lower. As mentioned in my President's Message regarding meetings, I believe lower outing attendance is also attributable to the ability of newer birders to gain ID and other information from their devices so lessening the need to be in a group led by an expert.

Drew led two outings, the Mobile-Tensaw boat trip and Around the Island. The boat tour helmed by Ben Raines is a combination of birds and natural history, with lots of field knowledge gained by Ben over more than 20 years exploring the delta. Close-up views of Purple and Common Gallinules going about their natural business are always a highlight, as is seeing four or five Least Bitterns in a couple of hours, rather than maybe a glimpse once a year. Prothonotary Warblers singing above your head just feet away while we eat lunch is another highlight. This is one of the differences compared to DI, seeing and hearing these birds in their breeding habitat, rather than just seeing them rapidly flitting around in the Shell Mounds. The morning in the Delta can be a cacophony of birdsong from warblers, vireos and others. Due to the lack of birds the Around the Island outing was slow, though excellent long looks at multiple Clapper Rails from just feet away is always fun. In the Shell Mounds warblers and vireos were pretty much nonexistent with just Prothonotary and a Louisiana Waterthrush; the expected continuous calling of Red-eyed Vireos was absent, though at least one each of that species and White-eyed tried their best. A couple of Great Crested Flycatchers substituted for the background



soundscape, aided by a couple of pairs of Brown Thrashers, one pair feeding chicks. Tanagers were the most common species of migrants, both Summer and Scarlet. Barn Swallows flew overhead. Grant Street provided more of the same, but Jennie's place, where she had birdseed out, provided more expected birding, including more color with Cape May Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. A variety of black-colored birds, including a Shiny Cowbird, added to the list. But though bad news for birders, the strong southerly winds that prevailed for the meeting were good news for the birds, sending them on their way further inland after a safe and speedy crossing of the Gulf.

On the beach Scot ran into some luck, with a number of shorebirds appearing that had been conspicuously absent prior to the meeting, with nine species seen. The group saw Audubon's work protecting beach nesting birds with signs and roping around two Snowy Plover nests, with one female on the nest, and the male banded by Audubon at the other nest, showing why banding allows individual birds to be recognized and populations to be counted more accurately as well as establishing breeding success rate. Four Whimbrels were a surprise and a Least Sandpiper along with four Semipalmated Sandpipers allowed comparison between these peeps. Terns were well represented with six of the eight spe-



OPPOSITE PAGE: Birdseed put out at Jennie Stower's house attracted a number of birds including this Shiny Cowbird.

ABOVE: A Blackpoll Warbler was spotted in the woods across the street from the Goat Tree Park. (Both Bob Reed)

cies regularly seen in Alabama, plus 60 Black Skimmers loafing with other Larid family members at the end of Pelican. A total of 37 species was seen or heard in a couple of hours.

At Splinter Hill, Andrew and his group had a good morning with 41 species found including four seen or heard Bachman's Sparrows. Sometimes finding and seeing birds at the Bog can be difficult, and Andrew's ear for songs and calls came in very handy. Eight species of warblers were high for the area, and most of the birds of these wet pine forests were found during the outing. Of course, the glorious display of a number of species of pitcher plants, with white-topped being the main contributor, over such a large area, was a highlight of the outing.

Seven birders met up at Gate 4 for the AOS Mud Lakes walk Sunday, April 20. It was cool and calm when we began, but after an hour the winds whipped up to 25 mph. There weren't many biting insects at the start, but the wind drove the number down even lower. Fortunately, the winds did not get in the way of seeing birds, most of which were on the ground.

Right at the start of the walk we ran into shorebirds in the pond across the levee from the red clay pond. One was a nearby Stilt Sandpiper, giving some participants their first look or best look ever at this species. Many shorebirds, including some close-up Dunlins, were molting into alternate (breeding) plumage, the Dunlins showing red on their backs and black on their bellies. We all enjoyed great views of American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts, three peeps (Least, Semipalmated, and Western) and studied several Long-billed Dowitchers.

Just as we approached the half-way point of the two-mile main loop, we got word that Scot Duncan and two birders from Wisconsin had spotted three Roseate Spoonbills in a tree, apparently just where Geoff Hill had seen two shortly before joining us. We made the turn to the east. Although the tree was partly obscured by other vegetation, everyone got to enjoy these strikingly pink birds.

We ended a happy walk with 54 species (see <https://ebird.org/checklist/S227458962>).

At the end of the meeting, species seen tallied 187, a bit of a surprise given what seemed to be very quiet birding, but well shy of last year's total of 204. Thanks to all who contributed to the compilation; the long-term collection of this data helps establish the direction our birds are headed as far as population size, important for setting conservation needs.

AOS SPRING BOARD MEETING, APRIL 11, 2025

AOS Spring Board Meeting Minutes

By DORIS GERTLER, *Secretary*

RESIDENT DREW HAFFENDEN CALLED THE meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. April 11, 2025 via TEAMS. The minutes of the January AOS board meeting were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Hal Smith stated that the checking account balance is \$36,883 and CD balance is \$30,353. A discussion concerning best management of funds—CD vs money market—ensued but no action was taken.

VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

VP Shirley Farrell requests that the survey she emailed be completed to help with planning for next year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EDUCATION—VP Farrell stated the curriculum rewrite is on hold for the moment. Greg Jackson asked if we could add a younger contingent to the board. Larry Gardella asked if we need to develop a junior board.

BIRD RECORDS—Greg Jackson stated the website has the current accurate taxonomy.

THE YELLOWHAMMER—Bob Reed asked for articles from board members about recent birding adventures.

CENSUSING—Greg Jackson stated there were two Summer Bird Counts last year and more are planned this year. Bob Reed requested the reports be forwarded to him.

OLD BUSINESS

The Dan C. Holliman grant language was changed to state that two grants may be awarded with the total amount granted up to \$2000, but each grant can vary from \$1000.

NEW BUSINESS

VP Farrell proposed an expenditure of \$750 for Alabama Bird Search. A total of \$500 would be used to purchase prizes and \$250 would be used for the Raptor Ridge show.

The AOS logo would be on T-shirts and materials. The \$750 expenditure was approved.

President Haffenden stated that DIBS is interested in a lot on the east side of DI near the eagle's nest. After much discussion it was determined that AOS will give \$7,500 from checking and an additional \$7,500 from the CD to DIBS on the condition that the money be used for purchase of a lot next to the eagle lot, but if DIBS is unable to purchase that lot, DIBS can use the money for another property but only after getting approval from the AOS Board, which will vote on the use by email.

Discussion of the bylaws was tabled. An email discussion of any changes will be followed by a special meeting.

The next scheduled board meeting is October 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING—Friday,
Saturday, October 4, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

FALL MEETING—October 10–12, 2025
Dauphin Island, Alabama

WINTER MEETING—January 23–25, 2026
Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge

SPRING MEETING—April 17–19, 2026
Dauphin Island, Alabama

Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions

Fall 2025	August 10, 2025
Winter 2025	November 10, 2025
Spring 2026	February 10, 2025

AOS Spring Meeting Compilation List Dauphin Island, April 18-20, 2025

NOTEWORTHY BIRDS WERE INCA DOVE, GLOSSY IBIS, AND Cave Swallow. Count total was 187 species.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck
Canada Goose
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Mallard
Mottled Duck
Redhead
Lesser Scaup
Ruddy Duck
Fulvous Whistling Duck
Northern Bobwhite
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Common Ground Dove
Inca Dove
White-winged Dove
Mourning Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Common Nighthawk
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
King Rail
Clapper Rail
Sora
Common Gallinule
Purple Gallinule
American Avocet
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
American Oystercatcher
Black-bellied Plover
Snowy Plover
Killdeer
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover
Whimbrel
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Knot
Stilt Sandpiper
Sanderling
Dunlin
Least Sandpiper
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Spotted Sandpiper
Lesser Yellowlegs

Willet
Greater Yellowlegs
Bonaparte's Gull
Laughing Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Least Tern
Gull-billed Tern
Caspian Tern
Forster's Tern
Royal Tern
Sandwich Tern
Black Skimmer
Common Loon
Northern Gannet
Double-crested
Cormorant
Anhinga
Brown Pelican
Great Blue Heron
Least Bittern
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Egret
Reddish Egret
Cattle Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Swallow-tailed Kite
Mississippi Kite
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Bald Eagle
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Great-horned Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Downy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Loggerhead Shrike
White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Tree Swallow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Bank Swallow
N. Rough-winged Swallow
Purple Martin
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Cave Swallow
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Cedar Waxwing
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Wood Thrush
House Sparrow
House Finch
Bachman's Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Seaside Sparrow
Nelson's Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Eastern Towhee
Yellow-breasted Chat
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Bobolink
Eastern Meadowlark
Orchard Oriole

Red-winged Blackbird
Shiny Cowbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Grackle
Boat-tailed Grackle
Ovenbird
Worm-eating Warbler
Louisiana Waterthrush
Northern Waterthrush
Black-and-white Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Swainson's Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Kentucky Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
American Redstart
Cape May Warbler
Northern Parula
Blackburnian Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Palm Warbler
Pine Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Painted Bunting
Dickcissel

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.

Alabama Bird Search Youth Challenge

ADAPTED FROM A PRESS RELEASE BY JESS SEARCY

THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Alabama Audubon, Turkey Creek Nature Preserve, and others sponsored the Second Annual Alabama Bird Search Youth Challenge in April. Two young AOS members, Mason Currier and Ava Lyerly, were members of the high school team, Bama Kingbirds, who identified a whopping 175 species in a 24-hour period, breaking their own “Big Day” record set during the competition’s inaugural year.

During this state-wide competition, youth teams ranging from prekindergarten through high school compete against other teams in their age division for most bird species identified, among other categories, for prizes and recognition. The nine-day birding window ended in a judging and awards event hosted by Turkey Creek Nature Preserve on April 27, 2025.

The following teams earned first place in each division:

High School Division

First Place with 175 species—Bama Kingbirds

Middle School Division

First Place with 91 species—Nate Bird Nerds

Elementary Division (3rd–5th grade)

First Place with 50 species—Hines Bird Nerds

T-Shirt Art (Grand Prize)—Noah Barrett

Primary Division (Pre-K–2nd grade)

First Place and Overall Top Fledglings with 35 species—The Feathered Friends

ABOVE RIGHT: *The Bama Kingbirds* (from left to right), Ava Lyerly, Clara Halgren, Ellis Halgren, and Mason Currier. RIGHT: *The Feathered Friends* (left to right), Ayzlin Dukes (2nd grade), Shaila Bansal (1st grade), Nehara Bakshi (2nd grade), and Cora Nichols (2nd grade). INSET ABOVE: Noah Barrett’s painting won the T-Shirt Art competition.



Mason Currier, who is already leading field trips for Alabama Audubon, was thrilled with achieving the team's goal of identifying 175 species in one day. "I'm still surprised by the Alabama Gulf Coast's bird diversity, even after living and birding here for over a decade." Ava Lyerly is well known in the birding community for founding Alabama's Youth Birding Club, her contributions to *The Yellowhammer*, and for volunteering at Alabama Audubon's bird banding stations.

The T-shirt art contest Grand Prize was won by talented fifth-grader Noah Barrett for his colorful painting of Northern Bobwhites. Next year's T-shirt Art competition will begin taking entries in early 2026, and the ABS Youth Challenge will take place in April, with judging and awards on April 25, 2026.

Our own vice president and chair of the Education Committee, Shirley Farrell, was heavily involved in this very promising event. Thank you, Shirley, and to all those who bought items at the silent auctions.

Plan B—North Alabama Birding

WHEN JEAN FOLSOM, FORMER BIRMINGHAM RESIDENT and current AOS member, made her plans to leave wintry Colorado to attend the AOS meeting in Florida, little did she think a snowstorm in south Alabama and northern Florida could cause a disruption of her plans.

With the meeting cancellation, Jean and friends Lydia Johnson and Dee Gertler needed another option. The roads north were cold but clear so...

We visited the Visitor Center at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Flint Creek trail, Osprey Point, Limestone Bay, Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area and Lake Guntersville, all in north Alabama, and remarkably snow-free.

We tallied 57 species over several hours. Although we missed the Snow Geese on a frozen Limestone Bay, we did see Sandhill Cranes, a lone Whooping Crane, White-fronted Geese, Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Wilson's Snipe.

Another road trip to Van De Graaff Park and Arboretum in Tuscaloosa with Louise Tommy yielded a beautiful Orange-crowned Warbler and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. River Bend Turf yielded Loggerhead Shrikes, Eastern Meadowlarks, an American Kestrel and a Palm Warbler.

An impromptu outing among friends...and a snow storm to remember!

—Dee Gertler

IN MEMORIAM

Alison Glascock

ALISON GLASCOCK, A LONG-time member of AOS, died on May 6, 2025, after a brief illness.

Alison was English, born in Oxford, England, on July 23, 1939. Following her graduation from Leeds University, she worked as a secretary in England and Europe before moving to Birmingham in 1969 to work as secretary to her father, a professor of physiology at the UAB School of Medicine.



In 1976, she married Charles Glascock and they settled in Birmingham's Highland Park. Both became avid birders and active members of AOS. Alison served on the AOS Board as co-director of the Mountain Region. She was also a proof-reader of the *The Yellowhammer* for many years. Alison and Charles birded around the United States and in the UK.

In the 1990s, Alison became active in the Highland Park Neighborhood Association, elected secretary in 1995, and then president from 1998 to 2018. One of her major achievements was overseeing the restoration of Rhodes Park, which won the Birmingham Historical Society Landscape Preservation Award, the first ever awarded for a park. In 2011, the American Planning Association designated Highland Park as one of America's Top 10 Neighborhoods.

Donations in Alison's name may be made to: Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, P.O. Box 1295, Dauphin Island, AL 36528 or DIBS1295@gmail.com.

In Memoriam

IT IS A SAD FACT THAT OUR MEMBERS DIE. WE WOULD LIKE to honor each one appropriately in *The Yellowhammer*. To do that we must know about the loss, so please notify the editor, treasurer or membership chair if you are aware of the loss of one of our friends.

An unusual sighting at the spring meeting was this Redhead, spotted near the SeaLab. (Bob Reed)



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 _____

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Hal Smith, AOS Treasurer, 3590 Eagle Nest, Opelika, AL 36801

Name(s) _____

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**YOU CAN ALSO JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE AT WWW.AOSBIRDS.ORG
PLEASE ADD 4% TO PAYPAL TRANSACTIONS**

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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TALLASSEE, ALABAMA 36078

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Opelika, AL 36801
Email: aosbirdstreasurer@gmail.com

Annual Membership:

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



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<http://www.aosbirds.org>



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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>

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