

Flicker Flashes

Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society

For conservation and greater knowledge
of birds, their habitat, and natural world

Audubon Teaches Nature - Begins 24th Season Preserving Alabama's Wild Places: From the Paint Rock River and Beyond *Presented by Steve Northcutt, Guest Speaker* *Sunday, October 19th, 2 P.M.* *Oak Mountain Interpretive Center Auditorium*

The Audubon Teaches Nature committee is pleased to announce the 2014-2015 slate of Audubon Teaches Nature (ATN) seminars, and we think you'll like the choice of seminar speakers and topics. Some are familiar favorites, while other speakers and topics are new to the series.

The ATN seminar series is a joint effort of the Alabama Wildlife Center, Birmingham Audubon, Friends of Oak Mountain and the Oak Mountain Interpretive Center. The seminar topics were selected to appeal to a range of natural history interests for all age levels, and it is especially hoped that families with children will attend these family-friendly seminars together.

The first seminar will be presented by Steve Northcutt, the Director of Protection for The Nature Conservancy of Alabama, and his topic will feature one of our favorite field

trip destinations: the Paint Rock River in Jackson County. As regular attendees on our June field trip already know, this region of the state is unique for its mountain cove forests and the birds we find there on our annual trip to Graham Farm and the Larkin Fork of the Paint Rock River. Steve will educate us on this unique natural landscape and their efforts to protect it.

Be sure to come early and enjoy some refreshments and conversation in the Observation Room at the Alabama Wildlife Center; then, when it is time for the program, we will proceed to the auditorium for the presentation. Seminars are presented either in the Alabama Wildlife Center (AWC) or the adjacent Oak Mountain Interpretive Center (OMIC).



Other topics in the series are:

Bird Coloration: Understanding the Beauty of Birds
Sunday, November 16th, 2 p.m. - Geoffrey E. Hill, Guest Speaker (AWC)

The Wetumpka Astrobleme, An Ancient Tale
Sunday, January 18th, 2 p.m. - David Frings, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

Identifying Birds of Prey: Tips, Tools and a Bird or Two!
Sunday, February 22nd, 2 p.m. - Greg Harber, Guest Speaker (AWC)

Snails and Mollusks of Alabama
Sunday, March 22nd, 2 p.m. - Lori Tolley-Jordan, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

Native Plants for Wildlife: Attracting Birds to your Garden
Sunday, April 12th, 2 p.m. - Michelle Reynolds, Guest Speaker (AWC)

Bees & Pollination: What's buzzing in your Garden?
Sunday, May 3rd, 2 p.m. - Sallie Lee, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

Birmingham Botanical Gardens Tom Imhof Annual Half Day Field Trip

Saturday, October 4, 2014 - 8 A.M.

Join us for a walk through the Birmingham Botanical Gardens as we look for fall migrants on this early Saturday in October. The garden encompasses 67.5 acres of wooded habitat on the south side of Red Mountain and serves as both a home for many year-round species and an important stop along the way for many migrating species.

We hope to see migrating species such as warblers and vireos. The garden hosts many species of woodpeckers and hawks. Winter migrants such as sparrows and kinglets may also be present by this date. All the possibilities are really too numerous to list.

Please meet in the parking lot of Birmingham Botanical Gardens at 8 a.m. This is a half-day field trip that will involve a lot of walking, so please be prepared with liquid refreshment and snacks for the hike.



Ruby Crowned Kinglet - Thinkstock by Getty Images

MEET:

Birmingham
Botanical Gardens
2612 Lane Park Road Birmingham AL 35223

TRIP LEADER: Susan Barrow cell 205-253-8667,
home 205-942-8667

Avondale Park Birds and Brews

Sunday, October 26, 2014 - 2 P.M.

509 40th Street. South, 35222

5th Avenue South and 40th Street South

Avondale Park provides a wonderful example of the rich birdlife which may be found in an urban park. Join Birmingham Audubon for a leisurely stroll around the park and its variety of habitats while we look for resident and migratory birds. Learn which birds can logically be found in which habitat. This event will also provide information regarding Birmingham Audubon's Avondale Park Project, which in cooperation with a variety of community groups, will introduce numerous native plants to the gardens around the pavilion. When completed this garden will

demonstrate how beautiful and attractive to wildlife a planting of native plants can be. After our walk and garden talk, we'll visit the Avondale Brewery and / or Post Office Pies for refreshments and a snack.

We will meet at the old rose garden pavilion behind the library at 2 p.m. for a fun and educational afternoon. We will have binoculars to loan to those who need them.

For more info please email Hans Paul at the following address: cooterpl4@gmail.com

Orange Beach and Gulf Shores Raptors Heading for the Alabama Coast

Mid-October through November

Phillip West, Coastal Resources Manager for the City of Orange Beach, reminds bird watchers they can enjoy peak migration for raptors from mid-October through November in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores. Some species of raptors will be in the coastal area, West



says, as early as September. Make your plans for a trip to Orange Beach and Gulf Shores to experience this migration in a beautiful location. For more information, email Phillip at pwest@cityoforangebeach.com

October Membership Program

Mixing It Up:

Alternative Strategies for Reproduction in Amphibians

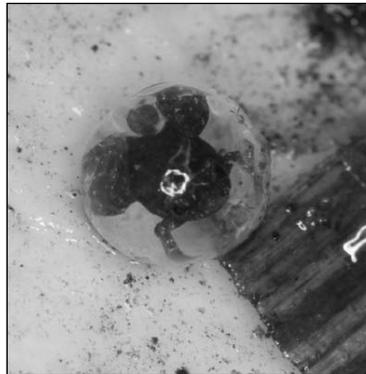
Presented by Dr. Megan Gibbons of Birmingham-Southern College

Birmingham Botanical Gardens, East Room

Thursday, October 16, 2014 - 7 P.M.

Everyone knows that amphibians spend part of their lives in water and part on land - that description is clear from their name - "amphi," meaning "of both kinds," and "bios," meaning "life." Eggs are laid in the water, and after spending some time as aquatic larvae they turn into terrestrial adults, right? Not so fast. Amphibian lifestyles are much more complex than you think. Even in North America, some species including some of our common species of salamander found in Alabama, lay their eggs on land and have tiny offspring that look just like miniature adults. Others never leave the water, even as adults. In other parts of the world, the different reproductive strategies seem endless! Amphibians have more flexibility in their reproductive strategies (frogs and toads have at least 22 different modes) than any other group of vertebrates.

Dr. Megan Gibbons will present some of the amazing reproductive adaptations of amphibians, including frog em-



Frog embryo - By Dr. Gibbons

bryos in trees that can detect and escape snake predation, adults that tote their tadpoles from nests to nurseries, and moms who swallow eggs and rear their young in their stomachs. Who knew amphibian reproduction could be so unusual?

Dr. Gibbons is a Professor of Biology at Birmingham-Southern College. Her areas of research include amphibian ecology and behavior, particularly heritability (the influence of genetics and environment on behavior) and maternal investment

(how much energy does a female provide to her offspring). She earned her B.A. from Emory University and her M. S. and Ph.D. from University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Fellowship and snack time begins at 6:30 p.m.
Please come early for refreshments and conversation.

A Celebration of Life Service

For Bob Sargent

Saturday, October 25, 2014 - 2-5 P.M.

Trussville Civic Center

We are saddened to announce the passing of Bob Sargent, co-founder of the Hummer/Bird Study Group and longtime friend of Birmingham Audubon, on September 7, 2014. Sargent was a tireless advocate for both birds and the environment through his educational programs, bird banding efforts and his activism. He was blessed with the ability to focus on the science through a lens of emotion and an ability to relate to everyone from children to senior citizens.

A Celebration of Life service will be held for Sargent on October 25, 2014 at the Trussville Civic Center in Trussville, Alabama from 2 to 5 p.m. All who wish to speak during the service may do so. The address for the civic center is 5381 Trussville-Clay Road Trussville, AL 35173.

In its upcoming newsletter, the Hummer/Bird Study Group will announce three non-profit organizations that Sargent wished that memorials designated for him would be given.



SoSo for the Record

Sightings August 16 through August 30, 2014

In one of his last reports prior to his untimely passing, Bob Sargent relayed one of his many remarkable stories about the hummingbird experiences of him and his wife, Martha Sargent. On September 14, 2012, the Sargents banded a ruby-throated hummingbird in Rockport, Texas. This bird was later found dead in Quebec, Canada on July 24, 2014. The distance between the locations is roughly 2069 miles. As Bob said at the time of the report, "this stuff still blows me away."

Other Sightings:

- 8/16 **Wood Stork (300+); Scissor-tailed Flycatcher;** Hale County (RR,SR,KM,VM).
Double-crested Cormorant; Fultondale (DH).
- 8/17 **Summer Tanager** (female); Seen At a feeder in her yard (HW).
- 8/18 **Swallow-tailed Kite;** Even during dispersal, this species is not usually seen this far north of their breeding area (CG).
- 8/20-21 **Mississippi Kite** (1 imm.); Etowah County (3); Cherokee Co (1).
- 8/27 **Fish Crow;** Avondale Park (KA).
Also, the **Herring Gull** that has been at Avondale Park for several weeks, apparently has moved on. Several Birmingham Audubon members have been monitoring and feeding it, but it was not seen on or after this date. (KA,GH,DM,KW).
- 8/30 **Warblers: Cerulean and Blackburnian; Baltimore Oriole;** Ruffner Mountain (SD).

Contributors:

Ken Archambault
 Scot Duncan
 Charles Grisham
 Greg Harber
 Donald Hulsey
 John Imhof
 Ken and Vicki Marion
 Dick Mills
 Rick and Sue Remy
 Bob and Martha Sargent
 Ken Wills
 Harriett Wright



Baltimore oriole - Thinkstock by Getty Images

Please send sightings for November/December Flicker Flashes at least five days before the October 1, 2014 deadline to Ann Miller, 520 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209 annmiller520@aol.com

Birders of All Skill Levels Needed

Our laboratory at Vanderbilt University is looking for birders of all levels of experience to participate in a project examining how perception and memory for birders differs between beginners and experts of all levels. We really do mean all levels of experience, from the true beginner to the expert with decades of study and everything in-between.

These experiments are conducted online at our website. They measure your ability to remember and identify birds and sometimes other animals or objects. Many experiments are fairly short. They can be done on any computer, wherever and whenever you decide to do them.

One of our current experiments is a bird identification test, and the web site for our experiments is: <http://expertise.psy.vanderbilt.edu>

Once you register and create your own login ID and password on the site, you will be able to participate in any experiments that are currently available. We expect to add new experiments over time.

If you have questions, please contact Thomas Palmeri (thomas.j.palmeri@vanderbilt.edu) at Vanderbilt University.

Thomas Palmeri, Ph.D
Professor of Psychology,
Vanderbilt University



Photo - Thinkstock by Getty Images

Birmingham Audubon October Field Trip

James D. Martin Wildlife Park, Neely Henry Dam and Ten Islands Historical Park

Saturday, October 18, 2014

The Wildlife Park boasts a 300 acre lake, three miles of walking/hiking trails (paved and unpaved), wetlands and mudflats and boardwalks bordered by thickets. The Park was opened in 1991 and is dedicated to James D. Martin, a former Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. It is sited on an extensive backwater of the Coosa River and is behind the Gadsden Mall. Productive at any season of the year, the lake attracts wintering waterfowl, migrating shorebirds and resident woodland songbirds. Long-legged waders are resident, and it is possible occasionally to observe both osprey and bald eagle.

Neely Henry Dam is an Alabama Power hydroelectric dam on the Coosa River, approximately 40 miles southwest of Gadsden and near the town of Ragland. With the damming of the Coosa here, an impoundment of 77 miles north to Weiss Lake was created (Neely Henry Lake). It provides feeding and nesting habitat for long-legged waders during breeding season and a refuge for wintering waterfowl. Leading south from the parking area is a short nature trail winding through woods and allowing opportunities for observing songbirds.

Ten Islands Historic Park, which is near the dam, was the locale for a pitched battle between Federal and Confederate forces during the Civil War. The area was first used as a village and as a river crossing or ford by the Creeks. They named it Otipalin or Ten Islands. The park is on the shore of Neely Henry Lake and provides the birder with a different perspective of the river and different habitats, ranging from mature mixed hardwood/pine to second growth scrub. Raptors and a diverse set of songbirds are all possibilities.

DATE: Saturday, October 18, 2014

MEETING PLACE: McDonald's on Montclair Road (Eastwood Mall). Please park in the rear of the building and consider carpooling.

DEPARTURE TIME: We will leave at 7am for the drive north to Gadsden and James D. Martin Wildlife Park, our first destination of the day.

TRAVEL TIME: Approximately one hour (55 miles) via I-59 North

DESTINATIONS: James D. Martin Wildlife Park (wetlands, wooded areas); Neely Henry Dam (hydroelectric dam creating impoundment on Coosa River); Ten Islands Historical Park (site on shore of Neely Henry Lake near the Dam)

NOTES: Bring along your binoculars, camera, a picnic lunch, drinks and snacks. Have a full tank of gas. The plan is for a midday picnic at the Wildlife Park.

ADDRESS: James D. Martin Wildlife Park
U.S. 411
Gadsden, AL

Neely Henry Dam
None

Ten Islands Historical Park
16157 AL 144
Ragland, AL 35131

PHONE: None available for two of the sites.
Ten Islands Historical Park 205-472-0481

GPS: James D. Martin Wildlife Park N33.99735W86.008322
Neely Henry Dam N33.4708W86.0353
Ten Islands Historic Park N33.47058W86.3852

WEBSITES: James D. Martin Wildlife Park:
www.alabamabirdingtrails.com/sites/james-d-martin-wildlife-park
www.greatergadsden.com/portfolio-view/james-d-martin-wildlife-park-walking-trail

Neely Henry Dam:
www.alabamabirdingtrails.com/sites/neely-henry-dam

Ten Islands Historical Park:
www.alabamabirdingtrails.com/sites/ten-islands-historical-park

For further information, please contact trip leaders Anne G. Miller 902-1389 (cell) or Maureen Shaffer 205-822-8728 (home) or 205-222-2662 (cell)

ATTENTION

Please help Birmingham Audubon communicate electronically with you. If you are a National Audubon member please go to www.audubon.org, and at the top of the page click on "Member Center." Then please enter the requested information under either option B or C and then hit the

submit button. This will provide Birmingham Audubon with your email address. You may also simply send us your name and email address to basoffice@birminghamaudubon.org

Be assured that your email address will never be shared or sold.



BIRMINGHAM AUDUBON

Bird Species Threatened by Climate Change New Audubon Study Reveals

September 9, 2014 - Climate change threatens the survival of nearly half the bird species in the continental United States and Canada including many of Alabama's birds, warn National Audubon Society scientists in a groundbreaking new study released today. Local birds at risk include Wild Turkey, Hairy Woodpecker, Mallard, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Osprey.

"It's sobering to see the changes this study predicts for some of Alabama's favorite backyard birds and game birds that are currently part of successful conservation efforts, and resident birds that contribute to the strong nature-based tourism industry here," says Suzanne Langley, Executive Director for Birmingham Audubon Society.

Of 588 bird species examined in the seven-year National Audubon study, 314 species are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe decline by 2050 and another 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if climate change continues on its current trajectory. The Audubon report says that hundreds of species not previously considered at risk will be challenged to survive in a climate-changed future.

"The greatest threat our birds face today is climate change," says National Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham,* who led the investigation. "That's our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and thorough research. Climate change threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds and the rest of us depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively if we are going to avoid catastrophe for them and us."

Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed more than 40 years of historical North American climate data and millions of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey's North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count to understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them. Understanding those links then allows scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive, and not survive, in the future.

Audubon's study shows how climate conditions including rainfall, temperature and changing seasons - the building blocks for ecosystems and species survival may have catastrophic



Hairy woodpecker
- Thinkstock by Getty Images

consequences when tipping those balances. While some species will be able to adapt to shifting climates, many of North America's most familiar and iconic species will not.

"The prospect of such staggering loss is horrific, but we can build a bridge to the future for America's birds," said Audubon President and CEO David Yarnold. "We know that if we help avoid the worst impacts of climate change for birds, we're doing the same for our kids. And this new report can be a roadmap to help birds weather the storm of climate change."

National Audubon Society today launched a new web portal, Audubon.org/Climate, dedicated to understanding the links between birds and climate change, including animated maps and photographs of the 314 species at risk, a technical report, and in-depth stories from the September-October issue of Audubon magazine, which is also devoted to the topic.

"The National Audubon study illustrates just how critical it is to conserve and establish habitat, not just in undeveloped areas, but in urban spaces like parks, and in our own back yards and neighborhoods," Langley says. "We are fortunate in Alabama to not yet experience many of the issues associated with climate change that other states have to now manage each day. This look into the future shows how important local efforts in establishing greenways and protecting habitat are."

Birmingham Audubon, a certified chapter of National Audubon Society, promotes conservation and a greater knowledge of birds and habitat through projects ranging from habitat projects in urban public spaces to providing programming for students and educators to hosting for 38 years the nature-based Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop each May. Birmingham Audubon serves 1,300 members in Jefferson, Shelby, Bibb, Blount, Chilton, St. Clair and Walker Counties.

*Dr. Gary Langham will visit Birmingham, December 4 as a guest speaker for the Birmingham Audubon annual banquet.

Contact: Suzanne Langley, Executive Director
Birmingham Audubon - 205-714-8227
suzannelangley@birminghamaudubon.org

Join and Support Birmingham Audubon

Are birds, wildlife and our natural habitat of interest to you?

If so, we invite you to be a part of a community that enjoys, values and protects birds and our natural world.

Founded in 1946, the Birmingham Audubon Society is Alabama's leading non-profit organization engaging people in the enjoyment and conservation of birds, their habitats and the natural world. With your support, we involve people through recreational birding, by extending their horizons with education programs, and by engaging them in conservation actions such as planting trees, counting birds, and working with local, state, and national policy makers.

There are many ways you can support Birmingham Audubon

Please join us and make a difference for birds and your quality of life, right here in Alabama!

Membership

Take the first step and become a Member of Birmingham Audubon. Get connected with our *Flicker Flashes* newsletter. See birds by participating in one of our free field trips, and learn something at one of our free monthly programs.

Make a Donation

We rely on your support and are proud to work on your behalf to restore wildlife habitat, conserve areas that are important to birds, and inspire appreciation and understanding of our natural world. Your generous donation, above and beyond the basic membership dues, is an important source of funding which allows Birmingham Audubon to facilitate our vital mission of connecting people with birds and the places they live.

Your memberships and donations support:

- Free monthly programs on natural science topics
- Free field trips led by expert birders to great birding / cultural locations
- Opportunity to attend Annual Banquet and Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop
- Introduction to great locations to see and observe birds
- Exposure to knowledgeable birders
- Travel opportunities to regional, national and international birding locations
- Graduate student research grants
- Local and statewide conservation initiatives
- Adult and student education initiatives
- Local, state and national conservation initiatives
- Alabama Birding Trails support

Birmingham Audubon Society Membership Application

Join Renew Annual Membership: \$ 20.00

Donation to support the programs & projects of Birmingham Audubon: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Please make check payable to:
Birmingham Audubon Society

Please charge my credit card
 Visa MasterCard

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Birmingham Audubon Society is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Your donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Please keep my donation anonymous
 Yes No

I want to receive communications electronically
 Yes No

I want to be contacted to learn about volunteer activities
 Yes No

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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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