

Flicker Flashes

*Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society*

*For conservation and greater knowledge of
all wildlife, wilderness and natural resources*

JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING

“Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. (DIBS) ~ What We Are and What We Do”

Presented by John F. Porter, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

The speaker for the January meeting is John Porter, Executive Director of Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. His presentation will address the organization’s mission: what it is and what it does. In a nutshell, think habitat preservation. With the help of partners such as the Birmingham Audubon Society and the Sessions Foundation, DIBS has achieved great success in recent years and strives to preserve even more habitat on the island. Dauphin Island is a legendary birding site and John Porter is leading the efforts to keep it so.

To date, DIBS has acquired 21 parcels on the island, affording permanent protection of 7.4 acres of prime stopover habitat. The appraised value at the time of the purchase was \$973,000. However, their worth has increased dramatically with the recent boom in coastal real estate values.

John is a Birmingham native who received both his undergraduate and Master’s degrees from the University of Alabama and went on to get his Ph.D. in Physics from The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. John had a distinguished teaching career at the University of Alabama in Huntsville before beginning a 10-year stint as the Executive Director of The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE).

From that position he returned to academia as a professor of educational administration at the University of Alabama. Upon retiring in 1992 John became president of the Friends of Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary, which has evolved into Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. John has been its unpaid Executive Director for the last ten years.

Attend and enjoy this program

Please come early at 6:45 PM to socialize and enjoy some refreshments. Guests are welcome.

Hans Paul
VP Programs



SoSo for the Record

Sightings October 4 through November 27, 2006

Recently a pair of three-year-old **Trumpeter Swans** were released at Star Lake in Hoover. This was accomplished by members of the Star Lake Garden Club and local residents. According to Janet Richardson, a member of the garden club who grew up in England, the birds were purchased and imported from Illinois. She regularly visited places with swans when she lived in England, and she thinks Star Lake visitors will enjoy these "majestic" birds. It is hoped that they will eventually mate and nest, and chase the large population of geese away, that have created problems (although it is not their fault). A Star Lake Swan Fund has been established to cover cost of feeding these swans. The "Star Lake Friend" buttons can be purchased for ten dollars, and children also may participate in a contest to name the swans.

A **Western Kingbird** was seen in Shelby County November 22 (HW,JG). This bird is uncommon in the fall on the coast, rare in other seasons, and occasional inland in migration.

Other birds seen were:

10/ 4 **American Redstart**; Chelsea (CG).

10/7 **Great Black-backed Gull**; Guntersville (SMcC).

Common Loon; American Pipit (50); Lake Purdy (DH).

10/10 **Gray Catbird; Hermit Thrush; Black-throated Green Warbler**; Chelsea (CG).

10/11 **Northern Flicker; Blackburnian Warbler**; Chelsea (CG).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Swainson's Thrush; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; And many other resident birds feasting on Black Gum berries; Bluff Park (SB).

10/31 **Peregrine Falcon**; UAB (MMcE).

11/4 **Purple Finch**; Southlake (HK).

11/7 **Common Loon; American Pipit (50)**; Lake Purdy (DH).

11/8 **A sparrow bonanza ! Chipping, Field, Vesper, Savannah, Fox, Song, White-throated, and Swamp**; Shelby County (HW,AC).

11/11 **White-crowned Sparrow !!** First ever on my patio (HK,RK).

Common Loon (100+); Horned Grebe (100+); Many dabbling ducks and Ruddy Duck; Tree Swallow (2); Guntersville (SMcC).

11/12 **Geese- Greater White-fronted (24); Snow (500); and Ross's; Sandhill Crane (25)**; Wheeler Refuge (SMcC).

11/14 **White-winged Scoter; Franklin's Gull**; Draper Ponds, Speigner (HK, et al).

Wood Duck (9); Hooded Merganser (12); Hawkins Park (DH).

11/18 **Hummingbirds- Rufous and Allen's**; Cullman (BS,MS,CL,LL).

American White Pelican; Greater and Lesser Scaup; Franklin's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls; Colbert County (GJ,DJ).

11/19 **American White Pelican (175+); Greater (10+) and Lesser (3) Yellowlegs; Western Sandpiper; Dunlin (200+); Long-billed Dowitcher (13); Rough-winged Swallow (late ?)**; Wheeler Refuge (SMc).

(cont'd on next page)

SoSo (cont'd)

11/22 **Blackbirds- Red-winged, Rusty, Brewer's, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Common Grackle;** Shelby County (HW,JG).

11/23 **Lapland Longspur (10);** Near Decatur (SMcC).

11/24 **Osprey;** Lake Purdy (DH,AT).

11/27 **Cooper's Hawk;** Ruffner Mountain (DH).

Contributors:

B.J. Allen
Sheila Bancroft
Alice Christenson
Martha Dagg
Kap Garmon
Jessica Germany
Caleb Grace
Catherine Hodges

Donald Hulsey
Susan Hutchison
Greg and Debi Jackson
Peggy King
Helen Kittinger
Ron Kittinger
Loran and Caila Lamont
Steve McConnell

Mark MacEwen
Janet Richardson
Bob and Martha Sargent
Maureen Shaffer
Arthur Tyson
Harriett Wright

Please submit sightings for February FF at least five days before January 1st deadline to Ann Miller, 520 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, Al. 35209.

Audubon Teaches Nature Owls of Alabama

Anne G. Miller, Executive Director, The Alabama Wildlife Center
Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 2:00 P.M.
The Wildlife Center at Oak Mountain State Park

Everyone is invited to join us for the next installment of the Audubon Teaches Nature seminar series. Anne G. Miller, Executive Director of The Alabama Wildlife Center, will be our guest speaker and she will be speaking on one of her favorite subjects: Owls!

Owls are nighttime raptors, filling the ecological niche left vacant when daytime flying hawks call it a day and retire for the evening. However, just because you can't readily see them is no reason not to enjoy and "observe" owls, you just have to rely on your other senses! In this program you will learn how you can recognize local species of owls by their vocalizations, markings, and habitat preferences.

Come early for fellowship and refreshments in the Observation Room at the Center! Coosa, the Barred Owl, will be on hand for closer observation, fulfilling her role as a member of the Wildlife Center's Education Program. This will be

an excellent opportunity for your children or grandchildren to observe one of these magnificent raptors.

After the program and weather permitting we will go on an Owl Prowl walk within the park and attempt to call in a few owls for closer observation. Please recall that park admission is \$3.00 per person but the program itself is free.

P.S. There will be door prizes too. A little bird reminded me that a certain someone's homemade Sourdough Bread used to be offered as one of these door prizes. Have no fear, the bird has been heard and bread will be fresh!



Next Month's ATN seminar:

February 11
Geology Vs. Ecosystem, An Introduction to the Habitats of Oak Mountain State Park,
David Frings, Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

**January Half-Day Field Trip
Saturday, January 6, 2007
Oak Mountain State Park**

The Birmingham Audubon Society's 1/2-day field trip in January will be to Oak Mountain State Park in Shelby County. You may recall that the Birmingham Audubon Society, in support of the new Interpretive Center operated by Samford University, has agreed to help develop a new bird list for the park. Our first effort in search of migrant songbirds took place in September, but they are now long gone. Therefore, our goal on this trip will be to again visit a variety of habitats within the park, but instead of fall migrants we will be looking for winter visitors.

We will meet 7:00 a.m. at the park visitor center, located right outside the park entrance on

John Findlay Drive. To reach the park exit I-65 at Cahaba Valley Road/AL 119 (exit #246) and travel west one block, to the first traffic light. Turn left here and follow this road back under the interstate to the 4-way stop sign. Turn left and drive to the visitor center parking area on the right.

Bring your lunch, drinks, sunscreen, a pair of sturdy walking shoes, and your binoculars. We shall plan to eat lunch in the front room at The Wildlife Center and watch the birds coming to their feeders.

Trip Leader: Greg Harber, 251-2133.



**JANUARY FIELD TRIP
Saturday, January 20, 20067
Guntersville, AL**

Please join us Saturday, January 20, for an all-day trip to view wintering waterfowl and raptors in the Guntersville area. It is the best place I know of to have a very close look at a number of ducks species up close and enjoy their rich colors. In addition, hawks and eagles are quite likely.

We will leave at 7:00 a.m. sharp from the Mc Donald's in the Tarrant Shopping Center on Highway 79 N in Pinson. From I 59/20 take the Tallapoosa street exit, travel north for about 3 miles, approximately 10 signal lights, and the McDonald's and the Tarrant Shopping Center will be on the left. After traveling north on AL Hwy 79, we will stop around 8:00 am at the Burger King in Guntersville for coffee, biscuits and a rest room break. To reach the Burger King from Highway 79, turn left at the intersection of A L 79 and US 431, go a few blocks.

During the morning we will make several stops around Guntersville Lake with Dick and Linda Reynolds, our hosts, expert birders and guides to the area. At noon, we will stop for lunch. Bring your favorite picnic lunch and drinks. In the afternoon, we hope to visit the nearby Hawk Farm to view hawks and eagles. Last year we enjoyed satisfying but distant looks at Rough-legged Hawks at this location.

Since temperatures in Guntersville can be quite a bit colder than those in Birmingham, it would be advisable to wear coats, hats, gloves, etc., and be sure to dress in warm layers. Please bring you lunch, water, snacks and binoculars.

For more information, call John Swan 205-933-6469 home; 205-276-4909 cell. See you on January 20!



IN MEMORIAM



Vandolyn Chaplin

In October, 2006 the Birmingham Audubon Society lost a valued member, Vandolyn L. Chaplin, better known to us as "Van." Van participated in our meetings, our field trips, and the Audubon Spring Tour Trips. All who knew her were fortunate and privileged. Van was a gentle, sincere, and caring lady. Wherever there was a need, Van was there to give concern and help to others. She was an avid gardener, especially loved to grow vegetables that she delighted in sharing with her friends. She was devoted to her church, her family and her friends.

Van was a person we all admired. As a young widow in the 1950s Van took her three young sons with her to Chapel Hill, North Carolina to earn her Master of Science degree in Biology at the University of North

Carolina. Her teaching career began as the Biology teacher at Shades Valley High School in Homewood. After some 30 plus years teaching Biology there, Van retired to devote her time to her family, her church and her nature interests.

She is survived by her sons: Ramsey (Phyllis), Harold (Elizabeth), Vandiver (Lois), and three sisters. She is also survived by six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Many of us in Birmingham Audubon can recall times when Van befriended us in one of her special, thoughtful ways. Van was much loved and will be missed by her many friends.

Harriett Wright

Maxie Bryant

Maxie Bryant, a longtime leader in the Audubon Society and the environmental community died on Sunday, November 26, 2006. Although Maxie was a member of the Tuscaloosa Audubon Society, she had many friends here in Birmingham and throughout the state.

The following recollections of Maxie come to us from Pat Byington, publisher of the Bama Environmental News :

When I served on the Forever Wild board of trustees, every meeting opened with comments from the public. It never failed. At every meeting, Maxie Bryant, smiling from ear to ear would stand and greet us "you know why I'm here!" she would always say. Then, with boastful enthusiasm, she would passionately tell the trustees how important the Sipsey River Swamp is to Alabama.

I can't remember a Forever Wild meeting without Maxie. Encouraging us. Prodding us. Even after the board bought over 2000 acres on the Sipsey River, she still attended the meetings, graciously thanking us at every turn. She loved Forever Wild. She loved preserving our rivers, swamps and land. She loved nature and her family.

I can still see her smiling. Maxie - Well Done.

Pat also had this to share:

Last night, I received an email from Kirsten Bryant, Maxie's granddaughter in-law, relaying the following

special story Maxie told the Forever Wild Board last March in Montgomery.

"75 years ago our vacation was to throw two bushels of corn into the back of a wagon and to go overnight to the Sipsey Swamp. We put out the set hooks and trout lines. It was so exciting. We made a check of them on the hour to take off the fish and put new bait on them. Everyone fought to get to go but they felt like that was not proper for a girl to go. Girls were left out when it came to putting out the trout lines and changing the bait. That was not something the girls did. I pushed the button. I always wanted to go and I would put a pitiful face up to Dad. And, I convinced him that I could hold the lantern. I never dropped it."

At Maxie's request, in lieu of flowers, she asked memorial contributions be made to Forever Wild Land Trust, 64 North Union Street, Suite 464, Montgomery, Alabama 36104 or Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, P. O. Box 1295, Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528

The Birmingham Audubon Society would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their special gifts: George C. Cusick, Carolyn Sloss Ratliff and Rockwell Automation.

Memorials : For: Mother of Louise Ayer Tommie

From: Catherine C. Hodges
Jean K. Folsom

Honorariums: For: Ellen W. McLaughlin
From: Home & Garden Club
of Mountain Brook

For: Marriage of John F. Porter, Jr. & Mary F. Waldrip
From: Greg, Patti, Beth, & Anna Waldrip

TO ALL AUDUBON MEMBERS:

Please pass the following information on to elementary school teachers you know in the Birmingham area who have a particular interest in nature and the environment, and to science teachers of all levels through high school.

The financial support for these scholarships comes from the Diane Stobert Sessions and Paul Trammell Sessions, Jr. Foundation that was established by the late Tram Sessions to assist the Birmingham Audubon Society in furthering its education and conservation mission.

Ann A. Sweeney
Chair, Education Committee
879-7127



Birmingham Audubon Society Ecology/Environmental Education Workshop Scholarships for Teachers Spring and Summer of 2007

Birmingham Audubon Society's Audubon Mountain Workshop, May 10-13, 2007

Held at Alpine Camp in Mentone, Alabama, this workshop begins on a Thursday evening and concludes on Sunday at noon. Not exclusively for educators, it attracts adults and young people from throughout the state. Among session topics are bird identification, wildflowers, stream and forest ecology, animal ecology, mammals, insects, reptiles, geology and fossils, canoeing, and mountain crafts. Most classes are taught by college professors and are conducted in the field. The five scholarships to this workshop cover tuition which includes lodging and all meals. Application deadline is April 1, 2007.

Maine Audubon Society's Workshop for Educators, July 15-21, 2007

This nationally renowned workshop held on Hog Island, Maine, is for teachers who would like to incorporate more environmental education into their lessons. Included are field trips, boat cruises, discussions, workshops, special presentations, and numerous hands-on experiential activities intended for direct application in a classroom. The two scholarships BAS offers to this workshop include tuition and transportation costs. Application deadline: March 1, 2007.

For more information, see www.maineaudubon.org, click on Adult Residential Camps, then on Workshop for Educators.

Click on www.birminghamaudubon.org in early January for applications for both workshops.

BIRMINGHAM AUDUBON SOCIETY WANTS YOU!

Members are needed to step forward to fill jobs for the next two-year term of office, 2007-2009. I can assure you from my experience in filling several BAS positions over the years that being an Audubon volunteer is rich in rewards. You will enjoy getting to know fellow BAS members and the fine feeling that comes from contributing to a good cause.

Volunteer to help by contacting John Swan, Nominating Committee, phone 933-6469 (home) or 276-4909 (cell) or by sending your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to:

John Swan
1100 27th St South Apt 1001
Birmingham, Alabama 35205

If you are interested in a specific committee or office, please let me know.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

.....
Clip along dotted line

~ Membership Application ~

Birmingham Audubon Society/ National Audubon Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

Introductory membership ~ \$20.00
Includes quarterly subscription to **Audubon** magazine and 8 issues of *Flicker Flashes*, the chapter newsletter.
Senior (62 & older) and student (full-time) memberships available for \$15.00.
(Preferred method of payment for all new members is through the chapter, using this form).

Regular membership/Renewals ~ \$20.00
The National Audubon Society handles membership renewals through their Membership Data Center. Contact them at 1-800-274-4201 or write them at:
P.O. Box 52529,
Boulder, CO 80322-2529.
Submit renewals directly to NAS.

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Please make check payable to: National Audubon Society

Mail this form and check to: Birmingham Audubon Society
P.O. Box 314
Birmingham, AL 35201

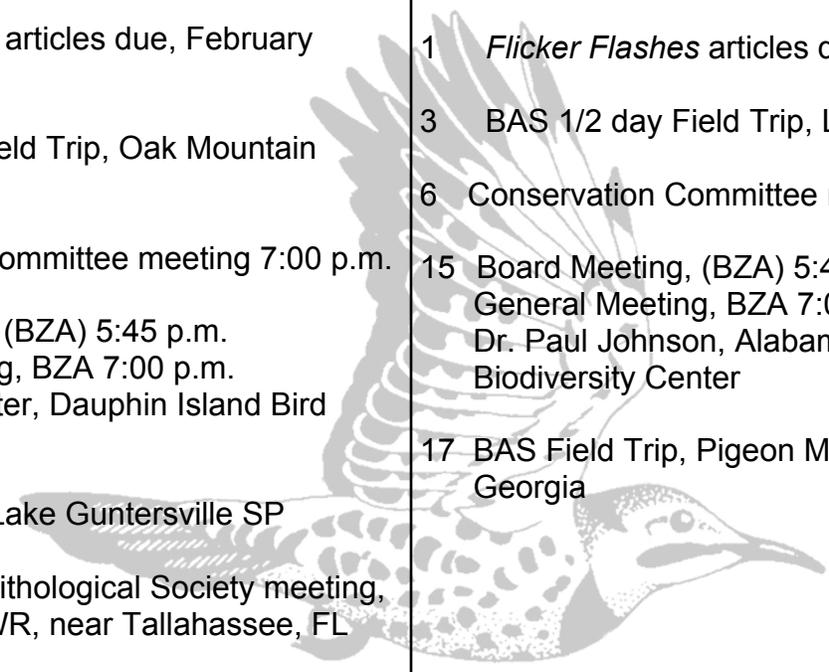
Birmingham Audubon Society *AO07XCH8

January 2007

- 1 *Flicker Flashes* articles due, February Issue
- 6 BAS 1/2 day Field Trip, Oak Mountain State Park
- 9 Conservation Committee meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 18 Board Meeting, (BZA) 5:45 p.m.
General Meeting, BZA 7:00 p.m.
Dr. John F. Porter, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries
- 20 BAS Field Trip, Lake Guntersville SP
- 26-28 Alabama Ornithological Society meeting,
St. Mark's NWR, near Tallahassee, FL

February 2007

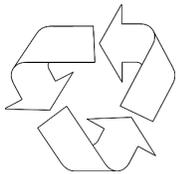
- 1 *Flicker Flashes* articles due, March issue
- 3 BAS 1/2 day Field Trip, Lake Purdy
- 6 Conservation Committee meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 15 Board Meeting, (BZA) 5:45 p.m.
General Meeting, BZA 7:00 p.m.
Dr. Paul Johnson, Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center
- 17 BAS Field Trip, Pigeon Mountain WMA, Georgia



Birmingham, Audubon Society
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