

Flicker Flashes

Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society

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

Aububon Teaches Nature

Birds of Prey, Masters of the Sky

Callaway Gardens Birds of Prey Program, Guest Speaker

Sunday, January 24, 2016, 1 P.M. and 3 P.M. (Two session times)

Alabama Wildlife Center

Birds of prey are truly masters of the sky. They have keen eyesight, sharp talons and are adept hunters of both birds and other types of animals and, fortunately for us, Alabama is home to several species of year-round residents, migrants and the occasional winter rarity. During this seminar, featuring live birds from the Callaway Gardens Birds of Prey Program, you will learn their various features, adaptations and field marks to help you identify them in the field. Your kids will love this program, and be sure to bring a camera, too!

Programs are held at the Alabama Wildlife Center at Oak Mountain State Park, and the adjacent Oak Mountain Interpretive Center. Admission to the park is \$4.00 per person, but the program itself is free. Come early to enjoy refreshments at the Alabama Wildlife Center and the birds at the feeders, then when it is time for the program we will proceed to the auditorium.

Note that there are two time slots for this program to accommodate everyone, but please arrive early to ensure your seat.

Next month's program:

Swallow-tailed Kites: Their Incidence and Status in Alabama

Eric Soehren, Guest Speaker
Sunday, February 28, 2016, 2 P.M.
Alabama Wildlife Center



Red Shouldered Hawk
- Thinkstock by Getty
Images

Programs are held at the Alabama Wildlife Center at Oak Mountain State Park, and the adjacent Oak Mountain Interpretive Center. Admission to the park is \$4.00 per person, but the program itself is free.

Winter Audubon Coastal Bird Survey Period

January 10 - February 20, 2016

The 2016 Winter Audubon Coastal Bird Survey period will run from Jan. 10 to Feb. 20. This project is a collaboration between Birmingham Audubon, Mobile Bay Audubon, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Participants survey coastal routes in Mobile and Baldwin counties for all bird species and submit their data to ebird.org, which is publicly available. For the Fall period, eleven volunteers gave over 50 hours of their time and observed over 100 species.

If you are interested in participating, please send an email to Andy Coleman, program director; andycoleman@birminghamaudubon.org. Volunteers can choose from 12 different survey routes and can partner with other volunteers to complete surveys. In addition to the normal protocol, volunteers will also be participating in the International Piping Plover census which occurs every five years. This census helps inform federal and state managers about this protected species.



Loon - Thinkstock by Getty Images

Guntersville Field Trip

January 16, 2016

Leaving from the gardens, we will travel via Red Mountain Expressway to Interstate 20/59 eastbound and exit at the Tallapoosa Street/Alabama 79 exit (#128). Follow Alabama 79 north to Guntersville. We will regroup at the Burger King at 1929 Gunter Avenue Guntersville, Alabama 35976 at approximately 8:30 a.m. You are welcome to meet the group there instead of the initial meeting place. Please consider carpooling.

You may bring a picnic lunch or choose to dine at any of the locations in the Guntersville area. Dress accordingly. Please note that the winds coming off the lake in January can be quite cold. Spotting scopes, cameras and binoculars are all welcome. Birmingham Audubon will have binoculars available for any who may need to borrow a pair.

Trip leader: Susan Barrow (home) 942-8667 (cell) 253-8667 and Anne Miller 902-1389

Lake Guntersville, an impoundment of the Tennessee River which provides winter habitat for thousands of waterfowl each year, is our January field trip destination. We will visit several viewing spots along the shores of the lake in the city of Guntersville as we search for species of loons, grebes, herons and ducks. Our drive along this portion of shoreline will encompass most of the morning. Following lunch either in or around the city's recreation center, we will backtrack to the north side of Guntersville Dam. This location has historically been the site of a bald eagle nest as well as an excellent site to view large numbers of gulls, cormorants, and herons as they fish below the dam.

Meeting Place: Birmingham Botanical Gardens

2612 Lane Park Road
Birmingham, AL 35223
Time: 7 a.m.

Beginner Bird Walk at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge

Monday, January 18, 2016 - 8 A.M.

Located within the eastern part of the Mississippi Flyway, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge is a place of rest for many birds in migration and for waterfowl throughout the winter. Blue-wing teal arrive in September and duck counts continue to increase throughout October and November. With 300 species of birds recorded at the refuge and most waterfowl numbers peaking in January, it is a great place to observe a variety of birds.

Canada geese, snow geese, gulls, ducks, pelicans, and sandhill cranes will be the key species of birds highlighted on this trip. If we are lucky, we may spot one of the endangered whooping cranes that have been returning to the refuge since 2006. **There were 12 whooping cranes counted during the 2012-2013 winter, and 14 spotted last winter.** We invite you to join us as we enjoy this seasonal display of birds from both the observation building, and a few restricted-access locations. Birmingham Audubon members and volunteers will have scopes available and knowledge of birds to share.

Remember to call ahead to RSVP at 205-719-3678. Please leave your name, number of participants in your party, your phone number, email, age of children attending, and if you need binoculars. A confirmation email will be sent out to you a few days before the event with additional details.

Meeting Place: Fieldstown Road in Gardendale.

We will meet in the parking lot behind Wells Fargo Bank at the Fieldstown Road Shopping Center in Gardendale, just off I-65 at exit #271. Turn right onto Fieldstown Road, take another right onto Odum Road with an immediate left into the shopping center.

We will leave at 8 a.m. sharp, (please arrive early for pre-trip instructions) and caravan up I-65, north toward Decatur to the Priceville exit (#334). We will reconvene at Hardee's located at this exit at 9:30 a.m. before taking a short drive to the visitor's center.



Whooping Crane - Thinkstock by Getty

January Membership Program

Assessing Patterns and Causes of Bumble Bee Decline in North America

Presented by Dr. Jeffrey Lozier from the University of Alabama
Birmingham Botanical Gardens - First Floor Conference Room
Thursday, January 21, 2016 - 7 P.M.

The national media has been documenting the sharp decline of the honeybee population here in North America and its possible impacts on our food supplies. Honeybees, however, are just one of many bee species that provide our flora with pollination services. A similar decline is being observed in our native bumble bee species. Our January membership program speaker, Dr. Jeffrey Lozier will provide us with the details behind this situation.

Dr. Jeffrey Lozier is an assistant professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Alabama. Dr. Lozier's

research focuses on utilizing molecular markers to study populations of wildlife. One of his main projects is a nationwide collaboration looking at the decline of native bumble bee species. His presentation will focus on efforts to gather baseline data on native bee populations as well as study potential causes of this decline and solutions to reverse it.

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



Bumble bee -
Thinkstock by Getty Images

February Half-day Field Trip

Logan Martin Dam

February 6, 2016 - 7 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Logan Martin Dam on the Coosa River is a magnet for birds of many species as the shoals below the dam offer first-rate fishing for waders, gulls, ducks, cormorants, and most notably, bald eagles. This half-day trip will take us to an Alabama Power Company observation area overlooking the water just below the dam. Some time will be spent here, and then we will take a stroll along a wooded trail that follows the river, looking for some of our winter land birds such as hermit thrush, winter wren, and yellow-rumped warbler. Later in the morning, we will cross the dam to the picnic area overlooking the deep water above the dam. Here we will look for divers such as common loons and red-breasted mergansers which are occasionally seen here in winter. Meanwhile, we will continue to scan the skies for bald eagles, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks.

Meeting Place: Eastwood McDonalds, 1569 Montclair Road, at 7 a.m. We'll take I-20 east to the first Leeds exit (Exit 140), and then take U.S. Highway 78 East to a right turn on Alabama Highway 25 South at the old wooden railroad trestle in Leeds. We will stay on this road for roughly 18 miles through very scenic country as we pass through Sterrett and the small



Bald Eagle - Thinkstock by Getty Images

community of Calcis. Our path will next take a left fork onto County Road 60, which will cross U.S. Highway 231 and lead to the entrance of the lower dam parking lot on the right.

Please bring layered outerwear, snacks and beverages, and a picnic lunch. Scopes and cameras are welcome. Birmingham Audubon will have binoculars to borrow for those that may need them.

Trip Leaders: Anne Miller - 205-902-1389
and Susan Barrow - 205-253-8667



SoSo for the Record

Sightings October 8 through November 27, 2015

On November 9, a beautiful adult male White-eared Hummingbird was reported in Theodore, Alabama. It was banded by Fred Bassett. This was the first record of this species for Alabama, and it was well documented. It was featured on the front page of the Mobile Press Register as well as being written up in the Mississippi Press and the Birmingham News.

Other Sightings:

- 10/8 **Roseate Spoonbill**; Middle Pond at Blakely Mud Lakes , Mobile, AL (SM).
- 10/14 **Plumbeous Vireo**; Wetlands Trail, Florence, AL (DS).
- 11/4 **Wood Stork (6)**; South of Greensboro, AL (JS).
- 11/5 **Pine Siskin**; Huntsville, AL (SM).
- 11/8 **American White Pelican**; Several hundred were seen flying over-head near Huntsville, AL (CG).
- 11/13 **Common Nighthawk**; UAB (GH).
- 11/27 **Franklins Gull**; Alabama Point near Gulf Shores, AL (SD).
Black Scoter (93); Fishing pier, Gulf State Park, AL (SD).

Contributors:

Fred Bassett
 Scot Duncan
 Charles Grisham
 Greg Harber
 Sue Moske
 Damien Simbeck
 Judy Self



White-eared Hummingbird -
Thinkstock by Getty Images



Plumbeous Vireo -
Thinkstock by Getty Images

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

Eastlake Park Birds and Brews

Sunday, January 24, 2016
2 P.M.

1st Avenue North,
and 84th St. North

Eastlake Park is the birthplace of Birmingham Audubon's Urban Bird Habitat initiative. Efforts to protect and enhance the heron rookery on the lake served as the catalyst for our extensive Urban Bird Habitat projects. Join us for a leisurely stroll around the park and its variety of habitats that may host both resident and migratory birds. Learn which birds can be found in which habitat. This event will also provide information regarding Birmingham Audubon's Eastlake Park Project, and the efforts being made to protect the heron rookery on the island. After our walk, we'll visit the Avondale Brewery or Post Office Pies for refreshments and a snack.

We will meet in the Shepherd Senior Center Parking lot which is beside the Eastlake Park Public Swimming Pool on 84th Street North. The parking lot is about one block north of First Avenue North. Please join us at 2 p.m. for a fun and educational afternoon. We will have binoculars to loan to those who need them.

Trip Leader: Hans Paul,
cooterpl4@gmail

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/East+Lake+Park/@33.570943,-86.72592,17z/data=!3m1!4b!4m6!1m3!3m2!1s0x0000000000000000:0xaa51648769a41fb2!2sEast+Lake+Park!3m1!1s0x0000000000000000:0xaa51648769a41fb2>

Gifts in Memory

Thank you to donors who have made gifts to Birmingham Audubon in memory of late members, leaders and friends. Gifts to remember or honor individuals can be made online at www.birminghamaudubon.org or by forwarding to Birmingham Audubon, Attn. Suzanne Langley, 3720 4th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35222.

Maureen Shaffer Memorial Gifts

Ken & Rufino Ward
 Lela Anne Brewer
 Robert & Catherine Taylor
 Ken & Vicki Marion
 Michael & Joan Russell
 Elizabeth Motherwell
 Harriett Wright
 Alan & Doris Gertler
 Donald & Ann Sweeney
 Elberta G. Reid
 Lida I. Hill
 Pelham Rowan
 Shirley Farrell
 Dorothy Gerard
 Cathy Rockett

Elizabeth Mills Memorial Gift

Elberta G. Reid

Charles Holley Midgley, Sr. Memorial Gift

Suzanne Langley

February Field Trip Coleman Lake - Talladega National Forest Shoal Creek District

Saturday, February 20, 2016 - 7 A.M.

Red-cockaded woodpeckers and red crossbills are among the two most uncommon species in Alabama, but we hope to see both species on our day-long field trip to Coleman Lake and the nearby Pinhoti Trail in the Talladega National Forest. Fox and Bachman's sparrows may also be found here with some regularity, and golden eagles have been seen on this trip in past years.

Following a picnic lunch in the field, we can continue birding at scenic Pine Glen Campground just south of Coleman Lake in the national forest. Shoal Creek flows through the campground, and we can expect to find typical winter woodland songbirds while walking the easy trails here.

Travel plans: Depart at 7 a.m. from the Eastwood McDonald's, 1569 Montclair Road, 35210, and caravan east on I-20 to the Hardee's in Heflin in Cleburne County at exit 199. We expect to arrive here at approximately 8:30 a.m., if you wish to

meet us here. To reach Coleman Lake and the Pinhoti Trail-head, follow U.S. Highway 78 east for 8.5 miles to Edwardsville. Turn left at the sign for Coleman Lake on County Rd 61 in Edwardsville and follow it for approximately 7.5 miles. Turn right at the sign for Coleman Lake on County Road 532, and right onto County Road 500 in approximately .7 mile. The entrance to Coleman Lake Recreation Area is about 1.5 miles ahead on the right.

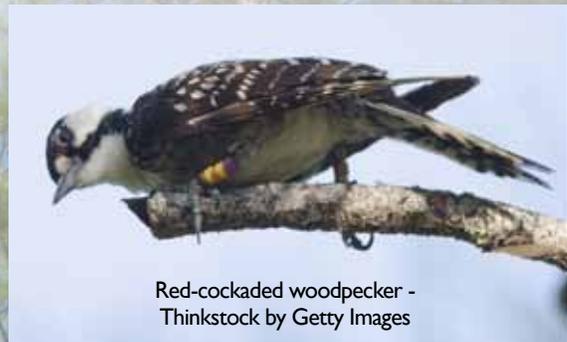
Remember to bring your picnic lunch and plenty of fluids for a day in the field, and be sure to dress in layers to stay warm.

Trip leader: Greg Harber, 205-251-2133 (home), or 205-807-8055 (cell; day of trip only, please) or gharber@mindspring.com.

GPS: 33.7817328 -85.557492



Red crossbill - Thinkstock by Getty Images



Red-cockaded woodpecker - Thinkstock by Getty Images

Long-leaf pine forest - Thinkstock by Getty Images

69th Annual Banquet

Walker Golder, Deputy Director of Audubon North Carolina, and leader in the Audubon Sharing our Seas and Shores conservation strategy, served as the Diane and Tram Sessions Speaker for the 69th Birmingham Audubon Annual Banquet. Approximately 85 participants were on hand, including members of Birmingham Audubon's new Junior Board, to enjoy Walker's presentation on flyway scale conservation of threatened and endangered shorebirds.

(Left) Walker Golder. (Right) left to right: Ken Blackwood, Walker Golder, Hans Paul, Michelle Blackwood.



Maureen Shaffer - Remembered

Birmingham Audubon Past President and Committee Chair,

Members and friends have shared their memories of Maureen Shaffer over the past several weeks since her death in mid-November. We thought some of our members might enjoy excerpts from her eulogy by Greg Harber.

Good morning, my name is Greg Harber, and like you, I am here this morning to bid a fond farewell to Maureen. Maureen was a family member to some, a good and treasured friend to others, and to still others, an active and vital member of organizations like the Alabama Ornithological Society and the Birmingham Audubon Society.

I can honestly say that I do not know if I first met Maureen when I moved to Birmingham in June, 1986 and became a member of this parish, Our Lady of Sorrows, or whether I first met Maureen at a Birmingham Audubon meeting or field trip. Either way, suffice it to say, that Maureen has been in my life for nearly 30 years and I'd like to share with you this morning a few words in remembrance of her.

Maureen was a member of the Alabama Ornithological Society and the Birmingham Audubon Society, and she served in a variety of capacities on their board of directors. Most recently she served as chairman of the Meetings Committee for AOS, and everyone appreciated her warm and welcoming nature. She also lent her considerable birding skills to the field trips committee, introducing many a new birder to the joy and wonder of birdwatching, and to the entire outdoors, really.

Maureen was also good to the Birmingham Audubon Society. She was generous with her time, and during the course of her many years with the organization she impacted almost every facet of our chapter. Maureen was chair of our Field Trips, Archives and Campouts committees, and was actively involved in the Education, Communications and Conservation committees. And perhaps most importantly, Maureen was President of our chapter during the formative years of our office's opening at the McWane Science Center.

I can clearly remember the many meetings when a small group of we BAS volunteers met in each other's homes and began the planning process that led to the opening of the office and the hiring of Bianca Allen, our first employee. It was a momentous time for us, as this step was the culmination of many, many months of discussion and decision-making. The timing was such that the implementation of our decisions fell to Maureen during her two-year term as President, and she served admirably.

Looking back, I cannot think of anyone who was better suited to that role than Maureen. She had been an active and dedicated member for so many years, and perhaps more importantly, Maureen knew that the secret to what made Birmingham Audubon unique among other conservation organizations in Alabama was that we were like family; not numbers or email addresses on a membership list, not someone who happened to reside in a certain key legislative district, but members of an extended family of like-minded people who shared a common interest in birds and nature, and who wanted to see it conserved. Maureen led by example; we would be wise to continue following in her footsteps.

Maureen was also kind. These past few days I have perused the comments that others have posted on various social media sites and other outlets, and it was obvious to me from reading those comments that she was a good and true friend to many of you. Chances are you have one or two special moments captured vividly in your memory; my advice to you is to share it often with others, write it down if you must, and treasure it always. I am fortunate that one of my memories was captured on film. One standing joke among many of us is that no matter how cold it was outside, Maureen hardly ever, ever wore a jacket. I think Joan and Mike Russell summed it up best, though, when they wrote that she didn't need one because she was so warm-hearted!

I also know that Maureen treasured her time with her family, her aunt, uncle, cousins, and their kids. She'd often tell me that she would be spending a week at the coast with them, or that she had bought a certain gift for a special someone she had in mind. It was obvious to me that although Maureen did not have any siblings, she enjoyed being part of a large, loving family. Everyone should be so lucky.

And speaking of lucky, how many of us here reaped the harvests of Maureen's backyard garden? In my book, anyone who shares homegrown produce with you is a true friend, indeed!

And I can recall that Maureen was her mother's caregiver for many years, which only served to strengthen the mother-daughter bond they had forged together through the years. Caring for an elderly parent is surely one of the purest expressions of love, is it not? I have no doubt that this kindness of heart and generosity of spirit was of great comfort to Maureen's mother.

Lastly, I think what I admired most about Maureen was the fact that she did not have to proclaim her faith from a mountaintop, because she wore it in her heart and wove it into every fabric of her life. You knew by her actions and the way she treated others that Christ was the center of her life, and we are all the richer for it.

In closing, and given Maureen's love of birds and nature, the words of today's Responsorial especially ring true: *"And he will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of His hand."*

"Requiescat in pace," Maureen, rest in peace.



Maureen Shaffer - seated, center front

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

If you are interested in joining National Audubon Society, visit: www.audubon.org

Birmingham Audubon's policy is to not share or sell our mailing list. Your privacy is of the utmost importance to us.

Birmingham Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Office Address and Mailing Address:

Birmingham Audubon Society
3720 Fourth Avenue S, Second Floor
Birmingham, AL 35222
Phone: 205-719-3678



Suzanne Langley, Executive Director
Andrew T. Coleman, Ph.D., Program Director
Helena Uber-Wamble, Teaching Naturalist

Email: basoffice@birminghamaudubon.org

Web Site: www.birminghamaudubon.org

Join us on social media:

Facebook: Birmingham Audubon

Instagram: @bhamaudubon

Twitter: @bhamaudubon

PRINTED ON
RECYCLED PAPER
NO BLEACH USED

Flicker Flashes

Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society

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

Flicker Flashes is published eight times a year by
the Birmingham Audubon Society

Editor: Ty Keith 205-602-8037

Graphic Design: Michelle Blackwood

Please check your mailing label for your
membership expiration date.

Consider gifting a membership to Birmingham Audubon

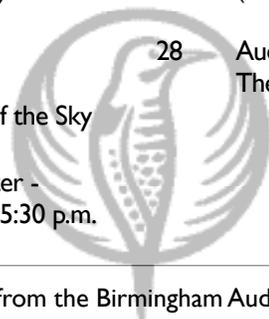
www.birminghamaudubon.org
or 205-719-3678

January 2016

- 10 - Feb. 20 - Winter Audubon Coastal Bird Survey Period
(See page 1)
- 16 Guntersville Field Trip (See page 2)
- 18 Wheeler Wildlife Refuge - Beginner Bird Walk (See page 2)
- 21 Membership Program - Assessing Patterns and Causes of
Bumble Bee Decline in North America (See page 3)
- 24 Birds and Brews, Eastlake Park (See page 4)
- 24 Audubon Teaches Nature, Birds of Prey, Masters of the Sky
- 30 The Salamander Festival, Homewood Senior Center -
Featuring Alabama Wildlife Center Birds - 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.
(visit: www.shadescreek.org for more information)

February 2016

- 6 Half-day Field Trip: Logan Martin Dam (See page 3)
- 18 Membership Program
- 20 Coleman Lake - Talladega National Forest,
Shoal Creek District (See page 5)
- 1/10 to 2/20 - Winter Audubon Coastal Bird Survey Period
(See page 1)
- 28 Audubon Teaches Nature, Swallow-tailed Kites:
Their Incidence and Status in Alabama



Copies of *Flicker Flashes* can be viewed and downloaded from the Birmingham Audubon web site: www.birminghamaudubon.org