February Monthly Meeting
City of Hoover Green Initiatives
Presented by: David Lindon, Fleet Management Director for the City of Hoover
Thursday, February 18, 2010 at 7:00 P.M.
Birmingham Zoo Auditorium

Over the last 2-3 years the City of Hoover has converted most of their vehicles from gasoline and diesel to “flex-fuel”, a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent conventional gasoline. The ethanol for this fuel is produced from the city’s wood scraps which are processed at a demonstration plant in Livingston. “We wanted to show everybody we can do this,” said Mark Warner, the chief executive of Gulf Coast Energy, the plant operator. Mr. Warner said he believes this is the first time municipal wood waste has been transformed into liquid fuel. Wood has the potential to be one of the principal “cellulosic” sources of ethanol in the future, and may one day sup- plant corn, currently the principal source of the ethanol produced in the U.S. Mr. Lindon will bring us up to date with regards to this and some of the other “green” initiatives the City of Hoover has taken.

Come Early for Refreshments and Conversation!

Audubon Teaches Nature
Caves and Cave Life ~ All about Alabama’s Underground Wonders
Presented by David Frings, Director of Oak Mountain Interpretive Center
Sunday, February 21, 2010 at 2:00 P.M.
Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

The next seminar in the Audubon Teaches Nature series will take us to a totally new environment – underground! Alabama is blessed with a plethora of caves, especially in the northern portion of the state, and so it is no surprise that a variety of animals have adapted to life in these environments.

While Alabamians readily enjoy the species diversity Alabama has to offer, many unique animals found underground in the state’s many caves are unfamiliar to most people. Several rare and endangered species are found nowhere else on earth. A special exhibit at the Interpretive Center will help you to appreciate these animals and their adaptations!

We will gather for refreshments prior to the program, in the front Observation Room at the Alabama Wildlife Center. After refreshments and some social time together, we will move to the Oak Mountain Interpretive Center for the afternoon’s program. Door prizes will be awarded but you must register and be present in order to win. The programs are free but park admission is $3.00 per person.

The next seminar in the schedule:
March 28  Greg Harber, Return of the Spring Migrants ~ Catching the Yucatan Express

Come early for fellowship and refreshments in the Observation Room at The Center!
Audubon Mountain Workshop
May 13-16, 2010

Make your plans now to join your family and friends for 4 days of fun, learning and relaxation at the Audubon Mountain Workshop, to be held May 13-16, 2010. This will be our 33rd year! Once again, Alpine Camp for Boys will host our workshop at their beautiful campus on the banks of the Little River across from DeSoto State Park.

Workshop participants have the opportunity to take classes covering a wide variety of topics, such as: birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects, geology and astronomy, trees and shrubs, wildflowers, forest and stream ecology and mountain crafts. Experts teach all of the classes and most are taught in the field.

In addition to the adult-oriented classes there will be a Young Naturalist’s Program for children ages 5-12. During class time our experienced staff closely monitors the children while their parents/guardians are enjoying their own classes. This arrangement offers a wonderful opportunity for young families and/or grandparents and grandchildren to spend quality time together in the camp’s idyllic surroundings. Either way, it is fun for all ages!

Your registration fee covers the cost of tuition, room and all meals. Participants are housed in rustic, one-room cabins and the camp staff will serve us three square meals a day in the dining hall. The Gym will serve as our main classroom and Alpine Lodge as our gathering place, library and canteen.

Look for the Audubon Mountain Workshop brochure inserted in this newsletter and send in your registration today. Then kick back and relax in the rocking chairs on the back porch of Alpine Lodge, and let the soothing sounds of the wind, the water and the woods fill your mind and renew your spirit.

Birmingham Audubon Announces Scholarships for Local Teachers to Attend our 33rd Mountain Workshop
Mentone, Alabama, May 13-16, 2010

Scholarships for teachers in Jefferson and Shelby counties are available for this workshop. The scholarships cover tuition that includes lodging and all meals. To qualify, applicants must teach science in elementary, middle, or high school. See the BAS website at www.birminghamaudubon.org for the scholarship application and more information.

Teachers will not need to miss more than one day of school since the workshop does not begin until dinner on Thursday, May 13th, and the trip to Mentone takes about two hours.

The application deadline is April 1, 2010. For more information, call BAS Education Director Helena Uber-Wamble at (205) 353-5972 or Education Chairman Ann Sweeney at 879-7127.

Audubon members, please tell your teacher friends about these scholarships!

BAS Education Committee

Count for Fun; Count for the Future
The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)
February 12-15, 2010

It’s easy as 1, 2, 3…

2. Count the birds you see, wherever you choose to count.
3. Report your results online at www.birdcount.org
4. You can repeat your count at the same place on each day of the GBBC, or you can visit other locations.
5. View results – online maps and lists are updated throughout the count, making it easy to see how your birds fit into the big picture.
February Field Trips

Downtown Birmingham - Half-day  
Saturday, February 6th, 8:00 a.m.

This month's half-day trip will be to downtown Birmingham. Plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. at the McDonald's on University Blvd, near St. Vincent's Hospital. We will visit a number of city parks and trails in search of winter birds. Among our options: Patton Park to look for waterfowl on the pond and woodpeckers in the hackberry trees, Sloss Furnaces to look for shrikes, sparrows and other songbirds, or Vulcan Trail with its paved, easy access and splendid view of the city.

Next, we'll go to the viaduct on 22nd street. The tall buildings and open areas along the railroad tracks are good locations to look for Cooper's Hawks, American Kestrels and other raptors as they hunt the numerous pigeons. If we're lucky we may be able to locate the Peregrine Falcon that has been observed in various locations downtown this winter.

Our final stop is the McWane Science Center, where we will bird from its rooftop. A quick tour of the Center will be offered at the end of the trip. After the tour, those who wish may join us for lunch at McWane's food court. For more information contact our trip leader, Greg Harber, at 251-2133.

Coleman Lake & Pine Glen Campground, Talladega National Forest  
Saturday, February 20th, 7:00 a.m.

The newly proposed Appalachian Highlands Birding Trail site of Coleman Lake in the Talladega National Forest, the home of Red Crossbills and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, is our choice for the February field trip. Along with the "Red" birds, we'll have chances for Fox, Field and White-throated Sparrows. Coleman Lake is closed for the winter, so we will have our midday meal at nearby Pine Glen Campground, on the banks of Shoal Creek.

Travel Plans: Meet at the Eastwood McDonald's on Montclair Road at 7:00 a.m. From there, we will caravan east on I-20 to the Heflin exit (Exit 199). This is a drive of approximately 70 miles. We will regroup at the Hardees for a rest break, and then proceed to the parking lot for the Pinhoti trailhead on FS RD 500, near Coleman Lake to bird for the Crossbills and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. For those who wish to meet us at the Pinhoti trailhead, take US-78 east from Heflin for 5.7 miles to the Coleman Lake sign (CR-61). Turn left onto CR-61 and proceed 7.6 miles to FS RD 500 (Coleman Lake sign). Turn right onto FS RD 500 and drive for .4 miles to Coleman Lake campground sign. Turn right and continue on FS RD 500 to reach the parking area on the right.

Please keep in mind that this is a time of change, from late winter to very early spring. Weather conditions can shift from mild, balmy to damp cold. Dress in layers and bring warm jackets, gloves, wind and waterproof outer garments. As this will be a full day, in addition to a picnic, bring drinks and snacks. Have a full tank of gas. Don't forget your camera and binoculars.

For questions or further information, please call our trip leader Maureen Shaffer 205-822-8728.

See you on the 20th!

The Birmingham Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges the following gifts and memorial donations:

Gift: George Cusick

Memorial for Janelle H. Findlay from Warren and Gwen Findlay
Memorial for Robert R. Reid, Jr. from Dinah Bear

Also, we note with sadness the passing of long time BAS member Ruth Monk.
A Valentine for Birds

Valentines and love in the air tells us it is February! While we humans are sending valentines and candy to our friends and family, the birds are searching for food. After the cold months of December and January, some food for the birds may be scarce. To help the birds we can “send” three different Bird Valentines to them.

**Pinecone Valentine**

- Pine cones
- String
- Peanut butter - plain or crunchy
- Spoon or butter knife
- Birdseed
- Large pan

1. Put birdseed into the large pan to cover the bottom.
2. To hang the pinecone, take a large pinecone and tie a string around the top, about three rows below the top. Leave plenty of string hanging to tie it on a tree branch.
3. Rub peanut butter all over the pinecone using a spoon or butter knife. You do not want the peanut butter too thick, just a thin layer to hold the birdseed.
4. Once the pinecone is completely covered in peanut butter, roll it in birdseed.
5. Make as many as you want to hang in trees at your home or school.

A stale bagel can be substituted for the pinecone.

**Citrus Feeders**

- Grapefruit or orange halves
- Birdseed
- String/ribbon

1. To hang the citrus halves, three to four holes need to be evenly spaced around the top edge of the halves. Ask an adult to help make the holes.
2. Make the holes about a half an inch from the top edge.
3. Tie the string or ribbon through the holes. If you make four holes two long pieces of string can be used. See illustration.
4. Fill citrus half with bird seed.
5. Hang in a tree.

**Popcorn and Fruit**

Garland is hung during Christmas but why can’t we hang it for Valentine’s Day?

- Popped corn
- Cranberries, grapes, and/or raisins
- Needle and thread

1. Thread the string through the eye of the needle. You may need an adult to help with this.
2. String together popcorn and fruit. You can make patterns by alternating the popcorn and fruit, use three popcorons with one fruit and repeat, etc.
3. Drape your Valentine garland in trees.

Place the Valentine bird feeders in areas that are not too windy. Once you have your Bird Valentines delivered, watch the birds flock to your yard! How many birds can you identify?

Have a Birdy Valentine’s Day!

Cardinals are Red
Bluebirds are Blue
Hang your feeders
And the birds will love you!
Here follows a summary of a recently issued report and a new proposal for ozone standards:

According to the Green Resource Center of Alabama’s annual Green Report (http://media.al.com/bn/other/GreenReport09.pdf), Alabama has stepped up efforts to “green” buildings and manufacturing practices, made major public land acquisitions and initiated pollution control efforts. The Homewood-based clearinghouse for environmental information published its second annual roundup of advances on the environmental front. The Green Resource Center’s founder, Scott Walton, said the report is something of a “state of the state” report on the adoption of “social, economic and environmental best practices. Alabama isn't doing everything right, but there is a lot of good going on and the report highlights those things,” Walton said. Among those highlighted is a $20.9 million federal grant that is paying for programmable thermostats and new energy-efficient heating and cooling systems and kitchen equipment at prisons statewide. At Limestone Correctional Facility, it’s paying for three generators that will convert wood chips into gases that can generate limited electrical power. The Department of Corrections also is building a biogas plant to convert food waste and old cooking oil into methane for use as kitchen fuel, according to the report. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs used federal money to insulate 800 houses of low-income Alabamians in 2009 and, with additional federal money on the way, officials estimate they’ll be able to weatherize 6,500 more homes by 2012.

On the land preservation front, Little River Canyon National Preserve and Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge got money from Congress to expand. Also at Little River, The Nature Conservancy acquired 2,186 acres, some of which will be added to the preserve with the rest going to the state for a Wildlife Management Area. In 2009, the land preservation program Forever Wild added 500 acres to its Walls of Jericho Preserve in Jackson County, 1,343 acres to the Lowndes Wildlife Management area, and 3,007 acres of rare Black Belt prairie and pine forest that adjoins the historic grounds of Old Cahawba. Forever Wild also protected more than 61,000 acres of Wildlife Management Area lands in Bibb, Tuscaloosa, Walker and Shelby counties through a 93-year lease with a timber company.

The trend toward building green continued with numerous LEED-certified building projects, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, either announced, completed or certified in 2009, including the new Children’s Hospital under construction in Birmingham, Ruffner Mountain’s new Nature Center and the Vestavia Hills Public Library.

The city of Birmingham has a $2.5 million project to replace heating systems in eight city recreation center gymnasiums with geothermal ground-source heat pumps. The city expects to save about $250,000 a year in heating and cooling costs. On the auto manufacturing front, Mercedes announced it would build a hybrid version of the M Class sport utility. Also, both Mercedes and Honda have completely eliminated the waste they had been sending to landfills, according to the report.

There also are some unusual projects out there such as the Alabama Rain Barrel Project, which was launched in Montgomery and Auburn. The project converts 55-gallon “secret syrup” barrels donated by Coca-Cola into rain barrels for water harvesting and storm water control. It will expand across the state in 2010.

A coalition of groups on the Tennessee River put out 100 fishing line disposal bins at public fishing areas throughout the Tennessee River basin. The line can persist in nature for hundreds of years and is a danger to wildlife. The program is being expanded to lakes and reservoirs statewide. Walton said it’s gratifying to see government, corporations and organizations adopting green practices. “People are starting to get it more than ever before,” Walton said.

On January 7, 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed stricter standards for ozone pollution. These standards could require state and local governments to find additional means to combat smog in Alabama. Depending on the level of final standards, EPA estimated that the proposals could yield health benefits of $13 billion to $100 billion by reducing premature death, emergency room and hospital visits and work and school days missed due to ozone related symptoms.

Ground level ozone is formed when pollution from industrial facilities, power plants and motor vehicles reacts to sunshine. It can create health problems such as asthma and heart and lung disease. The EPA’s new proposed standards would lower the emission level to 60-70 parts per billion as opposed to the current standard of 75 ppb. Jefferson County would not meet the proposed standard. Also, adoption of the standard would mean that other Alabama counties would face pollution controls. In Jefferson County, some reductions should be on the way because of pollution control devices Alabama Power has installed on its’ plants. However, the Birmingham area needs to work harder on reducing traffic congestion. Frank Rambo, an attorney for the Southern Environment Law Center, stated that building more roads and widening existing ones are not effective measures to reduce pollution. There should be a rethinking on transportation planning measures for the area.
Winter Bird Survival Challenge

_How are feathered friends surviving the season?_

_Ithaca, NY—_How do birds withstand wicked winter weather and other daily threats to survival, even in warmer climates? A new environmental challenge from the Celebrate Urban Birds (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/celebration/) project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology invites participants to show how birds are surviving in their neighborhoods this winter. It can be a photo, artwork, video, even a story or a poem describing how birds are finding the food, water, and shelter they need. People of all ages can participate as well as groups such as schools, libraries, clubs, and businesses. Celebrate Urban Birds is a free, year-round citizen-science project focused on birds in neighborhood settings.

"It’s unbelievable how even tiny birds can survive being outdoors 24/7 in places where winter is cold and snowy," says project leader Karen Purcell. "We want to see how they’re getting along. It might be a crow huddling near a chimney to get warm, visits to bird feeders, a berry bush that birds raid for food, a fountain birds use for water, or maybe even one of the lucky birds soaking up the sun in a warm, southern state."

Prizes include a pair of Eagle Optics binoculars, bird feeders, a bird-song calendar, books, posters, cards and more. The first 50 entrants will receive a copy of the "Little Green Places" poster and selected images and videos will be posted on the Celebrate Urban Birds website.

(Continued on page 7)
~ Membership Application ~
Birmingham Audubon Society/National Audubon Society

Yearly membership includes a quarterly subscription to Audubon magazine and 8 issues of Flicker Flashes, the Birmingham chapter newsletter.

Name: _________________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________  State: __________  Zip: _________
Phone: ( ) ______________________

☐ Introductory Membership ~ $20.00
Mail application and check to:
Birmingham Audubon Society
P.O. Box 314
Birmingham, AL 35201
Phone: 205-714-8227

☐ Membership Renewal ~ $20.00
Mail application and check to:
National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250
Phone: 1-800-274-4201

☐ Senior (62 & better) and ☐ student (full-time) memberships available for $15.00

My check for $___________ is enclosed.

Please make all checks payable to: National Audubon Society

(Continued from page 6)

How to enter:

1. Email entries to urbanbirds@cornell.edu. If you submit a video, post it on YouTube and send us the link.
2. Write "Survival_yourfirstname yourlastname yourstate" in the subject line.
3. Include your mailing address in your email.
4. Explain why you submitted your entry—describe your winter conditions and what you observe the birds doing during winter.
5. One entry per person, please.

Deadline for entries is February 15, 2010

Visit the Celebrate Urban Birds (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/celebration/) website for more information, to see entries for past challenges, and to read the terms of agreement for all entries.

Contact: Karen Purcell, Project Leader, (607) 254-2455, urbanbirds@cornell.edu

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a membership institution dedicated to interpreting and conserving the earth’s biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Visit the Cornell Lab’s web site at http://www.birds.cornell.edu
Please check your mailing label for your membership expiration date.

Birmingham Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 314
Birmingham, AL 35201

Business Office:
200 19th Street North
Birmingham, AL 35203
(205) 714-8227

Email: Audubon@McWane.org

DATED MATERIAL
Please deliver by January 31, 2010

Printed on recycled paper

Birmingham Audubon Society
www.birminghamaudubon.org
(205) 879-7709

Flicker Flashes
Published by The Birmingham Audubon Society

Flicker Flashes is published eight times a year by the Birmingham Audubon Society.
Editor: Greg Harber (205) 251-2133
Co-Ass't Editor: Bianca J. Allen (205) 854-5233
Co-Ass't Editor: Donna Shook (205) 664-2982

February 2009

1  Flicker Flashes articles due, March issue
6  BAS 1/2 day Field Trip, Around Birmingham Tour
13 Purple Martin House Cleaning Project, The Wildlife Center, 8:00 a.m.
18 Board Meeting, Birmingham Zoo Auditorium (BZA), 5:45 p.m.
   General Meeting, BZA, 7:00 p.m.
   David Lindon, Fleet Management Director for the City of Hoover
20 BAS Field Trip, Coleman Lake
21 Audubon Teaches Nature, Oak Mountain Interpretive Center, 2:00 p.m.

March 2009

1  Flicker Flashes articles due, April issue
6  BAS 1/2 day Field Trip, Saginaw Swamp area
18 Board Meeting, Birmingham Zoo Auditorium (BZA), 5:45 p.m.
   General Meeting, BZA, 7:00 p.m.
   William R. Foster, D.V.M., "Trails of Africa"
20 BAS Field Trip, Selma Area - Trail of Phillip Henry Gosse
27 Sessions Sanctuary Workday
28 Audubon Teaches Nature, The Wildlife Center, 2:00 p.m.

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