October Monthly Meeting
Gardening for the Birds
Presented by Herb Lewis
Thursday, October 18, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.
Birmingham Zoo Lodge

We have a treat in store for us at the October membership meeting when Herb Lewis of Huntsville presents his program, "Gardening for the Birds." Since retiring from the defense industry, Herb has combined his personal hobbies of landscaping, birding, and photography into creating a natural wildlife habitat. His interest has developed into a training program for the Master Gardener classes and other workshops taught at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. He was made Honorary Master Gardener of North Alabama in 2007. He and his wife Terry travel extensively, and his bird-watching interest has expanded from the backyard to many locations throughout the U.S. and foreign countries. Herb is currently serving as a volunteer at the Huntsville Botanical Garden.

This program will illustrate the benefits of gardening for the birds with a small garden. Some of his techniques for developing a backyard habitat to attract a wide variety of birds are included along with personal photographs of the birds that come to his garden. His presentation shows personalized methods for feeding, providing shelter and housing, and incorporating water features into the garden habitat. His goal is to share the enjoyment and benefits resulting from expanding the vision of backyard gardening. For a sneak preview of what Herb has created, visit his website at http://www.creativebirding.com/

Join us in welcoming Herb Lewis to Birmingham.
Fellowship and snack time begins at 6:30 p.m.
Come Early for Refreshments and Conversation

Note that the date is not as listed on the calendar last month.

Audubon Teaches Nature Kicks Off Another Season

Your Introduction to Alabama Birding Trails
Sunday, October 21st, 2:00 p.m. ~ Paul Franklin, Guest Speaker
Alabama Wildlife Center Auditorium

I am happy to announce that the 2012-2013 slate of Audubon Teaches Nature (ATN) seminars has been confirmed, and I 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 are 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.

The first speaker in the series is well known to BAS members and the Birmingham birding community. Paul Franklin, a past president of BAS and the author of the Birding column that appears in The Birmingham News, will inaugurate the series with a presentation on Alabama Birding Trails. Paul wrote the site descriptions that appear on the Alabama Birding Trails web site (http://www.alabamabirdingtrails.com) and took most of the site photos as well. If you have the desire to learn more about birdwatching in Alabama you’ll certainly want to attend this program as Paul draws of his wealth of experience in birding in Alabama and sharing that knowledge with others.

(Continued on page 6)
October Field Trips

Fort Toulouse, Jackson Island and Confederate Memorial Park
October 20, 2012 - 7:00 a.m.

Our day will start with a visit to Fort Toulouse National Historical Park, which is located where the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers meet to form the Alabama River near Wetumpka. We will explore the many features of the park including a Mississippian Native American mound site and the William Bartram arboretum with its boardwalk path. The surrounding woods often contain sparrows, winter wrens, hermit thrush and blue-headed vireo at this time of year. Fall migrants may be present between the woods and the park’s open fields. Please note that there is a $2.00 admission fee per adult for the park. Additional information about the park may be found at www.forttoulouse.com.

Next on our itinerary is a stop at Jackson Island near Montgomery. The hedge rows along Jackson Lake Road could present us with an opportunity to see various sparrow species such as savannah, white-throated, fox and field. This same road also passes through a small patch of pine woods where we hope to encounter brown-headed nuthatches and pine warblers. Other potential sightings may include double-crested cormorants, red-headed woodpeckers and loggerhead shrike. There may also be a small entrance fee to this site, but this could not be confirmed by press time.

Finally, we will travel to Confederate Memorial Park in Chilton County. The park’s nature trail and cemeteries could yield up some interesting feathered friends.

Travel Plans: We will meet at the Hoover McDonalds on US-31 across from the Riverchase Galleria Mall (1731 Montgomery Hwy Hoover, AL 35244). Plan to arrive early in order to have breakfast, if desired. Please consider carpooling for the trip. Leaving at 7:00 a.m., we will proceed on I-459 to I-65 South towards Montgomery to exit 173 Northern Blvd [Hwy-152] east to US-231 North. Then we will travel approximately 8 ½ miles, passing a Key West Inn on left, to a right turn onto Fort Toulouse Road. It is then another 2 ½ miles to the entrance to the park.

This is a full day trip, so bring a lunch, snacks, and drinks and have a full tank of gas. We look forward to spending the day with you.

Trip Leader: Susan Barrow 942-8667[h] 253-8667[c]. Please call if you have any questions.

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Gosse Nature Guide - “Ferns of Alabama” - Book Signing
October 25, 2012

_Ferns of Alabama_, by Jack Short and Dan Spaulding, will soon be in the book stores according by a recent announcement of the University of Alabama Press. Birmingham Audubon and 6 other organizations are co-hosting the official book launch and signing on Thursday, October 25, at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. An invitation to this gala event is enclosed. Please come, bring your friends, and RSVP so we will know how many to prepare for. Our fellow hosts are Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham Fern Society, Blanche Dean Chapter of the Alabama Wildflower Society, Crepe Myrtle Garden Club, Little Garden Club, and Red Mountain Garden Club.

One of the beautiful new Gosse Nature Guide series, of which Birmingham Audubon is an inaugural sponsor, this book will replace our own Blanche Dean's fern book that was originally published almost half a century ago and is now out of print. Each individual account of fern species found in Alabama will be accompanied by a color photograph, a botanical drawing, and a map showing county-by-county distribution. Horsetails, club mosses and quillworts are also covered. Taxonomic keys designed for the non-scientific user make it easy to pinpoint the identity of a subject being studied in the field, and a glossary explains necessary botanical terms.

Both authors will be on hand to sign books and to give the evening program. Copies of the book will be available for purchase during this event.

_BAS members are welcome to attend the early signing._

4:00-5:00 p.m. Host Party & Early Signing
5:00 p.m. Public Reception
5:30 p.m. Program

This is a celebration you do not want to miss!

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Elberta Reid
SoSo for the Record

Sightings from the field

3 August through 21 August, 2012

The eleventh day of August was the dedication day for the observation platform at Limestone Park in Alabaster. This special structure was made possible through the efforts of Birmingham Audubon members Anne Miller, Maureen Shaffer, and Ken Wills with the support of Alabaster Mayor David Frings. According to Ken, this location, part of the tupelo swamp complex of Shelby County, has provided great birding this summer. Sightings have included **anhinga**, **white ibis**, **roseate spoonbill**, and **wood stork**, all of which are normally birds of the Coastal Plain.

Many thanks to all who attended the dedication!

Other sightings were:

- **8/3** Yellow-crowned Night heron (3ad., 2juv.); East Lake (KW).
- **8/8** Chimney swift (150+); Southside/ Birmingham (BA,GH).
- **8/18** Wood duck; In their swimming pool, startling! (BS,MS).
- **8/19** Rufous hummingbird (banded); Leeds (BS,MS).
- **8/20** Common nighthawk (12+); Homewood (GH).
- **8/21** Northern waterthrush; Railroad Park (GH).

Contributors: Bianca Allen
David Frings
Greg Harber
Anne Miller

Bob and Martha Sargent
Maureen Shaffer
Ken Wills

Please submit sightings for November/December FF at least five days before the October 1st deadline to:
Ann Miller, 520 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, Al. 35209
annmiller520@aol.com

Thanks Greg!

Thank you to Greg Harber for his tireless commitment to Flicker Flashes as editor for the past four years.

“Greg’s talents as a birder were evident in the range of information members received each month,” says Hans Paul, BAS president. “We learned as much as we were entertained.”

Former BAS Administrative Director B. J. Allen said, “Greg didn’t just edit the newsletter, he solicited articles and writers, suggested improvements for each issue and wrote articles himself. Greg was so dedicated to his role as editor and always went above and beyond.

Prior to becoming editor, Greg worked as assistant editor. His combined time as editor and assistant editor represents 13 years.

Flicker Flashes is provided as a membership benefit eight times per year and is available in printed and online formats. Past issues of Flicker Flashes are available through the online archives located under the “News” tab at [www.birminghamaudubon.org](http://www.birminghamaudubon.org).

Ty Keith came on board as Flicker Flashes editor with the September 2012 issue, and Donna Shook continues to do wonderful work as the Graphic Designer. Congratulations Ty and best wishes. And, thank you to all who volunteer their time to provide our membership with an informative guide to BAS activities and interests.
Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?
By Shirley Farrell

Hanging bird feeders in order to attract birds can be very rewarding. Feeders will bring in the resident birds that live in the neighborhood throughout the year, winter-only residents, and visiting migrants. In order to attract as many species of birds as possible, you will need an assortment of bird feeders and food.

House-like, lantern-shaped, or tube feeders with large openings are great for seeds or mixtures of seed, such as black oil sunflower, striped sunflower, millet, and safflower. The birds that like these seeds are cardinals, titmice, chickadees, goldfinches, house finches, house sparrows, juncos, nuthatches, grosbeaks, and wrens. Doves, sparrows, and juncos prefer to eat on the ground, so seed offered on the ground will attract these species; however this may also attract chipmunks and squirrels.

An open tray feeder installed on a platform or hanging from a tree branch provides space for larger birds to perch and dine on items like nuts and dried fruit. In addition to the previously listed seed-eating birds, these feeders appeal to woodpeckers, mockingbirds, and sparrows.

Tube feeders with small openings are perfect for thistle. This is the favorite food of goldfinches, pine siskins, purple finches, and house finches. Nuthatches, wrens, and chickadees will also try to eat this seed. Thistle seed is also known as Nyjer seed.

Suet feeders have large holders for the blocks of this foodstuff, which can be purchased mixed with seeds, nuts, insects or even peanut butter. Putting out suet will draw woodpeckers, nuthatches, wrens, and pine warblers to the feeders.

Stop! Don’t put hummingbird feeders away yet! These small but gorgeous birds are still migrating through the area. Continue to fill and watch these feeders at least through November. Fill the feeders with one part sugar to four parts water. Food coloring is not required. If a hummingbird is seen after November 15, then it may be a winter hummingbird migrant. Contact Bob and Martha Sargent of the Hummer/Bird Study Group at Rubythroat@aol.com to report any wintering hummingbirds!

Remember to keep feeders clean of molded or sprouted seeds. When seeds get old, bacteria and mold could grow on them and harm the birds. Always wear gloves to clean feeders. Use hot water and little bit of dish soap to do the job. A small scrub brush or an old toothbrush can help clean in tight areas. Wash all parts of the feeders, and then rinse thoroughly with hot water. You can sanitize feeders using one part bleach to nine parts water. Set the feeders in the sanitizing solution for a few minutes. Then let the feeders completely dry before adding fresh seeds, so the new seed will not get wet and possibly mold. Bleach should always be handled under the supervision of an adult.

When feeders are kept clean and full of seeds, birds will flock to them. Don’t forget to have binoculars and a field guide next to the window to help identify the feathered friends dining in the yard!

We are looking for artists and writers: Send us your pictures, journal pages, stories and poems about birds, nature, wildlife, etc. If selected, your original work will be published in the Flicker Flashes.

Do you have any suggestions as to what you would like to read about in Kid's Corner? Send your ideas to:

Birmingham Audubon Society
Attn: Kids Corner
200 19th Street North
Birmingham, AL 35203-3117
Family Memories through Birding
By Helena Uber-Wamble

Birmingham Audubon’s education committee is excited to offer Family Bird Walks again this year. The first bird walk will be at a local hot spot designated as a birding site on the Appalachian Highlands Birding Trail, and the second walk takes us to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge.

Why Family Bird Walks? Parents who spend time with their children in the great outdoors can reap multiple benefits. The experience of having an outdoor adventure together is one benefit. Birding provides the chance to have that outdoor adventure with the bonus of exercise. No, one does not have to hike miles and miles to watch birds. But the simple act of getting up and moving around while being entertained by the sights and sounds of nature makes for a relaxing way to keep fit. Fresh air and Vitamin D from the sun are additional benefits gained from simply being in the outdoors. Birding gives a body time to attune to the rhythms of nature instead of the hustle and bustle of the highways and byways. You become more relaxed, and you begin to see things literally in a different light!

Another benefit is that our Family Bird walks are educational. Both adults and children have the opportunity learn about all the native and migratory birds that are encountered during the walk. Volunteers, leaders and educators will pass along facts about the birds being seen. Certain birds then can begin to be familiar “friends” that might be noticed in many other places. A bird song or call identified on this walk could be one previously heard somewhere like the backyard. Bird behavior might be observed, and these behaviors could become a key to identify certain species such as noting that nuthatches hop down the tree trunk in search of food unlike the woodpeckers who hop up the tree in their search. Once bird songs and behaviors become familiar, curiosity might take hold and encourage one to start looking up other facts and information on a species that was enjoyed on the walk.

My favorite benefit is building memories together while enjoying a common activity. These experiences are ones that adults and their children will be able to reminisce about during one of those “remember when” conversations, or it may lead to many similar outdoor adventures. Such memories help explain why I am so passionate about wildlife and birds in general. My mother and father used to take the family out to the lake to go fishing on the weekends, and my father would point out birds like great blue heron and Canada geese as they were flying by us. The calls of the Red-winged black birds were noted as they began to gather in the stands of cattails in the spring. Dabbling ducks and grebes were identified by their common name. Mother further nurtured this love of birds by putting out several feeders at home and watching the birds with me. It wasn’t long before I was pointing out the birds as we drove through the country. It became a game to see who was first to point out hawks on a wire while we were driving down the freeway. Such memories are priceless!

Creating such priceless memories for our member families is the goal for these two special events. We hope to nurture a love of the great outdoors, of being together and of learning what birds share your community with you.

The first Family Bird Walk will be on Monday November 12, 2012, which is the Columbus Day Holiday. Registration is required. Please call the Birmingham Audubon office at 205-714-8228, at which time additional details will be given. Hope to see everybody and their children there!

Appalachian Highlands Birding Trail News

A cooperative venture between Birmingham Audubon and the City of Alabaster has resulted in significant improvements to the Limestone Park site on the Appalachian Highlands Birding Trail. The City of Alabaster provided the labor and Birmingham Audubon helped pay for the materials needed to build this ADA compliant bird-viewing platform at the park. This stop on the Appalachian Highlands Birding Trail provides great views of wetland birds such as roseate spoonbills, herons, egrets, ducks, anhingas and more as well as grassland species and raptors. Visit the park and see what your Birmingham Audubon is doing to promote conservation and the greater knowledge of birds.
From the Director’s Desk
By Suzanne Langley, BAS Executive Director

It’s Saturday a month ago, as I read Greg Harber’s post on the BASBirding Yahoo Group message board about his seeing a Swainson’s thrush and with that sighting, also seeing the end of summer.

We are fortunate, as birders, to understand the connection between migration and seasons or hurricanes and displaced birds that would never be in the spot were it not for the weather. Our profession/recreation/science leads us eagerly to habitat where we know we’ll find these prize species.

I’ve never met a birder who did not welcome someone new to the sport with the invitation to learn how to verbalize the spot where you see the bird, how to use binoculars, how to treat Warbler neck. Can we transfer this passion during the next several weeks to telling our friends, our children, colleagues and grandchildren why it’s important to maintain habitat in Alabama through the Forever Wild program?

Take someone birding with you at one of the public locations made available through Forever Wild purchases. Send someone the link to Alabamians for Forever Wild (http://www.alabamiansforforeverwild.org/) and remind them of the value of their vote. And, Vote Yes for Amendment One on November 6th.

Birmingham Audubon Society Supports Constitutional Amendment Continuing Forever Wild Program

Birmingham Audubon, by unanimous vote of its Board of Directors, has joined Alabamians for Forever Wild, a broad-based and bipartisan coalition of more than 200 business entities, conservation organizations, outdoor recreation groups and others supporting Constitutional Amendment #1 on the November 6, 2012 general election ballot, which continues the existing Alabama Forever Wild land Trust program.

Alabama’s Forever Wild Land Trust acquires, from willing sellers, lands critical to sustain wildlife habitat and Alabama’s natural diversity. These lands contribute to clean water and provide a resource for outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, birding, camping and nature study which all Alabamians and tourists visiting the state can enjoy. Forever Wild Lands serve as both an economic and ecological benefit for current residents and future generations without imposing any new taxes.

The conservation goals of the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust are compatible with the mission of Birmingham Audubon. Members of Birmingham Audubon are encouraged to share information with others in building support for renewal of the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust and to vote in favor of the Constitutional Amendment #1 on November 6, 2012.

For additional information, please visit: www.alabamiansforforeverwild.org/get-involved/

(Continued from page 1, Audubon Teaches Nature)

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.

Other topics in the series are:

**Alabama Salamanders: Our Hidden Treasures**
Sunday, November 18th, 2:00 p.m. ~ Kristin Bakkegard, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

**An Introduction to Birds of Prey**
Sunday, January 20th, 1:00 & 3:00 p.m.* ~ Nature’s Echo (AWC)

**Return of the Spring Migrants ~ A Closer Look at our Favorite Birds**
Sunday, February 17th, 1:00 p.m.* ~ Greg Harber, Guest Speaker (AWC)

**Indigo Snakes in Alabama, Conserving a Species and its Habitat**
Sunday, April 28th, 2:00 p.m. ~ The Orianne Society, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

**Soil Critters ~ It’s a Tiny World under the Microscope!**
Sunday, May 19th, 2:00 p.m. ~ Ellen McLaughlin, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

**Dragonflies and Damselflies ~ Winged Wonders Around Us**
Sunday, March 24th, 2:00 p.m. ~ Steve Krotzer, Guest Speaker (OMIC)

Seminars are presented either in the Alabama Wildlife Center (AWC) or the adjacent Oak Mountain Interpretive Center (OMIC).

* Note earlier or later than usual start time for program.
~ Membership Application ~
Birmingham Audubon Society*

New Members and Renewals $20.00  
Seniors (62 or better) $15.00  
Full-time Students $15.00

Make check payable to: Birmingham Audubon Society

Send application and check to:
Birmingham Audubon Society  
200 19th Street North  
Birmingham, AL 35203-3117

Name: ________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________
City, State and Zip code: _________________________________________________
Phone: (      ) ______________________  Email: ______________________________

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* There are two ways to become a member of Birmingham Audubon Society:

1. Join Birmingham Audubon Society without National Audubon Society affiliation. This chapter only membership provides you access to all chapter activities and benefits including the chapter newsletter, Flicker Flashes. All dues stay in Birmingham to support local activities. You will not receive the National Audubon magazine.

— AND/OR —

2. Join National Audubon Society directly through the National Audubon website www.audubon.org. Birmingham Audubon Society serves as a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. Joining National Audubon Society also provides you a membership to Birmingham Audubon Society and access to all chapter activities and benefits. You will receive the National Audubon magazine. Your dues support the work of National Audubon Society and a small percentage of your dues are returned to the Birmingham Audubon Society for local efforts.

Education Committee Recognizes Volunteers

At the September Birmingham Audubon Meeting all of the volunteers who assisted with last year's bird walks at Birmingham Botanical Gardens were formally recognized. Twenty- five dedicated Birmingham Audubon members shared their time to create positive birding experiences for local school children. Volunteers gave what time as they could, from as little as one day a month to as much as twice a week. These were all contributions to an educational program that demonstrated to children the value of what nature has to offer. The reward is great when a Birmingham Audubon volunteer knows that through their efforts children are awestruck by a bird that has just popped into view.

Once again, Birmingham Audubon is partnering with Birmingham Botanical Gardens to take loads of children from the school bus, put binoculars around their necks and spend 45 minutes on a bird walk. We influenced 1,410 children through these bird walks during the past school year.

Our need for benevolent volunteers for this program continues during the current school year. Additional volunteers are needed by both group leaders and helpers for the months of October through November and March through May. Please email or call Louise Ayer Tommie and get your name on the list to volunteer. Louise Ayer Tommie, Volunteer Chairman (205) 222-6628 or louiseayer@charter.net
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<th>October 2012</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong>  <em>Flicker Flashes</em> articles due, November/December issue</td>
<td><strong>5</strong>  BAS 1/2 day Field Trip, Montevallo Lake and Orr Park</td>
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<td><strong>4-6</strong> Alabama Costal Bird Fest</td>
<td><strong>10</strong> Girl Scout festival, Talladega, 9:30 a.m.</td>
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<td><strong>12-14</strong> Alabama Ornithological Society meeting, Dauphin Island, AL</td>
<td><strong>12</strong> BAS family Bird Walk, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, 9:00 a.m.</td>
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<td><strong>18</strong> Board Meeting, Birmingham Zoo Lodge (BZL), 5:45 p.m. General Meeting, BZL, 7:00 p.m. Herb Lewis, “Gardening for the Birds”</td>
<td><strong>14</strong> Board Meeting, Birmingham Zoo Auditorium (BZA), 5:45 p.m. General Meeting, BZA, 7:00 p.m. Mike Howell, “Memories of a Naturalist”</td>
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<td><strong>20</strong> BAS Field Trip, Fort Toulouse, Confederate Memorial Park and Jackson Island, 7:00 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>17</strong> BAS Field Trip, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, 7:00 a.m.</td>
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<td><strong>21</strong> Audubon Teaches Nature, Paul Franklin, “Your Introduction to Alabama Birding Trails” Alabama Wildlife Center, 2:00 p.m.</td>
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