Saving the Native Prairies of Northwest Arkansas

Calopogon & Pluvialis

Joe Neal

I have a passion to see declining birds un-declining, to turn things around for native grasslands and their birds. In that regard, I'm thinking of Joe Woolbright. We are out on Chesney Prairie Natural Area, near Joe's hometown, Siloam Springs. He is the fourth generation to live on the former prairies in Benton County. Considering Joe's children and grandchildren, his family has six generations here.

During his 1819 Arkansas visit, Thomas Nuttall wrote about "the annual conflagration" of fire that kept the prairie clear of brush and encouraged the native grasses and flowers. Here I am today with a modern "conflagreur" himself, Chesney's Contract Land Steward, Mr. Woolbright. He burns the prairie to achieve the same conditions noted by Nuttall.

The Arkansas Department of Natural Heritage conferred Joe's title. He is also steward of the few additional acres of native prairie grassland remaining elsewhere in northwest Arkansas. These jobs are his passion, but his income is mainly from Woolbright Electric, founded by his father, and now including a third generation, Joe's son.

Chesney contains almost all of what remains of Lindsley Prairie that once covered 24 square miles. It has disap-

peared under the growing city of Siloam Springs, pastures, cattle herds, and an impressive poultry concentration. Ditto for prairies generally in Arkansas. I'm trying to keep up with Joe as he searches for and greets his old friends, the native orchids. I'm in luck. Platanthera lacea and Calopogon oklahomensis are blooming: ragged fringed orchid and Oklahoma grass pink orchid.

The Platanthera is striking because of its upright spike and the long flower fringes. We're in full-blown admiration when Joe's cell summons his attention. He has a construction crew wiring a house in Gravette. This low wet field is one of a few places Calopogon occurs in Arkansas. I want to take a few photographs, but it's a blinding sunny day. No problem: the Contract Land Steward hangs up and takes off his shirt to shade the plant.

In his early 60s, Joe is a doer: early member of the Sierra Club in Arkansas; board member for Ozark Natural Science Center and the Illinois River Watershed Partnership. The latter is a diverse amalgam of public officials, educators, developers and business owners working "to implement water quality improvement and watershed restoration projects..." which would seem an intractable problem in a huge river basin and epicenter of North American poultry production.

Continued on page 8
From the President

Let’s pledge to sign up at least one new member for AAS in 2009

Those of us with email are familiar with the way in which stories and photographs spread quickly on the internet. Last year an especially heart warming incident was circulated. It involved a man who had a mallard nest just outside his second floor office window. On the day when it was time for the ducklings to leave the nest, the female mallard appeared on the sidewalk below. She began quacking to encourage the young to join her on the pavement below. The man watched in horror as the first brave duckling took the plunge and landed on the pavement, just barely alive. So our hero rushed downstairs and, in a series of photos, is seen to catch each remaining duckling before it hits the pavement. In the final picture, the mother mallard is waddling down the sidewalk with her children in single file behind her. By now, store clerks and office workers have lined the sidewalk to protect the mallards on their trip to the lake in the city park.

Anyone receiving this email was, no doubt, moved and happy to bask in the evidence that we aren’t such an uncaring species after all. I certainly felt that way.

A bit of reflection, however, produces a slightly different interpretation of this story. In the final photograph all the ducklings are seen marching to the lake. There is no squashed or crippled duck left behind! Perhaps human intervention was not necessary at all.

"O.K.," you say, "what about the line of humanity protecting the ducklings from traffic?" Yes, no doubt they are good people and there was, at that moment, I’m sure, a sense of solidarity. Most would have returned to their cash registers and desks with a warm feeling that lasted for hours.

But, here’s the rub. How many of those same people will stop on the way home to purchase an herbicide for the lawn or a pesticide for the rose bushes? How many will vote against the bond issue for the new city water treatment facility or fail to oppose development in a watershed, because they don’t want their taxes to go up? How many will be aware of and willing to protest changes to mountain-top mining regulations? Yet all of these actions pose a greater threat to the mallard family than any trek to the lake.

I guess the point is that we humans are quick to respond to the emotional issue of the moment, yet are unaware of or unwilling, to respond, in a sustained way, to long-term threats in our environment. We feel good when we protect a family of ducks, but give little thought to the health of the lake these same ducks must live in.

Are Audubon members any different in this respect? I’d like to think so. We need to grow our numbers to include more of those good people who have the right emotional response, but lack a broader commitment.

It would help if each of us would vow to sign up at least one new Audubon member this year.

Jack Stewart
AAS President

Arkansas Audubon Society Newsletter

The Arkansas Audubon Society Newsletter is a quarterly publication of Arkansas Audubon Society Inc., a nonprofit organization, P.O. Box 313, Pangburn, AR 72121.

Issue dates are: March 15, June 15, September 15 and December 15.

The newsletter is provided to those who pay membership dues to AAS.

Send submissions for the newsletter to:
Kelly Chitwood, 1023 Austin, Camden, AR 71701. Digital submissions can be sent to: kchitwood@cablelynx.com.

ANNUAL DUES on calendar year basis

- Regular Member ............. 15.00
- Regular Family ............... 20.00
- Sustaining Member .......... 20.00
- Sustaining Family .......... 25.00
- Contributing Member ....... 30.00
- Contributing Family ....... 35.00
- Student Member ............. 5.00

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Life ................................ 250.00
- Patron .............................. 500.00

Draw check to Arkansas Audubon Society and send to:
Terry Butler, Treasurer
P.O. Box 313
Pangburn, AR 72121

AAS is a 501 (c) (3) organization.
The Arkansas Audubon Society was organized in 1955.

Graphics on banner and mast drawn by Pat Moore.
50th anniversary logo by Sharon Carter.

Visit the Arkansas Audubon Society website: arbirds.org
Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds
The Fall Season — August - November 2008

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK—An incredible 129 were seen at Camp Nine Farm, Desha 9-20 (Dick Baxter). This included at least two broods, the second breeding record for Arkansas. Seven were present at the late date of 11-28 (DBa, Sarah Baxter). Rare and local, these birds are found mainly in se. Arkansas.

SURF SCOTER—Two were seen at Millwood Lake 11-22 (Charles Mills). Rare, but seen nearly every fall, when 70% of records were reported.

BLACK SCOTER—Much rarer in fall than the previous species (seen in about 22% of fall seasons), two sightings were made: one bird at Mallard Lake, Mississippi 11-20 (Ron Howard), and one at Camp Nine Farm 11-28 (DBa, SB).

LEAST GREBE—The first record for Arkansas, one was found 8-3 at Craig Fish Hatchery, Benton (Jacque Brown, Mike Mdoinow, et al.). It stayed until 8-6 (JB).

BROWN PELICAN—One to two were seen at Millwood Lake 10-13 to 11-8 (CM, m.ob.). This is the 19th record for Arkansas, but the tenth for this century, presumably reflecting the recent increase in the Gulf population. This is the sixth record for fall.

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT—The first record since 2003, one was found at Felsenthal NWR 9-25 (Leif Anderson). There are eleven previous records, three from the fall.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD—Three records, all apparently associated with Hurricane Gustav: an adult male at White Oak Lake, Ouachita (Kelly Chitwood, Hilda Jones, Dan Scheiman, Dennis Braddy), an immature at Grand Lake, Chicot (Kenny Nichols, LaDonna Nichols, DBa), and an adult male at Millwood Lake (CM); all seen 9-2. In addition the Millwood Lake bird was joined by an immature on 9-3 (CM). There are 12 previous records, most thought to be hurricane related: nine from September, one from October, one from December, and one from May. Only two records were outside southern Arkansas: one from Crittenden and one from Washington Counties.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL—Now rare, but seen annually in late summer and fall in se. Arkansas; much more rare elsewhere. So the twenty-two seen 9-9 at Bald Knob NWR, White (KN, Bill Alexander, Robert Pearrow) were more unusual than the two Chicot County records from this autumn: Nineteen 9-21, north of Lake Village (KN, LN); one 8-9, Mississippi River near Grand Lake (KN, LN, DBa). There are more records from 2001 to the present, than from the entire 20th century.

OSPREY—Two were seen building a nest at Lake Dardenelle, Pope-Yell (KN, LN). This is the first nesting attempt for Lake Dardenelle, and the sixth reported location of nesting activity in the last 23 years.

SWAINSON'S HAWK—One adult with two dependent fledglings were found by Joe Neal just north of Vaughn, Benton 8-19. These stuck around at least until 9-1 (JN, et al.). This is only the second report of nesting for Arkansas, although adults of the species have been seen in Benton County nearly each summer for the last 15 years.

YELLOW RAIL—Three records: One at Camp Nine Farm, Desha 10-26 (DBa); one in se. Cleburne 11-4 & 11-6 (Terry Butler); and two in Crittenden 11-4 (Gail King). There are twenty previous records. This species has been found mainly in rice fields in eastern Arkansas and in the fall.

KING RAIL—One was found at Frog Bayou WMA, Crawford 10-14 (David Krementz fide JN). Rare in all seasons, this species has been found more often in spring than in fall, and least often during the summer and winter seasons.

SANDHILL CRANE—Rare and seen mainly in winter. So the six spotted by David Ray 11-1 at Bald Knob, White were especially unusual.

RED KNOT—Now very rare, a juvenile was seen 9-11 & 9-12 at Treadway's Minnow Farms, Prairie (KN, DBa). Almost all records are from the fall.

Continued on page 4
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER—Three were seen at Bald Knob 9-9 (KN). Rare in fall, there are only about 20 previous fall records.

DUNLIN—One was seen near Kelso, Desha on 8-10 (DBa). Very unusual this early: there are only three reports for the southward migration before 10-1, since 1986.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE—One was seen at Saul’s Fish Farms, Prairie 8-25 (KN, DBa, Dennis Braddy). Seen about twice as often in fall than in spring, but rare in both seasons.

SABINE’S GULL—A juvenile was seen at Lake Dardanelle, Yell and/or Pope 9-4 (KN, LN), 9-12 (KN), and 9-14 (DSc, et al.); one to three juveniles were seen at Millwood Lake, Hempstead 9-9 to 9-18 (CM); and an adult was seen at the latter location 9-14 (CM). This is a rare and very local species: there are thirty previous records, 27 from Millwood Lake, 3 from Lake Dardanelle; all from the autumn, and 23 from September. There are only two previous records of adults.

LITTLE GULL—The earliest fall record and the first for September was at Lake Dardanelle, 9-14 (KN, LN, DBa, et al.). There are 17 other records: 14 from winter and only two from fall: one in October, and the other in November.

LAUGHING GULL—Seven were seen at Millwood Lake, Little River, 9-6 (DSc, CM, Patricia Braddy, Samantha Holsbach, m.ob.). Both the timing and the large number seen, suggest that their occurrence was related to the passage of Hurricane Gustav four days earlier. Also, a single juvenile was seen at Lake Dardanelle, Yell 9-4 to 9-12 (LA, KN, LN, Ken Dayer, Lyndal York), and an adult seen near there in Pope 11-1 to 11-29 (KN, LN). These birds are more-or-less rare, but are seen regularly at the above locations. However, in the rest of Arkansas, they are seen once every few years at best.

SOOTY TERN—An amazing five records: two adults were seen at Lake Chicot, Chicot 9-2 (KN, LN, DBa); one adult was at Millwood Lake, Hempstead/Little River 9-2 (CM), then 12 adults and 2 juveniles were seen there 9-3 (CM), two birds (age not given) were observed 9-6 (DSc, m.ob.), and one adult remained until 9-9; one juvenile was seen at Lower White Oak Lake, Ouachita 9-2 (KC); one adult was at Lake Dardanelle, Pope-Yell 9-4 to 9-7 (LA, KN, LN, m.ob.), was later found dead and sent to the L.S.U. Museum; and one adult was discovered at Beaver Lake, Benton 9-6 (MM, JB). All are thought to be attributable to Hurricane Gustav, that passed through the state September 2nd-4th. There were three previous records.

BRIDLED TERN—The second record for the state, an adult, was photographed 9-3 (CM) at Millwood Lake, Hempstead. This bird’s occurrence was also thought to be due to the hurricane passage.

ROYAL TERN—The exact number of records for this species is uncertain. There were three to five, probably four records, before the ones this year. Then the single bird seen at the Craig Fish Hatchery, Benton (Douglas James) 9-4 as Hurricane Gustav was passing by, would be the fifth record, while the non-breeding adult found at Millwood Lake, Little River 9-16 (CM) that could have been related to the passage of Hurricane Ike about three days earlier would constitute the sixth.

BLACK SKIMMER—Three records: One adult at Millwood Lake, Hempstead-Little River 9-6 (CM); a juvenile at Millwood Lake, Howard 9-7 (DBr, DBa, SB, CM); and a juvenile on a sandbar on the Arkansas River, Pulaski 9-14 (Guy Luneau & Scott Luneau). The first two occurrences are thought to be related to Hurricane Gustav, and the third, to Hurricane Ike. There were only five previous records.

PARASITIC JAEGER/JAEGER SPECIES—A light morph adult Parasitic was seen at Millwood Lake, Hempstead-Little River 9-6-7 (CM, m.ob.), a light morph adult, either a Parasitic or a Pomarine was also found there 9-6 to 9-7 (CM, m.ob.), and a juvenile Parasitic/Pomarine was seen at Millwood 9-9 (CM). Although most of their occurrences may be hurricane related, these birds migrate south from the arctic, and may be brought to Arkansas by any strong storm. There were seven previous records of Parasitic Jaeger, five previous sightings of Jaeger species, and one record for each Pomarine and Long-tailed Jaegers. Almost all records of jaegers come from Millwood Lake (there is one record for each Lake Dardanelle, and Lake Ouachita); and all but one December record have been in the fall.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD—One female seen in Conway, Faulkner 11-11 to 12-13 (Rosemary Scott, Herschel Raney) provided the state’s second record for this largely Mexican species.

ALDER FLYCATCHER—There were only 15 previous fall records, one from Little Rock before 1986, and the rest from nw. Arkansas in 1990 or later. So, the singing and calling bird heard at Chesney Prairie, Benton 9-8 (MM, David Oakley, JN) was only a mild surprise.

WESTERN KINGBIRD—A rare fall migrant, one was seen at Two Rivers Park, Pulaski 9-27 (Craig & Dale Provost). This is the latest of 13 fall records since 1986.

Continued on page 9
News of Members

By Loice K. Lacy
for Arkansas Birds

We are having a great time with the birds at our feeders and bird baths this winter, having seen 29 species there in 2009. The latest arrivals were three Pine Siskins which showed up the second week of February. Among our favorites are Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler and Eastern Bluebird.

Remembering the terrible ice storm we had in our part of the state in 2000-2001, we have been greatly concerned for those further north who are suffering this winter from such storms. As I write this, I understand there are thousands still without power.

An update on February 9 from the Arkansas Forestry Association, of which Sterling is a member, states that more than half of the 1.2 million acre Ozark National Forest in Arkansas is closed due to widespread damage from the severe ice storms. Timber owners have been advised that they have two to three months in which to salvage damaged trees for sale before rotting will begin.

Sally Jo Gibson reported the last of January that “Harrison looks like a war zone.” She had a large limb through her garage ceiling while a neighbor had a tree through his bedroom ceiling. Sally Jo, with both heat and water, described herself as in great shape compared to many in the area. She said the upside was having lots of birds, including Bobwhites.

Leigh Helm of Fayetteville emailed on February 1 that her bird feeders survived the falling of trees and branches in her yard with only “flesh wounds.” With the ice bringing many birds to feeders, she has added Pine Warbler and Pine Siskin as two new yard species.

On February 12, David Chapman in Fayetteville wrote about the apparent delight birds are showing in the huge piles of brush created by falling trees and limbs all over the city. He says Northern Mockingbirds sing atop stacks of debris as though claiming such as an added attraction to their territories. But the enthusiasm for these new features may be short-lived, he adds, as tractors have already moved into the area to clear the rubble.

So far we’ve struck out on locating any birds for the Rusty Blackbird Hotspot Blitz. Sterling thought he knew exactly where he could find some but we’ve come up empty-handed. Now we’re looking forward to the Great Backyard Bird Count which should prove more productive as action at the feeders has been so good. Last year Arkansas had 140 species reported on 903 checklists. Let’s hope we can top that for 2009.

A report from the Christmas Bird Count Administration reveals that CBC counts over the past 40 years confirm that 58 percent of the 305 species that winter on the continent have shifted significantly north since 1968, some by hundreds of miles. To quote Audubon President John Flicker, “Experts predict that global warming will mean dire consequences, even extinction, for many bird species, and that an analysis suggests that the process leading down that path is already well underway. We’re witnessing an uncontrolled experiment on the birds and the world we share with them.

“The birds are giving us yet another warning that it’s time for urgent action. People hear about melting glaciers and changing weather, but now they can witness the impact global warming is having with the birds they see and don’t see right outside their doors. These birds are our ‘canaries in the coal mine’ and they’re telling us that we’d better do something fast to curb global warming and to protect habitat.”

On January 10, William Trimble reported that eight of the Trumpeter Swans released at Holla Bend last year have returned and are still present along with one Tundra Swan. DeLynn Hearn, Compiler/Transcriber for the Arkansas Rare Bird Alert, lists these two swan species and eight other birds on a report dated January 30. The eight are Broad-billed Hummingbird, Anna’s Hummingbird, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Thayer’s Gull, Franklin’s Gull, Inca Dove, Sandhill Crane and Red-throated Loon. For information concerning any of these species as to where and if they can still be seen, call the Hotline at 501-753-5853. The Hotline is sponsored by the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas and welcomes reports of rare birds from all over the state.

A recent issue of the Journal of Field Ornithology published the results of work by four Arkansans on Henslow’s Sparrows. The publication was coauthored by Bill Holm, Chief of Research for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission; Theo Witsell, also of ANHC; Dr. Bill Baltosser, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and Catherine Rideout, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Their work examined the density and habitat association of Henslow’s Sparrows wintering in saline soil barrens in southern Arkansas.

In January, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission completed the purchase of a 40 acre tract to add to Falcon Bottoms Natural Area. The area now consists of 2,827 acres located along Bayou Dorcheat in Columbia, Lafayette and Nevada Counties. In addition to being the only public hunting grounds in Columbia County, it is a productive birding area near to us.

Indeed, we’re packing. We are going for a three-day reunion at Texas A & M, this one for all alumni while the one we attended last fall was for his class of ’46 only.

See you at Petit Jean.

New Members

Linda Claborn - Hatfield
Dorothy Cooney - Wickes
Ethel Gleen - Mena
Donald C. Hall - Perryville
Don Higgins - Morrilton
Perrin Jones - Little Rock
Frank & Donna LaBlanc - Morrilton
Gail Miller - Conway
Gary & Debbie Miller - Heber Springs
Betty J. Parker - Dierks
Dr. Stephen Whisnant - North Little Rock
Larry & Desiree Witherspoon - Little Rock
Summary - Arkansas CBC Report

Here is a summary of the 109th Christmas Bird Count, held across Arkansas and count portions extending into Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. If you would like a copy of the full spreadsheet please contact Leif Anderson, Leanderson@fs.fed.us or 479-284-3150, ext 3151.

Weather heavily impacted 5 counts and moderately 4 others. The biggest problem was the counts starting on the 14th with a loss of one weekend and a reshuffling of count dates. 166 species were seen and 934,920 individuals were found.

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FIRST STATE CBC RECORD: Glau- cous Gull at Pine Bluff and Little Rock.
NEW HIGH SPECIES TOTALS FOR A COUNT: Crooked Creek-77; Conway-112
Lake GP/Felsenthal NWR-98
NEW SPECIES TO A COUNT: Arkadelphia - Nashville Warbler; Bayou DeView - American White Pelican, Kriker's sub. sp. Red-Tailed Hawk, Western Sandpiper, and Common Yellowthroat; Big Lake NWR - American White Pelican; Crooked Creek - Wood Duck, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, House Wren, Gray Catbird and Common Redpoll; Conway - Broad-billed Hummingbird; Fayetteville - Long-tailed Duck; Fort Smith/Moffett - Common Merganser; Hot Springs Village - Baltimore Oriole; Little Rock - Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Pine Bluff - Cackling Goose, Laughing Gull and Black-legged Kitiwake; Wapanocca NWR - Red-breasted Merganser and Herring Gull.

UNUSUAL SPECIES FOR A COUNT: Holla Bend NWR - Thayer's Gull; Lake Georgia Pacific/Felsenthal NWR - Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Osprey and Palm Warbler; Lonoke - Cackling Goose, Long-tailed Duck, Western Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Blue-headed Vireo and Palm Warbler; Little Rock - American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Wild Turkey and Greater Roadrunner; Mountain Home - Osprey and Merlin; Pine Bluff - Red-breasted Merganser, Cattle Egret, Merlin, Virginia Rail, Spotted Sandpiper, Blue-headed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat and Dickcissel.

SPECIES SEEN ON ONLY ONE COUNT and not listed above:
Arkadelphia - Pacific Loon; Fort Smith/Moffett - Sora; Holla Bend NWR - Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, Harlan's sub. sp. Red-Tailed Hawk and Oregon sub. sp. Dark-eyed Junco; Lake Georgia Pacific/Felsenthal NWR - Red-cockaded Woodpecker; Little Rock - Blue-winged Teal; Loneoke - Lesser Yellowlegs; Pine Bluff - Eared Grebe; Texarkana - Anhinga, Little Blue Heron and Great-tailed Grackle.


STATEWIDE HIGHS, LOWS and TRENDS: These numbers are based on numbers that have been "normalized" by parly hours to give a more accurate picture.
35 YEAR HIGHS: Greater White-fronted Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Northern Shoveler, Pied-billed Grebe, Snowy Egret, Sandhill Crane, Dunlin, Laughing Gull,
ARKANSAS AUDUBON SOCIETY
CALL TO CONVENTION

The 2009 spring convention of the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS) will be held 24-26 April at Petit Jean State Park in Morrilton, AR. Friday registration (4:00-6:00pm) and evening meals and programs will be at Show Barn Hall at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute.

At the time of this printing, about 13 queen rooms at Mather Lodge within Petit Jean State Park were still available at the special-rate of $65.00 a night. Call (501)727-5431 for reservations. Reserve rooms by 24 March for these special rates (be sure to mention you’re with the AAS).

Complete the form below (or a copy) and mail to: Jason Luscier, AAS Vice President
Dept. of Biological Sciences SCEN 632
1 University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201

Mail by 1 April to qualify for the Early Bird discount and subtract $5 per person from the registration fee. For questions contact Jason at 479-871-9199 or jluscie@uark.edu.

Spring 2009 AAS Convention
REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s):__________________________________________

Address:_________________________________________________________________________

City:________________________ State:______________ Zip:________________________

Telephone:________________________ E-mail:_____________________

Meeting Registration # ___________________@ $20/person $____________
* Early Bird: 1 April or before = $15/person
* Children under 16 with adult = free

Friday evening meal # ___________________@ $20/person $____________

Saturday evening meal # ___________________@ $20/person $____________

Donations to help pay meeting costs $____________

TOTAL $____________

Make checks payable to Arkansas Audubon Society.

Field Trips are FREE!! Please indicate which field trip(s) you’re interested in with the assigned alphanumeric code(s).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alphanumeric Code</th>
<th>Number of attendees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 24 April</td>
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<td>Saturday, 25 April</td>
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SPRING 2009
AAS CONVENTION FIELD TRIPS

Please indicate on your registration form which of the following field trips you would like to participate in. Sign-up sheets for Saturday field trips will also be available at registration (if you can’t decide now).

FRIDAY AFTERNOON FIELD TRIPS

Meet at Mather Lodge at 1pm for Friday afternoon field trips. These field trips will be over in time for registration. Field trip leaders TBA.

F1 - Bona Dea Trail (Russellville, AR) – paved and level walking. Part goes through woods and part of it is open. Easy walking, but a lot of it (up to 3-4 miles).

F2 - Petit Jean Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (Pontoon, AR) – forested bottomland.

F3 - Petit Jean Birds – search for birds in the park on trails adjacent to the lodge.

SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS

Please see field trip notifications at registration for times, meeting locations, and leaders for the following field trips.

S1 – Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge – mostly open-country birding.

S2 – Sweeden Island Park and Galla Creek WMA (Pottsville, AR) – search canebrake at Sweeden Island for Swainson’s Warblers.

S3 – Ed Gordon Point Remove WMA (Blackwell, AR/Morrilton, AR) – search wetlands and riparian habitat for migrants.


S5 – Cedar Falls Trail – Downhill from Mather Lodge to Cedar Creek below the falls. Mostly in the woods. Wear footgear appropriate for hiking and carry water.

S6 – Stout’s Point – Scenic point on the east end of Petit Jean Mountain overlooking the Arkansas River. Opportunity to see treetop birds below eye level. Wear footgear appropriate for hiking and carry water.

S7 – Petit Jean River WMA (Pontoon, AR) – Forested bottomland.

S8 – Magazine Mountain (Havana, AR/Paris, AR) – Search for Scarlet Tanagers, Ovenbirds, and potentially Rufous-crowned Sparrows.

SUNDAY FIELD TRIPS

Based on interest from Friday’s and Saturday’s field trips. Times, meeting locations, and leaders will be discussed after Saturday evening’s program.

ARKANSAS AUDUBON SOCIETY
2009 Spring Convention
24-26 April
Petit Jean State Park, Morrilton, AR

AGENDA

Friday, 24 April 2009

Field trips 1:00pm - Meet at Mather Lodge
Board meeting 1:00pm - 4:00pm Conference Center, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
Registration 4:00pm - 6:00pm Show Barn Hall, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
Dinner 6:15pm - 7:15pm Show Barn Hall, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
Evening program 7:30pm - 9:00pm Show Barn Hall, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

Bird Listing, Reporting Rarities, and Using eBird: Importance of Citizen Science
Dan Scheiman, Audubon Arkansas, Little Rock, AR
Door prizes and descriptions of Saturday’s field trips.

Saturday, 25 April 2009

Field trips Times TBA
Committee meetings As designated by Chairs
AAS Trust meeting 2:00pm - 4:00pm Conference Center, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
Trust/Camp reception 4:00pm - 6:00pm AAS member Sandy Davies’ home
Dinner 6:15pm - 7:15pm Show Barn Hall, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
Evening program 7:30pm - 9:00pm Show Barn Hall, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

New Zealand Birds: Yesterday and Today
Maureen McClung, PhD Student, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
Weekend checklist, door prizes and discussion of field trips for Sunday (26 April).

Sunday, 26 April 2009

Field trips Times TBA
From the Trust—Endowment-Memorial Fund continues to grow - slowly

"The Arkansas Audubon Society Trust Endowment-Memorial Fund continues to grow, but more slowly during the current economic downturn. The Endowment-Memorial Fund has reached its highest total ever, $121,852.06, and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker Fund has $1,011.76.

Several donations received in January allowed the Trust to establish an endowment fund in memory of Max Parker. The Max Parker Fund, with $10,416.08 currently, will produce about $525 annually to be used for in-state research grants. The first Max Parker Fund award of $300 was given to Bryan Reiley of Arkansas State University last November for his work on Swainson's warblers.

Donations to the Trust are 100% tax deductible. The Trust is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Make your check payable ‘AAS Trust’ and mail to 804 Konrad Ct., Little Rock, AR 72223-9201. Anyone wishing to make an anonymous donation to the Trust may do so by requesting anonymity.

Barry H. Haas
Treasurer, AAS Trust

AAS Trust Donations
(November 16, 2008 - February 15, 2009)
Endowment-Memorial Fund
In memory of J.O. Gibson
DeLynn Hearn
In memory of Lloyd Laster & Mary Black
Mrs. Mary Cahoon
In memory of Max Parker
Helen Parker
Anonymous
In memory of Max & John Parker
Joe & Terri Parker

From the Camp - Halberg Ecology Camp Annual Fall Appeal

"The Annual Fall Appeal for the Halberg Ecology Camp is near an end for this year, although we are still happy to receive donations if you have not had a chance to send your donation in. A total of $6,289 has been received to date, with $2,463 coming from known parents and grandparents of campers and the remaining $3,826 from Arkansas Audubon Society members and other supporters. That is a sharp decline from the $8,640 in total donations the previous year, but that year was an all-time record for Fall Appeal donations and the economy was still in reasonably good shape. Two years ago total donations were $5,215.

Given the current state of the national economy, we are gratified that so many supporters of the Ecology Camp continue to respond to our Annual Fall Appeal. The Camp Committee works hard to ensure every dollar is spent wisely, that we treat our staff members well and that our campers are able to enjoy the same rich learning experience other campers have had going all the way back to 1980. We welcome all donations to the Ecology Camp, large or small. It shows your commitment to helping 11- and 12-year old boys and girls continue to have this opportunity to learn about our wondrous and complicated natural world.

It’s easy to make a donation to the Ecology Camp. Just mail your check made payable ‘AAS Halberg Ecology Camp’ to 804 Konrad Ct., Little Rock, AR 72223-9201. All donations are 100% tax deductible. The camp is part of the Arkansas Audubon Society and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. If for any reason you wish your donation to remain anonymous, we will honor your request.

Barry H. Haas
Treasurer, AAS Halberg Ecology Camp

Ecology Camp Donations — November 17, 2008 - February 15, 2009

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fall Appeal</th>
<th>Donations by Individuals</th>
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<td>Nell Ambrose</td>
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<td>Shirley Ann Gilmore • Ann &amp; Jay Gordon</td>
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<td>Dolores &amp; Don Harrington</td>
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<td>Rebecca Hardin &amp; Grady Hinton</td>
<td>Susan Barad • Fred Berry</td>
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<td>Randy Johnson</td>
<td>Barbara &amp; Stephen Bonds</td>
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<td>Linda &amp; Douglas Morse</td>
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<td>Barbara &amp; Robert Shults</td>
<td>Dawn Butler Graves</td>
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<td>In memory of Joyce Godfrey</td>
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<td>Don &amp; Ann Godfrey</td>
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Cover Story - Calopogon & Pluvialis

His prairie management is run out of Ozark Ecological Restorations, Inc. The mainspring of his business operations—the one that helped him raise a family and supports his monthly pledge to The Natural Conservancy and other environmental causes—is Woolbright Electric. Among his clients are poultry companies, the Cherokee casinos just over the state line in Oklahoma, and banks. In short, this environmental activist rubs elbows and ideas with the powerful.

No problem is more vexing for a Contract Land Steward than alien plants. Western Arkansas’s prairies were virtually limitless in Nuttall’s time and remained so through the first few generations of Joe’s family at Siloam Springs. By the time Joe came along in his family’s fourth generation, isolated, postage stamp-size prairie patches were all that was left of a once bountiful native grassland heritage.

American Golden-Plovers (Pluvialis dominica) can be found during migration in short, open vegetation.

These patches are surrounded by an alien landscape of non-native plants. They invade the unplowed prairie and overwhelm the once common and widespread natives. Woolbright meets the invaders with strong hands and back. He is constantly bending down to pull out by its roots the alien invasive Barbarea vulgaris, yellow rocket.

But the war involves more than yanking up Barbarea. Here is the businessman and property owner in his boots, bluejeans and t-shirt, 10-gallon sprayer in his hands. Now, instead of Calopogon, he stops to discuss the merits of herbicides like Glyphosate, Imazapyr, and Triclopyr. He tries various mixes and strengths on experimental patches. The idea is to regain ground for natives.

At Baker Prairie Natural Area near Harrison, he’s at war with a patch of sericea lespedeza. At Chesney he’s attacking a highly aggressive alien, Holcus lanatus, velvet grass that has virtually excluded native plants from seasonal wetlands. Midst warfare, he’s mindful the battlefield is home to rare native sedges. These must be protected.

Oklahoma grasspink (Calopogon oklahomensis) is extirpated throughout most of its range.

I’m watching a thick patch of Helianthus mollis, ashy sunflowers, widespread natives characteristic of our prairies. They are common at Chesney and so are the American Goldfinches seeking their seeds. As spring turns to summer, these sunflowers ripen and goldfinches have an abundant supply of seeds and insects as they begin to nest.

Woolbright Electric still pays most bills, but this latter day Nuttall is also paid in orchids and big bluestem grass. He’s laid the spray on velvet grass so that the native Indiangrass will again flourish.

In a field near the precious Calopogon plants, premier grassland birds like American Golden-Plovers Pluvialis dominica, settle for a few days during spring migration. Le Conte’s Sparrows make a spectacular pass through during fall migration. I’ve seen a Prairie Falcon hurtles across these fields during winter.

In Arkansas’s distant past, Greater Prairie-Chickens rose up in great flocks before pioneers, but these birds were shot and their habitat plowed into oblivion long before our time. We cannot unplow it. That is, we cannot undo that history. But can we not learn something from it? See what there is of value in our past and consider what we might choose to change today?

The gift in understanding the losses in our natural history is that after so many decades of determined neglect and destruction, we are now growing in our appreciation of these grassy expanses. We nurture our spirits in this process. The point is, what has declined can un-decline.

Joe Neal, Curator - Arkansas Audubon Society
doeneal@uark.edu
Eastern Phoebe, House and Sedge Wrens, Gray Catbird, Palm Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow and Dickcissel.

**35 YEAR LOWS:** Little-blue Heron, Eastern Screech-Owl, European Starling, Brewer’s Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle and House Sparrow.

**BROAD GROUPINGS:** “Geese” set a 35-year high. The following are from the 35 year average: “Dabbling Ducks” had a 100% increase; “Diving Ducks” had a 50% increase; “Semi-hardy lingering waterbirds” had a 10% decrease; “Raptors” stayed at average; “Shorebirds” had a 40% increase; “Gulls” had a 70% increase; “Semi-hardy lingering landbirds” had a 10% decrease; “Grassland” had a 20% increase; “Irruptives” had a 35% decrease; “Blackbirds” had a 90% decrease; “Westerners” had a 55% decrease; “Fruit-eaters” had a 95% decrease; and “Upland Gamebirds” had a 25% decrease.

**SPECIES of CONCERN:** Eurasian Collared Dove – a rapid expansion to 2002 then a more gradual increase; Loggerhead Shrike – 3 of the lowest number years have been within the last 5 years; Rusy Blackbird – 4 of the 9 highest numbers have been within the last 4 years.

A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers for getting out and counting and the compilers for making the counts possible!

Leif Anderson
Arkansas Regional Compiler

**Arkansas CBC Sponsors**
Several counts were sponsored by the following:
Arkansas Field Office of US Fish & Wildlife Service
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas
Hot Springs Village Audubon • Mallard Point Lodge of Brinkley
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest • Plum Creek Timberlands of Crossett

THANK YOU so much for making the counts easier on the volunteers!

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**Distribution and Abundance continued from page 4**

**WHITE-EYED VIREO**—One was found by Jack Stewart 11-25 at the Buffalo National River, Newton. This species is rare after early October in nw. Arkansas, and is rare anywhere in the state by 11-1.

**TREE SWALLOW**—Rare in November, eighteen were counted at Saul’s Fish Farms, Prairie 11-12 (KN, LN).

**CAVE SWALLOW**—The third record for Arkansas, and the first in the fall, was an adult at Millwood Lake, Hempstead, 9-2 (CM). Its occurrence coincided with the passage of Gustav in s. Arkansas.

**GRAY-CHECKED THRUSH**—David Chapman described one that he saw 10-18 at Lake Fayetteville, Washington. There were only 6 previous records for the autumn in Arkansas, and no prior fall records for nw. Arkansas.

**YELLOW WARBLER**—DBa photographed a first fall female at Camp Nine Farm on 10-19, the third latest date for Arkansas.

**BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER**—Two immature females were seen at Craighead Forest Park, Craighead 9-25 (DB). These are rare in fall in most of the state, but are uncommon in the northeast corner.

**SUMMER TANAGER**—An immature or female was seen visiting a Cabot, Lonoke suet feeder 11-23 & 11-28. There were thirteen previous records for November or later, suggesting some regularity of occurrence this late.

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW**—The first November records for Arkansas were singles seen 11-1 at the University Farm, Washington (MM), and 11-13 in a field near the Siloam Springs Airport, Benton (JN). One was also seen at Millwood Lake, Howard 10-25 (CM) and at Chesney Prairie, Benton 9-15 (JN). The species is rare in fall, and at all times is seen mainly in western Arkansas.

**NELSON’S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW**—Two birds were seen at Bald Knob, White 10-31 (DBa), and one was seen at the same location 11-2 (DB, SH). Also, one was discovered at Woolsey Wet Prairie, Washington 10-10 and was seen again there 10-15 (JN). This species is rare in autumn, when about 80% of records have come.

**CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR**—The sixth record and first since 1983 was a single female discovered at Millwood Lake 10-19 (CM) and found, also, the next day (KN, LN, DB, PB).

**RED CROSSBILL**—Don Simmons saw 30 calling birds, fly over the Bear Hollow Trail in Mount Magazine S.P., Logan 10-25. Rare, and seldom staying long at a given location, these birds are almost always a surprise. They have been found in all seasons, only slightly more often during the colder months.

Mike Mlodinow
Bird Records Reporter

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**Donations by Individuals to the General Fund**

Richard & Elizabeth Taylor
Jack & Pam Stewart
Art & Martha Johnson
DeLois Crawford
David & Karen Holliday

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Report rare, unusual or extra-seasonal bird sightings to:
Joe Neal, Curator
Department of Biological Sciences
601 Science-Engineering Building
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR, 72701-1201

The curator’s email address is joeneal@uark.edu.

Responses to Mike Mlodinow’s report:
mamlod@hotmail.com

Link to online submissions:
http://www.arbirds.org/spring_form.asp
Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge IBA: A golden birding opportunity

Dan Scheiman, Ph.D.
Bird Conservation Director, Audubon Arkansas

Ornithological Summary:
Besides a healthy raptor population, Holla Bend routinely hosts at least 15 waterfowl species in winter. The most recent waterbird to make a splash is the Trumpeter Swan. A flock of 13 birds was introduced in January 2008 to seed a new wintering population. A year later, seven collared birds have returned, bringing with them two unmarked individuals and two Tundra Swans. Besides Short-eared Owls, a walk through the grasslands may yield multiple Sedge Wrens, Le Conte’s Sparrows, and a variety of other sparrow species. While the IBA is birded most often in winter, migration seasons can pay off with a slew of songbirds and a smattering of shorebirds.

Conservation Issues:
Portions of the refuge’s shrubby and grassy areas have been placed in carbon sequestration contracts, i.e. trees were planted; eventually they will mature into forest. While Holla Bend’s forested areas provide habitat for birds, the diversity and abundance of birds, especially birds of conservation concern, are not as high in the forested areas as is in the open areas. Ideally, large, contiguous blocks of grassy and shrubby areas should be maintained through a combination of controlled burns, selective cutting, and herbicides. However, on the whole, the refuge is well maintained for wildlife and wildlife watchers. The latter will notice new signs and a new observation tower (the former probably don’t care).

Site Description:
Holla Bend lies along the Arkansas River and is bounded by an old oxbow that was created when the Army Corps of Engineers cut a channel through a bend in the river to promote navigation and flood control. The oxbow, hardwood forests, grasslands, shrub-scrub, and agricultural fields provide recreational opportunities for hunters and birders alike. In 2003, Audubon Arkansas recognized the refuge as an Important Bird Area because it consistently harbors significant numbers of waterfowl, raptors, grassland birds, and Neotropical migrants of conservation concern. In 2008 it was recognized as a Global IBA for its population of a globally threatened species, the Rusty Blackbird.

Until AGFC can get the swan reporting link online, please report swan sightings to Karen Rowe at krowe@agfc.state.ar.us.

Please give the following information in your report:
Date of sighting; Number of swans; Swan species (trumpeter, tundra, mute); If the swans are wearing collars, color of collar and alphanumeric code; Location (please be as specific as possible); GPS location if known; county; nearest town; Name of landowner (if known); Habitat Type: fallow crop field, wheat field, pond, large lake, marshy wetland etc.; Your name and contact information.
Arkansas Audubon Ecology Camp at the Arkansas Curriculum Conference

The 2008 Arkansas Curriculum Conference took place November 13-14 at Little Rock’s Statehouse Convention Center with around 1200 K-16 teachers of science, mathematics, social studies and language arts attending. The theme of this year’s conference was “Professional Development Worth Sharing” with topics ranging from “Students are not pets, but they are trainable” to “Survivor science” to “From research to storytelling.” There were great vendor exhibits, lots of give-a-ways, terrific door prizes (Audubon Camp gave away tee-shirts) and plenty of food, plus all kinds of resource sharing going on.

As usual the Audubon Camp booth was well attended. We had a great ongoing slide show of kids in camp that caught everyone’s eye plus copies of Arkansas field guides, skulls, plants and other scieny stuff on display. We gave out tons of brochures for teachers to take back to their schools and share with students and other teachers. One of the questions I always ask students on their camp application is “how did you hear about Audubon camp?” and the top answer is always “from my teacher at school,” so we know this conference is a great tool for reaching interested students.

There working the crowd were myself, Barry Haas, Barbara and Maury Baker, Josie Ferrell, Fred Berry and Annie Meeks. Nobody gets past this team without hearing a pep talk on the greatest camp in the world.

Liz Fulton, Audubon Camp Executive Director and Editor for Arkansas Science Teachers Newsletter.

Editor’s Online Picks: Roll out the red carpet for birds and butterflies with native plants

Creating a native plant landscape is an excellent way to invite winged creatures to our gardens. Mary Smith, Director of Education for Audubon Arkansas, has created a list in Excel format with information to get you started: Native Plants for Birds and Butterflies. Pay an online visit to: http://www.ar.audubon.org/ to learn more. (Direct link is listed below.)

This two page document references shrubs, trees, grasses, vines, wildflowers and cites sources for more extensive reading. The document’s comments tab offers various plant specifics/trivia, including the late Carl Hunter’s favorite butterfly attractor: phlox.

In the gulf coastal plains region of south Arkansas, one native has proven to be a welcomed addition to my rock garden: the hearty Partridgeberry or Squaw Vine (Mitchella repens). This evergreen is a dense, low ground cover and is attractive in any season. It’s low maintenance makes it a greener choice when one considers the amount of pesticides used for non-native species.

Kelly Chitwood
Editor, Arkansas Birds

document link: http://ar.audubon.org/BirdSci_NativePlants.html

A reminder that membership fees are due in January of each year. Please remit your dues for the current year, if you have not done so already. Membership forms can be found online at:

“http://www.arbirds.org/join.html” Fees are on page two of this newsletter.
Names and addresses of legislators, AAS officers and chairmen

Senators and Congressmen
Rep. Mike Ross, 314 CHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515; (800) 223-2220
Rep. Marion Berry 2305 RHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515; (202) 225-4076
Rep. Vic Snyder, 1330 LHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515; (202) 225-2506

AAS Officers
President: Jack Stewart, P.O. Box 632, Jasper 72641, (870) 715-0260, jampack1@mac.com
Vice President: Jason Luscie, jluscie@uark.edu
Secretary: Barbara Baker, 29 Pandilla Way, Hot Springs Village, 71909, (501) 922-6077, mbbaker@suddenlink.net
Treasurer: Terry Butler, P.O. Box 313, Pangburn 72121, (501) 728-3540, twbutler@windstream.net
Editor: Kelly Chitwood, 1023 Austin, Camden, 71701, kchitwood@cablelynx.com
Curator: Joe Neal, 601 Science-Engineering Bldg., University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, 72701, joeneal@uark.edu
Immediate Past President: DeLynn Hearn, 317 W. K St., N. Little Rock 72116, (501) 771-4686, delynnh@iwon.com

Committee Chairmen
Conservation: Allan Mueller, akcmueller@gmail.com
Education: vacant
Finance & Webmaster: Lyndal York, 42 Pine Manor Dr., Little Rock 72207, (501) 663-2192, lbluejay@sbcglobal.net
Membership: Maury Baker, 29 Pandilla Way, Hot Springs Village 71909, (501) 922-6077, mbbaker@suddenlink.net
News of Members: Loise K. Lacy, 203 Troy, Magnolia 71753, (870) 234-4910, loiceclacy@att.net
Publicity: Sally Jo Gibson, 512 Yorkshire Cove, Harrison 72601, sjgibson@windstream.net

AAS Trust
Chairman: Leif Anderson, P.O. Box 195, Hector 72843, (479) 284-3402, leanderson@fas.fed.us
Treasurer: Barry Haas, 804 Konrad Court, Little Rock 72223, (501) 821-4097, bhaas@sbcglobal.net

AAS Halberg Ecology Camp
Executive Director: Liz Fulton, 2705 N. Fillmore, Little Rock 72207, efulton114@sbcglobal.net
Co-Chairman: Eric Sundell, 708 Rose St. #6, Little Rock 72205, esundell42@gmail.com
B.J. Cutrell, 115 Deerfield Cove, Somerville, TN 38068, BJC@cutrell.com
Treasurer: Barry Haas, 804 Konrad Court, Little Rock 72223, (501) 821-4097, bhaas@sbcglobal.net

Spring Call-To-Order
Convention enclosed.
Address Service Requested
P.O. Box 313
Little Rock, AR 72207-1313

Arkansas Audubon Society