Fall Meeting in Forrest City, Arkansas

Convention Highlights
Arkansas Audubon Society’s Fall Meeting was held in Forrest City, Arkansas with approximately 60 members in attendance. The casual format received positive responses based upon the evaluative survey that was distributed during Saturday evening’s program.

Friday evening, members mingled between the Halberg Ecology Camp reception and Lyndal York’s successful Powerpoint presentation compiled from member-submitted photographs.

Field trips, organized by Kenny and LaDonna Nichols, were held Friday through Sunday. These trips were designed to include a variety of habitats: local native prairies; Village Creek State Park (Crowley’s Ridge); Wapanocca NWR (bottomlands, lake and shore habitat); and St. Francis National Forest for more bottomlands at the confluence of the St. Francis and Mississippi Rivers. Ensley Bottoms was cancelled due to habitat loss. Recent heavy rains limited rice harvest, for raling. Nonetheless, the weather cleared enough on Saturday afternoon for a couple of groups to observe major agriculture harvesting operations while searching for rails. Weekend highlights included a Sora, Willow/Alder Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, American Redstart and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

“Regardless of rarities, it is always a pleasure to bird with friends from across the state,” was Dan Scheiman’s take for the weekend bird tally.

Saturday evening’s program was presented on the “Flora and Ecology of the Grand Prairie” by guest speaker Theo Witsell, Botanist for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. His photo-rich presentation highlighted extirpated and rediscovered plant species, restorative efforts, including a daring but successful prairie relocation project. Using commercial sod-cutting equipment two acres of habitat were removed and transferred to a nearby site, offering hope for dwindling flora and fauna species, effected by habitat loss.

Afterwards, Bill Shepherd distributed ANHC maps of local prairies for individuals who wished to further explore the region.

Friday Board Meeting
President Jack Stewart called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. He introduced three new board members, who were elected during the Spring Convention at Petit Jean. They were, Carolyn Minson, vice-president, Helen Parker, secretary and Jerry Davis, education chair.

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There are three items I’d like to share with you this time: a report, a request, and a political musing. First the report.

If you didn’t attend you still may have heard that the AAS fall meeting in Forrest City was an experiment. We met a month earlier than usual. We altered the traditional meeting format. At the conclusion of the Saturday evening program a survey was conducted. The responses have been compiled. Members were generous with their time and suggestions. Survey results were strongly positive. After incorporating as many of the survey suggestions as possible, we plan to hold a similar meeting in the fall of 2010. And, yes, planning for next year is already underway. Vice President Carolyn Minson is not one to procrastinate.

At the Forrest City meeting members snapped up the new AAS brochure. If you have copies, please put them to good use. The brochure is a pleasure to look at, but it is intended to help build membership. A second printing is already needed. Keep in mind that this is a contest year. By September 2010 we want 100 new members. We can’t reach that goal without your help. To receive credit for recruiting a new member, print your name in the lower right hand corner of the application form. Be aware that the next brochure printing will correct the web site address. It should read www.arbirds.org.

Now for the political musing. The other day I drove past one of those billboards that were put up following Sept 11, 2001. The sign was a bit battered and worn, a suitable metaphor for the state of our national mood. The sign read “UNITED WE STAND”. What is it that so often makes a mockery of that goal? Of course, we are a diverse people and differences of opinion are healthy, yet we like to believe that in the face of a crisis we are capable of putting aside our differences. I suspect the problem is, in part, our use of code words that prevent us from truly standing together on some important issues. “Government take over”, “proactive judges” “socialist” “racist” - Words and phrases like these block communication because we tend to supply our own meanings to them. Code words that concern me these days are ones such as: “environmentalist”, “clean coal”, “global warming”.

Looking beyond polarizing terms will enable us to search for common ground. As individuals we can strive to be better listeners and resist the tendency to see only what supports our personal worldview. We can strive to keep our minds open.

What does this have to do with Audubon and birds? One example should suffice. How we structure our energy and climate policies in the coming months will have a huge impact on bird habitat. Audubon members are apt to say birds are the litmus test (the canary in the coal mine) for our environment; we should then be able to find common ground in our desire to protect birds and, by extension, our own health.

In closing a quote from The World Without Us by Alan Weisman

“We don’t actually have to shoot songbirds to remove them from the sky. Take away enough of their home or sustenance, and they fall dead on their own.”

Jack Stewart
AAS President

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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, June, September and December.

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

The Arkansas Audubon Society was organized in 1955.

Visit the Arkansas Audubon Society website: arbirds.org

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The Spring 2010 Convention will be in Hope on April 30-May 2.
Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds

The Summer Report 2009

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK—Eight were found west of Winchester, Drew 7/6, and up to twenty-five, a large number for Arkansas, were counted at Camp Nine Farm, Desha, where this species was seen throughout the summer, all by Dick Baxter. The Drew birds were at a new location for this species, while the others were also seen last summer at Camp Nine Farm.

NORTHERN SHOVELER—A female was seen at the Joe Hogan Fish Hatchery, Lonoke 7/26 by Jim Dixon. This bird is rare in summer, especially in July.

BLACK SCOTER—A first-year male was found at Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge 5/31 by Jeff Wilson and Gail King, the latest spring date for Arkansas.

RUDDY DUCK—Fifteen were seen at Treadway’s Minnow Farm, Prairie 7/26 (JD). Not as unusual as most ducks at this season, these are reported in about half the summers.

COMMON LOON—One, in breeding plumage, was found by Dave Specht and Debbie Whitecotton 7/12 and later photographed 7/26 & 7/27 by Carolyn Minson, and John & Marilyn Williams. There are only 3 to 4 other summer records in the last 24 years.

BROWN PELICAN—An immature was seen at Bald Knob, White 7/22 by Kenny Nichols, LaDonna Nichols, Bill Alexander, and Robert Pearrow. There are only two previous summer records; nineteen for all seasons.

LEAST BITTERN—These were found nesting at Camp Nine Farm, Desha and at Frog Bayou, Crawford. One hundred, the largest number ever reported, were estimated to have been present at Camp Nine Farm, 6/27 (DBa, KN). Two birds were seen at Frog Bayou 7/6 (Joe Neal, Scott Michaud), and 4 to 6 adults and one fledgling were seen there 7/11 (JN, David Oakley, Jacque Brown), providing a very unusual nesting record for western Arkansas.

TRICOLORED HERON—One was found two miles north of Kelso, Desha 6/8 (DBa). There are only three other records for this species in June since 1986.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON—Two adults and two fledglings were observed feeding on crawfish at Frog Bayou, Crawford 7/3 (JN, JB, DO), and an adult was found at Devil’s Den State Park, Washington 7/27 (Joanie Patterson). The first record is only the third report of nesting since 1986, while the second record is a report from nw. Arkansas, where the species is somewhat rare.

WOOD STORK—Twenty-five were noted at Woodard Lake, Palmer Bayou, Ouachita 6/8 (Kelly Chitwood, Carrie Davis), one of the earliest reports of this species, and the only one for Ouachita in the online database; and four were seen at Raft Creek Bottoms Wildlife Management Area, White 7/25 (KN, LN), a locally early occurrence.

OSPREY—For the tenth consecutive summer a pair were seen occupying a nest at Lake Conway, Faulkner 7/1 (Dan Scheiman). Ospreys are very sparse breeders in Arkansas.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE—Very rare statewide, one was sighted at Lake Fayetteville, Washington 7/28 by Mike Mlodinow.

NORTHERN HARRIER—A male was discovered 6/7, ten miles east of Malvern, Grant by Cody Fields. This is the first June record in at least 24 years.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK—Leif Anderson found two active nests near Hector, Pope: on one he saw two adults and a fledgling 6/19, while at the other, in a stand of relatively old Shortleaf Pines, on 6/25, he could see only a single adult. This is a very rare nesting species.

These Wood Storks were located on private land, visible from Hwy 79B and Ouachita County Road 44. Photograph by Kelly Chitwood.

This Common Loon in breeding plumage was photographed and observed within Hot Springs Village. Photograph by Carolyn Minson.

see Birds continued on page 4
Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds from page 3

PURPLE GALLINULE—Rare, local, and found mainly in southern Arkansas, two were sighted at Bois d’Arc Wildlife Management Area, Hempstead 7/5 (KN, LN); and one to two were observed at Camp Nine Farm, Desha 6/24 to 7/31, (DBa), the first sighting at this location in nineteen years.

COMMON MOORHEN—Three hundred, the third highest count for Arkansas, were counted at Camp Nine Farm, Desha 6/27 (DBa, KN). This is an uncommon species, found mainly in southern Arkansas.

WILLET—One adult was seen at the Joe Hogan Fish Hatchery, Lonoke 7/28 by Devin Bosler. This species is very uncommon in both spring and fall. There are more records for August than for other months during the southbound migration.

MARBLED GODWIT—Two were seen at Anderson’s Minnow Farm, Lonoke 7/31 (JD, CP, DP, DM). These are rare fall migrants, when they are seen primarily in August and September, August having the most records.

RUDDY TURNSTONE—An adult in breeding plumage was found in sod farms near Kerr, Lonoke 7/30 (KN, LN). These are rare in fall migration, when the species has been reported more in August than in other months.

SANDERLING—One was seen at Anderson’s Minnow Farm, Lonoke 7/28 (KN, LN), while nine were, also, counted at the same location on the same day (DBo). During the fall, September has the plurality of records for this very uncommon migrant.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER—One was seen 6/17 at the Centerton Fish Hatchery, Benton (MM, Steve Erwin). The record is an unusually late, spring date.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER—Four were found on 6/17, an unusually late date, at the Centerton Fish Hatchery, Benton (MM, SE).

LEAST TERN—Twenty-five of this endangered species were found nesting on a sandbar in the Arkansas River near Mulberry, Crawford 7/8 (JN, Richard Stauffacher), an especially unusual occurrence in western Arkansas. Also, sixty-two, a very large number, were found at Anderson’s Minnow Farm, Lonoke 7/28 (DBo).

INCA DOVE—Heidi and Rick Farrar were surprised by one at Burn’s Hill Natural Area, Izard 6/6. This is as far northeast as the species has been reported in the state. It is rare outside of sw. Arkansas.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER—One was seen by H. D. Chapman at Lake Fayetteville, Washington 6/9, an unusually late date.

WESTERN KINGBIRD—A pair was found at a nest in se. Little Rock 6/22 by Guy Luneau. On 7/5 four young were seen in this nest (DSc, Samantha Holschbach). This species is a widespread nester in Fort Smith, but is otherwise a very local nesting species. The above location is a new nesting location.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER—Still rare in eastern Arkansas, one was observed near Lake Chicot State Park, Chicot 7/27 (KN, DBa).

SEDEX WREN—One was heard singing in the same spot at Lake Fayetteville, Washington 6/6 & 5/24 (MM). Both dates are very unusual for the state.

CEDAR WAXWING—The ninth nest in Arkansas was discovered by (HDC) at Lake Fayetteville, Washington 7/5. All nests have been in the nw. Ozarks.

PRAIRIE WARBLER—One was seen 7/9 at Lake Fayetteville, Washington (HDB) where it does not nest. This suggests that it was an early fall migrant.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK—One was found at a feeder in Harrison, Boone 6/19 by Sally Jo Gibson. This is the third summer record, and the first in 30 years.

Mike Mlodinow
Bird Records Reporter

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:
mamiod@hotmail.com

Link to online submissions:
http://www.arbirds.org/spring_form.asp

Charles Mills located a Rock Wren on 10/21/09 at Millwood Lake. The bird has continued to be sighted at least as 1/25/09. For current information: visit online to ArkansasBirder.net. Click on the RBA tab for more information. Thank you to Dennis Braddy for his website creation: Arkansas Birder.
by Loice Lacy

The total number of bird species reported by all parties for the Arkansas Audubon Society fall meeting at Forrest City September 25-27 was 105. Most of what Sterling and I saw we picked up trudging along behind our able leader Kenny Nichols through the Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday’s field trip.

Bill Shepherd compiled an impressive list of 155 bird species on a trip June 6-21 to Finnish and Norwegian Lapland and England. Of this list, 33 were life birds while 17 – most of them not unusual in the United States – had never before been identified by him in Europe.

Bill had an additional 10 species that he classified as near misses because he was unable to identify them himself to his satisfaction although some were pointed out by a guide. In some instances the distance was too great; in others he says he had failed to become familiar with their vocalization in advance. Of one species, White-billed Diver (Yellow-billed Loon), he lamented, “Through a telescope I saw something with a long white bill but at a very great distance. The bird was reminiscent of Alice’s Cheshire Cat which faded away until nothing was left but the smile.”

In addition to the birds, Bill observed nine mammal species: Gray Seal, Elk, Reindeer (domesticated but most were on open range), Red Squirrel, Muskrat, Mountain Hare, Brown Hare, Harbor Porpoise and Beluga Whale.

Marsha Heien sent me an interesting account of her experience at the Audubon workshop held at Ferncliff October 3-4. Classes on birds, tree identification and edible plants were offered; she chose edible plants which was taught by Tamara Walkingstick. (What an intriguing name for a naturalist! Wonder if it could be Native American?) Her class grazed through a meadow in the morning, then after lunch they went to the Ferncreek house to prepare a meal using many edible plants and plant parts.

Marsha says it was like a 3-ring circus with all the chopping, measuring, stirring and sampling that was going on. Some ground white oak acorns for flour to be used in cornbread while others hulled muscadines for a grape pie (made with the hulls, not the pulp), Tamara had brought additional white oak acorns from her freezer which were soft and the hulls easy to split with a thumbnail to peel off. These were dried in a dehumidifier overnight and then ground into flour to be taken home by those desiring it.

The menu for the meal was prepared consisted of poke salet quiche, wild green wraps, cream of wild greens soup, acorn/bear cracklin cornbread, muscadine hull pie, persimmon chocolate chip cookies and sassfras tea. Reading this menu from Marsha’s e-mail, I had a question or two. I knew the poke salad greens would not be edible gathered in October but she informed me that Tamara had brought them from her freezer. And the bear – reassuring to learn it was not one they’d encountered on their morning walk in the meadow; rather someone had shot it earlier and given the fat to Tamara to be rendered for her freezer. Some of the bear fat was used in the soup along with chopped wild onions, pureed sheep sorrel, chicken broth, and heavy cream.

Sounds as if the class had a delicious weekend. Marsha strongly commends this annual workshop as another highly successful undertaking of the Arkansas Audubon Society.

DeLynn Hearn and Buryl Dunlap missed a fall Audubon meeting to go on a church missions building trip to St. Petersburg. But trust DeLynn to add a little excitement to any adventure. She not only got lost from her group while in the Metro, she had set off alarms while trying to enter there. One way to stand out from the crowd in a foreign country.

For the week they were there, the two helped complete some missionary renovation projects, distributed pamphlets in major pedestrian traffic areas – and added some birds to their life lists! Buryl prides himself on yet another accomplishment while there; he mastered the fine art of getting a cold coke from the neighborhood grocery. If planning a trip to St. Petersburg you might want to check with him.

DeLynn and Buryl plan a medical mission trip to Moldova in the spring. Our commendations to the two for their involvement in such worthy projects.

Charles Mills went on medical leave in mid-October but will officially retire January 2, 2010. I’ll quote what he e-mailed to me concerning his plans for retirement: “I certainly intend to continue my observation of birds and dragonflies but, in the years to come, I anticipate spending somewhat more time photographing them. I live in one of the most biologically diverse regions of Arkansas. Even after 40 years of fieldwork, much remains to be seen and photographed here in Southwestern Arkansas. Also, treasured friendships formed over the past few years will afford me additional opportunities to study and work in a couple of unique IBA areas.”

Dick and Elizabeth Taylor went on a Field Guides trip to Lafayette, Louisiana in early November and were surprised to discover that a Rice and Yellow Rail Festival was being staged at Thornwell. They were permitted to ride on a combine as the farmers were making a second harvest; according to Dick it was “seeing the Yellow Rail in comfort.” They also saw many Soras as well as some Virginia Rails and visited a Red-cockaded Woodpecker colony in the Kisatchie National Forest.

Although Sterling and I went to the Louisiana Ornithological Society meeting at Cameron, Louisiana the last weekend of October and just returned from a 3-day trip to Fredericksburg, Texas for an Aggie reunion for Sterling’s class of ‘46, we have no extensive trips planned before next April when we’re off to Africa. But we will be packing shortly for a trip to Texas for Thanksgiving with family. Hope you, too, have happy holidays.

News of Members
contact information:
loicelacy@att.net
## Donations, Honoraria, Memorials and New Members

### Ecology Camp

**Fall Appeal**  
*(August 9 - November 20, 2009)*  
Rosalind Abernathy • Leif Anderson  
Peggy & George Ackerman  
Maury & Barbara Baker • Rene Barillier  
Phyllis Bartlow • Al & Linda Behm  
Brantly & Kate Buck  
Mary Jane & John Calhoun  
Richard Cifelli • Betty Courtway  
B.J. Cutrell • Sandy & David Davies  
Josie Farrell • Perk & Leanah Floyd  
Sarah Franklin • Ann & Jay Gordon  
Barry Haas & Susan Hardin  
DeLynn Hearn • Catherine Hepinstall  
Rebecca Hardin & Grady Hinton  
Patrick & Mira Holiman  
Doug James • Sandra Key  
Ed Laster & Mary Roark  
Loice & Sterling Lacy  
Cheryl & Norm Lavers  
Andrea Long  
Marty & Wayne Lynch  
David & Terri Luneau  
Jeri & Jim McMahon  
Carolyn Minson  
Kathleen & Allan Mueller  
Paige & Mary Bess Mulhollan  
Helen Parker • Dottie Patterson  
Ed & Sil Pemberton  
David Pryor • Virginia Reynolds  
John Roark • Dan Scheiman  
Rosemary Scott  
Robert & Barbara Shults  
John & Donna Simpson  
Terry & Ruth Singleterry  
Rickie Sterne & Chris Button  
Bernice Thatcher  
Audrey & Dick Velnetske

**Fall Appeal**  
*(Parents and Grandparents)*  
Alison & Joseph Burroff  
Judy & Thomas Costello  
Steven & Kimberly Dunnagan  
Nancy & George Gann  
Suzanne & Stephen Feldman  
Helen & Mike Fish  
Art & Martha Johnson  
Betty Kohr • Rose Owen  
Frank & Mary Reuter  
Eric & Melanne Sundell  
Mary Beth & Brian Trubitt  
Connie & Kitt Thomason  
Susan Toone  
Jim Pfiefer & Robynn Zinser

#### Memorials & Honoraria

In memory of Bill Brazelton  
Bill & Toka Beall  
Barry Haas & Susan Hardin  
Art & Martha Johnson

**Adult Workshop**  
*Complimentary Members*

Jane Craig  
Hot Springs  
Harold & Lynne Grubbs  
Brinkley  
Dr & Mrs. Gene McMillan  
Texarkana, TX  
Diane Mikrut  
Flippin  
Richard Peckham  
Texarkana, TX  
Ellen K Repar  
Little Rock  
Betsy Gillaspy-Williams  
Russellville

**AAS Gift Membership**

Jack Skeens  
Camden

**AAS Trust**  
*(August 10 - November 19, 2009)*

**Endowment-Memorial Fund**  
None  
**Max Parker Fund**  
Art & Martha Johnson

### New Members

Andrea Kae Long  
Monticello  
Stuart & Helen Ruth Thomas  
Cape Girardeau, MO  
Neil Richardson  
Hot Springs  
Taos Jones  
Bella Vista  
Isabella Craig  
Mountain View  
Colby Cronwhite  
Jasper  
Danielle Drake  
Yellville  
Christian Faubel  
Little Rock  
Hunter Gray  
Shirley  
Noah Hargis  
Mabelvale  
Sarah Malmo  
Bentonville  
Madison McCullough  
De Queen  
Andrew McDaniel  
Hot Springs Village  
Nikki Owen  
Fairfield Bay  
Jade Pfeifer  
Little Rock  
Stephen Shirley  
Little Rock  
Nathan Spencer  
Ft Collins, CO  
Anna Troll  
Little Rock  
Ryan Watkins  
Little Rock  
Tudarlo Willis  
Pine Bluff  
Nao Ueda  
Little Rock  
Vickie Martin  
Harrison  
David & Laura Timby  
Gilbert
From the Trust

There has not been a single donation to the Arkansas Audubon Society Trust Endowment-Memorial Fund in the past six months. And there has been only one donation to the Trust’s Max Parker Fund which was created last year.

Investment income from the Endowment-Memorial Fund and the Max Parker Fund is given out in grants twice each year and funds a wide range of research activities. Grants from the Red-cockaded Woodpecker Fund for work related to RCWs are given out periodically. You can visit the AAS website for detailed information about Trust grants in recent years.

If you are considering a tax deductible donation before year’s end, please consider the AAS Trust. Donations are put into endowment funds, and endowment fund investments produce income that is then used to fund grants. You should make your check payable ‘Arkansas Audubon Society Trust’ and mail to 804 Konrad Ct., Little Rock, AR 72223-9201. If for any reason you wish your donation to be anonymous, we honor such requests.

Barry H. Haas
Treasurer, AAS Trust

From the Camp

We have had a strong response to our Annual Fall Appeal mailing. We have received 63 donations for a total of $6,616 with $1,888 coming from parents and grandparents of campers and the remaining $4,728 from Arkansas Audubon Society members and other camp supporters. The 2009 Fall Appeal is our second highest total with the $8,596 raised two years ago being the beat. Additional 2009 Fall Appeal donations are likely to raise this year’s total even higher.

Camp finances remain sound. The two Halberg Ecology Camp sessions in June 2010 have their funding already in place as does the Johnson Advanced Camp to be held in July 2010. We are fortunate to have so many long-term supporters who realize the value of educating our youth on the wonders of nature.

To make a donation 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, Halberg Ecology Camp

Your Trust at Work

Thanks to YOUR generosity, we awarded $3,800 in grants to eight students from four universities during the fall convention at Forest City.

Rebecca Couper, a MS student at Arkansas State University, received a grant of $700 for her project — “Development of a non-lethal method for measuring persistent organic pollutants in adipose tissue of migratory passerines.”

Mike Fielder, a BS student at University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, received a grant of $100 for his project — “Status, distribution, and wintering habitat of the Rusty Blackbird (Euphagus carolinus) in western Arkansas.”

Andrea Long, a MS student at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, received a grant of $400 for her project — “American Woodcock (Scolopax minor) distribution, habitat use, and habitat selection during winter and spring migration periods in central Arkansas.”

Maureen McClung, a Ph.D. student at the University of Arkansas, received a grant of $750 for her project — “The response of avian communities to ice damage in the Arkansas Ozarks.”

Brandon Noel, a MS student at ASU, received a grant of $475 for his project — “The breeding and foraging ecology of the Pileated Woodpecker in eastern Arkansas, with reference to the conservation of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.”

Bryan Reiley, a MS student at ASU, received a grant of $475 for his project - “Habitat use by the Swainson’s Warbler in a mosaic landscape.”

Leah Scott, a MS student at UA, received a grant of $300 for her project — “Occupancy and habitat selection of secretive marsh birds in the western Arkansas river valley.”

Sarah Thompson, a MS student at ASU, received a grant of $600 for her project — “The distribution, abundance, and habitat affinities of Bewick’s Wrens (Thryomanes bewickii) in Arkansas.”

The Max Parker fund is designated for AR bird research. Max had a special spot that he shared with many who wanted to see a Swainson’s Warbler so we thought it appropriate to give the award to Bryan Reiley.

Financial times are tough and obviously, contributions have slowed. But the need continues. We awarded $3,800 from grant requests of $11,064. As you can see there is always a need to grow the trust for future grants. Your contributions of any amount that you feel comfortable with are greatly appreciated!

For information about the AAS Trust please contact Leif Anderson at Leanderson@fs.fed.us.
What’s New

2009 Field Reference to Arkansas Birds

If you were unable to attend the AAS Fall Meeting in Forrest City, Arkansas, then you missed the premier of the latest edition of AAS Field Reference List. This list provides the latest in valuable information on the 405 species of birds documented for the state of Arkansas, including information regarding approximate arrival and departure dates.

The list was compiled by Joseph C. Neal. Document design by Charles Mills. This edition honors longtime curator of bird records, Max Parker, who served from January 1986 - October 2007.

To obtain 2 copies, send $1 and a 6"x9" self-addressed, self-stamped envelope, with postage for two ounces to:
Helen Parker
14300 Chenal Parkway #7473
Little Rock, AR 72211.

New AAS Brochures

If you managed to get copies during the Fall Meeting, President Jack Stewart advises to “please be certain to put them to good use” and “help build membership.” A new printing is already needed.

The AAS Field Reference of the distribution and abundance of Arkansas birds is also available for downloading at http://www.arbirds.org/pdf/AAS_fieldlist09.pdf.
The Case of the Fastidious Waterthrush

by Vernon Human

The little bird first appeared on May 31, on the concrete-floored patio of our cabin in a clearing in the Ozark woods. It was bobbing its way along the base of a sliding glass door, and so near to it that a single step would have sufficed to carry it inside had the door been open. We are so unaccustomed to looking down on birds that for a few moments it was wholly unfamiliar to me although I stood no farther than six feet from it. But its habit of constant bobbing gave it away—a Louisiana Waterthrush.

That's a good name—except that the bird isn't a thrush, isn't restricted to water, and has no obligatory ties to water. It wasn't just outside our door without good reason. I am trying to get acquainted with some of the fantastic moths of the area and have rigged up an outside light to attract them. It worked beautifully, but beetles fly, bugs, neuroptera and all other minor arthropods also are attracted, may of which fall to the patio floor or cling to the screen door or house wall during the day. The waterthrush had discovered this mother lode of food, to be had for the taking.

She gathered up any suitable prey that had exhausted itself and fallen to the deck after dancing the night away around the light. You would think that such ground-ward concentration would blind her to everything else above. Not a bit of it; from time to time she flew up and snatched a crane fly from three feet overhead, a moth at five feet, or a spider at eight. Although she appeared never to look up, she knew very well what was going on up there.

To the waterthrush the numerous moths fell into three culinary categories. Some she pounced on with alacrity; others she walked past, even over, apparently not noticing them at all. These were the taste extremes—the delicious and the foul. But she was uncertain about those of the third group. She carefully looked them over, gave them an experimental (and usually fatal) peck, and accepted a few but rejected the majority, leaving them flopping and fluttering in her wake.

It was evident from the onset that she was collecting food for nestlings, for she gathered up a beak-full rather than swallowing each unfortunate on the spot. Maybe that's why she was such a neat, orderly feeder. She would catch a moth or other insect, pound and peck it into submission, and methodically remove its wings, elytra, legs, antennae and any other indigestible parts. She then rolled the soft remainder around in her beak, as if chewing it, until it was reduced to a shapeless blob. If she happened upon another edible, which she frequently did, she carefully put the blob down—or two or three of them—while repeating the described process on the new victim. That done, she gathered up her previously—collected groceries, never forgetting them, and proceeded on her way. It figures that the misedhaped insectian food was reduced to Gerber's consistency by the time it reached the cradle of her accoutrement. Being a glutton of the last-one-to-finish-has-to-wash-the-dishes stripe, I was rather put off by her fastidious habits.

The waterthrush appeared on our patio from one to several times daily, and I think more frequently as time went on. And then one day (June 10) three of them showed up. They all looked much alike, but before long two were chivying wing-quiveringly and open-beaked before the third. My suspicions were confirmed—the chicks were out of the nest! This was the last time I was to see any of them, but I was delighted that mama had seen fit to bring them at least once to the patio pantry that had figured so largely in their early nutrition.

Unexpected visitor
lands at Eagle Heights Elementary

When a strange black bird appeared outside the window of Ms. Slaughter's third grade classroom, she appealed to the office for help. Eagle Heights' principal, Linda Pledger, knew just what to do. If you have a bird problem in Boone County, call JoAnne Rife.

We'll let JoAnne pick up the story from here...

The principal called and tried to describe a strange bird outside Sheila Slaughter's third grade home-room. She couldn't get beyond "Strange. Strange. Strange... maybe the size of a crow, definitely not a crow, very funny feet."

I got dressed, she seemed to feel confidant the bird was going to stay there, grabbed two field guides, and headed for Eagle Heights.

We, principal and I, arrived in the room with about twenty or thirty of the neatest, best behaved students you ever saw. We walked to a floor length window inside a small niche in a brick building of good size. There, facing the glass in the corner, not more than three inches from the glass, on the ground, facing in, was a COOT!! I've seen hundreds of them in rafts on Bull Shoals Lake near

Continued on page 13
Lake Dardanelle Important Bird Area: Duck, Duck, Gull

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

From the dam to Delaware Recreation Area, Lake Dardanelle Important Bird Area offers many birds and birding opportunities, including the chance to see rare birds. Though manmade, the lake provides habitat for a variety of waterbirds but the landbirds are worth looking at too.

Site Description:
Lake Dardanelle (34,300 acres) was formed by a dam on the Arkansas River. It is managed as a navigable waterway by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The 240-acre Lake Dardanelle State Park, managed by Arkansas State Parks, offers various recreational opportunities. Much of the area is interspersed by river channels of the Arkansas & Piney Rivers and the Illinois Bayou. Shoreline, island, and upland habitats vary from pine to hardwood forest. The dam, state park, Piney Point, and Delaware Recreation Area are among the often used viewing areas.

Ornithological Summary:
Birdwatchers from across the state travel to the lake during fall and winter to see large concentrations of ducks and gulls, for which the site is recognized as an IBA. The frequency of rare bird sightings is also notable, thanks in large part to the vigilance of Kenny and LaDonna Nichols, and brings in birders from across the country. Among the thousands of wintering waterbirds are Ring-necked Ducks, both scaup, Ruddy Ducks, Buffleheads, Common Loons, Pied-billed Grebes, American White Pelicans, Ring-billed Gulls, Bonaparte’s Gulls, Franklin’s Gulls, and Least Terns. Add to that rarities like Tufted Duck, all three scoters, Pacific Loon, Western Grebe, Brown Pelican, Little Gull, Sabine’s Gull, California Gull, and Sooty Tern. It’s no wonder the Nichols spend as much time as they can at their lakeside house!

Conservation Issues:
Zebra mussels were first found in the lake in 1992. This exotic, invasive species detrimentally affects the ecological, commercial, and recreational functioning of infested waterbodies. Although diving ducks can be attracted to zebra mussel infestations, they risk being poisoned by heavy metals that accumulate in mussel tissue.

These Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen by many birders during their stay at Lake Dardanelle. Photograph by Robert Herron.

A Glaucous Gull takes flight after an American White Pelican lands too close for comfort. Photograph by Robert Herron.

Errata: In my last column I incorrectly stated that Columbus Prairie is owned by the Corps. It is owned by The Nature Conservancy, which is working to restore blackland prairie on private lands in the region.
Allan J. Mueller

When you search for an “extinct” bird with the charisma of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, you have to deal with the media – TV, radio, newspapers, blogs, YouTube, etc. So when my friends at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission asked me to cover a TV spot for them, I said “Yes” - without asking enough questions. A farmer near Augusta had grown a corn maze in the shape of an Ivorybill, very creative. Tracy Douglass, with KARK, Channel 4 in Little Rock, wanted to do a piece on it and asked for an Ivorybill expert. So far so good, but now comes the “not asking enough questions” part. Tracy was doing a feature segment for the morning show, which translates into a 0530 show up time at the farm near Augusta, a two hour drive from my home in Conway.

In the dark, with bright camera lights, we did several quick spots to fill the time before commercials on the morning show. I was impressed at how little warning Tracy got for when the spots would start. The farmer, his family, and I stood around ready to go when all of a sudden Tracy would be talking into her mic; we were on the air with essentially no warning. This was old hat to Tracy, so everything went smoothly. I was on the air for about 45 seconds!

It was now about 0800, and my mission was accomplished. As we left, the generous farmer loaded us up with pumpkins and squash of all shapes and sizes. Even though it was a little late to start, a search for the Ivorybill was the logical thing to do. After all, I was in the Delta and not very far from my favorite search area at Mike Freeze/Wattensaw Wildlife Management Area.

It was after 1000 by the time I walked into the Wattensaw Bottom from Buck’s Landing on the White River, expecting not much that late in the day. The best way to search for anything in the forest is alone; you are quiet and not distracted by companions. There were no woodpecker miracles that day, but I did walk up on two raccoons. The first one was working the edge of the water that was covering part of the flood plain. He was so intent in his food search that he never did see me; of course, I was invisible in my head-to-toe camo. The second coon saw me and very casually climbed the nearest tree, perching on a branch to see if I was going to bother him any further. By now I was almost to Wattensaw Bayou and decided to do a “watch”, sitting and waiting for Elvis to come by. Picking a comfortable log to lean against, I sat down hoping for good luck. Very soon I noticed movement nearby on the ground from a very young, and not frightened, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, about 10 feet from me. He was quite happy to pose for pictures.

What started out as an unexpectedly early morning TV spot turned into another good day in the swamp.

(If you want to see Allan and others talking about the swamp and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, try the following links:

“http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWSnbwlKQRo&feature=PlayList&p=69B4FD8B519D227D&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=8”

“http://vimeo.com/3165574”

“http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtFg3j-UyaY”

“http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7CqHNYMU4Y”

“http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYAhxPxlsY)”

Local environmental issues that AAS members are concerned about or involved with actively.

Power company herbicide spraying in North West Arkansas, and in Hot Springs Village • Pine Hollow Dam (proposed) Crawford City • Protection of drinking water, Lake Maumelle (400,000 water users) • SWEPCO Coal-fired power plant, Hempstead County • Fayetteville shale drilling • The taking and selling of aquatic turtles • Buffalo River new watershed management plan under consideration • Cats, allowed to roam and kill birds outdoors • Global warming, local results • Window and similar hazards to birds – A Clear and Present Danger.
The 110th Christmas Bird Count Season

It's the coolest (figuratively & literally) birding of the year.

The Christmas Bird Counts are held around the continent (and beyond) from 12/14 through 1/5. Counts have been done for 110 years - the oldest bird database in the world. ANY birding skill level is fine. Any length of time is welcome. Just contact a compiler for details and join in the fun.

It's free for feederwatchers and folks under 18. $5 for most, unless the count has a sponsor. If you do more than 4 and can register on-line then it's only $20. All counts can use more volunteers. Please consider doing more than one.

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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Hot Springs Village</td>
<td>Lynn Sackett</td>
<td><a href="mailto:t.sackett@sbcglobal.net">t.sackett@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sponsored by Hot Springs Village Audubon</td>
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<td>14 or 15th</td>
<td>North Fork, Illinois Bayou (near Hector)</td>
<td>Dwayne Rambo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:drambo@fs.fed.us">drambo@fs.fed.us</a></td>
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<td>Sponsored by US Forest Service</td>
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<td>16th</td>
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<td>Sally Jo Gibson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sjogibson@windstream.net">sjogibson@windstream.net</a></td>
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<td>17th</td>
<td>Bayou DeView (near Brinkley)</td>
<td>Steve Osborne</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsteveosborne@gmail.com">jsteveosborne@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Mountain Home</td>
<td>Phillip Hyatt</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sedgehead@gmail.com">sedgehead@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Arkadelphia</td>
<td>Dolores Harrington or Charles Mills</td>
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<td>Martha Johnson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amjohnson@conwaycorp.net">amjohnson@conwaycorp.net</a></td>
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<td>20th</td>
<td>Fayetteville</td>
<td>Joe Neal or Mike Modinow</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joeneal@uark.edu">joeneal@uark.edu</a> or <a href="mailto:namlod@hotmail.com">namlod@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Dan Scheiman</td>
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<td>Dan Scheiman</td>
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<td>Dick Preston</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net">dickpreston@bigriver.net</a></td>
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<td>Sponsored by TN Ornithological Society</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:shelbyforester1223@bigriver.net">shelbyforester1223@bigriver.net</a></td>
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<td>Pine Bluff</td>
<td>Rob Doster</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Rob_doster@fws.gov">Rob_doster@fws.gov</a></td>
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<td>Jan 1, 2?</td>
<td>Lake Georgia Pacific/ Felsenthal NWR</td>
<td>Leif Anderson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:L.anderson@fs.fed.us">L.anderson@fs.fed.us</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Fort Smith</td>
<td>Bill Beall</td>
<td><a href="mailto:biltoka@mynewroads.com">biltoka@mynewroads.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>White River NWR</td>
<td>Keith Sutton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:catfishdude@sbcglobal.net">catfishdude@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Holla Bend NWR</td>
<td>Leif Anderson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:L.anderson@fs.fed.us">L.anderson@fs.fed.us</a></td>
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Dates to be set later:
Texarkana; rondokyle@windstream.net or adkyle@earthlink.net
Big Lake NWR; aleams469@msn.com; Jonesboro; Jim Bednarz; jbednarz@aastate.edu
Buffalo National River (near Buffalo Point on Hwy 65);
Magnolia/Lake Columbia: Sterling Lacy; sterlinglacy@att.net
Lead Hill but never in my 35 years inside a public school has one ever tried to come to school.

Amazingly, to us birders, not the principal, the teacher, nor any of the students seemed to have ever heard of a bird named coot. The teacher had heard of “an old coot” before. This one looked pristine and very quiet. During the two-hour lecture about birds and their names that I cut to fifteen minutes the coot seemed to be listening!

I did suggest, under the circumstances, that they not have the children try to rescue him, but rather wait to see if he revived a little. I could see no injury, even no smudge on the glass, just a perfect specimen looking right into the third grade room! The pointy bill, the deep glossy black, and the very red eye all seemed normal. Perhaps he was just trying to get out of the wind.

Anyway, Sheila Slaughter’s third graders aren’t likely to forget when the coot came to school on a beautiful September morning. And they can now look up any bird that comes to school in their field guide because I donated my new copy of the National Geographic to the class.

We bet some future birders were created that day! 🦚

Other board members in attendance were treasurer Terry Butler, editor Kelly Chitwood, immediate past president DeLynn Hearn, conservation chair Allan Mueller, finance chair Lyndal York, membership chair Maury Baker, publicity chair Sally Jo Gibson, ecology camp committee co-chair B. J. Cutchell, trust chair Leif Anderson and trust/camp treasurer Barry Haas.

Butler reported assets as of October 24, 2008 were $13,048.33. Total receipts were $6,905.55; total disbursements, $6,041.83 for present total assets of $13,912.05.

Life memberships, which are now $250.00, are held in the general fund or the savings account. In discussion of treatment of these funds, the consensus seemed to be to hold them as they are for the present. Noting that preparing and adhering to a budget each year is a constant challenge, Butler predicted that without significant increases in annual memberships, the Society faces future losses of $500.00 to $1,000.00 each year.

Baker reported that there are 311 households representing 92 families for a total of 403 members.

Vice-president Minson announced AAS will meet in Hope, Arkansas, April 30 - May 2, 2010. Lodging will be available at both the Holiday Inn Express (higher rates) and the nearby Best Western (lower rates and a better breakfast). Meetings will be at the Community College.

Camp committee co-chair Cutchell reported that twelve members of that committee met recently. After thirty years of experience, Jim Gann has retired from active involvement. To honor his service, he was presented with a cherry-wood bowl made by Ed Laster. David Timby is the newest member of the camp committee.

AAS Trust Chair Leif Anderson reported that ten proposals had been received, totaling approximately $11,000.00. Not all were funded. Haas circulated a handout with information on the financial status of the Trust. Proposals were solicited for the H. H. (Shug) and Luvois Shugart Red-cockaded Woodpecker Fund. A recipient would receive a certificate and a print of the painting by David Plank.

Jack and a small committee are working on a statement for the guidelines or criteria for the Parker Award, a service award to be presented no more often than once each year.

Board meeting information, gleaned from the notes taken by AAS Secretary Helen Parker.

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**Obituary**

**William B. Brazelton Jr.**

Bill Brazelton, 80, of Fort Smith passed away Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2009. He was involved with many community organizations, including Girl Scouts, Audubon, Photographic Alliance, Camera Club, Fort Smith Art Center, Humane Society and the Fort Smith Public Library. He was a member of the West-Ark Church of Christ.

Bill was born Dec. 26, 1928 in Memphis. He graduated from Central High (Memphis) in 1946. He received a BS in Business Admin. from Northwestern (now Rhodes) College of Memphis.

After college, Brazelton, served two years in the Army during the Korean Conflict.

In Nov. 1956, Bill married Peggy Goodall, they moved to Baton Rouge, LA in 1962 where he worked in sales for Bostitch Company. In 1969 he was transferred to Fort Smith. He retired after 26 years with Bostitch and traveled extensively with his wife. Together they visited Africa, Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland and Galapagos Islands. He also competed nationwide in the Senior Olympics, winning over 100 medals and ribbons.

He and Peggy celebrated 47 years of marriage until her death in 2003.

He is survived by his daughters, Lissa Jennings, Kathy Brown and Margie Brazelton, grandchildren and countless friends.

Memorials made be made to the Girl Scouts Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas Council, 5705 Gordan Lane, Fort Smith 72903.
Names and addresses of legislators, AAS officers and chairman

Senator and Congressmen
Rep. Mike Ross, 314 CHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515; (800) 223-2220
Rep. Marion Berry 2305 RHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515; (202) 224-4076
Rep. Vic Snyder, 1330 LHOB, Washington, D.C. 20515; (202) 224-2506

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Immediate Past President: DeLynn Hearn, 317 W. K St., N. Little Rock 72116, (501) 771-4686, delynn@iwo.com

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Education: Jerry Davis, jwdavis@cablelynx.com
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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, 805 Beechwood St. #1, 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

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