Card-inal Club’s Mission Accomplished

By DAN SCHEIMAN
AAS Trust Chair

In January the Card-inal Club completed its purpose—all 34,174 records in the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS) card file were made available online. Before 1986, bird records were written on index cards and housed in Doug James’s office at UA-Fayetteville. In this digital age the AAS Board decided these records needed to be accessible to everyone. This was done in a three-step process. Step one consisted of scanning each card, which Carolyn Minson and Ann Gordon, with technical support from David Luneau, did nonstop for seven days. For step two, 39 volunteers and I transcribed each card into spreadsheets, a task completed in just seven weeks, faster than anyone anticipated. Finally, for step three, AAS Curator Lyndal York and I uploaded the files to the Bird Records Database and eBird, respectively.

Those 34,174 cards actually resulted in 39,802 individual records because more than one date or species was given on some cards. The card file included many records from Oklahoma, a few from Mississippi and Tennessee, and even some from Florida, Wisconsin, Ontario, and Saskatchewan as a result of birds banded in those regions and then recovered in Arkansas. eBird now has records for 412 of Arkansas’s 417 species (counting extinct and extirpated species). About 5,000 records tripped eBird’s filters, but only 26 were marked as rejected by the Bird Records Committee at the time. The database contained over 2,400 unique locations, most of which had to be reconciled in eBird; many thanks to Devin Moon for additional help with that part, as it was way more time-consuming and tedious than I predicted.


Card featuring Sooty Tern record from 1961.
A first state record Brambling was reported in Little Rock on January 23, 2016. Birders flocked to the residence on Sunday. Since it was located above their family business, they emphasized they could not host birders during the work week. Notice posted promptly to electronic outlets, such as the ARBIRD listserv, Audubon Society of Central Arkansas announcements email list, and Arkansas Audubon Society and Rare Birds Facebook pages, helped to quickly disseminate the news that the site was off-limits so birders stayed away.

Social media has greatly improved communication throughout the birding community. It can be used to advertise field trips, meetings, conferences, bird sightings, site closings, and safety alerts; hold discussion groups; highlight conservation concerns; plus link together birders with common interests. It’s an excellent format to notify the public about local and national birding events to spur interest and attract new people to the world of birds. Social media is an important tool, and we should build on its usefulness.

-KAREN HOLLIDAY
President, Arkansas Audubon Society

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**Newsletter and Membership Information**

The Arkansas Audubon Society Newsletter is a quarterly publication of Arkansas Audubon Society, Inc., a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization, P.O. Box 313, Pangburn, AR 72121. Issue dates are March, June, September, and December.

PLEASE NOTE: Announcements, articles, information, and/or photographs to be considered for an upcoming edition of Arkansas Birds should be submitted to the editor no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication.

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

Send newsletter submissions to samantha.scheiman@gmail.com.

**Membership renewals are due Jan. 1 of each calendar year.**
Please enter my membership in the Arkansas Audubon Society as a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(AAS Dues Prorated for New Members)</th>
<th>Jan-Jun 100%</th>
<th>Jul-Sept. 50%</th>
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*New Memberships paid in the last quarter (Oct. - Dec.) will include full membership for the following calendar year.

**SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Life Member of Arkansas Audubon Society (may be paid over a two-year period) $250.00
Patron of Arkansas Audubon Society $500.00

Draw check to Arkansas Audubon Society and send to: Terry Butler, Treasurer, P.O. Box 313, Pangburn, AR 72121
AAS Ecology Camps Welcome Former Camper Tamzen Tumlison Bryant as Executive Director

By CHERYL LAVERS
AAS Ecology Camps Co-Chair

It was with real sadness that the AAS Ecology Camps committee accepted Liz Fulton’s resignation as executive director last year. Liz had come to the post in December of 2000, having acted as co-director before that. She brought with her 30 years of experience in teaching biology with numerous accolades including 1997 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. As the camps have expanded to include senior and advanced camps, Liz has helped steer the way in her always-efficient manner. Quite apart from losing Liz and her expertise in the job, we on the committee will miss her bright presence at meetings.

We are now delighted to be able to announce that we have a new executive director and that the position has been filled by a former camper! Few people can be as familiar with the camps and how they open kids’ eyes as Tamzen Tumlison Bryant. Tamzen’s dad Renn has taught mammalogy at the camps for over 35 years so, as she says, she was hearing about the camps even before she was old enough to attend. In her own words...

“I went to camp when I was 12 and 13, and my favorite classes were ornithology and aquatic biology. I loved looking at plankton in the microscope and bird-watching, which has carried on to now (last year I completed my own challenge of seeing 100 different birds in a year, with the help of my dad and Mitchell Pruitt.) The jobs I’ve worked at camp include being a volunteer, cleaning bathrooms, cabin counselor, aquatic biology teacher, and last year I was co-assistant director with Matt Wilson. Growing up, I always heard my dad talk about camp, so I was excited to finally get to go see what the fuss was about, and I’ve been going back ever since.

I think the camp is a great place for kids to really start thinking about the world around them and how they affect it constantly. It is the only camp I’ve seen that seems to focus less on consumerism and more on mindfulness, while still being really fun. There is a good mix of games and learning, and it is nice to watch the kids run around and play a game, and then hear them say, “whoa,” at the end when they hear how it applies to the environment.”

-TAMZEN TUMLISON BRYANT

“...It is the only camp I’ve seen that seems to focus less on consumerism and more on mindfulness, while still being really fun. There is a good mix of games and learning, and it is nice to watch the kids run around and play a game, and then hear them say, “whoa,” at the end when they hear how it applies to the environment. Regardless of whether a kid comes for one year or three, I think the camp stays with them for a long time. Maybe they won’t remember the exact species name of a bee, but they will remember that the bee is important in the grand scheme of things. The staff at camp help instill respect for nature in every camper they see, and a majority of those campers seem to grow in just the one week we see them. I think it affects the staff in a great way, too, in that it lets them pass on their knowledge to kids who may not have otherwise had the chance to hear new perspectives about nature.”

Tamzen’s love for the camps is reflected in the fact that her only stipulation in taking on the post was that she still be allowed to continue being at the camps as the publicity person (she has her B.A. from the U of A in journalism). You might have seen her excellent work in the videos and stills from last year’s camp on www.arbirds.org. Now all we need is for everyone to reach out to any children who will be 11 or 12 by June who would enjoy being immersed in nature study with a bunch of enthusiastic teachers for six days. Then send anyone wanting more information to the above website or tell them to contact Tamzen at ttumlison@gmail.com or 870-510-0540.
For their annual pilgrimage to Long Island for Thanksgiving, Dan and Samantha Scheiman decided to do something different, and instead of going west to New York City or south to Jones Beach, they went east, all the way to Montauk Point, the tip of the south fork. Just off shore, Common Eiders and Common Mergansers were common, along with Red-throated Loons, all three scoters, and gobs of Northern Gannets. On the north fork they found Sam’s life Barnacle Goose resting in a flock of Canada Geese. Dan spied a Snow Goose with them, too, which is uncommon on Long Island. They wanted to add a rare Ross’s Goose to their state list, but when they arrived on the scene another birder told them the goose had been shot by a hunter that morning! It must have stood out from the crowd of Canadas.

Keith, Rayma Jean, and the birding dog Dee Dee Hawkins enjoyed a return to South Texas over Christmas. Birding in South Texas, as most of you know, is a lot of fun. Our vacation rental was located in Laguna Vista, a good jumping-off spot for the whole valley. It is also the location of a very nice little Ivory Gull, Duluth, Minnesota. | Photo: MICHAEL LINZ
nine-acre or so park, called Laguna Vista Nature Trail, that offers fantastic and very quiet birding. I birded it about every day. Grove-billed Anis were the park highlights as a somewhat challenging bird to find in the valley. I spotted and photographed a first year Rose-breasted Grosbeak in the park that got the local e-Bird gatekeeper in a twitter—fun stuff! We spotted most all of the local specialties again, which is always fun, plus got to ‘tick’ the Northern Jacana that was hanging around Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge at the time. Best part was the awesome BBQ, beans and Mexican food! I ate beans every day for two solid weeks and could not have been happier—outdoor hobbies allow for such gaseous indulgences aye!

Michael Linz and Allan Mueller paired up for a trip to the frozen north, Duluth, Minnesota. Turned out not to be too cold—lows in the teens and highs in the 20s. Michael found 16 lifers, and Allan added Gyrfalcon to his lower 48 list. They got great looks at Great Gray Owls.

In January, Karen and Ray Holliday and family spent nine days on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. At their rental house, best yard birds were Wandering Tattlers, Ruddy Turnstones, Pacific Golden-Plovers, White-rumped Shamas, and Common Mynas. Seen at the Kilauwea Point National Wildlife Refuge were several nesting pairs of Laysan Albatrosses and over 1,000 nesting Red-footed Boobies, plus White-tailed Tropicbirds, Great Frigatebirds, and Brown Boobies. Karen spent a full day birding with a guide at the Alakai Swamp searching for the few remaining forest endemic species. They spotted Elepaio, Apapane, Anianiau, and Amakihi. Unfortunately, avian malaria and predators have wiped out almost all native birds on the islands.


**Fall Appeal**
Helen Parker
Cindy Franklin & Bill Burnham
Chris & Rick Cash
Catherine Hepinstall
Karen & Victor Hicks
Barbara & Robert Shults
Leif Anderson
Danette Lawrie
Loice Kendrick-Lacy
Jane McGregor
Richard & Margaret Lincourt
Bernice Thatcher
Maureen McClung
Brandy & Kathleen Buck
Lillian Franklin
Keith & Rayna Hawkins
Karen Gulley
Wayne & Marty Lynch
Shirley Ann Gilmore
Jennifer Wang
Rob & Lisa Doster
Ed & Sil Pembleton
Sharen Carter
Ed Laster & Mary Roark
Holly Childs

**Fall Appeal (Parents & Grandparents)**
Kathleen & Allan Mueller
Naomi Showl
Frank & Mary Reuter
Rose Owen
Jamie & Gaylen Burnside
Fred Berry
Lisa Childs
Herschel Raney & Vicki Stancil
Hank Bates & Barbara Miles

**Scholarship & Tuition Assistance**
Ozark Chapter - Arkansas Native Plant Society
Mary Bess Mulhollan
Susan & Jeff Hoeper
Ozark Society Foundation
Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

**Memorials & Honoraria**
Don & Ann Godfrey memorial for the Joyce Godfrey Scholarship Fund
Loice Kendrick-Lacy in honor of Mark & Jennie Massia, Logan & Sarah Sledge, and Mary Ellen Lacy
Dawn Butler Graves as a Christmas honorarium for Terry & Judy Butler
Ellen Turner in memory of Martha Johnson
Pat & Hugh Donnell in honor of Dr. Hugh Donnell’s birthday
Here is the summary of the 116th Christmas Bird Count, held across Arkansas and portions extending into Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas.

Weather is always a factor, but this year was exceptional. Seven percent of the counts were moderately impacted by wind and an additional 15 percent by flooding. Nineteen percent of the counts were severely impacted by flooding. The Arkansas River flood stage at Dardanelle is 32 feet, and the river crested at 40.83 feet on December 28, the second worst flooding in recorded history.

Several counts go late in the season to get more waterfowl and semi-hardy passerines. This strategy didn’t work this year. The five counts most impacted by flooding (Bayou DeView, Holla Bend NWR, Pine Bluff, Wapanocca NWR, and White River NWR) were nine percent below the five-year species average and 53 percent below the five-year average for number of individuals. Overall, 163 species were seen and 687,681 individuals were found.

see COUNT, continued on page 7

COUNT SUMMARY TABLE

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<td>Crooked Creek Valley</td>
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<td>Mountain Home</td>
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<td>Fayetteville</td>
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<td>Mount Magazine</td>
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<td>North Fork of Illinois Bayou</td>
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<td>Holla Bend NWR</td>
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<td>Lake Dardanelle</td>
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<td>Wapanocca NWR</td>
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<td>White River NWR</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>22,776</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
COUNT, continued from page 6

NEW SPECIES TO A COUNT (note: cw = count week)

Arkadelphia: Cinnamon Teal-cw and Anhinga-1.
Fort Smith/Moffett: Common Loon-cw.
Holla Bend NWR: Swainson’s Hawk-1.
Jonesboro: Great Egret-1 and Fish Crow-2.
Lake Dardanelle: Red-breasted Merganser-1, Cooper’s Hawk-3, Greater Roadrunner-3, Great Horned Owl-1, American Pipit-1, Orange-crowned Warbler-1, Lincoln’s Sparrow-2 and Purple Finch-2.
Lake GP/Felsenthal NWR: Ross’s Goose-1 and Horned Lark-1.
Mount Magazine: Northern Bobwhite-1, Sharp-shinned Hawk-1, Merlin-1, Sedge Wren-1 and House Finch.
Mississippi River SP: Turkey Vulture-3, Wilson’s Snipe-9, Barn Owl-1, Eastern Screech-Owl-1, Bewick’s Wren (eastern sub sp)-1, House Wren-1, Orange-crowned Warbler (eastern sub sp)-2, Common Yellowthroat-1, Lincoln’s Sparrow-1, Swamp Sparrow-1, Lapland Longspur-1 and Pine Siskin-4.
Sylamore RD: Swainson’s Hawk-1 and Eastern Kingbird-1.
Wapanocca NWR: Forster’s Tern-1.

UNUSUAL SPECIES FOR A COUNT

Bayou DeView: Black Duck-2.
Fayetteville: Blue-winged Teal-3, Spotted Sandpiper-1, Gray Catbird-1, Orange-crowned Warbler-1 and Summer Tanager-1.
Fort Smith/Moffett: Great Egret-1.
Holla Bend NWR: Gray Catbird-1 and Lark Sparrow-1.
Hot Springs NP: Spotted Sandpiper-1 and Gray Catbird-1.
Hot Springs Village: Common Merganser-1 and Osprey-1.
Lake GP/Felsenthal NWR: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher-1.
Little Rock: Green-winged Teal-2, Greater Roadrunner-1 and Rufous Hummingbird-1.
Lonoke: Cackling Goose-1, Horned Grebe-2, Merlin-1, Avocet-6, Lark Sparrow-1 and Smith’s Longspur-3.
Pine Bluff: Wild Turkey-1, Osprey-1 and Virginia Rail-4.
Sylamore RD: Spotted Sandpiper-1.

SPECIES OF THE YEAR

A four-way tie between the Cinnamon Teal at Arkadelphia, the Swainson’s Hawks at Holla Bend NWR & Sylamore RD, the Eastern Kingbird at Sylamore RD, or the Summer Tanager capital of the interior U.S. at Fayetteville with 1 on the count, 4 nearby and 11+ in February.
Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds
The Summer Season: June 1 – July 31, 2015

By KENNY NICHOLS
Member, Bird Records Committee

Just the second July occurrence in the last 10 years, 2 Blue-winged Teal were at Craig Fish Hatchery, Benton 4 Jul (Karen Garrett, Paula Jugenheimer).

Rare and very local during the nesting season, 3 adult Tricolored Herons were flushed from three separate nests containing eggs in Hempstead 3 Jul (Charles Mills, Allan Mueller, Yancey Reynolds).

A Roseate Spoonbill at Bald Knob NWR, White 7 Jun (Will Britton) was just the second ever June occurrence for the state; another, this an adult, was in Hempstead 3 Jul (CM, AM, YR).

Possibly just the second for Baxter, a Mississippi Kite was at Mountain Home 27 Jun (Michael Linz).

Swainson’s Hawk is rare and very local during the breeding season. There were three reports, all from Benton: one bird at Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport 20 Jul (JN), one north of Maysville 1 Jul (JN), and one photographed near Gentry 4 Jul (Terry Stanfill).

Rare but annual, a Piping Plover was photographed at the state fish hatchery at Centerton, Benton 22 Jul (JN, Mike Mlodinow).

Rare in any season and the first ever June sighting, a Hudsonian Godwit was photographed at Bald Knob NWR, White 5 Jun (WB).

Rare but increasing, single White-winged Doves were spotted at Springdale, Washington 1 Jul (David Oakley) and Bentonville, Benton 21 Jul (Butch Tetzlaff).

Rare and declining, a Bewick’s Wren was seen and heard on the Mt. Magazine Breeding Bird Survey, Logan 8 Jun (Kenny & LaDonna Nichols).

There were three Swainson’s Warbler reports: one on the Havana BBS, Yell 7 Jun (K&LN) was a county first; one at Lake Fayetteville 2 Jun (MM) was the first for Washington since 2002; while 9 were counted on the Crowley’s Ridge BBS, Lee & Phillips 8 Jun (Leif Anderson).

Scrambling to See a Brambling

Birders flocked to Little Rock to see this first state record Brambling. | Photo: MITCHELL PRUITT
Halberg Ecology Campers Needed

By BARRY HAAS
Ecology Camp Treasurer | AAS Trust Treasurer

As this is being written in mid-February, we are awaiting confirmation of our Halberg Ecology Camp reservation dates at Camp Clearfork near Mt. Ida, Arkansas. The U.S. Forest Service usually notifies us about this time each year. Once we receive official confirmation of our dates, we begin recruiting the 100 total first-year campers we will need to fill both sessions.

Our tentative Halberg Ecology Camp dates are Sunday, June 12 through Friday, June 17 for the first session and Sunday, June 19 through Friday, June 24 for the second session. By the time you read this newsletter, our dates will have been confirmed and posted on the Arkansas Audubon Society website.

If you know of any 11- or 12-year-old boys or girls who love nature, please make them aware of this exceptional opportunity for hands-on learning about nature in all its wonder. Two instructors teach together with a class of about 8-10 camp youth who get a sampling of all seven disciplines taught at camp: ornithology, mammalogy, aquatic biology, entomology, herpetology, geology, and botany.

Our generous donors provide a number of scholarships and tuition assistance for those campers whose families can’t afford the regular $325 tuition. If you have an 11- or 12-year-old nature lover in mind for camp, encourage their family to apply even if they need help with tuition. We have a history of helping nature-loving youth attend camp. After all, they’re our future.

It’s always a good time of year to make a donation. Checks should be made payable “AAS Halberg Ecology Camp” or “Arkansas Audubon Society” and mailed to 804 Konrad Court, Little Rock, AR 72223-9201. Donations are tax deductible and acknowledged by letter or email (email when possible to save on postage expense).
Warren Prairie Natural Area IBA: Where Barren Areas Are Full of Life

By DAN SCHEIMAN, Ph.D.
Bird Conservation Director, Audubon Arkansas

Over the past decade, a contingent from the Connecticut Audubon Society has been visiting Arkansas to see some of our rare and regionally restricted birds. One of their sought-after species is the Henslow’s Sparrow. The place they visit for it is the same place that many Arkansas birders go for the species: Warren Prairie Natural Area, a Globally Important Bird Area.

Site Description
Co-owned by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) and The Nature Conservancy, Warren Prairie Natural Area (4,660 acres; the ANHC owns fee title or conservation easements on all but 40 acres) is in Bradley and Drew counties. It is a mosaic of salt slick barrens, saline barrens, Delta post oak flatwoods, mound woodlands, saline marsh, pine woodlands, and bottomland hardwood forest communities. Soils containing naturally high amounts of sodium and magnesium salts account for the sparse and irregular distribution of trees and the resultant dominance of grasses and other herbaceous vegetation. These tree-less barrens, which are often incorrectly referred to as prairies, are home to a variety of rare plants and animals. In fact, the natural area provides critical habitat for the state’s largest population of the federally threatened plant Geocarpon minimum in the barrens and associated woodlands.
Ornithological Summary

The site supports over three-fourths of the Henslow’s Sparrows that are known to winter in Arkansas. The density of Henslow’s Sparrow at Warren Prairie is similar to what is observed in frequently burned longleaf pine savanna, which is considered by many to be the species’ primary winter habitat. In October of 2010, the ANHC began repatriation of a breeding population of the federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) in the pine woodlands that surround the barrens. To repopulate the area, birds were translocated from populations in Arkansas and Louisiana, and the latest translocation of eight RCWs to Warren Prairie in fall 2015 complements previous successful releases conducted annually since 2010. These translocations, followed by productive nesting, have rebuilt the RCW population at Warren Prairie from zero to more than 30 birds in the last five years, and the program has gained momentum toward reaching the short-term goal of 10–12 nesting pairs and the long-term goal of 30 nesting pairs. Open pine-oak flatwoods are also home to Red-headed Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Northern Bobwhite, Prairie Warblers, Bachman’s Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbirds.

Conservation Issues

Fire suppression prior to ANHC ownership favored woody plants over herbaceous vegetation, adversely affecting many species. Since acquisition, the ANHC has been using prescribed burning and thinning to successfully restore the habitat to a more historical structure and species composition. Hydrology is easily disrupted by excessive soil disturbance caused by illegally entering off-road vehicles, and even by the installation of roads and fire breaks required for prescribed burns. The need for new fire breaks will decrease as the ANHC’s prescribed burning program gradually reduces the fuel load and thus the intensity of burns, allowing for larger burn units.