

# The Snipe

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## The Newsletter of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

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## WWW.ASCABIRD.ORG

The Audubon Society has a new URL and web page design. Many thanks to ASCA's webmaster, Lyndal York, for all his hard work in designing the new website. Besides information about meetings and field trips, one can find information on rare bird sightings, conservation issues, bird counts, birding hotspots, and bird photos. So if you are surfing the net, check out the new web site.

### Arkansas Audubon's Fall 2003 Meeting

The Fall meeting of the Arkansas Audubon Society will be October 24-26, 2003, at the Clarion Resort on the Lake, 4813 Central Ave., Hot Springs National Park. The reservation number is 1-800-432-5145. Be sure to mention that you are with Arkansas Audubon Society when you make your reservations so that we will receive the best possible rates. (If we have 25 rooms booked for our meeting, the rate is \$72.95 per night, single or double occupancy). On Friday night there will be a speaker, and field trips are scheduled for Saturday morning. The Saturday evening program will be a special treat--a viewing of the Academy Award nominated documentary "Winged Migration" in conjunction with the Hot Springs Film Festival. Contact DeLynn Hearn (501)771-4686 for registration information. See you there! DeLynn Hearn  
AAS Vice President.

## The President's Column

### Conservation starts in your own backyard

Are you one of many that would like to do more for conservation but are concerned that you don't have the finances to do so? No worries – you can make important contributions in your own backyard. How so? The answer is by using native plants and trees in your landscaping.

Some non-native plants that are used for landscape purposes escape and “invade” natural areas and ecosystems. Some other non-native plants, such as kudzu and sericea lespedeza, were introduced for erosion control but unfortunately are very aggressive and often “invade” natural habitats. In addition, there are non-native “weeds” that “invade” our agricultural systems. Collectively, these are referred to as non-native invasive plants and they create major problems for our natural and agricultural resources.

The economic cost of non-native invasive plants is estimated to be in the several billions of dollars per year in the United States alone. However, there are other significant costs associated with these plants. For example, over half of Hawaii's native bird species have gone extinct due to the introduction of non-native plants and animals. In the Sacramento Valley of California an invasive plant species has led to the decline in available water valued at \$16-56 million a year – significant in an area where water resources are scarce. Invasive plants also negatively impact wetlands by reducing oxygen levels available for fish, interfering with natural processes such as water flow and evapotranspiration, impeding boat travel by clogging waterways, and can even reduce the effectiveness of power production and irrigation. In addition, many butterflies are host plant specific and their populations decline when non-native plants invade their habitat.

If you don't think this is a problem in your area, go check out your local park. Chances are that privet, Chinese wisteria, Japanese honeysuckle, and nandina clutter the area at the expense of native vegetation. Unfortunately, the list of non-native plant species is growing. To see a complete listing, check out the following web site:

[http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/about/newsrelease/nr\\_2003-05-29-nonnative.htm](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/about/newsrelease/nr_2003-05-29-nonnative.htm)

The cost of eradicating these problem plants is enormous, so the key is prevention. A good way of preventing invasive plants is to use native plant species in your landscaping. Our feathered friends help spread the invasive plants by eating the fruits and then dispersing the seeds elsewhere when they void themselves. So let's put our feathered friends to work and have them spread native seeds across the country-side instead of those that adversely affect our ecosystems, wildlife, and economy.

Remember, think globally and act locally. You can make a difference by starting in your own backyard. The following is a list of known websites that are good sources of native plants. Please share with us if you know of others.

<http://www.pineridgegardens.com> (this one is in Arkansas – they sell plants not seeds)

<http://spencenursery.com/>

<http://www.oakprairiefarm.com/>

<http://www.prairienursery.com/>

<http://www.seedsource.com/>

<http://ionxchange.com/>

# Upcoming Programs of the ASCA

The ASCA meets at 7:00 PM the second Thursday of each month at the John Gould Fletcher Library which can be found at 823 Buchanan Street, the corner of Buchanan and H Street just off North University Avenue. The programs are free and open to the public.

## September 11

**Martha Jane Murray**, architect with The Wilcox Group in Little Rock, will discuss sustainable development and green buildings.

## October 9

**Roger Coleman**, archeologist with the United States Forest Service in the Ouachita National Forest, will speak about climatic changes using evidence from forest resources.

## November 13

**Dr. John Harris**, PhD, Zoologist with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, will talk about Arkansas wetlands and associated endangered species.

## December 11

**Adult Leisure Center**  
**6401 West 12th Street**  
**Little Rock**

Christmas is just around the corner. For the ASCA, the Christmas season brings one of the most glamorous events of the year, the third annual Christmas Potluck and Silent Auction. The potluck means there will be lots of food. The Silent Auction provides opportunities to bid on great items that can be turned into Christmas gifts for friends and family. The silent auction is one of the primary fundraisers for ASCA. Now is the time to go out and seek donations from businesses, friends, or neighbors for the Auction. Donations are tax deductible and all money raised stays exclusively within the ASCA. Donated items can be given to any officer on the list to the right.

The Adult Leisure Center is located one block west of the 12th Street and University Avenue intersection. Look in the next issue of the Snipe or in coming weeks on ASCA's website ([www.ascabird.org](http://www.ascabird.org)) for the time.

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**Vacant:**  
Education  
Outreach  
Publicity

# ASCA Field Trip Schedule

The ASCA sponsors numerous field trips throughout the year. The trips are open to all and carpooling is available for trips outside of Little Rock. This is a great opportunity for novice birders to meet and learn their birds from more experienced birders. Perhaps a chance to get a life bird for those dedicated birders. Contact Drew Phillips at 501-228-5245 for more detailed information about any of the upcoming trips.

## **September 20, 2003 Mt. Magazine State Park Hawk Watch**

We will meet at Christ The King Church's parking lot on Rodney Parham just south of Highway 10 at 7:30 AM. Arrival time at the Park should be between 9:30 and 10:00 AM. Quoting the Park's Web Site, "Stand on the top of Arkansas to watch birds of prey soar during their migration southward." For those who plan to meet us at the Park, meet at the Visitor Center at 10:00 AM. Bring lawn chairs, binoculars, water and lunch. A specialists from the Little Rock Zoo will display live birds of prey at 1:00 PM in the visitor center. Sounds like great fun! This is the perfect trip for the novice birder and youngsters interested in birds.

## **October 25, 2003 Lake Millwood**

We will meet at the Shackelford Road Commuter Parking lot (near the intersection of I-430 & I-630) at 7:30 AM and should arrive at Millwood around 9:30 to 10:00 AM. Those going on their own can meet us at Beard's Bluff at 9:45. We will be targeting gulls, ducks, and hopefully a rarity or two. Lake Millwood has a history of attracting rare birds.

## **November 22nd Lake Dardanelle**

We will meet at Christ the King parking lot on Rodney Parham just south of Highway 10 lot at 7:30 AM. Again we will be looking for gulls and ducks on the Lake, but we will also search for sparrows at Blackwell Bottoms east of Russellville. We may adjust if there are reports of any rare birds in the general vicinity.

## **The National Audubon Society's Annual Christmas Bird Counts**

**December 14 Lonoke County**  
**December 20 Little Rock**

These two Christmas Bird Counts are sponsored by ASCA. There will be other Counts around the state during this period. These are not your standard field trips, as the Counts typically last the entire day. In case of inclement weather, these Counts could be postponed. Contact Lyndal York at (501) 663-2192 for more information or to volunteer.

# ASCA Field Trip Reports

June 7, 2003  
Mt. Magazine State Park

ASCA's Mt. Magazine State Park trip was success as Don Simons led us to a **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** perched out in the open on a dead snag for all to see. We saw two others and heard one more Sparrow. This was the first time in three years that an ASCA's trip to Mt. Magazine has resulted in a Rufous-crowned sighting. The eighteen participants who made the trip were a diverse group with some regulars from Central Arkansas and individuals from Ft. Smith, Missouri, and California. **Don Simons** did an excellent job leading this group. During the morning hours, he took us birding around the Park and eventuality to the top of Arkansas. In the afternoon he led a butterfly and wildflower walk. During this walk, he showed us the Mt. Magazine specialties: the **Maple-leafed Oak** and the **Western Wall-flower**. Other interesting topics he covered included the ecology and geology of the Park, the Black Bear who has learned to open the animal-proof trash containers, and the waterfalls on the Mountain. Due to the wide range of topics cover by Don, this was a very informative trip; and ASCA would like to thank Don Simons for leading this trip.

## Mt. Magazine Trip List

**Birds:** Rufus-crowned Sparrow, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Phoebe, American Goldfinch, Carolina Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, Chipping Sparrow, Broad-winged Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Indigo Bunting, **Ovenbird**, **Scarlet Tanager**, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Red-eyed Vireo, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood Peewee, **Hooded Warbler**, Blue Jay, American Crow, Pine Warbler, **Black-and-white Warbler**, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Chimney Swift, and Brown-headed Cowbird

**Butterflies:** Painted Lady, Great Spangled Fritillary, Diana Fritillary, Pipevine Swallowtail, Zebra Swallowtail, Silver-spotted Skipper, Eastern Blue Tail, Spicebush Swallowtail, Monarch

**Plants:** Mapled-leaf Oak, Western Wall-flower, Spiderwort, Wild Hydrangea, Ginseng, Butterfly Weed, Venus' Looking Glass, Pale-purple Coneflower, and Daisy Fleabane

July 12, 2003  
Bell Slough

Contrary to expectations it was a mild day with a cool breeze and light intermittent showers. These conditions were great for the thirteen avid birders who descended on Bell Slough at 7:30 AM, but poor for butterfly observation. The butterflies were not flying as only three were seen (Spicebush Swallowtail, Viceroy, Red Spotted Admiral). However, the mosquitoes were flying. We fared a little better on our bird observations as there was considerable activity of egrets and herons over the waterfowl rest area.

**Birds:** Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, White-eyed Vireo, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Red-winged Blackbird, Titmouse, Chickadee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, **Kentucky Warbler**, Indigo Bunting, Common Yellowthroat, **Yellow-crowned Night Heron**, Green Heron, Little Blue Heron, Great Blue Heron, Chimney Swift, Mourning Dove, Prothonotary Warbler, **Summer Tanager**, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Goldfinch, Cardinal, Common Crackle, Blue Jay, Fish Crow. A sudden downpour from a passing thunderstorm sent us packing at 11 AM.

Bald Knob NWR  
August 9, 2003

Fifteen eager birders turned out for the trip to Bald Knob. We had a cool north breeze for a time, but then it stopped and we all started to glisten. The birding was good as suggested by the list below. The highlight birds were the **White Ibis**, **Roseate Spoonbill**, and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, which is on the Watchlist.

**Birds:** White Ibis, Killdeer, Pectoral Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, Roseate Spoonbill, Black-necked Stilt, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Semipalmated Plover, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Mockingbird, House Sparrow and one frolicking Mink.

Interestingly, no hawks or vultures were observed. We did not bird the forested areas of the refuge so none of the expected forest/edge dwellers were found.

## Arkansas Rare Bird Alert (RBA)

The RBA lists rare and unusual birds found throughout the state, and if possible directions to these birds. To report or hear the latest sightings, call (501) 753-5853. This number is listed as J.J. Audubon in the phone book, the only white page listing with the last name of Audubon.

### ARBIRD-L

ARBIRD-L is an e-mail discussion list (listserv) composed of users interested in Arkansas birds and birding. Once you are subscribed (**it's free**) you will be able to send a bird-related question, observation, or message to a single address and it will quickly and automatically be delivered to ALL other subscribers to the list. This list is hosted by the University of Arkansas. ARBIRD-L provides a forum for questions, answers, and discussions about Arkansas birds and birding. It allows subscribers a quick and efficient way of reaching a large number of people who are interested in birds. Post your questions, interesting observations, directions to good birding sites or rare birds, etc. Or, if you are shy, just sit back and read the messages as they come in! To subscribe, send a message from your e-mail account (or screen name) you wish to use for your subscription with "subscribe ARBIRD-L your name" (your first and last name, or first initial and last name, not your email address) as the only thing in the message body to [listserv@listserv.uark.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uark.edu). Be sure and leave the subject line blank. Subscriptions will be processed soon thereafter. You will receive confirmation and further instructions once you are added to the list. **You may also unsubscribe at any time.** For more information, e-mail your questions, with "ARBIRD-L questions" in the subject line, to: Kimberly G. Smith, List Owner Department of Biological Sciences University of Arkansas [kgsmith@uark.edu](mailto:kgsmith@uark.edu)

**Example message to subscribe:**

subscribe ARBIRD-L John Doe

You must first be a subscriber to post to the ARBIRD-L list. To post messages to the list, send your message to [listserv@listserv.uark.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uark.edu). Please remember to include your name and location at the end of your message. To unsubscribe, send a message from the e-mail account in which you subscribed with "signoff ARBIRD-L" in the body of the message. An automated reply acknowledging your removal from the list will follow.

**Looking for that perfect Christmas  
Gift for that birder in your life?**

**A membership to the Audubon  
Society of Central Arkansas would  
make the perfect gift.**

# Conservation News

## USFWS Migratory Bird Plan

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and you, our partners and constituents, are making considerable strides for migratory birds on a host of fronts. But, as you know, we still face great challenges: habitat loss and deterioration continue to harm bird populations and a host of other threats continue to cause direct loss of bird life, such as pesticides and other contaminants, wildlife diseases such as West Nile Virus, entanglement in fishing lines, and collisions with towers and other structures. We face challenges of controlling overabundant populations as well.

To deal these challenges, the Service has produced **A Blueprint for the Future of Migratory Birds**, a draft strategic plan to strengthen and guide the Service's Migratory Bird Program over the next ten years. The Service is keenly aware that effective management of migratory birds depends upon the collective efforts of many individuals, organizations, and nations. That is why it is absolutely essential that the Service develop its migratory bird strategic plan in consultation with the many partners and constituents who share interest and active involvement in conserving these international avian treasures that have been entrusted to our care. As a valued partner and/or constituent, you are key to making this effort a success. From whatever your vantage point, we ask that you please provide your views and recommendations on this draft plan. Your input is important to us and to the future of migratory birds! Please access the draft strategic plan entitled **A Blueprint for the Future of Migratory Birds** and provide comments by October 10, 2003 at the following internet address.

<http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/mbstratplan/mbstratplan.htm>.

We look forward to hearing your recommendations regarding the future of migratory birds!

Paul Schmidt, Assistant Director  
Migratory Birds and State Programs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Arkansas Environmental News

With pressure supplied by the Crooked Creek Coalition and others, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality is watching gravel mining operations more closely on Crooked Creek.

Arkansas' Conservation Groups achieved some success with this past General Assembly. The Arkansas Canoe Club hired a lobbyist for the first time to deal with stream issues.

Environmental groups successfully sued the United States Corps of Engineers to revoke their dam permit for Bear Creek, a tributary of the Buffalo River.

Environmentalism will always remain with us. To quote Jose Lutzenberger, "**Our defeats are always final, our victories always provisional. What you save today can still be destroyed tomorrow.**"

If you want more information on these Arkansas' environmental issues or if you want to become involved, you can contact William Saunders (501)664-2539. He is active in both ASCA and the Arkansas Canoe Club on many environmental issues.