

# THE SNIPE

The Newsletter of the  
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas



Charles Mills

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## Audubon Society of Central Arkansas A Look Back in Time

Dottie Boyles

January 2013 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the formation of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas (ASCA). While there have been many changes over the years one thing has remained constant, our love of birds and protecting the environment they depend on.

In 2002, ASCA member Ken Dayer wrote his Master's thesis entitled *The History of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas*. Ken spent endless hours searching through chapter newsletters, financial statements, newspaper articles, and various other publications. Several excerpts from his thesis are referenced here. A former Editor of *The Snipe* newsletter, Ken currently lives in Silver City, New Mexico.

### Introduction: A brief history of Audubon, Environmentalism, and Ornithology in Arkansas, 1819-1953

Ken's thesis begins with a brief history of Audubon, environmentalism, and ornithology in Arkansas. His research revealed some interesting facts such as, in December 1910, the first documented National Audubon Society (NAS) activity for Arkansas was the Monticello Christmas Bird Count; the first documented Audubon group, the Arkansas Audubon Society, met in Little Rock on February 7, 1914, with then governor-elect George Washington Hays as its secretary. The society later disbanded only to reform years later; and on March 11, 1915, Governor Hays signed Act 124, initiating the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for the purpose of preserving the state's wildlife that was in drastic decline due to over-hunting and habitat destruction.

The names of both the Society and the chapter's newsletter have changed over the years. The original name of the society was the Pulaski County Audubon Society (PCAS). The Society changed its name on October 8, 1981 to the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas so as to adequately describe the scope of its operations and to possibly increase its membership. The newsletter was originally known as *The Pulaski Snipe*. From October 14, 1981 through December 1, 1982, the newsletter was known as *The ASCA Snipe*. In 1983 it became known just as *The Snipe*.

Iola Hicks Rea was instrumental in getting the PCAS started. In 1952 she attended the NAS's annual meeting, and met president John Baker. He urged her to start a chapter in Little Rock. Returning from the conference, she initiated

discussions with fellow birders and discovered there was enough interest to establish an official chapter. The first regular meeting of the PCAS occurred in January 1953. Officers were installed at the February meeting with Dr. P.J. Almaden being elected the first president of the Society. In the March meeting, the fledgling Society voted to become a full chapter of the NAS; there were 21 members at this meeting. New members continued to join and by the end of its first year of operation, the Society had a membership of 40. Rea was very active in the PCAS until her death on February 14, 1977. She served as the Society's first secretary and its first female president. The PCAS was the second Audubon group organized in the state, after Ruth Armstrong's chapter at Fort Smith, but it was the first in fully affiliating with the NAS.

### The Beginnings of the Pulaski County Audubon Society and Stream Preservation in Arkansas, 1950-1959

The 1950's were a relatively quiet time for the national conservation movement and the PCAS. Each organization concentrated on its specific agenda, such as the NAS's efforts to preserve birds and their habitat. The PCAS, except for monetarily or in letter writing campaigns, was unable to participate in NAS activities; nor was it able to work closely with the State Game and Fish Commission in its preservation efforts because of limited resources. Faced with these limitations, society members decided to focus its attention on birds.

The Society's first preservation activities dealt with counting bird populations. In December 1953, members participated in the NAS's annual Christmas Bird Count and counted birds in Little Rock and Lonoke.

The PCAS also monitored Little Rock's bird environment. During 1959, they worked with the Division of Parks & Recreation in Little Rock to set aside part of Rebsamen Park as a bird sanctuary and aided in the development and care of the sanctuary.

More emphasis was put on educational activities than preservation efforts. The educational program was based on three main staples: the NAS Screen Tours, meetings and presentations, and field trips. The latter two were initiated in 1953 and still are part of the Society's programs today.

Another significant educational activity of the PCAS was its involvement with the Bird Room of Little Rock's Museum  
*See A Look Back in Time, page 4*

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# President's Column

Karen Holliday has been researching the archival of information for the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas at the Arkansas Studies Institute, a division of the Central Arkansas Library System. Some information has already been archived, but this change will make access to it easier. There is a lot of information because the society has been in existence for 60 years.

I guess I am feeling nostalgic because the speaker for August was Arkansas State Parks Director Greg Butts. I remember meeting Greg when he was beginning his career at Arkansas State Parks and I was starting the Eagle Awareness Program. Greg is the perfect combination of book learning and honest, thoughtful, dedication to the heritage of Arkansas that Arkansas State Parks represents. We were fortunate to have him. He talked about the benefits and values of Arkansas's State Parks, the history of the Department, and the changes that have occurred over the years.

The Arkansas State Park system as we know it today started in 1923 with land given by the Fort Smith Lumber Company to our state. The donation of the land around Cedar Falls started a wonderful program that continues today and brings recreational, educational, and "soul mending" opportunities to many people yearly.

The Audubon Society of Central Arkansas was formed 60 years ago and the information being archived will have lasting benefits to scholars and interested birders for years to come. Information recorded in *The Snipe*, ASCA's quarterly newsletter, concerning rare bird sightings, Christmas Bird Counts, International Migratory Bird Day, monthly field trips, and reports on National Audubon's Important Bird Areas, all provide a history of the birds and birding areas in our state. Additionally, information can be evaluated in relation to habitat change and many other scientific fields.

On August 17th, ASCA hosted one of its monthly field trips to Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge and one of National Audubon's Important Bird Areas. There is always a possibility of seeing some very interesting birds such as Rosette Spoonbills, Wood Storks, or other unusual species, all while learning methods to improve your birding skills, have great fellowship, and be a part of history!

Please join us for our field trips and meetings. You can search Audubon Society of Central Arkansas to find all the information on both activities-there are even some past issues of *The Snipe* newsletter on the website.

Jane Gulley  
ASCA President

## Birding Opportunities around Central Arkansas

**September 16 – "Bird Language, Revealing the Secrets of Nature"** a 7:00 PM program at the Little Rock Audubon Center by nationally renowned naturalist Jon Young, author of "What the Robin Knows" and "Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature." Mr. Young will share stories and experiences with the art of interpreting the language of the birds, and will provide an exciting update on the Bird Language Outreach Project, a nationwide collaboration with the National Audubon Society and 8-shields Institute. He will also sell and sign books after the talk. Details will be posted on Audubon Arkansas's website and Facebook page soon. The event is being co-hosted by the Ozark Tracker Society." For more information visit: <http://birdlanguage.com/bird-language-leaders>.

**September 21 – Hillcrest Harvestfest in Little Rock.** Dan Scheiman will be leading a bird walk. Meet in Allsopp Park's parking lot by the baseball field at 7:15 AM. For more information visit their website at: <http://harvestfest.us/>.

**September 28 – Volunteer day at the Little Rock Audubon Center for National Public Lands Day,** 8:00 AM–12:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to help get the Center's native plant gardens and new wildlife observation trail in shape. Visit <http://ar.audubon.org/events/volunteer-national-public-lands-day> for more information.

# Do You Know Where Your Drinking Water Comes From?

Barry Haas

ASCA Conservation Chair

If you are one of the roughly 400,000 central Arkansans whose water is provided by Central Arkansas Water (CAW), what comes out of the faucet when you turn your water on is from Lake Maumelle and Lake Winona. Lake Maumelle provides 60% or more of our water. It was built in the late 1950's specifically as a high quality drinking water supply for Little Rock Water Works which later became part of the regional water authority Central Arkansas Water.

Most of the attention in recent years has been on Lake Maumelle due to potential threats to that water source. Lake Winona is more isolated and not threatened at present. One of those threats to Lake Maumelle is westward migration of residential developments that pose the greatest long-term threat to water quality. The other more imminent threat is the ExxonMobil Pegasus pipeline that crosses 13.5 miles of the Lake Maumelle watershed just north of the lake. You may have heard of this pipeline. Yes, it's the same one that ruptured in Mayflower in late March, spilling an estimated 210,000 gallons of diluted bitumen and forcing homeowners out of the Northwoods subdivision.

Diluted bitumen is heavy Canadian crude oil with the consistency of peanut butter that must be mixed with light liquids so the mixture can be forced through a pipeline at very high pressure and temperature. Many of those so-called light liquids are carcinogenic (cancer causing substances like naphtha). The last thing we need getting into Lake Maumelle's exceptionally high quality water is this nasty stuff.

Beginning in 2005 a number of steps have been taken to help limit development in the Lake Maumelle watershed to reduce the long-term threat. The first step was CAW's adoption of the Lake Maumelle Watershed Management Plan in early 2007, which was developed by more than 20 stakeholder groups. Following adoption of the Watershed Management Plan Pulaski County adopted stormwater regulations dealing with large scale developments in the watershed. Another critical protection approved by the Arkansas Pollution Control & Ecology Commission was the prohibition of wastewater discharge into the lake, which protects the entire Lake Maumelle watershed in three counties.

Finally, in recent years Pulaski County has been working to draft and then implement a Land Use Plan and Zoning Code for the portion of the Lake Maumelle watershed within Pulaski County. Part of the watershed extends west into Perry County and a small piece is also in northern Saline County. But the development pressure is in Pulaski County.

The Pulaski County Quorum Court approved a Land Use Plan and Zoning Code earlier this year. Since property owners in the watershed and many others who have worked for years to protect Lake Maumelle have concerns about some elements of the Zoning Code, a task force was authorized and is beginning to meet on a regular basis. The task force is working on improving protections in the current Zoning Code that would then be presented to the Quorum Court in March or April of next year for their consideration.

Now back to the immediate threat- the ExxonMobil Pegasus pipeline. Since the March 29 Pegasus pipeline rupture in Mayflower, the pipeline has been shut down.

ExxonMobil is being urged to move the pipeline outside the Lake Maumelle watershed to eliminate the threat it poses to our drinking water. If the Pegasus pipeline is allowed to once again begin transporting more than 3,780,000 gallons a day (90,000+ barrels) of this noxious diluted bitumen, our drinking water could be compromised at any moment. That threat is simply unacceptable. How could ExxonMobil provide sufficient water to 400,000 central Arkansans? They couldn't, and the lack of sufficient, affordable water would severely cripple our local economy. ExxonMobil must do the right thing and either not restart this suspect pipeline or at a minimum move the 13.5 mile section outside the Lake Maumelle watershed.

The public is invited and encouraged to attend the Lake Maumelle Watershed Task Force meetings. You can contact me for the date, time and place of any meetings at [bhaas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bhaas@sbcglobal.net).

At present they are scheduled beginning Thursday August 29 at 6:00 p.m. and then every 3rd Thursday until the end of March 2014. The meetings last approximately two hours.

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## History of The Snipe Newsletter

The first newsletter for the Pulaski County Audubon Society, *The Pulaski Snipe*, was published on January 31, 1967. The name was briefly changed to *The ASCA Snipe*, and in 1983 it became known as *The Snipe*. In 1988 the newsletter was published bi-monthly. It was briefly published monthly from March until August 1999, but returned to bi-monthly with the Sept/Oct issue of that year. While most issues consisted of four pages, the newsletter was eventually changed to eight pages and issued quarterly.

Carol Wood served as editor of *The Snipe* from December 1988 until June 1993. Nancy King, who had served as the assistant editor for several years, became editor from August 1993 until August 1994. Tamara Tidwell served from October 1994 until December 1995. Robert Lashley became the editor with the Feb/Mar 1996 issue until October 2000. Andy

Dapkins served from 2001-2002. Ken Dayer took over with the December 2002-February 2003 issue and served until February 2005. With the March-May 2005 issue, Dottie Boyles became the current Editor.

Over the years several versions of clip art have been used featuring a snipe as the newsletter logo. In February 1994 the logo changed after a specially commissioned pen-and-ink drawing was sent to Henry Halberg courtesy of Massachusetts artists Larry Barth. The artwork was used until March 2005. Unfortunately as editors changed over the years, the quality of the original artwork was lost. In March 2007, the logo was once again changed, this time featuring a photograph taken by Arkansas Audubon Society member Charles Mills of a Wilson's Snipe. It is currently still being used.

## A Look Back in Time cont.

*Continued from page 1*

of Science and History. In 1958, the PCAS was instrumental in establishing this Room, an exhibit devoted exclusively to the birds of Arkansas. It officially opened to the public in September 1960. In 1958 and 1959, the Society contributed over \$200 for taxidermy, primarily for specimens going to the Bird Room. Members of the society helped maintain the exhibits by cleaning, arranging, and buying needed supplies. PCAS member Ross Jamison painted most of the pictures in the exhibit

### **Pulaski Audubon and the Rise of the Modern Environmental Movement, 1960-1969**

Beginning in 1963, the PCAS used television to advertise the Audubon ideal to the state. The Society did this by contributing money to sponsor nature programs on local television stations. In the winter of 1963-64 reporters from local television affiliates interviewed several PCAS members. They encouraged bird feeding during the winter and promoted the Audubon message. In 1966, several Society members made appearances on a local television show "Little Rock Today" for programs about birds. In 1967, the Society arranged for one of the Audubon Screen Tours, "The Bald Eagle" to be shown on the Arkansas Educational Television Network.

The first newsletter for the PCAS appeared on January 31, 1967. *The Pulaski Snipe* contained information regarding the local activities of the society along with conservation news on the state and national scene. It was the first newsletter published by a state Audubon Chapter, and was the second oldest among the state's Audubon groups. The Arkansas Audubon Society's newsletter *Arkansas Birds* preceded *The Pulaski Snipe*.

### **Earth Day and a New Direction for Environmentalism, 1970-1979**

During the 1970's, PCAS continued its close alliance with the Museum of Science and History and financially supported many of its educational activities, including a traveling exhibit called "Avian Predators" and later "Bird Adaptations" presented to students in the Central Arkansas area.

In 1975, Society members conducted breeding bird surveys around Pinnacle Mountain and Camp Logoly in Columbia County for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. During a field trip in 1977, members surveyed two areas in the Grand Prairie Region for the Department of Arkansas Heritage. Beginning in 1978, the Society helped Pinnacle Mountain State Park with its Hawk Watch program and sent the data to the Hawk Migration Association.

### **The Audubon Society of Central Arkansas and Wetlands Preservation, 1980-1989**

As the PCAS continued to be involved in conservation issues it was decided on October 8, 1981, to change the name to the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas (ASCA). The Society decided to change its name because PCAS implied the Society worked exclusively within Pulaski County. The name change adequately described their area of operation and influence.

During the 1980's the ASCA developed a close working relationship with Pinnacle Mountain State Park, as its relationship with the Museum of Science and History declined. The museum's director planned to eliminate the Bird Room as a separate exhibit and incorporate its birds into other exhibits which caused friction between members who had volunteered long hours cleaning and maintaining the exhibits. The long-term relationship with the museum ended in 1983.

The Society also became involved in AAS's annual Ecology Camp. The Camp, which lasted one week, introduced children, ages 11 and 12, to nature with classes in the sciences often taught by college professors. In 1980, the PCAS funded \$1000, out of a total cost of \$8000, for the first AAS Camp. This \$1000 contribution became an annual donation.

The ASCA also supported one of its own, Jane Gulley and her Eagle Awareness Program. Jane initiated this program at the start of the decade, and presented it around the state at schools, state parks, Boy and Girl Scout meetings, other environmental groups, hunters, etc. Through these efforts she addressed over 27,000 people directly through her programs and reached an additional 100,000 others by circulating educational packets. For her efforts here in Arkansas, Gulley went to Washington, DC as guest of the National Wildlife Federation to help launch 1982 as the Year of the Eagle. Jane is currently serving as President of the Society.

### **Mainstreaming of the Environmental Movement in the 1990's**

During the 1990's the ASCA embarked on efforts to preserve Little Rock's parks. In 1990 plans were proposed by the city of Little Rock for the widening and extension of Rebsamen Park Road across Jimerson Creek and into West Little Rock. At a public hearing on July 10, the ASCA went on record opposing this extension. A lawsuit was filed by then ASCA treasurer Barry Haas, the ASCA, and three other individuals against the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the city of Little Rock to halt the proposed expansion on the grounds that the Environmental Impact Statement was not sufficient. On April 1, 1991, the court ruled in favor of Haas and the ASCA. In 1992, it was appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis, Missouri. In response, Haas initiated a petition drive in a "Save the Park" campaign to get the proposed expansion on the November general ballot. The petition drive resulted in more than 8,550 names of registered voters. On November 3, with 55% support, the Save the Park campaign stopped expansion of Rebsamen Park Road.

### **Conclusion**

A statement by Florence Mallard can best sum up the activity of the ASCA throughout its history. In 1981, she said, "I would rather go birding than get into controversy. However, if we are to continue birding, it is imperative that we assume responsibility for speaking out against destructive environmental practices." There can be no birding without a natural environment; and the ASCA played an important part in preserving the natural environment of The Natural State as a true conservation organization.

## *Upcoming Programs*

The ASCA meets at 7:00 PM the second Thursday of each month at the John Gould Fletcher Library (except where noted), located at 823 Buchanan Street, on the corner of Buchanan and H Streets, just off North University Ave. The programs are free and open to the public.

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### September 12, 2013 – Southern Ecuador Birding Tour

Speaker: Dan Scheiman

Dan and Samantha Scheiman got a high watching birds in the Ecuadorian Andes this past January 8-21. With help from the expert guides at High Lonesome Tours their group saw 540 bird species. This includes 48 species of hummingbird, 42 species of tanager, 2 umbrellabirds, and the much sought-after Jocotoco Antpitta. Dan will take you on a photo tour of their trip from sea level to nearly 14,000 feet.

Dr. Dan Scheiman is Vice President of ASCA. His day job is Bird Conservation Director of Audubon Arkansas. He and his staff monitor birds and other wildlife, restore habitat, and help Arkansans improve their local environment. He has been birding for over 25 years. In the eight years he has lived in Arkansas he has seen 350 of the 413 bird species documented in the state. Dr. Dan the Bird Man has a B.S. from Cornell University, M.S. from Eastern Illinois University, and Ph.D. from Purdue University.

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### October 10, 2013 – Out of Our Element, Costa Rica

Speakers: Don Simons and Lori Spencer

Costa Rica is a tropical wonderland for students of natural history. Around 25% of the country is protected natural areas. It is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world. Lori Spencer and Don Simons enjoyed a visit to Costa Rica in April. They will share images and lessons learned on their first trip to Central America.

Lori Spencer is the author of *Arkansas Butterflies and Moths* and *The Diana Fritillary, Arkansas's State Butterfly*. Don Simons, an interpreter for Mount Magazine State Park, has been with Arkansas State Parks since 1981, and is a former president of the Arkansas Audubon Society.

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### November 14, 2013 – Adventures in Drip

Speaker: Cindy Franklin

Program: Irrigation: Maintaining a Patio Container Garden during an Arkansas Summer.

Cindy's front patio, full of pollinator-friendly plants is a full-on demonstration of how to maintain an extensive container garden in an extreme location, i.e. a stone patio with full sun from morning to mid-afternoon. How does she keep it watered through the summer months without killing herself or her plants? She'll cover the components of DIY drip irrigation. This will be a fun presentation for all of us who try to provide a bird, bee, and butterfly environment on our properties.

Cindy was raised on a dairy farm in Pennsylvania. After becoming an RN, she and her husband moved to Arkansas in 1978. Within a year, Bill entered the Family Practice residency at UAMS and Cindy became a nurse practitioner at the Little Rock VA Hospital. She retired from the VA in January 2013 after a career as a geriatric advanced practice nurse in the home care program. In addition to birdwatching, she gardens. Currently she has ten drip lines and one sprinkler automatically watering 100+ containers and multiple raised beds around the yard.

## **Lake Maumelle Lake Sweep**

*Stephanie Liechty*  
*Central Arkansas Water*

Central Arkansas Water (CAW) will hold its annual Lake Sweep clean up event on Saturday October 5, 2013. This year, CAW will be partnering with Audubon Arkansas to expand efforts to include outreach and educational activities. The event will include water quality sampling along with the usual trash pick-up and general sprucing up. Volunteers will meet at Jolly Rogers Marina, time to be determined later. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

For questions or comments, please contact either Uta Meyer at 501-244-2229 or email at [umeyer@audubon.org](mailto:umeyer@audubon.org); or Stephanie Liechty at 501-377-1331 or [Stephanie.liechty@carkw.com](mailto:Stephanie.liechty@carkw.com).

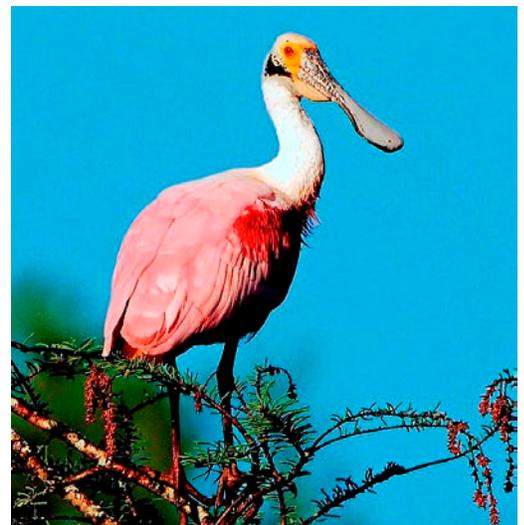
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### **Roseate Spoonbill**

With its distinctive spoon-shaped bill, snow white and hot pink coloring, and 50 inch wingspan, the Roseate Spoonbill is an impressive bird.

A mainly tropical species that normally occurs throughout the Gulf Coast region, spoonbills can be seen in Arkansas from July until October. The bird measures 32 inches in length, and weighs just over three pounds. They feed by sweeping their spatulate bill through shallow water and can be found in fresh and saltwater habitats. The birds often nest in rookeries shared with Great Egrets.

While fairly common along the southern part of the state, occasionally Roseate Spoonbills are spotted further north at Bald Knob NWR and other locations around Arkansas.



*photo by Larry Jernigan*

## Mark Your Calendars!

Karen Holliday, AAS Vice President

The **Arkansas Audubon Society 2013 Fall Meeting** will be held September 27-29 at the Quality Inn and Convention Center in Harrison, Arkansas. Call the hotel at 870-741-7676 to book a room. Tell them you are with the Arkansas Audubon Society to get the \$77.00 per night rate. Rate includes the hot breakfast buffet. The rate is also available Thursday night, Sept. 26. Dinner is on your own Friday night.

Following Saturday's dinner, the guest speaker will be Joe Neal who will discuss "Astounding Crossbill Irruption: Arkansas 2012-2013."

For complete convention details visit the AAS website at: [www.arbirds.org](http://www.arbirds.org).

### **Pinnacle Mountain State Park Owl Prowl**

Peek into the darkness and discover a world filled with owls. Join a park interpreter on a guided hike along the Arboretum Trail in search of the elusive nocturnal hunters. Advance payment of \$5.00 and registration is required.

Tours are scheduled for:

Sunday, September 8, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 15, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 12, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

### **Wood Storks, Glossy Ibis spotted in Chicot County**

On their quest to find as many species as they can this year, Kenny and LaDonna Nichols stumbled upon a large number of Wood Storks near Grand Lake in Chicot County. On a previous trip to the area, the Nichols spotted a Glossy Ibis feeding alongside White and White-faced Ibis's. A new state/life bird for several who chased it.



Wood Stork photo by Ron Howard



## **ASCA Field Trip Schedule**

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 more about birds from experienced birders, or perhaps a chance to see a life bird for those who list. For more information visit [www.ascabird.org](http://www.ascabird.org) or contact Karen Holliday, ASCA Field Trip Coordinator, at [ladyhawke1@att.net](mailto:ladyhawke1@att.net) or 501-920-3246. Always bring plenty of water with you.

*September 14, 2013*

### **Bell Slough Wildlife Management Area-South**

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the main entrance to the Bell Slough Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Our target birds will be migrating fall warblers. Bell Slough is a mix of ecosystems consisting of 2,040 acres of woodlands and wetlands situated between Little Rock and the Mayflower/Conway region. There are 198 species of birds documented for the area, including the adjacent waterfowl resting habitat. the Kenny Vernon Nature Trail consists of three connecting trails, each ranging in length from about a half-mile to 2 1/4 miles. The WMA also has a nice mix of wildflowers that attract numerous butterflies. Wear study walking shoes. This will be a morning trip.

From Little Rock, go west on I-40. Exit I-40 at Mayflower (Exit 135) and turn east (right) at the light onto Hwy. 89. Then turn south (right) just past the commuter parking lot. Follow the service road paralleling I-40, then veer right at the fork. This is the new link to Grassy Lake Road. After crossing the Palarm Creek bridge, turn left into the WMA parking lot.

*October 5, 2013*

### **Millwood Lake**

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the commuter lot at I-430/630 off Shackleford Road in Little Rock. We should arrive around 9:00 a.m. at the observation deck overlooking the lake at Beard's Bluff Park for those who would like to meet us there. Our target birds will be herons, egrets, ibises, terns, gulls (maybe Sabine's), and late migrants. An alligator sighting is also possible and butterflies should still be plentiful. Bring a scope, plenty of water, snacks, and lunch. There are snacks and drinks at the marina. Very little walking will be involved. Drive time to Millwood Lake is two hours each way. This will be an all-day trip.

Millwood Lake is in the southwest corner of the state, north of Texarkana. Beard's Bluff Park is approximately 5 miles west of Saratoga on Hwy. 32.

*November 16, 2013*

### **DeGray Lake Resort State Park**

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the commuter lot at I-430/I-630 off Shackleford Road in Little Rock. We'll arrive around 8:45 a.m. at the park's Lodge for anyone who would like to meet us there. Our target birds will be eagles, ducks, mergansers, grebes, and gulls. Bring a scope, plenty of water, and snacks. You can bring lunch or eat in the restaurant at the Lodge. Dress warm, the lake can be windy and cold.

Address for the park is: 2027 State Park Entrance Road - Bismarck, Arkansas 71929. GPS coordinates: 34.24562, -93.14840. Visit: [www.degray.com](http://www.degray.com) for more information about the park.



# *Field Trip Reports*

Karen Holliday, Field Trip Coordinator

## **Mount Magazine State Park**

*June 8, 2013*

At the Mount Magazine State Park Visitor Center, Park Interpreter Don Simons gave an overview and oriented us to the park. Then Don led the group to the Benefield Picnic Area. Along the entrance road and in the parking lot, we spotted Eastern Bluebird parents showing their youngsters how to swoop down into the grass to snag tasty bugs. Great Crested Flycatchers, Hooded Warblers, Pine Warblers, Eastern Wood-Pewees, and Summer Tanagers were also seen and heard. At the hang gliding area, we found our target bird – a Rufous-crowned Sparrow, plus close looks at a Blue Grosbeak and an Ovenbird.

Along the cliff on the west side of the lodge, we found a Black-throated Green Warbler and were surprised to find a Prairie Warbler that popped up out of the honeysuckle. We also found a Rufous-crowned Sparrow skulking in the juniper bushes, plus a second one singing further along the path. A brilliant male Scarlet Tanager flashed past, eliciting gasps of delight from the group.

Following lunch, we caravanned to the Brown Springs Trail, where we were joined by Lori Spencer, Arkansas's best-known butterfly expert. Lori identified and educated us about the numerous plants along the trail and the butterfly's nectaring on many of those plants. Lori also entertained us with stories of how she met Don and their joint work on their *Arkansas Butterflies and Moths* book. Returning along the trail, we stopped to watch a male Scarlet Tanager singing in the top of a bare tree, plus listened to and watched two singing Wood Thrushes in the undergrowth, and heard more Ovenbirds. We ended the day with a total of 36 birders, 33 species of birds, and 18 species of butterflies.

## **Arkansas Post National Memorial**

*July 13, 2013*

Twenty-seven birders hit the jackpot weather-wise for our field trip to southeast Arkansas. The temperature never climbed above 83 degrees. Our first stop was the Hwy. 169 bridge that crosses Little Post Bayou, just before the park entrance. The Bayou is full of water lotus and water hyacinth, great habitat for Purple and Common Gallinules. No chicks were seen of either species, but several adults were very cooperative. A Least Bittern made two lengthy cross-flights, flashing its large buffy wing patches. It vocalized multiple times from the reeds next to the road. An American Alligator and several Spotted Gar were seen swimming near the bridge, while an Anhinga circled above.

At the Visitor Center, park rangers dressed in colonial uniforms described the multi-faceted history of the site and port. We were treated to an exhibition of live firings of cannon and flintlock musket. Our second alligator of the day was seen leisurely cruising the lake adjacent to the Visitor Center. We walked the trail along Post Bend, part of the Arkansas Post

Canal and stopped at the site of Montgomery's Tavern, where John James Audubon in 1822 described, painted, and named the Traill's Flycatcher. The Traill's has since been split into the Willow and Alder Flycatchers. Eastern Wood-Pewees and Acadian Flycatchers were seen and heard as we walked the trail. A Warbling Vireo was warbling in the top of a tree next to the tavern site, a life bird for several in the group.

At the Post Bayou picnic area, a Least Bittern flushed from the reeds along the bank and flew to a nearby raft of water hyacinth. It proceeded to sit on the raft for several minutes while it caught and swallowed a minnow, stretched its neck, and pointed its bill to the sky several times. Excellent looks at this normally secretive bird!

At the Menard Mounds area, located in an isolated part of the park, a juvenile White Ibis flew over. Several newer birders were able to get close looks at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

At Merrisach Lake Recreation Area, a couple dozen Least Terns were scattered over the lake, soaring and diving, perching and preening. Also seen were numerous Barn Swallows, Purple Martins, Great Egrets, Eastern Kingbirds, Double-crested Cormorants, and our only Great Blue Heron of the day. We had approximately 49 species for the trip.

## **Bald Knob National Wildlife Area**

*August 17, 2013*

A record number of 45 birders descended on the Bald Knob NWR in White County, including four from Memphis, TN. The cooler than normal temperatures and cloud cover were appreciated by all. A quick scan of the ponds, revealed a mix of shorebirds, egrets, and herons. Wood Storks and Roseate Spoonbills were no-shows. We briefly abandoned the mudflats and drove to the buttonbush swamp to see if any night-herons were active. Mitchell Pruitt had a flyover by an adult Tricolored Heron, which dove into the Bald Cypress trees and refused to show himself to the rest of the group. We had great looks at several adult and juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons, plus an adult Bald Eagle did a leisurely fly-by.

Back at the mudflats, we carefully scanned the shorebirds. Best finds were Buff-breasted, Baird's, and Stilt Sandpipers, Black-necked Stilts, Semipalmated Plovers, and Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers.

Cindy Franklin and Donna Haynes split from the group to check the east side of Coal Chute Road and soon called to report another Tricolored Heron. The group raced to the spot arriving just as the bird flew from the drainage ditch to join a Great Egret in another section of the ditch. It briefly flew towards us before landing, giving us awesome looks at its long reddish neck and upperwing coverts, confirming it was a juvenile.

Several birders continued on to Saul's Minnow Farm in Prairie Co. There we found two Willets, a Greater Yellowlegs, Baird's and Western Sandpipers, as well as Bank, Tree, and Barn Swallows perched on wires above the pond. We ended the day with 42 species at Bald Knob and 19 species at Saul's.

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