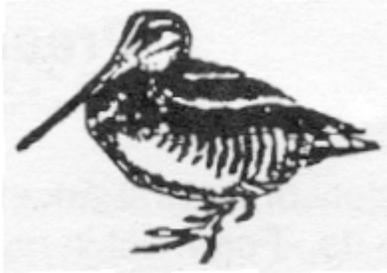


The Snipe

Volume 38 Issue 2
March – May 2004



The Newsletter of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

www.ascabird.org

		What's Inside?	
Upcoming Programs	Page 3	President's Column	Page 2
Upcoming Field Trips	Page 7	Arkansas Audubon Society's Spring Meeting	Page 4

International Migratory Bird Day May 8, 2004

The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology initiated the International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) in 1993. Today IMBD is under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Events are held in the United States, Mexico, and Central America that focus on the lives of migratory birds. Further information can be found at the IMBD website.

<http://www.birdday.org>

Arkansas will sponsor a Migratory Count for May 8th. This count is similar to the Christmas Bird Counts. Participants spend the day counting birds. Since it is held during the spring, the weather is considerably nicer than the Christmas Counts and it is an excellent opportunity to find migrating warblers. Volunteers are needed to census Pulaski County and other parts of the state. Lyndal York (501-663-2192 or jlyork@aristotle.net) serves as the state coordinator for this count, so anybody wishing to volunteer please contact Lyndal York.

Beginners Bird Identification Course slated for Pinnacle Mountain State Park April 24, 2004

The Beginners Bird Course at Pinnacle Mountain is scheduled for April 24 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. This is a great opportunity to better learn how to identify many of our feathered friends. Pinnacle Mountain State Park and ASCA are co-sponsors of this event. There is a \$10 admission fee, and participants will get a Peterson Field Guide for Eastern Birds. For further information, contact Pinnacle Mountain State Park by phone or email.

(501)868-5806

pinnaclemountain@arkansas.com

BILL HOLIMON

Bird Droppings

Arkansas is now referred to as the natural state. But is that name appropriate anymore? After all, much of the habitat in the state has been converted to other land uses. For example, the Grand Prairie in eastern Arkansas historically had around 320,000 acres of tallgrass prairie, but currently the amount of this habitat is a mere 430 acres. This large scale loss of grassland habitat has resulted in the extirpation of the Greater Prairie-chicken and the near disappearance of the King Rail from that region. Is this natural to you?

Prior to being the natural state, Arkansas has also been referred to as the land of opportunity and the bear state (pronounced "bar" state). I can't say with certainty why the logo of the land of opportunity was dropped, but nearly all of the bears in Arkansas were wiped out by the early 20th century due to over hunting. Was this the beginning of a trend regarding our state's logos?

One quick trip to the east or west coast may quickly convince one that the natural state is still a good fit for Arkansas. I can recount several long drives on both coasts and thinking that the habitat there consisted of one continuous strip mall. Grackles, pigeons, house sparrows, and dandelions do not represent biodiversity to me. Given that, I think it is safe to say that Arkansas has a lot of natural habitat relative to other states.

The question is how do we keep it that way? Well, there are several ways to address this. Foremost, get involved. You don't have to contribute a million dollars and you don't have to become a conservation biologist to help make a difference. The synergy of everyone trying to do something can make a big difference in the conservation of our natural resources. There are many groups that you can become affiliated with such as your local Audubon Chapter, The Nature Conservancy, or attending your local City Park board meetings. There are also little things you can do such as keeping your cats indoors (especially when birds are nesting) or simply favoring native plants in your own backyard. Remember, think globally and act locally. If we all do that, we will make a difference.

3rd Annual Christmas Potluck and Silent Auction

The Audubon Society of Central Arkansas would like to thank all persons who either donated items or participated in its third annual Christmas Potluck and Silent Auction. This year's auction raised \$442 for ASCA. The first silent auction brought in \$609 and the second raised \$427.50. On the unfortunate side, there were more items than actual participants as only 27 showed for the event. According to ASCA's treasurer, "this is the lowest number I can recall in my 18 years or so of attendance."

The Potluck and Silent Auction is one of the important fundraisers for the Society. Fund raising is a critical issue for the ASCA as the National Audubon Society plans to reduce its 'dues share' allotment for all its chapters beginning with the 2005-2006 fiscal year. ASCA's allotment for the period of July 1, 2004-June 30, 2005 will be approximately \$1800. Unless NAS changes its policy, ASCA will need to rely more on local fundraising to continue many of its conservation and educational activities. So, be sure to make plans for the fourth annual Potluck and Auction in December 2005.

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.

March 11 Dana Needham-Kirby

Dana Needham-Kirby is the Study Manager for the Little Rock District of the Army Corps Of Engineers. Dana will be talking about habitat restoration projects that the Corps is involved in around the state including Boyle Park in Little Rock.

April 8 John C. Sunderland

John C. Sunderland is the Assistant Chief Wildlife/Programs (species and statewide programs) at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. He is assigned to coordinate development of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy that is required for State Wildlife Grants funding.

May 15 Potluck

There will be no regular Thursday meeting in May. Instead, ASCA will hold its annual potluck on Saturday May 15th. The location and time has not yet been determined and will be posted on ASCA's website (www.ascabird.org). For those, without internet access, feel free to call the officers listed in the column on the right. The time and location should be determined during the March or April meeting. There will also be a short bird walk, so participants should bring a dish to share with appetite, and binoculars for the bird walk.

Former Newsletter editor sends his greetings from Japan.

Andy Dapkins served as the editor of The Snipe from 2001-2002. Andy is a member of the United States Air Force and he and his family (wife and two boys) are currently stationed in Japan. As part of his Air Force duties, Andy spent some time in the Middle East. Here is an excerpt from an email that he sent to the current editor.

"I was in Qatar and Oman (Masirah Island). Although the living arrangements were not the best the birding was pretty good. I got 10 lifers and was able to watch leatherback turtles lay eggs and then watch them hatch, that lets you now how long I was out there. I haven't had much time to bird in Japan yet but I plan on some really serious birding over the next year. I have found two really active groups and they love it that I have picked them to show me around. Tell everyone I said hi."

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Vacant: Education, Outreach, and Publicity

ARKANSAS AUDUBON SOCIETY CALL TO MEETING

The 2004 spring meeting of the Arkansas Audubon Society will be held on April 30-May 1 in Harrison. Meals and programs will be at the First Christian Church. Local hotels (approximate room rate-single) are: Comfort Inn 870-741-7676 (\$58.49), Days Inn 870-391-3297 (\$56), Family Budget 870-743-1000 (\$39.95), Holiday Inn 870-741-3636 (\$67.15), Hotel Seville 870-741-2321, Ozark Mt. Inn 870-743-1949 (\$39.99), Super 8 870-741-1741 (\$48.60)

Directions: From the north—on HWY 65, come to a light at Walmart. At the 3rd light after this turn left on HWY 65. Continue for about 1 mile to a light at Prospect. Go straight through the light, and in about ¼ mile turn left onto HWY 7. At the second light, turn left onto Pine. Continue about 6 blocks to a right hand curve and the church is at the top of the hill. **From the south**—on HWY 65 you will see a Flexsteel factory on the right. Turn left onto Main at the Flexsteel plant. Continue until you reach the bridge crossing the lake. After crossing the lake, you will come to a light. Turn left at the light onto Central. Turn left at the next light onto Pine. Continue about 6 blocks to a right hand curve and the church is at the top of the hill.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____

Meeting Registration # _____ @ \$15.00 each \$ _____
(Children under 16 with adult are free)

Friday evening meal # _____ @ \$8.50 each \$ _____

Saturday evening meal # _____ @ \$8.50 each \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Complete the form, include a check made out to **Arkansas Audubon Society**, and mail to by **April 23rd**:

DeLynn Hearn, AAS Vice-President
317 West K St.
N. Little Rock, AR 72116

For questions contact DeLynn at 501-771-4686 or delynnh@iwon.com.

Arkansas Audubon Society
2004 Spring Meeting
April 30-May 1
First Christian Church, Harrison

AGENDA

Friday, April 30

Board Meeting	12:00 Noon - 3:00 PM
Registration	4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Supper	6:30 PM - 7:30 PM
Evening Program	7:45 PM - 9:00 PM

SPEAKER: Suzie Rogers, Historian, Buffalo National River
PROGRAM: Natural and Cultural History of the Buffalo National River

Explanation of Saturday field trips and members slide show.

Saturday, May 1

Field Trips	As announced Friday night.
Committee Meetings	As necessary - chairs will designate time and place
AAS Trust Meeting	3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Appreciation Reception	5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Supper	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Evening Program	7:00 PM

SPEAKER: Joe Neal, co-author of *Arkansas Birds*

PROGRAM: New records of birds in Arkansas since *Arkansas Birds* (1986): Summary and comments with input from the field

Acknowledgments, bird checklist, explanation of Sunday field trips.

Sunday, May 2

Field Trips	As announced Saturday night.
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Information can also be found at the Arkansas Audubon Society's website.

www.arbirds.org

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, Field Trip Chairman, at 501-228-5245 or drewmilp@yahoo.com for more detailed information about any of the upcoming trips.

March 13, 2004 Warren Prairie Natural Area

We will meet at the Shackelford Road commuter parking lot (near the intersection of I-430 & I-630) at 7:30 AM. We should arrive at Warren Prairie around 9:30 AM. This trip will involve medium walking through tall grass. There also may be standing water so rubber boots are recommended. You may also want to bring a sack lunch. Our target bird is Henslow's Sparrows. Last year we got several very good looks!

April 10, 2004 Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge

This month we will search for early shorebird migrants. We will meet at the Other Center parking lot behind McDonald's on McCain Blvd. in North Little Rock at 7:30 AM. We should arrive at Bald Knob NWR by 9:00 AM. You may want to bring a sack lunch or you can eat lunch in Bald Knob. We will visit area fish ponds after lunch.

May 15, 2004 Site to be determined in March/April

We will have a bird walk from approximately 4:00 to 6:00 PM before the annual potluck.

June 5, 2004 Bell Slough Wildlife Management Area

Bell Slough WMA is owned and managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. It is very close to Little Rock just south of Mayflower off Hwy 365. We will meet at Christ the King Church's parking lot just south of the intersection of Rodney Parham Road and Highway 10 at 7:00 AM. We will arrive at Bell Slough about 7:30 AM if you wish to meet us there. We will be looking for summer resident birds and butterflies. We should be finished by noon.

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. The number is listed as J.J. Audubon in the phone book, the only white page listing with the last name Audubon.

Field Trip Reports

NOVEMBER 22, 2003 Lake Dardanelle

Eleven ASCA birders met Leif Anderson and Kenny and LaDonna Nichols for a delightful day of birding at Lake Dardanelle. Our first stop at the Russellville Junior High School yielded Ring-billed Gulls, a Red Tail Hawk, a Cooper's Hawk, and a group of seven American Pipits. Our third stop on the Russellville side of the Lake Dardanelle Lock and Dam gave everyone excellent views of a Rock Wren. After lunch, we went to Piney Point on the south side of the Lake where we got very close view of a White-winged Scoter! We also had distant looks at a Surf Scoter. Other birds of note were Common Loon, Bald eagle, Ruddy Duck, Bufflehead, American Pelicans, Bonaparte Gulls, Canvasback, Red-breasted Mergansers, Greater Scaup, Ross's Goose and Green-winged Teal. We saw 32 species in all with several life birds for some of participants including me. It was an excellent day for birding. Many thanks to Leif, Kenny and LaDonna for their help.

Drew M. Phillips
Field Trip Chairman

Christmas Bird Count Results December 14 (Lonoke County) and December 20 (Little Rock), 2003

The results are in and it was another successful Christmas Bird Count for Little Rock and Lonoke. Eighteen individuals took part in the Little Rock count that totaled 92 species. The highlights included a Redhead, Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Herring Gull, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Vesper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, and a Purple Finch. A total of 13, 570 birds were observed. There were sixteen participants in the Lonoke Count that totaled 107 species and 47,521 birds. Snow Geese dominated the individual honors with 19,561 individuals. Highlights for Lonoke included the Ross' Geese, Redhead, Hooded Merganser, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, Bewick's Wren, and Vesper Sparrow.

Lyndal York
CBC Coordinator

JANUARY 17, 2004 Holla Bend NWR

The threat of storms limited the trip participants to three. However, we had an excellent trip to Holla Bend and did not encounter any rain. We sighted a total of 44 species including over 800 Snow Geese and seven Ross' Geese among the Snow Geese. We saw seven adult Bald Eagles and three immature Eagles. They were very cooperative giving excellent views. Other birds of note were American Kestrels, Northern Harriers, Flickers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Eastern Phoebe, and Chipping Sparrows. Waterfowl were scarce other than the Snow Geese. But we did sight Gadwalls, Northern Shovelers, and Mallards. All in all it was a great day to be in the field.

Drew M. Phillips
Field Trip Leader

February 21 Lake Dardanelle

Approximately 18 birders enjoyed a fabulous day on the Lake. The group not only included ASCA members, but also, Kenny and LaDonna Nichols and Charles Mills. ASCA member Ed Laster brought along his granddaughter, Hannah Laster, age eight. While at the Lake, Hannah enjoyed seeing the White Pelicans. Numerous birds were seen that day including lifers for many of the participants. Birds of interest included the following: Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, American White Pelican, Herring Gull, Laughing Gull and Rock Wren. Seven birders, including the dedicated Hannah, continued on to Holla Bend NWR in the afternoon. Unfortunately no Bald Eagles were seen, however birds of interest included the following: Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, White-breasted Nuthatch, Fox Sparrow, and Chipping Sparrow.