

THE SNIPE

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The Newsletter of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas



www.ascabird.org

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International Migratory Bird Day May 14, 2005

The ASCA Board voted at the February meeting to discontinue sponsorship of and participation in the IMBD Count because a national database for the count results has not materialized as envisioned when the count was first organized. The Board directed that the 12 years of count data should be deposited in the archives of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville for the future use of ornithology students/faculty.

Leif Anderson has volunteered to assume the coordination of the count for those who might be interested in continuing to participate and represent Pulaski County.

The count date is May 14, 2005.

Leif can be reached at: leanderson@fs.fed.us

Beginners Bird Identification Course slated for Pinnacle Mountain State Park April 23, 2005

The Beginners Bird Course at Pinnacle Mountain is scheduled for April 23 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

DREW PHILLIPS

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings!

I am honored to be given the opportunity to serve you once again as your President. While there was some concern about the future of ASCA, we will continue on. We are fortunate that everyone who attended the yearly planning meeting stepped up and we have filled most Officer and Director positions, but not all. There are still openings we need to fill. I invite you to come to our meetings and get involved! I wish to congratulate Bill Holimon for his superior leadership as the President of our Society. Bill was elected to be the Vice President. He will continue his outstanding work in arranging our monthly programs. Ken Dayer has retired as Snipe Editor to work on his Master's degree. Ken has done an excellent job during his tenure. We appreciate his dedication to producing The Snipe. Dottie Boyles has assumed the Editor position, one of the most difficult jobs in our group. I'm sure she will continue the great work of her predecessors. Barry Haas will continue as our treasurer and will be our point man on conservation issues. We could not have a more capable person in these two jobs. Lyndal York is retiring from his position as Christmas & Migratory Count Compiler. Lyndal has done these jobs for the past 16 years and deserves our special thanks for the wonderful job he has done. The Count Compiler recruits volunteers to do the counts, assigns their

count areas and maintains all records for those Counts. We are fortunate he will continue as Web Master of ASCA. Sherry Phillips will remain Hospitality Chairperson and DeLynn Hearn will continue operating the Rare Bird Alert for the state of Arkansas, which we sponsor. Bill Hailey, Bill Shepherd, Bill Saunders, Ed Laster, DeLynn Hearn, Robert Herron and Sherry Phillips will be our Directors. They are a vital part of setting our policies and overseeing ASCA's mission. We appreciate the superior job Ed Laster has performed as our Recording Secretary. Ed has retired from that job. We will rotate taking the minutes of our business meeting until someone volunteers to take that job. Robert Herron is our new Field Trip Coordinator. I know he will do an outstanding job. As you can see, we have an outstanding group of volunteers! I encourage you to come to our meetings and enjoy the wonderful programs Bill Holimon has lined up. Our programs have great variety and substance. While Cable TV has many nature programs, you do not get to meet the people who provide the television shows. You do at ASCA programs. Please come join us. You will be glad you did.

Good Birding!
Drew M. Phillips

Financial Report

In 2004 the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas (ASCA) had total income of \$3,387.25, expenses of \$3,147.32 and net income of \$239.93. Chapter income included sales of bird field guides and nest boxes, memorials, honorariums and donations, interest and dividends, Entertainment book sales and Chapter Only membership dues. Expenses included a donation to the Halberg Ecology Camp run by the Arkansas Audubon Society, the cost of field guides and other items sold like Entertainment books, bank charges, postage, pavilion rental for ASCA's spring potluck, printing and mailing costs for the "Snipe", phone charges for the Rare Bird Alert, bird count fees for two Christmas Bird Counts in December and the Migratory Bird Count in May and hosting ASCA's home page. Last year ASCA received \$840 from 33 Chapter Only memberships, a figure slightly higher than in 2003. We also receive some dues share funding from National Audubon Society, which did not arrive until after the first of the year and will be accounted for in 2005. Remember that donations to ASCA are tax deductible as we are a 501(C)3 tax-exempt organization as determined by the IRS. If you have any questions about ASCA finances or Chapter Only memberships, please contact ASCA treasurer Barry Haas (821-4097 in Little Rock or bhaas@sbglobal.net).

Sincerely,
Barry

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 is 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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## Mar 10, 2005 – Fourche Creek Watershed Initiative

Audubon Arkansas' Director of Conservation, **Kevin Pierson**, will present an overview of the Fourche Creek Watershed Initiative. This initiative will focus conservation efforts on one of Central Arkansas' most valuable natural resources, Fourche Creek. Despite decades of neglect and abuse, Fourche Creek supports over 50 species of fish, stands of three hundred year old bald cypress and a core, contiguous, bottomland region that still maintains wetland functions.

The Fourche Creek Watershed is arguably the most important urban watershed in the state for ecological, economic and social reasons. The watershed drains and filters runoff from Arkansas' largest and capital city of Little Rock and encompasses at least six third-order streams and numerous tributaries that discharge into Fourche Creek. An estimated 90,000 acres of the watershed's 108,000 acres lie within the city limits of Little Rock.

The Fourche Creek Watershed Initiative's primary goals are:

- Revitalize, reclaim, and enhance wetland and stream function
  - Increase and improve habitat and wetland capacity
  - Reduce hypoxia contaminants in the Fourche Creek Watershed
  - Develop education opportunities through demonstration sites and restoration projects
  - Increase the use of Best Management Practices in urban developments and construction projects
  - Work with the City of Little Rock to establish model ordinances and watershed policies
  - Improve watershed awareness
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## April 14, 2005 – Your new Education and Nature Centers

Your new Education and Nature Centers provided by AR Game and Fish Commission. **Neil Curry**, Chief of Education & Outreach AGFC, former ASCA president and board member, served as an interpretive naturalist at Pinnacle Mtn. State Park for 21 years. Past recipient of the AR Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award.

Get the latest information on current centers, birding programs and watchable wildlife viewing areas that are now open and a progress report on those being planned. If you want to know more about places like Cook's Lake, Ponca Elk Center, Crooked Creek, Grandview Prairie and the Janet Huckabee AR River Valley Nature Center then plan to attend this informative program.

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May 7, 2005 – Annual Spring Potluck and Field Trip, Gilliam Park

We are combining our annual spring potluck with our May field trip. For specifics, please see May 7th Field Trip and Picnic on the Grounds at Gilliam Park on page 6.

Hope to see you there!

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Education, Outreach,
Publicity, Christmas and
Migratory Counts

Spring 2005 Agenda

April 28, 2005, Thursday

- 1:00 PM - Field trips.
4:30 PM - 7:30 PM Registration—Mather Lodge
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM Members slide show at the University of Arkansas Winthrop Rockefeller Conference Center.
Member slide show, with each member limited to 15 slides, and we would encourage them to show pictures of past meetings featuring members as much as birds.

April 29, 2005, Friday

- 7:00 AM - Field trips.
Noon - 3:00 PM Board of Directors meeting—Mather Lodge, CCC Room
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Registration—Mather Lodge
6:30 PM - 7:30 PM Dinner—Rec Hall
7:30 PM - 7:45 PM Welcome—Rec Hall
7:45 PM - 8:30 PM Business meeting including elections--Rec Hall
8:30 PM - 9:30 PM Evening Program – Doug James, “Memories of the First AAS Meeting”--Rec Hall
9:30 PM Door prizes--Rec Hall

April 30, 2005, Saturday

- 7:00 AM - Field trips.
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM AAS Trust Meeting—Mather Lodge, CCC Room
4:45 PM - 5:45 PM AAS Trust and Camp Reception—Rec Hall
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Dinner—Rec Hall
7:00 PM - 7:15 PM Acknowledgements--special guests and past presidents—Rec Hall
7:15 PM - 7:30 PM Introduce charter members—Rec Hall
7:30 PM - 7:45 PM Introduce speaker – Dr. David Luneau—Rec Hall
7:45 PM - 8:45 PM Evening Program, Dr. John Fitzpatrick, Director Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, “How Birds Will Help Save the World: The Approaching Era of Citizens as Scientists” —Rec Hall
8:45PM Door prizes and Sunday field trips—Rec Hall

May 1, 2005, Sunday

- Morning - Field Trips based on Friday and Saturday trips.

Meeting information and additional registration forms are available at www.arbirds.org .

50th Anniversary Spring Field Trip Descriptions

Thurs afternoon: **Trip 1, A. Scoping the Mountaintop.** Meet Lyndal York in front of Mather Lodge 1:30 p.m.

Trip 1, B. Seven Hollows Trail. Meet Bill Shepherd in front of Mather Lodge 2:00 p.m.

Fri. all day: **Trip 2, A. Magazine Mountain.** Meet Don Simons at the Mount Magazine State Park Visitor Center 9:00 a.m.

Trip 2, B. Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge. Meet Mel White in front of Mather Lodge 7:30 a.m.

Trip 2, C. Ed Gordon Point Remove W.M.A. Meet Bo Verser by the Mather Lodge swimming pool 7:30 a.m.

Fri. morning: **Trip 3, A. Bona Dea Trail (Russellville).** Meet Leif Anderson in front of Mather Lodge **6 a.m.**

Trip 3, B. Holla Bend NWR. Meet David Luneau by the Mather Lodge swimming pool 8:00 a.m.

Trip 3, C. Upper Cedar Creek Trail. Meet Bill Shepherd at the Pioneer Cabin, located between the Petit Jean State Park Visitor Center and the Cedar Falls Overlook 8 a.m.

Fri. afternoon: **Trip 4, A. Petit Jean Birds.** Meet John Morrow at the Petit Jean State Park Visitor Center 1:30 p.m.

Trip 4, B. Petit Jean Wildlife Management Area. Meet Kenny Nichols in front of Mather Lodge 2:00 p.m.

Sat. all day **Trip 5, A. Holla Bend WNR.** Meet Kenny Nichols at the Mather Lodge swimming pool 7:30 a.m.

Trip 5, B. Sweeden Island Park & Galla Creek W.M.A. Meet Herschel Raney in front of Mather Lodge 7:30 a.m.

Trip 5, C. Ed Gordon Point Remove W.M.A. Meet David Luneau at the Mather Lodge swimming pool 8 a.m.

Sat. morning: **Trip 6, A. Harris Break W.M.A. (Perryville).** Meet Mel White in front of Mather Lodge 7:30 a.m.

Trip 6, B. Holla Bend NWR. Meet 7:30 a.m. by the Mather Lodge swimming pool to carpool.

Meet Chris Kellner at the refuge headquarters/visitor center around 8 a.m.

Trip 6, C. Cedar Falls Trail. Meet Doug James and Joe Neal by Mather Lodge swimming pool 8:00 a.m.

Sat. afternoon **Trip 7, A. Stout's Point.** Meet Leif Anderson in front of Mather Lodge 1:30 p.m.

Trip 7, B. Petit Jean WMA. Meet Karen McGee and Sandy Berger in front of Mather Lodge 2:00 p.m.

**For detailed information on each trip, please visit the Arkansas Audubon Society web site 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 Robert Herron, Field Trip Chairman, at rherron@netscape.com for more information about upcoming trips.

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## **March 19, 2005** **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.

Robert Herron – Field Trip Coordinator

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April 16, 2005 **Bell Slough Management Area**

Bell Slough WMA is owned and managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. It is very close to Little Rock. Located two miles south of Mayflower off Hwy 365, on Grassy Lake Road. We will meet at Christ the King Church's parking lot just south of the intersection of Rodney Parham Road and Hwy 10 at 7:00 AM. We will arrive at Bell Slough around 7:30 AM if you wish to meet us there. We will be looking for spring warblers.

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## **May 7<sup>th</sup> Field Trip** **&** **Picnic on the Grounds** **@** **Gilliam Park**

Gilliam Park is a large city park in the Granite Mountain area off Springer Blvd. This park, which is leased to Audubon Arkansas, is closed except for groups with Audubon Arkansas' permission. They have graciously granted us access on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. This park features a varied habitat from White Oak glades to bottom land hardwoods. We expect it to be full of songbirds and other migrant species. Therefore we are doing something a little different this year. We will meet at the commuter parking lot on I-630 & Shackelford Road at 7 AM. We will proceed to Gilliam Park for morning field trip and have our annual spring picnic at the park. We plan to be finished with the bird walk by noon and have our potluck at the pavilion in Gilliam Park.

This should be great fun with good birding and a potluck picnic. Please contact Drew Phillips at 228-5245 for more information.

### **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.

Arkansas is a wonderful place to watch for birds. Recently several rare birds have been reported in the State.

Common Redpoll-Danville, Pacific Loons-Lake DeGray, Sandhill Cranes-Mississippi County, Black-chinned Hummingbird-Jacksonville & a Laughing Gull and Rock Wren have been seen at the dam site at Lake Dardanelle.

Come join us on the field trips for a chance to add a Life Bird to your list.

# *Field Trip Reports*

## Christmas Bird Count Results

The Little Rock and Lonoke Christmas Counts were held on Dec. 18th and 19th, respectively. In Little Rock, 88 species were tallied by 26 participants and at Lonoke 17 participants found 102 species. The number of species is about average for these counts. The larger number of species at Lonoke compared to Little Rock can be attributed to more ducks and sparrows.

Species observed but not normally found at Little Rock included: Blue-winged Teal, Herring Gull, Fish Crow, Bewick's Wren, Catbird and Vesper Sparrow. The 452 American White Pelicans were a record number for the count. Another first was the occurrence of Eurasian Collared Doves on the south side of the Arkansas River although not in numbers as large as in North Little Rock.

Unusual species found on the Lonoke count included: Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Western Meadowlark, Bald Eagle, Common Goldeneye, Red-headed Woodpecker, Rusty Blackbird and seven Cattle Egrets. The 93 Great Egrets represented a significant number of over wintering egrets. Wintering shorebirds included both Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher and Dunlin.

A complete party by party listing of both counts can be found at [www.ascabird.org](http://www.ascabird.org).

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JANUARY 15, 2005

Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge

Fifteen birders attended the field trip to Holla Bend NWR. However, we made a detour to the Danville Ranger Station in search of a Common Redpoll. Five of us gave up the watch at 10 AM and went on to Holla Bend. The rest stayed a while longer before going to the Dardanelle Dam site and then on to Holla Bend. The first group saw 34 species including Lincoln's Sparrow, Bald Eagles and had very good looks at Northern Harriers stalking, catching and consuming prey. The second group sighted a Laughing Gull at Dardanelle Dam, a Harlan's Hawk at Holla Bend as well as 39 other species. One of the great things about birding is encountering the unexpected or at least the hope of it. The Redpoll never showed.

Drew Phillips – Trip Leader

Editor's note: After waiting several hours for a no-show Redpoll, three ASCA birders drove back to Danville on Tuesday, Jan. 18th, fifteen minutes after we arrived the Common Redpoll appeared. She was well worth the drive back. Robert Herron has pictures of the Redpoll on his web site www.pbase.com/rherron. Also, there is an excellent picture taken by Charles Mills posted on the ASCA web page at www.ascabird.org. Congratulations to everyone who got to see this rare visitor to Arkansas.

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***February 12, 2005***

### **Stuttgart Airport**

Eighteen eager birders gathered at the commuter parking lot before heading to the Stuttgart Airport. On the way there we stopped to view approximately 2000 Snow Geese in a field not far from the airport. Upon arriving, we were joined by two ladies from Memphis. It was very cold and windy but we managed to see 17 species for the day. Highlights were Lapland Longspurs, Horned Lark, Bobwhite, Savannah Sparrows, Meadowlarks and Northern Harrier.

Robert Herron – Field Trip Leader