

THE SNIPE

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The Newsletter of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

www.ascabird.org



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Rebsamen Park Road

It has been several months since there has been anything new on Rebsamen Park Road which runs along the Arkansas River. You may recall that early this year Alltel Corp. asked the Little Rock Board to consider opening Rebsamen Park Road to through vehicular traffic, in other words commuters. But a lawsuit (ASCA was the lead plaintiff) and vote in November 1992 had nixed that idea, we thought for all time.

The last we heard was back in April when the Board decided to ask the Arkansas Highway Department to do a traffic study of the area around Rebsamen Park Road and Cantrell Road. That might help determine if there is even a problem that needs addressing, much less by running a commuter road through three of Little Rock's most used parks. The voters thought this was a bad idea in the early 1990s, and input included in a recent study by UALR paints a similar picture today. Little Rock citizens are very protective of their valuable recreational spaces, as well they should be.

Usage of the area near Murray Lock and Dam will

surely increase in a few months when the new bicycle and pedestrian bridge above the dam is officially opened. That will connect miles of Little Rock and North Little Rock trails and make this area almost unparalleled anywhere in the country. Isn't it time we bragged on our community based on this incredible recreational resource? Remind your City Board member how protective you are of this area. Go to the Board of Directors web site:

<http://www.littlerock.org/BoardOfDirectors/MemberBios/>

and send some e-mails. If you live in Little Rock, you have a ward Board member depending on where you live plus three at-large directors, plus the mayor who is also at-large and represents everyone. Many of those positions are up for (re)election in November, so don't be shy about letting them know how you wouldn't look favorably on someone who would jeopardize this area for the sake of maybe saving commuters a minute or two on their rush to and from work each weekday.

Barry Haas

Rare Bird Sightings

On Saturday, August 12th, a female **Ruff** was found in Prairie County by Kenny Nichols at Saul's Fish Farms. A photo of the Ruff, taken by Dan Scheiman, can be found on page 6.

Friday, August 18th, Kenny Nichols reported seeing **300+ Wood Storks**, along with a Piping Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Black-necked Stilt, Wilson's Phalarope and both dowitcher species at Bald Knob. Robert Herron has several photos of the Wood Storks on his web site <http://www.pbase.com/rherron>.

Tuesday, August 22nd, Norm and Cheryl Lavers, Dick Baxter and others reported seeing two **Swallow-tailed Kites** in a field just outside Jonesboro. The Lavers have an excellent picture of one of the birds.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

DREW PHILLIPS

Greetings Birders and Friends,

The time has come for the members of ASCA to chart the direction of our Society for the future.

First, let me tell you where we stand presently. We offer to our members and nonmembers a variety of activities and services. One of our most popular activities is the monthly program on issues of interest to those who enjoy the natural world and those interested in local environmental concerns. We also have monthly field trips to local birding hot spots. Our services include the Rare Bird Alert Hotline maintained by DeLynn Hearn, the outstanding ASCA web site managed by Web Master Lyndal York and The Snipe newsletter edited by Dottie Boyles. We are also very involved in local environmental

issues. Currently, ASCA is a plaintiff in the Dark Hollow lawsuit fighting Bass Pro's attempt to fill in Dark Hollow swamp to construct one of their stores. As you can see we are quite busy.

That brings us to what kind of society we will have in the future. The monthly field trips attract anywhere from 5 or 6 to as many as 16 birders. Our programs have an average attendance of about 15 to 20 people. There are several who attend one but not the other, and those who attend both. Our problem is leadership manpower. If we are to continue to offer the activities and services we presently provide, we need new leadership with new ideas. There is a core group of about 10 members who have either held the

same office for some time or rotate from one office to another.

ASCA is a wonderful organization that has done a great deal of good over the years. I urge you to consider the good you could do if you became an active leader of our organization. There are several opportunities to serve including President on down. Please call me if you have any interest in learning more about us. This will be the major topic of discussion at our September Business meeting following the 7 PM program. I know this; ASCA has given me far more than I ever gave it.

Good Birding!

Drew M. Phillips
ASCA President

INCA DOVES in Cabot

When Robert and Elizabeth Lanius moved into their new home in September 2005. They had no idea that the 'baby' doves they saw in their backyard would turn out to be Inca Doves. When the birds didn't seem to grow up, they consulted their *Sibley Guide to Birds*, then proceeded to find a way to share their rare birds with others.

On July 29th, Karen Holliday, Dan Scheiman, Doris and Dottie Boyles traveled to Cabot for a chance to see the doves, we were not disappointed. Here is Dan's report of the birds we saw that day and one of his photos.



At 1:40 a single INCA DOVE showed up to feed. Delos and Hazel McCauley arrived 20 min later. Over the next two hours one or more doves arrived every 15-30 minutes. We had up to 6 at one time. They are shy birds and don't stay very long. I found one dove down the road by the row of pines. I heard it monotonously calling "no hope" from the Lanius' home. Delos got some great shots. I took a few low quality but diagnostic pics you can see at my new PBase photo album <http://www.pbase.com/birdan/rarities> Thanks go to the Lanius', a very welcoming and nature-loving couple.

Conservation News

Barry Haas

Arkansas' Extraordinary Resource Waters

Those of you who read the conservation news in the summer issue of *The Snipe* know there were a number of ongoing issues yet to be decided. For the most part that is still the case.

Let's start with Extraordinary Resource Waters (ERWs). The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) continues to move forward on its Triennial Review process. A work group of interested parties has been meeting at least monthly to submit input that ADEQ staff will consider as possible changes to Regulation 2 which governs surface waters in Arkansas. By the time you read this the work group may have completed its work. ADEQ staff will then decide what changes to suggest that the Arkansas Pollution Control & Ecology Commission would then either submit to the public for comment or reject. The Commission will likely consider those changes at a special meeting in October, after which a number of public hearings will be held to allow anyone to offer comments on the proposed changes. Finally, those changes which may incorporate some of the public input, will go back before the Commission for either adoption, alteration or rejection.

Those changes will likely include at least three new elements currently missing from Regulation 2. First, since Reg. 2 currently has no process for communities to get drinking water from ERWs, there will probably be language to incorporate this possibility whenever a community has no other viable alternative for drinking water and the needed quantity of water can be safely withdrawn from the ERW without damaging the existing in-stream habitat. Since 'the devil is in the details', we

encourage you to follow this process and carefully monitor any language along these lines and offer comment if you feel the changes would not be stringent enough to continue the special protections we currently have for ERWs.

Second, the issue of adding ERWs will also likely be added to the language in Reg. 2. And, finally, the issue of removing ERW designation will also likely be included. It is undetermined if an ERW designation (and its protections) can even be removed, as federal law may preclude such an action. On the issues of adding to or removing ERWs from the existing list, that language also needs to be carefully reviewed to make sure that such changes are done in a way that protects special streams, lakes and water bodies like ERWs.

We encourage you to visit the ADEQ web site at:

http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/water/waterquality_standards_review.htm

for more information on ERWs and the ongoing water quality standards review. You will find everything there from Reg. 2 to minutes of the workgroup meetings, notes from the public meetings held earlier this year plus slide shows and fact sheets by ADEQ about ERWs. All of this will help you better understand the process that is taking place.

If you have questions about this issue or process, please contact Barry Haas (bhaas@sbcglobal.net or 501-821-4097) who has been following this issue for ASCA.

Dark Hollow

Barry Haas

This wetlands area in North Little Rock, adjacent to the interstate as you are driving north and start curving eastward on I-40, is a critical area in North Little Rock's drainage of thousands of acres. A developer has proposed a shopping center on this site and has declined the opportunity to move just to the east to a less environmentally sensitive area.

A federal judge ruled in early May that ASCA and other plaintiffs did not have 'legal standing' to file suit. That decision has been appealed to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis. As this is being written in mid-August, there has been no decision on the appeal.

Wings over Arkansas

The "Wings Over Arkansas" awards program is a part of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's "Watchable Wildlife" program. It is a free service to the residents of Arkansas. The program offers five levels of achievement with full color certificates and lapel pins awarded to birdwatchers who report their life list of Arkansas Birds to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The new Watchable Wildlife Coordinator is Kirsten Bartlow.

All birds reported must have been seen in Arkansas. Pins and Certificates are awarded as follows:

Chickadee Level – for children age 12 or younger

Wood Duck Level – 50-99 birds

Kingfisher Level – 100-174 birds

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Level – 175-249 birds

Peregrine Falcon Level – 250 or more birds

For more information you can go to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's web site at:

<http://www.agfc.state.ar.us/>

Congratulations to Dan Scheiman, Doris Boyles and Dottie Boyles who completed the program in May 2006. Doris was birding Allsopp Park in Little Rock, while Dan was birding in Southeast Arkansas on May 6th, when they found their 250th bird species. With a lot of help from Dan, Dottie found her 250th bird at Allsopp Park five days later.

SAVE THE DATE

AAS Call to the 2006 Fall Meeting

The fall 2006 meeting of The Arkansas Audubon Society will be in Jonesboro, October 27-29, at the Holiday Inn. For reservations call the Holiday Inn at 870-935-2030 and say "Arkansas Audubon Society code # 20394". Additional details of the meeting will be posted on the AAS web site www.arbirds.org as plans for the meeting develop.

ASCA Christmas Party and Silent Auction

The annual ASCA Christmas Potluck and Silent Auction will be held on Thursday, December 14th. This fun event is a great opportunity to enjoy wonderful food, spread some holiday cheer and exchange stories with fellow birders. We will hold our **Silent Auction** again this year, which is a critical source of funds for ASCA. Auction items can be purchased or hand made.

Watch for details and location in the next issue of The Snipe or you can check the ASCA web site: www.ascabird.org

Little Rock and Lonoke Christmas Bird Counts

Dan Scheiman, Christmas Bird Count Compiler has chosen the dates for this years CBC.

Lonoke – Sunday, December 17th

Little Rock – Saturday, December 30th

The Little Rock CBC covers one of the state's major urban areas while the Lonoke count takes place in a much more rural setting and includes numerous fishponds. Both CBC's are interesting in their own way and important citizen science is taking place. You do not have to be an expert birder to take part or to be a valuable contributor.

If you would like to participate please contact Dan at birddan@comcast.com or 501-280-9024

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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## September 14, 2006 – Arkansas Bats

Guest Speaker: **Blake Sasse**  
Program: **Arkansas Bats and Ecology**

Blake Sasse, Nongame Mammal Program Leader with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, will discuss the ecology of the sixteen species of bats found in Arkansas. There are three species of endangered bats. Blake will cover conservation efforts by public and private organizations to protect the caves utilized by these bats so their populations are allowed to recover.

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October 12, 2006 – Herpetological Program

Guest Speaker: **Kelly Irwin**
Program: **AR Game & Fish Commission Herpetological Program**

Kelly Irwin, herpetologist with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, will give a presentation on The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Herpetological Program. Kelly's presentation will provide a brief overview of current and recent research and management activities of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission herpetological program.

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## November 9, 2006 – Bumblebee Survey

Guest Speaker: **Michael D. Warriner**  
Program: **Arkansas Bumblebee Survey**

Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission Field Ecologist, Michael D. Warriner will be our guest speaker.

### Welcome New Chapter Only Members for 2006:

Shea Lewis, Parkin  
Keith Sutton, Alexander  
Crata Castleberry, Little Rock  
Charlotte Paul, Little Rock  
Greg & Judy Gingerich, Little Rock  
Karen & David Holliday, Maumelle  
Craig & Dale Provost, Little Rock

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# 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. Check out the web site at [www.ascabird.org](http://www.ascabird.org) or contact Drew Phillips at (501) 568-3182 or (501) 228-5245 for more information about upcoming field trips.

September 23, 2006

## Pinnacle Mountain Hawk Watch

We will meet at the Pinnacle Mountain Visitor's Center parking lot at 8 AM. We will look for migrating hawks coming down the Arkansas River for most of the morning, from the observation deck above the Visitor's Center. We will also check out the surrounding trails for woodland birds. This will be a half day trip. If you want to learn how to identify hawks, this field trip is for you. Contact Drew Phillips 501-228-5245 for more information.

October 14, 2006

## Two Rivers Park

We will meet at the Highway 10 Kroger parking lot just behind Simmons 1<sup>st</sup> National branch office at 8 AM. Then proceed to Two Rivers Park to search for woodland and grassland birds. This park is not only beautiful, but also teeming with interesting species. This will be a low impact walk and is wheel chair accessible. Drew Phillips will be leading this trip.

November 11, 2006

## Lake Dardanelle

We will meet at the Regions Bank parking lot across from the Shackelford Road and I-630 commuter parking lot at 7:30 AM. Waterfowl will be the main attraction. Lake Dardanelle always has the opportunity to attract something unusual. This is always a productive trip and a lot of fun. We may do a side trip to Holla Bend on the way back. Bring a sack lunch or pick up a sandwich at a local restaurant. Call Drew Phillips for more details.



This photo of a female Ruff with a Least Sandpiper was taken by Dan Scheiman at Saul's Fish Farms on Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>. For more of photos of Ms. Ruff you can visit Dan's web site at <http://www.pbase.com/birddan/rarities>





# *Field Trip Reports*

## Lorance Creek Natural Area

*June 17, 2006*

Unfortunately the field trip to Lorance Creek Natural Area had to be canceled due to rain. Dan Scheiman was kind enough to go to the commuter parking lot and meet any die-hard birders that might arrive. In the end three people showed up, but as the raindrops became harder, Dan decided to call the trip.

Although canceling the trip was disappointing, seeing the much needed rain was not.

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## Mt. Magazine State Park

*July 15, 2006*

Fifteen people attended the trip to Mt. Magazine State Park. The clouds and scattered spitting-rain kept the bird activity low. The highlight was a male **RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW** at the hang glider site that popped up and sang for us for a long time after only a single use of playback. After lunch at the lodge (nice place!) Robert Herron and Dan Scheiman stayed behind. The sun came out but the birds were still fairly quiet. They added a few more species to the trip list. Their highlight was the same **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** that sang in plain view of his own volition while we were in the area looking for butterflies. Morning species included: **Eastern Wood-Pewee, Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Cardinal and White-breasted Nuthatch.**

Additional species Robert and Dan encountered: **BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER**, a female and a juvenile, **Great Crested Flycatcher, Chipping Sparrow, Blue Jay, Yellow-throated Vireo, Carolina Wren and Pileated Woodpecker.**

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## Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge

*August 26, 2006*

Eighteen birders met at Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge and dealt with the heat while sifting through flocks of shorebirds and waders. We found 6 species of wading birds including many adult and immature **Little Blue Herons**, a **Snowy Egret**, and 300-plus **Wood Storks!** The storks perched in the trees far behind the shorebird ponds or wheeled high overhead as they rode on thermals. We also encountered 14 species of shorebirds on the ever-drying ponds and mudflats. Highlights included 3 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers**, 3 **Upland Sandpipers**, and 1 **Black-bellied Plover** in striking breeding plumage! We also had fun studying the **Dowitchers** to separate **Long-billed** from **Short-billed**. Other highlights of the trip included a family of 4 River Otters that crossed the road near the stork roosts, and 1 male Exposed Bird-Dropping Moth (*Acontia aprica*) sitting on a leaf, doing its best to look like its namesake.

Other species included; **Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Blue-winged Teal, Bank Swallow, Mourning Dove, House Sparrow, Canada Goose and Eastern Kingbird.**



Exposed Bird-Dropping Moth  
Photo by Dan Scheiman