

THE SNIPE

*The Newsletter of the
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas*



Charles Mills

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March – May 2010

Volunteering Makes A Difference!

*by Susan Staffeld, Park Interpreter
Pinnacle Mountain State Park*

Pinnacle Mountain State Park was proud to host the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas on Lake Maumelle for a winter waterfowl lake cruise. Eight brave birders, and a park interpreter to guide, boarded the park's pontoon early on a Sunday morning in search of the lake's regular visitors...and a prospective Long-tailed Duck. After cruising all the way upstream on the lake to the Hwy 10 bridge and back to Jolly Roger's Marina, the group was able to check off nine species, with beautiful views of both Common Loons and Red-shouldered Hawks. If you were unable to attend this cruise, the park heads out on Lake Maumelle year-round with a huge range of targets, including eagles, waterfowl, star-gazing, meteor showers, bats, sunset and moonlight viewing, and fishing.

The park was able to offer the ASCA cruise free-of-charge to the whole group due to volunteer hours put in to help educate central Arkansas students on bird adaptations at the park's annual Discovery Days. As the state's largest environmental education park, Pinnacle Mountain State Park is overwhelmed with field trip requests every spring, and ends up turning away dozens of schools every year when we fill our time slots in April and May. Discovery Days is designed to give those schools that don't get their own day another chance to come and learn about Arkansas's natural and cultural history. We bring out dozens of volunteers who offer

programs ranging in topic from water ecology to Cherokee culture, and everything in between (including astronomy, geology, entomology, ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology, mycology, pioneer life, and fun games with the Air Force)! We can easily accommodate 800 students (well over 1000 people) with this setup, and have had a lot of positive response from area schools. This is a fantastic way for anyone to make a difference in the lives of young Arkansans, by opening their eyes to the wonders of the natural world.

We now have a system in place where volunteers can bank their hours and redeem them (1 hour = \$1) for interpretive programs or renting park equipment (canoes, kayaks, pedal boats, facilities). Don't think that because you're not an expert in any field that you're not needed, or feel like you're limited to the above topics. Our students aren't looking to identify every plant or animal they encounter – we want to expose them to what's out there, and inspire them to learn more either on their own or by coming back to the park. If you're not comfortable in coming up with ideas on your own, park interpreters can assist you in designing a program or can pass along outlines to an existing program.

To learn more about the park's volunteer program, please feel free to contact a park interpreter at 501-868-5806 or email pinnaclemountain@arkansas.com.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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Service as a Two-Way Street

It is hard to believe, but my term as ASCA president is now more than half complete. Unless someone with great authority appears this coming December to crown me ASCA emperor, next year at this time we will be reading the president's column written by my successor. It is for this reason that the spring installment of the president's column will be an encouragement to those who may be asked to serve on as an officer or board member in the years to come.

Normally, when one thinks of serving in an organization, the direction of service is perceived as originating with the individual and being received by the organization. After this last year in the ASCA, my perception of such service is quite the opposite. Without a doubt, I have benefited a great deal from non-official activities in the chapter such as field trips, meeting presentations, and participation in citizen science projects. However, the deliberations and conversations which took place in the course of carrying out my duties have provided me with far more learning and knowledge than I expected.

Every day we make choices that have an effect on our lives and, in some cases, the lives of those who come after us. When we take time to share our skills and abilities with those who share the same interest, but have different skills and abilities, the end result is more than a group of individuals could reach acting independently. The participation, service, and decisions of those who preceded us bring us to the place we are

now within the Audubon Society, be that at the national, state, or local level.

This past January Bill Hailey, a member of the ASCA board of directors, passed away. I will surely miss the many conversations I had with Bill over this past year and the enjoyable times with him at our chapter meetings. Although I will miss him, I am very grateful for the time which I did have to become acquainted with Bill. Had I not been serving in this office, there is little chance that I would have been able to get to know him as well as I did.

It is here that I have found the greatest benefit in my past year of service—the people with whom I have served. There has never been a situation in which I lacked counsel or assistance. The many members of this chapter have given me insight and knowledge into not only birding, but a vast array of matters concerning nature and conservation, as well as how such matters are addressed by various governmental agencies.

While it is true that serving in this chapter does require a small sacrifice of time and thought, it is a very small price to pay for the treasure gained in knowledge, experience, and friendships—treasures which are kept for years to come. Whether you are given the chance to serve in an official function or simply by attending meetings or field trips, it is my firm belief that you will not regret a moment of it.

Rob Weiss
ASCA President

William F. “Bill” Hailey, 1930-2010 A True Conservationist

by Keith Sutton

On January 26, 2010, Arkansas lost one its most devoted conservationists. William F. “Bill” Hailey of Little Rock, a long-time employee of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), passed away after a long battle with cancer.

In 1957, after serving as a Marine in Korea, Bill was one of eight men chosen to become conservation agents for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). He was assigned to an 860-square-mile piece of Ozark Mountains territory and lived in the town of Potosi—an ideal location, he felt, because the area was laced with streams full of smallmouth bass. In his off-hours, Bill enjoyed fishing and canoeing.

Soon after, Bill met the former Goldie Lee Wilson, a young lady teaching eight grades of school children in a one-room schoolhouse in Berryman. They were wed on July 10, 1960 and never parted.

Bill’s marriage to a local girl required him to move, and he was reassigned to Carthage in Jasper County. His salary that year was \$3,780. “We basically started with nothing,” he said.

What Bill did possess was an intense passion for his job as conservation officer. He was enforcing game and fish laws in the field practically every day year-round. And to improve relations with local residents, he took on additional tasks. He wrote weekly newspaper columns for the *Carthage Evening Press*, the *Joplin Globe*, the *Sarcoxie News* and the *Golden City Herald*, and made regular appearances on local TV and radio programs. He also was a regular guest speaker at every civic club group in his assigned area, and later an active member (and president) of the Lion’s Club.

Bill’s work as a conservation agent opened up a world of interesting opportunities. He was part of a bird-banding team that spent weeks in Alberta, Canada, working with waterfowl, and was responsible for annual censuses of prairie chickens on Missouri’s virgin prairies. These tasks led to a lifelong love of birding, a passion he often indulged.

Bill later worked in Missouri’s Ripley and Ozark counties. Then, in 1981, he retired from his decades-long career with the MDC and moved to Little Rock, Arkansas where he became assistant chief of Game and



Bill Hailey – Keith Sutton

Fish Commission’s Enforcement Division and head of the state’s new Boating Education program. Soon after he was promoted to Education Division chief where he helped launch the state’s fledgling Hunter Education program.

While Bill excelled in his work in education, the wildlife law enforcement tasks he had been involved with more than three decades were still his primary love. When his friend David Herman became chief of the Enforcement Division, Bill accepted Herman’s offer to come back to his former job as assistant chief of the division. During the months that followed, Bill continued as he always had—working diligently to ensure that wildlife laws were enforced fairly yet firmly. And through it all, from the time he became a conservation agent in 1957 until he retired almost 40 years later, he was guided by the principles of our nation’s great conservationists, including people such as Harold Alexander in Arkansas and Werner Nagel in Missouri who were among his many close friends. In particular, he was a student of Aldo Leopold, one of the foremost conservationists of the 20th century, and Bill was constantly guided by the

continued on page 4

William F. “Bill” Hailey

continued from page 3

principles Leopold laid out in his *Sand County Almanac*, a book Bill made required reading for every cadet who went through the AGFC’s enforcement academy. “Conservation is a state of harmony between man and land,” Leopold wrote. That principle guided Bill Hailey as he supervised, taught and mentored people of all stripes who joined the ranks of state wildlife agency employees.

During the years Bill worked at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and Missouri Department of Conservation, he was a respected leader who dedicated himself to working with a wide variety of conservation groups. He was a longtime member of the Wildlife Society (serving as president of both the Missouri and Arkansas chapters), served for many years on the board of directors of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas, was secretary/treasurer of the Law Enforcement section of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for 10 years and a longtime member of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. In addition, he annually taught wildlife

law enforcement to students of the national Wildlife Management Short Course at Colorado State University, he was long-time secretary for the Fraternal Order of Police, an active member of his church, and served as AGFC liaison to the Arkansas Office of Emergency Services.

Bill worked as assistant enforcement chief until 1993, when finally, after a career that spanned 36 years at two state wildlife agencies, he decided it was time to retire. Retirement didn’t suit him, however. A month after leaving the AGFC, he returned and started working part-time for the Wildlife Management Division, taking on a variety of tasks that included everything from managing fur-buyer records to answering questions from the public about wildlife and wildlife laws. During this period, too, he served as a mentor for many young employees, teaching them lessons about conservation and human nature that no doubt will serve them well throughout their careers. Never has there been a greater teacher of conservation and ethics than this gentleman who taught by example as well as by words.

Bird Profiles

Greater Roadrunner: More Than a Cartoon Character

by Samantha Holschbach

Beep beep! Make way for the Greater Roadrunner, which has more important things to do than outwit Wile E. Coyote, such as devour venomous fare like scorpions and rattlesnakes, dance before its mate, sunbathe after a cool night, or perhaps run more than 18 mph to reach its nest and defend the chicks.

“We are always thrilled to see the roadrunner in our yard, even when it sits on our bird feeder waiting in ambush for the hungry sparrow or finch to come in for a ‘free’ meal,” said Allan Mueller, former avian conservation project leader of The Nature Conservancy. “The male likes to sing from our roof top—a good show.”

This member of the cuckoo family can be found roaming rocky and grassland habitats year-round across the Ozarks and Ouachitas, though it can be unpredictable and hard to find. Good spots to look for this uncanny critter include Petit Jean State Park, Wedington Wildlife Management Area and Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge.

The roadrunner is well-adapted for its terrestrial lifestyle in sometimes harsh arid areas. It sports black skin that it exposes to the sun to get energized after a long sleep. Possessing weak wings, the bird instead has vested power in legs built for running; these are located farther back on the body than in most birds to accommodate better balance and stability. Additionally, salt glands near the eyes expel salt from the roadrunner’s blood, enabling it to sometimes survive on water derived solely from its food.

Exhibiting a distinctive profile, the Greater Roadrunner is easy to identify. Its extensive tail, long legs, streaky brown plumage, lengthy bill and black-blue crest distinguish this bird from all others. Expect to see only one roadrunner: this bird likes to go it alone, rarely seen with others unless it’s with a mate.

Just because roadrunners like to play solitaire doesn’t mean you should. In fact, seeing the Greater Roadrunner—an infrequent, rare treat for Arkansans—is a moment best shared among fellow nature lovers.

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.

March 11, 2010 – Green Living

Speaker: **Nao Ueda, Outreach Coordinator, Audubon Arkansas**
Program: **Green Living 101**

Nao will discuss steps you can take to reduce your environmental footprint, and the importance of green living to bird conservation.

As the Outreach Coordinator for Audubon Arkansas, Nao coordinates grassroots efforts regarding environmental policy. Prior to joining Audubon, she worked for a local foundation with a mission to advance education, economic development, and social justice in Arkansas. In 2006, she co-founded the Arkansas Sustainability Network and helped organize the first ever green expo in Arkansas. In her spare time, Nao writes a blog, GreenAR by the Day, where she discusses steps she has taken to reduce her environmental footprint, as well as various environmental topics around the state and the country.

April 8, 2010 – Digiscoping

Speaker: **Larry Jernigan**
Program: **Take a “Long Look” at Nature – Digiscope!**

Larry will show photos to demonstrate what can be accomplished when you meld digital camera with spotting scope. He will discuss equipment and how pieces fit together, pitfalls and how to avoid them, and the discipline involved to master this art.

Larry Jernigan took his first photos in 1961 and has been addicted ever since. He is a retired chiropractor who now works part-time helping 4-H. During two years in the Army he worked in medical research and medical photography. He also owned a professional photography studio for 10 years.

May 8, 2010 – International Migratory Bird Day

We will *not* have a regular meeting or program in May.

Instead, we would like to encourage everyone to join ASCA as we celebrate *International Migratory Bird Day* with a morning bird walk around Pinnacle Mountain State Park. We will meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Arboretum Trail located off Pinnacle Valley Road.

For specific details please see May 8th field trip to Pinnacle Mountain State Park on page 6.

Arkansas Audubon Society Spring Convention

The 2010 Spring Convention of the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS) will be held April 30-May 2 at Hope, AR. Friday registration (4:00-6:00 p.m.) will be in the breakfast area of the Holiday Inn Express.

AAS has a block of rooms set aside at the Holiday Inn Express and the Best Western of Hope. Both hotels are located at the same intersection.

The **Holiday Inn Express** is a newer, more updated facility, with an expanded continental breakfast. Room rates are \$89.10 plus tax. Call 870-722-6262 for reservations.

The **Best Western of Hope** is a much older facility in reasonably good condition and features an expanded full breakfast. Rooms are \$59.49 plus tax. Call 1-800-429-4494.

Be sure to mention you are with the Arkansas Audubon Society to receive special room rates.

Directions: From I-30 - take Exit 30 and turn north. Both hotels are located very close to Exit 30.

For more information or to download a registration form you can visit the AAS website at:
http://www.arbirds.org/AAS_meeting_spring_2009.pdf

Register by **April 1st** to qualify for the **Early Bird Discount**. If you have any questions you may contact Carolyn Minson at 501-915-0669 or csminson@mac.com.



Spotted Towhee – Dale Provost

**Little Rock Christmas Bird Count
December 27, 2009**

by Jim Dixon

The area in Little Rock my team was assigned to count might be referred to as the Southwest Region, with I-630 marking the northern border, I-30 marking the eastern border, and Roosevelt Road/Asher Avenue/University Avenue marking the southern border. At first glance, it didn't look very promising being mostly residential, although it did contain the fabled Boyle Park. Ten inches of rain three days earlier meant that Rock Creek had flooded several of the likely areas, though the waters had receded by game day.

We started our day at Kanis Park, near I-630 and Rodney Parham Road. It is a small park and I had never birded it before. We were pleasantly surprised by the number of species found there.

Next stop was University Park on 12th Street. There wasn't much there besides tennis courts but we were able to pick up both of the common nuthatches and Brown Creeper.

We headed to Boyle Park which I hadn't visited in quite some time. Despite its shady reputation, we found it to be quite pleasant on an icy Sunday morning. It lived up to its birding reputation as we spent two full hours and covered only 20% of the trails there.

After lunch we headed down University Avenue and walked behind the old Crain dealership at One Tee Way. From the map, I knew there was a lake back there. Finding a couple of hundred gulls, cormorants, and one Bald Eagle was a pleasant surprise as I wasn't expecting an eagle in our territory.

Next we ventured to Hindman Park where we viewed very large flocks of blackbirds at a distance. They moved every time we tried to get close so they had to be recorded as "blackbird species". However, we did find Rusty Blackbirds near the club house.

Roselawn Cemetery on Asher Avenue turned out to be a good place for Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds as well as Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Time was running out so we headed west to Shackleford Road for a cleared area I had discovered. It looked like a good place for sparrows and when I checked it out earlier, it had been just that. It was a dead zone that day except for 25 American Robins.



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 or contact Karen Holliday, ASCA Field Trip Coordinator at karenh@arkleg.state.ar.us or 501-920-3246. Always bring plenty of water with you.

March 20, 2010

Cook's Landing

Meet at Cook's Landing at 8:30 a.m. We'll explore the Isabella Jo Trail and the Pfeiffer Loop Trail, both provide for easy walking. The trails at Cook's Landing offer a diversity of habitats, including the Arkansas River, and should provide us with a variety of bird species. We will finish with a short climb to the top of the Big Dam Bridge. This will be half day trip.

Directions: From Little Rock take I-430 North across the river bridge. Take Exit 12 Maumelle/Crystal Hill Road. Turn right (east) onto Crystal Hill Road (Hwy. 100). At the stoplight, turn right onto Northshore Drive. Take the first right onto Cook's Landing Road and follow it to the first parking lot on your right at the North Little Rock Police guard shack.

April 10, 2010

Frog Bayou Wildlife Management Area

Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Mayflower commuter lot located at Exit 135 off I-40 West. Frog Bayou WMA is one of Arkansas' newest wildlife management areas. This former farm is a wetland restoration area, with migratory waterfowl as its main user. Secretive marsh birds such as King Rail, Sora, Virginia Rail, and Least Bittern will be our target birds. Walking will be on unpaved but level paths. If time allows, we may stop by the Alma Sewer Treatment ponds to look for Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. Bring water and a lunch. We will return to Little Rock by late afternoon.

For those in west Arkansas who would like to join us, meet at 8:45 a.m. at the Kountry Xpress Truck Stop south of I-40 West at Exit 20 at Dyer.

May 8, 2010

International Migratory Bird Day Pinnacle Mountain State Park

Come help us celebrate *International Migratory Bird Day*, Saturday, May 8 and join ASCA in participating in a citizen science project by counting the number of birds in the Pulaski County area. Meet at the parking lot of the Arboretum Trail at 7:00 a.m. The trail is a short loop, so late arrivals can easily catch up to the group. We will be looking for spring migrants. If time allows, we may walk the Kingfisher Trail, or hike the Rocky Valley Trail to the East Quarry Trail, which has dramatic vistas of Pinnacle Mountain and the Arkansas River Valley. The Arboretum and Kingfisher Trails are paved with slight inclines. The Rocky Valley Trail is unpaved and has very uneven terrain. Bring water and light snacks. This is a half day trip.

Directions: From Little Rock take Cantrell Road (Hwy 10) west and turn right onto Pinnacle Valley Road. Traveling 1.6 miles turn left to stay on Pinnacle Valley Road. Continue .9 miles before turning slightly left, staying on Pinnacle Valley Road for approximately 2.5 miles. The sign to the entrance of the Arboretum Trail will be on the left side of the road.



Field Trip Reports

Lonoke and Little Rock Christmas Bird Count Results

For the Lonoke CBC (Dec 20, 2009), 27 participants spent 58 hours and traveled 377 miles to tally 105 species and 57,377 individuals. The effort was down a bit compared to last year. Despite this, the mild weather, and the fact that several parties left their territories for a few hours to chase a very rare bird, we managed to match last year's species total. The number of individual birds, however, was way down from last year (290,245). Notable species this year were: Horned Grebe (1), Merlin (1), Western Sandpiper (8), Long-billed Dowitcher (12), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1), Orange-crowned Warbler (9, high count), and the **first state record Ash-throated Flycatcher!**

For the Little Rock CBC (Dec 27, 2009), 27 participants plus 3 feeder watchers traveled 441 miles and spent 77 hours tallying 24,477 individuals of 96 species. The effort was up a bit from last year but the total number of species and individuals were down slightly compared to last year (98 and 25,108). In addition to cold weather, this year brought a few unusual species: Cackling Goose (14, high count), Rufous Hummingbird (1), Blue-headed Vireo (4, high count), Gray Catbird (1), and Orange-crowned Warbler (9, high count)!

If you missed the fun and these good birds because you were sitting at home instead of birding, then please join us next year! --*Dan Scheiman*

Heber Springs and Magness Lake

January 9, 2010

Fourteen very hardy birders (4 under the age of 16) ventured out in 20° weather to participate in the field trip. Despite the ice-covered ponds and fields, birds were still abundant. At the Heber Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant we were treated to the colorful sight of 15 Northern Shovelers, 48 Ring-necked Ducks, 51 Hooded Mergansers, 17 Common Goldeneyes, 25 Buffleheads, 20 Gadwalls, 45 Ring-billed Gulls and 25 Bonaparte's Gulls, all clustered on the only pond not frozen!

We visited Sandy Beach on Greer's Ferry Lake where Common Loon and Horned Grebe were life birds for some.

Our final stop was Magness Lake where 200 Trumpeter Swans dotted the lake, honking and fussing. Snow, Ross's and Cackling Geese, Mute Swan, American Wigeon, and Wood Duck were among the usual mix of waterfowl. We finished the day with a fun dinner in Conway, giving us a chance to thaw out. --*Karen Holliday*

Two Rivers Park and Lake Maumelle

February 13, 2010

We started our day at Two Rivers Park by fanning out across an open field looking for sparrows. A considerable amount of crunchy snow was still on the ground making it challenging to sneak up on birds. Within two hours we had flushed eight species of sparrows including six Le Conte's! We had good looks at Vesper, Fox, Lincoln, Field, Song, Chipping and Savannah Sparrows. We tallied 36 species for the park.

We then moved to Lake Maumelle in search of loons. At Jolly Roger's Marina we found our first Common Loon. At Loon Point we saw Common Loon, Common

Goldeneye, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Bald Eagle. Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets were so tame that several of the photographers in the group were able to get photos of the normally hyperactive birds. At the Hundley Road Causeway we spotted the **Red-throated** and **Pacific Loons**, which were life and state birds for several in the group. At Vista Point, we saw a second Red-throated Loon and recorded 23 species in less than an hour.

A total of 20 people participated in the field trip, including three new ASCA members. --*Karen Holliday*

Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

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Western Tanager

Ed Laster was the first to report this adult male, seen in Little Rock, on Feb. 5th.

This photo was taken by Gail Miller on Feb. 21st.

Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

Chapter Only Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Membership Level:	Student/Senior	\$10 per year
(Check One)	Regular	\$15 per year
	Family	\$25 per year
	Supporting	\$35 per year
	Patron	\$50 per year

Make check payable to "ASCA" and mail to treasurer:
Ed Laster, 64 Bouresse Drive, Little Rock, AR 72223. Please note that "Chapter Only Members" will not receive *Audubon* magazine. To receive *Audubon* magazine, you need to join the National Audubon Society (NAS).

Address changes should be sent to the following: If a Chapter Only Member, notify Leon Brockinton, c/o Brockinton Company, LLC at P. O. Box 6213, Sherwood, AR 72124. If a NAS member, notify both Brockinton Company and NAS at P. O. Box 51001, Boulder CO, 80322-1001.

The Snipe is published quarterly by the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas. Our mission is to encourage programs and activities supporting all things natural, wild, and free, especially birds, bird habitat stability and improvement, as well as to promote fellowship among members, educate and inspire the public, and champion the highest standards of ethical outdoor conduct.

Find an Injured Bird?

For a listing of an AR Game & Fish Commission authorized Migratory Bird Rehabilitator in your area, you can visit their website at:

<http://www.agfc.com/wildlife-conservation/rehabilitators.aspx>
or
http://www.agfc.com/pdfs/rehab/migratorybird_rehablist.pdf

*****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. It is the only white page listing with the last name Audubon.