AAS Ecology Camper Tells of Activities

ASCAs has always been a strong supporter of the Arkansas Audubon Society Ecology Camp for young people. We have given money for camp operations as well as scholarship for campers, and several of our members have assisted in camp teaching and administrative duties.

Jennifer Greenwood, daughter of ASCA member Fred Greenwood, was nice enough to send us the following letter telling us about her experiences at the camp this summer, and we herewith pass it along for everyone to share:

I'm glad I was picked for the Ecology Camp. I learned a lot and enjoyed myself. We got up at 6:45 every morning, and we ate breakfast at 7:00. Some mornings we woke up early to go on a bird walk. After breakfast we got ready for our first class, which was at 8:00.

Monday, my first class was Entomology. We studied the different parts of a bug's body. Then we went in the woods with nets to catch bugs. After we caught some bugs we took them back to study them. Some of the bugs we caught were the dragonfly, damselfly, pearly butterfly, red wasp and crane fly.

At 10:00 we studied Botany. We went on a hike and learned about sweetgum, white oak, sassafras, Virginia creeper and red maple, to name a few. Then we took a core sample out of a pine and a black gum to see which was the oldest. We all thought the pine tree was the oldest but the black gum was.

Then we ate lunch at 12:00 and had Aquatic Biology at 1:00. We went seining, mucking and snorkeling. At 3:00 to 5:00 we had recreation. After that we ate dinner and watched films. At 10:00 we went to bed.

The next day we had different classes. First we had Ornithology. That was my favorite. We saw slides about birds and looked at stuffed birds. After that we had Mammalogy and Herpetology. I really liked that class. We looked for snakes, Frogs, lizards and turtles. Then we saw slides of snakes and mammals. During Herpetology we saw a rat snake eat a rat. It was very interesting. Our last class for the day was Geology. We matched names of rocks with rocks.

Wildlife Films Are Threatened

This year National Audubon is asking local chapters to pay considerably more for the popular wildlife film series. For the 1982-83 season, the cost of five films was $1925; this season, five films will cost $2,625 - a 36 per cent increase. The ASCA board, after considering whether to drop the film series, or perhaps to offer only four films, has decided to continue to sponsor five films. The films have been very well attended in recent years and provide an excellent educational service to the community as well as Audubon members.

To prevent deficit spending, we are raising the price of tickets and reducing local expenses for the films. ASCA members are asked to provide private housing for all of the speakers, rather than the chapter paying for a motel room. We are printing fewer brochures and depending on Audubon members to assist in informing the public about the films. There will still be dinner with the speaker before each film.

The program looks very exciting for this year, and with continued support from all ASCA members, it will be a successful season. You will soon be getting ticket reservation forms in the mail. Prices are: season ticket - $10; single ticket - $2.50; student season ticket - $5; student single ticket - $1.25. This is still the best deal in town! If you would like to have a speaker stay in your home, please call Jeanne Jackson at 663-9201. This season's films are all on Friday nights. They are:

October 7, Charles Hotchkiss: "From Reefs to Rockies"
November 18, Fran Hall: "Kiwi Country?"
December 2, Richard Kern: "Smoky Mountain Magic"
February 17, Clint Denn: "The Golden Sea of Cortez" February 17, Clint Denn: "The Golden Sea of Cortez"
March 16, Jon Panos: "The Okavango".

"If you at the chapter level and if we at National are to continue to carry on our vital work, we have no choice but to bite the bullet and face the hard economic reality that as inflation goes on, dues must increase." Thus spoke National Audubon in a June letter to chapter presidents announcing that regular individual dues to the society will go up from $25 to $30, effective January 1, 1984. Several things come to mind in regard to this:

• If you want to join Audubon, renew your membership, or give gift memberships, now is the time to act. 
• Audubon magazine is a fine publication that has won several national awards, and it is not cheap to produce. Please remember when you turn its pages and admire the spectacular photography that your dues go in part to pay for the pleasure it brings you. Just.
• Dues are not just for the magazine, or a contribution to charity. Your money goes to buy land for sanctuaries, to lobby for clean air and water, to protect endangered species, and many other important tasks. It’s really an investment in our country, and our world.

Chapter News

ASCAs has received a letter from Randy Frazier, superintendent at Pinnacle State Park, thanking us for contributing $100 toward the purchase of bird feed for the feeding station at the park visitor center. Randy says the feeding station has become a favored spot for visitors and that it has encouraged many of them to get involved in birding.

Famed former local birding whiz Gary Graves and his wife Sidney are the no-doubt proud parents of a baby girl, Sonya Erin, born July 18. Gary is doing doctoral work in ornithology at Florida State University in Tallahassee; he has also been doing field work in Peru, where he participated in the discovery of a new species of owl a couple of years ago.
Conservation

Rep. Ed Bethune’s proposal to designate eleven wilderness areas in Arkansas continues to make good progress. Thanks to the efforts of members of the Arkansas Conservation Coalition, both the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission and the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce have endorsed the bill. Both groups were convinced that our state can continue its economic growth and at the same time protect part of its natural heritage for future generations to study and enjoy. As the facts about wilderness in Arkansas are disseminated, more and more people are supporting protection, and realizing that wilderness scare tactics are usually slanted and misleading.

This doesn’t mean that the battle is won — not by a very long shot. If you haven’t yet written to Rep. Bethune and Arkansas’ two senators, please do so now. Right now. Tell your friends to do the same. If you belong to a civic group or similar organization, contact a member of the Conservation Coalition and try to arrange to have the 12-minute wilderness slide show presented at a meeting.

Please do your part! There is no more important issue in Arkansas now.

A potentially very dangerous change has been proposed recently in the rules of the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service; it requires the immediate attention of all of us. The National Taxidermists Association is asking the FWS to allow “salvage” permits to permit individuals to have mounted and possess accidentally killed migratory birds. This might sound innocent enough, but it would present the opportunity for all sorts of abuse, and would inevitably lead to the killing of more hawks, owls, and other large birds.

Present FWS rules forbid possession of any dead migratory nongame bird, or any part of such a bird. No one can shoot a bird and then say, “I just found this along the road.” This rule has worked for many years and there is no reason to change it simply to allow taxidermists to make more money. Already overworked FWS agents simply don’t have the time to inspect all the birds that would be claimed as “accidentally” killed. One agent has called this proposed rule change “a real step backward.”

Write to: Director, (LE), Fish and Wildlife Service, P. O. Box 28006, Washington, D.C. 20005. Put the notation REC 21-03 on your comments, and say that you oppose 50 CFR Part 21 to allow salvage permits of accidentally killed birds. Your written comments must be received by September 12.

The Reagan Administration’s environmental double-speak continues: In a June radio address, the President defended his wilderness record, comparing it to Jimmy Carter’s and boasting that “our administration has proposed 37 wilderness areas encompassing 2.7 million acres.” He didn’t mention that the Carter Administration saw 65 million acres added to the wilderness system. He also didn’t mention that he has supported legislation that would have virtually halted further additions to the wilderness system, and that he has sought to open many wilderness areas to oil, gas and mineral development.

Reagan defended James Watt’s attempt to reject 800,000 acres of proposed wilderness, saying that Carter’s administration had rejected 150 million acres. This 150 million acres was “rejected” only in the sense that it was classified as unqualified for wilderness in the original survey of all federal lands. Watt’s action involved land that was already being protected as possible wilderness.

Meanwhile, Watt was proudly taking credit for breaking up a ring that was selling eagle feathers and killing as many as 300 birds a year, never mentioning that he has tried to cut a million dollars from the law enforcement budget of the Interior Department.

The drive to reauthorize and strengthen the Clean Water Act is moving forward, but supporters need our help now. Please write to your representative and senators in Washington and let them know you support a bill concerning this very critical issue. This bill covers wetland preservation, control of toxic substances, and nonpoint source pollution.

Bird News

Former Little Rock resident Julie Baldridge, who now lives in Fayetteville, was in town on business July 21 and found what has to be the bird of the summer. Julie was entering the “Big Mac” building at the state Capitol when she noticed a small bird under some bushes. She thought it looked like a Purple Finch, but knew it was the wrong time of year. The bird was very weak, so Julie and a Parks Department employee caught it. Since she had to go to a meeting, Julie asked that Henry Halberg be called, and left. Henry came and got the bird (it promptly died) and identified it as a House Finch — only the fourth or fifth ever seen in Arkansas. The bird had two leg bands, so somebody we’ll know where it came from. House Finches are expanding their range rapidly from the east, and before long they’ll probably be fairly common here, but for now this is a real find. Congratulations to Julie, and the editor apologizes for asking her if she was sure it wasn’t an Orchard Oriole.

Bill Shepherd visited the site of the Burdette heronry in northeast Arkansas in early August and reports that the birds have completely abandoned it. This is a real loss; seven species of wading birds once nested there, including rare occurrences of Glossy Ibis and Tricolored (Louisiana) Heron. Some slightly offsetting good news, though, is the apparent success of the Lake Conway heronry, just off Interstate 40. Nearly anytime you drive by you can see lots of Cattle Egrets, Little Blue Herons, and excellent news — Great Egrets. The last-named is a somewhat rare and special bird in Arkansas, and its presence here on land owned by the Game and Fish Commission is a bright spot in the otherwise dismal outlook for colonial-nesting waders.

The B’n B group (or is it B and B?) has been keeping an eye on a pair of Purple Gallinules with four chicks at Faulkner Lake, as well as breeding Yellow-crowned Night Herons.

An effort was made this summer to census the small colony of Rufous-crowned Sparrows hanging on at Mount Magazine. In June, Bill Shepherd of the Natural Heritage Commission and Doug James of the University of Arkansas led a few other folks in traipsing along the rocky cliffs where the birds have been found before; three adults and two young birds comprised the total number seen.

The next month, however, Bill went back and found another family group, of two adults and at least one fledgling, in an area where no birds have ever been seen before. To quote Bill: “Perhaps we are beginning to see the benefits of the burning and brush-cutting that the Forest Service did in March of 1982.” Another census, with more participants and covering two other mountains in the vicinity of Magazine, is tentatively planned for next spring.

This has been the best season so far in the continuing effort to establish a new flock of Whooping Cranes in an Idaho wildlife refuge. Of 28 eggs placed in Sandhill Crane nests, 26 hatched. Most of these birds, however, can be expected to die before reaching adulthood, either as chicks or in their first attempt to migrate to the wintering grounds. There are 14 Idaho whoopers still living from earlier foster parent hatching.
Report From Alaska

By ASCA Member

Former ASCA President Florence Mallard took a guided birding trip to Alaska this summer, and she has given us the following report:

At last – the perfect trip. Alaska in early June is a special place, particularly on a Joseph Van Os Nature Tour. Add to this being met at the Anchorage Airport by Joel and Karen Ward, plus a breakfast at their lovely new home with mountains all around, and we were off to a running start. Our tour included Anchorage, Nome, St. Paul on the Pribilofs, Denali (Mt. McKinley) National Park and Glacier Bay National Park. We traveled by plane, van and boat in perfect weather. We soon realized that our leaders, Joe Van Os and John Blair, were super birders of the daylight-to-dark group, and that we were in the “land of the midnight sun.”

How else could we have seen over 160 bird species (74 lifters for me), over 50 new flowers, and 20 new animals? There is no way I could list everything, but the very close sightings of birds in breeding plumage, the vivid colors of Arctic flowers (miniature size) and being locked in the Visitor Center at Denali National Park because a grizzly sow and her two cubs were lunching close by are exciting to remember.

We were able to experience hiking on Arctic tundra almost daily. It was particularly great when we found nesting gyrfalcons and rough-legged hawks at the top. We left Denali National Park without seeing Denali, but we had perfect views of it later from the highway for over two hours. Alaskan mountains have to be seen, heard and smelled to be adequately described. They were one of the highlights of my trip. However, there were also the bird cliffs on St. Paul crowded with penguins, auklets, cormorants, kittiwakes and murres. Also the fur seals, the bulls establishing their territories and the first pup of the season being born. The excitement of finding my first dipper, actually seeing a hawk owl and being forgiven for all my “stick birds” when I found the McKay’s hunting first still seem like a dream come true.

Audubon Hunters and Fishermen.

Florence Mallard, conservation chairman of the Arkansas Audubon Society, asks our help in a project she is working on:

As we were birding in the Pribilofs, an Audubon member from Anchorage said Senator Stevens is gearing up for another run at Wild Alaska. She asked that we help them keep the beauty that is theirs and ours. Let’s face it folks – the threat to our environment is always there.

New Members

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Joyce Berger
B. Daniels
Anne M. Coteerman
H. Watt Gregory III
Mrs. Lynn Griffis
Kathy L. Hemingway
Patricia Hoftield
Robert Lashley
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MARY ELLEN SMITH
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Frances Theodore

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CABOT
Dr. Richard Hayes

SHERWOOD
David Wheeler

FORT SMITH
Donald Roome

Join the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas (ASCA) and you automatically become a member of the National Audubon Society. You will receive the bimonthly national Audubon magazine and the Snipe, published from time to time by ASCA. It is important for new members to join through ASCA, so a portion of your dues support local activities.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Check the Membership You Desire (includes Audubon Magazine)

☐ Individual ....................................................... $25.00
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Local Chapter: Audubon Society of Central Arkansas, NAS #B-50

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society.

To join, complete the coupon and mail to Henry Halberg, ASCA Treasurer, 5809 No. Country Club, Little Rock, AR 72207.

SRC-7

Renewals should be sent to National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 2657, Boulder, Colorado 80321. Send change-of-address notification to the national membership center and Henry Halberg, so you won’t miss Audubon or the Snipe.
Calendar

Thursday, September 8, 7 p.m.: Quarterly meeting for all members at Pinnacle State Park Visitor Center. Edith Huey, who took the same Alaska tour in June that Florence Mallard did, will show slides of that trip. For those of us who must experience things vicariously, this will be the next-best thing to being there. Also, Anita Thurmond will show some slides from a trip she made out west recently. Bring supper and have a picnic in the park area at 6 p.m. if you wish.

Saturday, September 17, 7 a.m.: Field trip to Maumelle Park on the Arkansas River west of town. Take the Old County Farm Road north off Highway 10. Good chance to see migrating hawks, ospreys, who knows what else. Bring a sack lunch if you plan to stay into the afternoon. Meet at the parking lot at the Maumelle Park entrance. Leader, Florence Mallard, 663-8803.

Saturday, September 24, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.: Hawk watch at Pinnacle State Park Visitor Center overlook. Come and go anytime you wish. Good chance to see eagles, ospreys, cormorants, hawks. For information call the park at 868-5806.

Thursday, October 13, 7 p.m.: Board meeting at place to be announced. All members are welcome. Call Chris Granger at 227-0258 for information.

Saturday, October 15, 7:30 a.m.: Field trip to the Faulkner Lake area. Go east on Interstate 40 to Galloway exit, go south on Highway 391. Stop after crossing the railroad; we will meet by the roadside. Wetland birds should be seen. Leader, Florence Mallard, 663-8803.

Thursday, November 10, 7 p.m.: Board meeting at place to be announced. All members are welcome. Call Chris Granger at 227-0258 for information.

Saturday, November 12, 9:30 a.m.: Field trip to Lake Hamilton Fish Hatchery. Take Highway 7 south from Hot Springs to Highway 290; turn left, go about two miles, look for fish hatchery sign and road to left. All day trip; bring lunch. Leader, Sam Slagle, 374-4978.

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