International Migratory Bird Day

The results are in for the IMBD Count here in Pulaski County. On Saturday, May 10th thirteen birders spent 52.45 hours in the field and observed or heard 116 total species and 2831 total individuals. The numbers might have been higher if not for the windy conditions. All in all it was a good time and fun for all the participants: Barry and Susan Haas; Brantly Buck, Bill Shepherd, Lyndal York, Ken Dayer, Ed Laster, Karen and Neill Hart, Neill Ambrose, Sherry and Drew Phillips, and Bill Holimon. A complete listing of the species can be found on ASCA’s website under the field trip page or by going directly to the address listed below.

http://www.aristotle.net/~asca

Some of the highlights for the count included the following:

Yellow-crowned Night-heron
Broad-winged Hawk
Solitary Sandpiper
Spotted Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Wilson’s Phalarope
Caspian Tern
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Barred Owl
Red-headed Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Acadian Flycatcher
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Bewick’s Wren
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson’s Thrush

Blue-headed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Tennessee Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Louisiana Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Hooded Warbler
Blue Grosbeak
Painted Bunting
Lark Sparrow

The IMBD count was held throughout the state in 27 counties. Many thanks to ASCA’s own Lyndal York. Besides being the Pulaski County coordinator, he also served as the Arkansas state coordinator. This is an annual count, so make plans to volunteer for next May 2004.
Conservation. Who needs it?

The word conservation is constantly in the news, often times associated with controversy. As taxpayers, we spend large amounts of money on conservation. Some people go beyond that and donate additional money for conservation purposes. Given the controversy and cost, why bother?

There are several important reasons, most associated with protection of biodiversity. Biodiversity is a shortcut term for biological diversity, which refers to the variety of living things, their relationships to each other, and their interactions with the environment. As part of nature, we humans are dependent on biodiversity for many things. These can be summarized in three parts: ecosystem services, biological resources, and social benefits.

Ecosystem services include protection of water resources, soil formation, prevention of soil erosion, nutrient storage and cycling, pollution breakdown and absorption, and contribution to climatic stability. For example, the roots of plants and trees help with soil formation and structure, retention of moisture and nutrient levels, and helps prevent erosion. A 1997 paper in Nature estimated the value of ecosystem services to range between $16-54 trillion a year.

Biological resources include food, medicinal resources, wood products, and population reservoirs. Approximately 80% of the top 150 prescription drugs in the U.S. had their origins in natural compounds. Further, 25% of all the U.S. prescription drugs are derived from plants. Do you think human health is important? If so, then protection of biodiversity is essential in continuing to find new cures for diseases and ailments that decrease our duration and quality of life. In addition, protection of some habitats is important because they contain spawning areas for fish and crustaceans. This protection is important in maintaining our food supply as well as jobs for the folks that harvest these food items.

Social benefits include research, education, cultural values, and recreation. Some people like to play golf, yet others like bird watching. And bird watching is big business. In 1991, 24 million Americans took trips focused on bird watching. In 2001, 149,000 people took bird watching trips in Arkansas. Indeed, more people travel for birding than for either hunting or golf. Such travel is not only fun but also provides economic input into rural areas, where popular bird watching areas most often occur. In addition, each year $2.5 billion is spent on bird seed, feeders, baths and nesting boxes. While destruction of important bird areas occasionally garners attention, how do you think destruction of golf courses would play out on American television?

So personally, I think we all need conservation. From bird watchers to golfers, we all need and deserve the benefits derived from conservation of biodiversity, and we all can play an important role. So no matter your hobby, please pitch in, you'll be glad you did.

Where are all the birds? Am I missing any lifers? What is everybody else seeing? If these questions vex you, then here is a solution.

Arkansas Rare Bird Alert (RBA)
The RSA 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. This number is listed as J.J. Audubon in the phone book, the only white page listing with the last name of Audubon.

OR send us your preference by e-mail to: babirder@aristotle.net

Please check your preference below.

☐ I would like to continue receiving the Snipe in the paper format.
☐ I would like to receive the electronic version of the Snipe and my e-mail address is:

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Please mail you response to:
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas
804 Konrad Ct.
Little Rock, AR 72223-9201
Nine birders arrived at Warren Prairie at about 10:00 AM. We walked through a wooded mound to the first patch of prairie. In less than twenty minutes, we kicked up a Henslow’s Sparrow. It flew to the edge of the woods and landed on a bare tree limb. Most of our group got a decent view, but several of us never located it before it flew out of sight. We began to sweep along the edge of the prairie and kicked up another Henslow’s in short order. This bird flew into a tree on an isolated mound and put on a show! See the photo at the bottom of the page. Everyone got excellent views. It posed and allowed us to approach it within twenty feet. No one in our group will ever have trouble identifying this bird again.

By the end of two and half hours in the field we located seven Henslow’s Sparrows, all of which gave us excellent views. We were unsuccessful in locating any Sedge Wren’s but tallied twenty-two species during our short stay. Other notable birds were Red-shouldered Hawk, Black and Turkey Vultures, a brilliant male Pine Warbler freshly molting into his finest spring plumage, Great Egret, Purple Martins, Cedar Waxwings, Swamp Sparrows, and Black-and-White Warblers. We would like to thank Bill Holmion for teaching us about this special place and its special bird.

Pine City/Louisiana Purchase State Park - SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2003

Thirteen birders attended a field trip stopping by Railroad Prairie Natural Area, Louisiana Purchase Natural Area and State Park, and finally, Pine City Natural Area. We were hoping to find Dickcissels at Railroad Prairie. We failed on that but the Indian Paintbrush was beautiful. Our next stop was at the Louisiana Purchase State Park where there is a very nice boardwalk to the middle of the headwater swamp. We had very good looks at the numerous Prothonotary Warblers, and a Diamond Back Water Snake came up to rest after an apparent sizable meal within a couple of feet of the boardwalk giving us a wonderful look. We now headed to our primary destination, the Pine City Natural Area. Bill Holmion gave us a field lesson on the ecology of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. He then positioned us in groups around the roost trees, and we began our wait. About 7:00 PM, the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers returned and everyone got a really good look. While the species count was low, the experience was fantastic. Thanks Bill!

Drew M. Phillips
ASCA Field Trip Coordinator

This is a photo by Bill Holmion of a Henslow’s Sparrow taken on the field trip to Warren Prairie. See what you are missing if you do not join in on the field trips.
The Disorganized Bird Club

Over several years, Harrison resident Jo Anne Rife kept a list of birders living in Boone, Newton, and other surrounding counties. In March 2001, Jack Stewart used Jo Anne’s list of birders to plan a meeting at the Buffalo Lodge. Twenty-five people attended this first meeting of the Disorganized Bird Club (DOBC). Now no longer so disorganized, this club schedules field trips, participates in the Crooked Creek Valley Christmas Bird Count, which the DOBC member Sally Jo Gibson established in 2001, and the International Migratory Bird Day Count. And now the DOBC has gone on-line. The Disorganized ones even make it all the way down to Central Arkansas with trips scheduled for Mt. Nebo and Holla Bend NWR on July 7, 2003 and three more trips to Holla Bend, Dardanelle State Park, and Bell Slough set for the winter of 2004. To see what is happening in North Central Arkansas and find out about their next field trips, visit them at the following web address.

http://www.digitallogistics.com/private/dobc/dobc.htm

Here is a list of the Audubon or bird groups now online in Arkansas.

Audubon Society of Central Arkansas  http://www.aristotle.net/~asca/index.html
Arkansas Audubon Society  http://www.arbirds.org/birds.html
Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society  http://www.uark.edu/~nwasudubo/
Tex-Ark Audubon Society  http://www.tex-arkaudubon.org/

Obituary

Carl S. Runyon

Carl S. Runyon, 68, of North Little Rock died March 20, 2003. He was born in Ft. Worth, Texas. At the age of eighteen, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was wounded in 1954 during combat in Guatemala. After returning to civilian life, Carl went on to earn three Master Degrees including one in Sociology and worked as social worker for over 30 years in Jacksonville and North Little Rock. Carl is survived by his wife Myra Coether Runyon and three sons. Both Carl and Myra were very active in ASCA from the late 1980s through the 1990s. Both served the ASCA as membership and publicity chairpersons. Carl also served ASCA in the following offices: Board of Directors, vice-president, outreach and education chairperson. He also led numerous field trips. In addition to his work with ASCA, Carl also worked with Partners For Pinnacle.

ASCA Field Trip Schedule

The ASCA sponsor 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 Drow Phillips at 501-228-5245 for more detailed information about any of the upcoming trips.

June 7, 2003
Mt. Magazine State Park

Mt. Magazine is located northeast of Paris, Arkansas in West Central Arkansas. It is the highest elevation in Arkansas and home to one of the most eastern nesting populations of Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We will encounter nesting songbirds such as Black-throated Green Warblers and Ovenbirds. We will also look for butterflies. Meet at the Christ the King Church’s parking lot on Rodney Parham just south of Hwy 10 at 7:00 AM, and we should arrive at the Mt. Magazine Visitors Center around 9:00/9:30 AM. Bring a sack lunch and a youngster interested in birds and or butterflies.

July 12, 2003
Bell Slough Wildlife Management Area

Bell Slough WMA is owned and managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. It is very close to us just south of Mayflower, Arkansas off Hwy 365. We will meet at Christ the King Church’s parking lot on Rodney Parham just south of Hwy 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.

August 9, 2003
Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge

We will meet at the Other Center Parking behind McDonald’s at 7:30 AM. The Other Center is on the southeast corner of McCain Blvd and Hwy 67. We will arrive at the Refuge between 8:30 AM and 9:00 AM. We will target migrating shorebirds working there way south. We should be finished a little after noon. You can bring a sack lunch or eat lunch in Bald Knob. Be sure to bring plenty of water!

September 20, 2003
Mt. Magazine State Park
Hawk Watch

We will meet at Christ The King Church’s parking lot at 7:30 AM. We will arrive at the Park between 9:30 AM and 10:00 AM when the Hawk Watch will begin. Quoting the Park’s Web Site, “Stand on the top of Arkansas to watch birds of prey soar during their migration southward. Meet at the Visitor Center at 10 AM. Bring lawn chairs, binoculars, water and lunch. At 1:00 PM specialists from the Little Rock Zoo will display live birds of prey in the visitor center.” Sounds like great fun! This is the perfect trip for the novice birder and youngsters interested in birds.