Annual Potluck and Silent Auction

Join us on Thursday, December 12, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., at the Little Rock Audubon Center for our annual holiday potluck and silent auction.

This fun-filled event is a great opportunity to enjoy wonderful food, spread some holiday cheer, and exchange stories with fellow birders.

If you are bringing an item for the auction please be there by 6:00 p.m. in order to get the item(s) labeled and in place. We’ll begin accepting bids at 6:15 and sit down for dinner at 6:30. Auction items can be purchased or handmade.

ASCA will provide the drinks. Plates, cups, and eating utensils will be furnished by Audubon Arkansas.

In addition to all the fun, we’ll conduct one important point of business – election of Board Members for the upcoming year, 2020.

The Little Rock Audubon Center is located on the southeast side of Little Rock at 4500 Springer Blvd., just minutes from downtown.

Little Rock and Lonoke Christmas Bird Counts

Dan Scheiman
ASCA Christmas Bird Count Complier

Now in its 120th year, Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a community science program and the nation’s longest running bird survey. Have no doubts that your participation is meaningful – thousands of scientific studies have used CBC data, including National Audubon’s latest report Survival by Degrees (climate.audubon.org).

On count day participants count all birds they encounter within their assigned section of a 15-mile diameter circle. Birders of any skill level are welcome. It’s a great opportunity to learn from experienced birders. You can bird for as long as you like.

I organize two counts: Little Rock is Saturday, December 14, and Lonoke is Sunday, December 15. Contact me at birddan@comcast.net or 501-366-0840, and specify the count.

Both counts have a great mix of habitats and have the potential to tally over 100 species, though Lonoke does so more consistently. Rarities found in the recent past include Rufous Hummingbird, Long-tailed Duck, Black Scoter, Glaucous Gull, Say’s Phoebe, Spotted Towhee, and the state’s first Ash-throated Flycatcher!

Participation is free. Make your birding count for the birds!
President’s Column

The other night about dusk as I was taking a bag of trash out to the outdoor bin, a single White-throated Sparrow was singing nearby. Its pure sweet notes echoed across the yard. I stopped and listened as it sang into the still. More than any other bird, the humble White-throated Sparrow is the bird that marks the arrival of fall and the oncoming winter.

As you read this message we should be well into the Christmas Bird Count season. Everyone from beginners to experts are welcome to participate. We encourage folks of all ages and all activity levels to participate. All you need is a curiosity about the world that exists around us. ASCA has binoculars we can lend to those without, but do let us know ahead of time so we can make arrangements to have a pair available on count day. The Little Rock count is scheduled on Saturday, December 14, and the Lonoke count is Sunday, December 15. There are other counts held across the state, and nearby counts in Conway, Pine Bluff, Hot Springs Village, and Garland County. The Lake Dardanelle count is always held on January 1 which will get your year count off to a good start.

Here is another way to participate. If you live within the Count Circle, you can participate by keeping track of the birds in your yard during the 24 hours of the count. That includes owls at night if you are so inclined. If you’re interested in participating in either the Little Rock and/or the Lonoke count, please contact the count coordinator, Dan Scheiman, at baddran@comcast.net. Dan also has the contact information for the other count coordinators in the state.

Some of you may know that the Central Arkansas Library System maintains a bird watching kit including a field guide and binoculars at each branch. This kit can be checked out just like a book.

And finally let me say a few words about civic engagement. I know we all have busy on the go lives. Volunteer organizations like ASCA, the garden clubs, Arkansas Native Plant Society, the Halberg Ecology Camp, and many, many other service organizations cannot function without people willing to assume organizational responsibilities for a period of time. Stepping into a position like the ASCA President may be daunting when you consider the people who attend the meetings. Becoming an officer is a good way to get to understand how the organization works and you quickly find other people invested in the organization are always willing to help. Like the bird counts mentioned above, anyone with an interest in birds and the environment is eligible to become an officer or board member.

Have a great winter birding season.

Cindy Franklin
ASCA President

ASCA Membership Renewal

Just a reminder, ASCA membership renewals are due January 1, 2020 and can be paid on-line via PayPal through the membership page at www.ascabird.org.

Check can be made out to ASCA and mailed to Jim Dixon, Treasurer, 11805 Birchwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72211.

Membership Level
Regular Membership – $15.00
Students/Seniors – $10.00
Family – $25.00
Supporting – $35.00
Patron – $50.00

Welcome New Members

ASCA would like to welcome the following new members:
Stephanie Lisk
Kathy Sue Phillips
Anna Riggs

Great Backyard Bird Count

The 2020 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) begins on Valentine’s Day (Friday), February 14, and continues through Monday, February 17. For more information visit: www.gbbc.birdcount.org to participate in this fun event.
# 120th Christmas Bird Count

*Leif Anderson*
*State Christmas Bird Count Compiler*

It’s getting close to the coolest birding of the year, figuratively and literally.

The Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are held around the Americas from December 14 through January 5. Counts have been conducted for 120 years - the oldest citizen science bird database in the hemisphere.

If you've seen Audubon’s climate change report *Survival by Degrees*, then you know the CBC and Breeding Bird Surveys supplied the data that made the report possible.

Here is your chance to help.

Each 15-mile diameter count circle has a compiler. The circle is broken into sections with a group of volunteers for each. Each group then tries to find all the birds in their area, within a calendar day. You count the birds you actually see and hear, not the birds that should be there.

All counts could use more volunteers. Also, please consider participating in more than one count, especially those that may involve a drive or have less than 10 volunteers.

Birders of all skill levels are welcome. The amount of time you spend is flexible. Some watch bird feeders for an hour, while others go for 15+ hours out in the field.

To participate or for general information contact, Leif Anderson at 479-284-3150 ext. 3151 or email leif.anderson@usda.gov; or a CBC compiler listed below.

Several counts have yet to be set. Contact Leif for details or subscribe to ARBIRD-L for regular updates.

### Arkadelphia
Sat - Dec 14
Evelyn & Glenn Good
theoldcrow@sbcglobal.net

### Bella Vista/Bentonville and Centerton
Sat - Dec 14
Butch Tetzlaff
bultoka@mynewroads.com

### Fort Smith
Sat - Dec 14
Bill Beall
birddan@comcast.net

### Little Rock
Sat - Dec 14
Dan Scheiman
heather.runyan@arkansas.gov

### Village Creek SP
Sat - Dec 14
Heather Runyan

### Fayetteville
Sun - Dec 15
Joe Neal
joeneal@uark.edu

### Lonoke
Sun - Dec 15
Dan Scheiman
birddan@comcast.net

### Hot Springs Village
Mon - Dec 16
Chris Cash
c52cash@sbcglobal.net

### Mississippi River SP
Thu - Dec 19
Cara Curtis
cara.curtis@arkansas.gov

### White River NWR
Thu - Dec 19
Than Boves
tboves@astate.edu

### Buffalo Nat’l River East
Fri - Dec 20
Jack Stewart
jacksteward_us@yahoo.com

(Lodging is available, call Jack for details)

### Sylamore Ranger District
Fri - Dec 20
Idun Guenther
iguenthal@fs.fed.us

### Crooked Creek
Sat - Dec 21
Alan Gregory
quattro@windstream.net

### Conway
Sat - Dec 21
Maureen McClung or Cody Massery
mcclung@hendrix.edu or codythebirder@outlook.com

### Pine Bluff
Fri - Dec 27
Rob Doster
rdoster@hotmail.com

### Wapanocca NWR (AR)/Shelby Forest (TN)
Sat - Dec 28
Dick Preston or Van Harris
dickpreston@rittermail.com or shelbyforester1223@bigriver.net

### Hot Springs Nat’l Park
Sun - Dec 29
Nathan Charlton
nathan_charlton@nps.gov

### Lake Dardanelle
Wed - Jan 1
Kenny Nichols
kingbird@ymail.com

### Holla Bend NWR
Fri - Jan 3
Leif Anderson
leif.anderson@usda.gov

### Lake Ouachita SP
Sat - Jan 4
Jennifer Menge
jennifer.menge@arkansas.gov

### Mount Magazine
Sat - Jan 4
Don Simons
don.simons@arkansas.gov

### Pond Creek NWR
Sat - Jan 4
Devin Moon or Matt Gideon
moondevg@gmail.com or paulmatthewgideon@gmail.com

### Other counts close to Arkansas:
- **Red Slough WMA, OK**
  Mon - Dec 16
  David Arbour
  arbour@windstream.net

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*Other counts not listed*

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*Contact Leif for details or subscribe to ARBIRD-L for regular updates.*
Birding Tidbits

Flea Market Find Yields Birding Treasure

Cindy Franklin

Found: a well used Peterson field guide in a flea market along I-30 between Bryant and Benton. The book by itself was not worth the $8 price. What attracted Bill Burnham's attention were all the papers stuffed inside including many notations of bird sightings, suet recipes, Ruth Thomas's last newspaper column published posthumously, and the attached photocopied letter from then Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Director Andrew H. Hulsey to H. H. "Shug" Shugart regarding Red-cockaded Woodpecker conservation efforts.

Bill called me and asked if I recognized the name Shugart. My answer, "buy the book."

Efforts are underway to identify the original owner.

Outdoor Hall of Fame Inductee Recognized for Native Plant Work

Cindy Franklin

Congratulations to Mary Ann King, owner of Pine Ridge Gardens in London, Arkansas. Mary Ann was inducted into the 2019 Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame, on August 24. Mary Ann was recognized for her extensive knowledge of native plants and for promoting their use in landscapes around the state through education outreach and native plants sales including the sale sponsored by Audubon Arkansas twice a year.

Unusual Hummingbird Visits Backyard in Heber Springs

On Sept. 28, 2019, Kenny Nations photographed this leucistic Ruby-throated Hummingbird visiting one of the feeders in his backyard.
Upcoming Programs

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.

December 12, 2019 – Potluck and Silent Auction
Little Rock Audubon Center

Come join us from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the Little Rock Audubon Center for our annual December Potluck and Silent Auction. This fun-filled event is a great opportunity to enjoy some wonderful food, spread holiday cheer, and exchange stories with fellow birders.

If you’re bringing an item for the auction please be there by 6:00 in order to get the item labeled and in place. We’ll begin accepting bids at 6:15. Items can be purchased or handmade. Dinner starts at 6:30.

Bring your favorite dish and join us for a fun-filled evening at the Little Rock Audubon Center, 4500 Springer Blvd., Little Rock. For more information and directions to the Center see page 1 of this issue.

January 9, 2020 – Annual Business Meeting

ASCA can exist only with active participation by its members. Our annual business meeting is your opportunity to provide input into activities for 2020 and help start the New Year off right for our organization!

All members are urged to attend. We will begin at 7:00 p.m., located at John Gould Fletcher Library, 823 Buchanan Street.

Due to the number of topics covered, there will be no program or guest speaker for this meeting.

February 13, 2020 - Darters: Living Jewels in Arkansas Streams
Dustin Lynch, Aquatic Ecologist, AR Natural Heritage Commission

Darters are the hummingbirds of the fish world because of their bright, flashy colors and rapid movements. Despite their astonishing diversity of colors, patterns, and forms, darters are easily overlooked due to their tiny size and they live at the bottom of fast flowing mountain streams. About 50 species occur in Arkansas, with new species still being described. Unfortunately, a host of issues ranging from pollution, sedimentation, rising stream temperatures, and habitat fragmentation have led to sharp declines in many species. See Dustin’s remarkable photos of these living jewels as you learn about the challenges they face and the efforts by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) to conserve them.

Dustin Lynch holds a Ph.D. in biological sciences from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and a M.S. in zoology from Oklahoma State University (OSU). Before starting his job at ANHC, he worked as a post-doctoral research associate and collections manager at the OSU Collection of Vertebrates, overseeing the renovation and re-curation of ~500,000 specimens in the museum’s fish, reptile, and amphibian collections. Current research projects include conducting aquatic species inventories of the 75 ANHC Natural Areas; monitoring populations of federally endangered, threatened, and imperiled darters; gathering data on poorly known primary burrowing crayfish; and trapping insects for a statewide inventory of aquatic insect species.

Election of Board Members

The election of ASCA Board Members for 2020 will take place Thursday, December 12, at the Little Rock Audubon Center.

The nominating committee consisted of Dottie Boyles and Cindy Franklin. Board members serve for one-year.

During the November 14 business meeting, Joan Ellison, DeLynn Hearn, and John Webb agreed to serve another year. Cindy and Dottie said they would contact the other members.

Nominations are as follows:
Joan Ellison
Jane Gulley
DeLynn Hearn
Lance Runion (replaces Robert Bays)
Bill Shepherd
John Webb

ASCA members are welcome to make nominations from the floor before the election is held.

Leucistic White-throated Sparrow Returns to Conway

Back for a third winter! Gail Miller said she got chill bumps when she spotted this leucistic White-throated Sparrow outside her kitchen window, in the rain, on November 7, 2019.

Gail stated, “I was beginning to fear it didn’t make the long trip, but I am beyond thrilled to have it back for a third time!”

White-throated Sparrow | Photo: Gail Miller
Louisiana Whooping Crane Returns to Arkansas

Dottie Boyles

L4-17, a female Whooping Crane from the Experimental Whooping Crane Population established in Coastal Louisiana, was first spotted in Arkansas in late October of 2018, near the town of Roe, in western Monroe County. She had spent most of the summer in eastern Oklahoma after her release in Louisiana the winter before. She foraged for several months in a rice field before finally moving on.

Once again in late October, L4-17 was spotted in Arkansas, this time at Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge, in Pope County.

The crane was still present during Arkansas Audubon Society's Fall Conference, held November 15-16, in nearby Russellville. Field trips to Holla Bend were already scheduled for both days and L4-17 did not disappoint. Participants on both days enjoyed great views of this beautiful bird. Many, including myself, were lucky enough to see this rare visitor two years in a row.

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 ladyhawke1@att.net or 501-920-3246. Always bring plenty of water with you.

December 14-15, 2019
Little Rock and Lonoke Christmas Bird Counts

The Little Rock Count will be Saturday, December 14, the Lonoke Count Sunday, December 15. To participate in one or both counts, contact Dan Scheiman at birddan@comcast.net or 501-366-0840. For more information see page 1.

January 25, 2020
Lake Dardanelle-Delaware Park and Holla Bend NWR

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Mayflower commuter lot off I-40 West at Exit 135. We will carpool to Delaware Park, located on the southwest side of Lake Dardanelle. We should arrive at the boat ramp around 8:45 a.m. for anyone who wants to meet us there. We'll scan the lake for gulls, waterfowl, and eagles. A rarity is always a possibility. The lake can be very cold and windy so dress in layers, including hats and gloves.

At Holla Bend the bathrooms are closed, but there is a single-stall Porta-Potty in the back corner of the parking lot. Our target birds will be the Whooping Crane (if she's still there), raptors, including Bald Eagles, waterfowl, and sparrows. There will be some walking in tall grass, so boots are recommended. Bring snacks, lunch, and plenty of water. We'll return late afternoon.

Directions from Dardanelle to Delaware Park: At the junction of Hwy. 7 and Hwy. 22, go west on Hwy. 22 approximately 10 miles. Turn right onto Hwy. 393, which is the first road on your right after you cross the long causeway. Hwy. 393 dead ends at Delaware Park. GPS coordinates: 35.295749, -93.271458.

For information about Holla Bend NWR visit www.fws.gov/hollabend. Address: 10448 Holla Bend Rd., Dardanelle, AR 72834. GPS coordinates: 35.163222, -93.093477.

February 15, 2020
Two Rivers Park

Participate in the 2020 Great Backyard Bird Count. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Two Rivers Park Bridge at the start of the walking trail located at 4468 River Mountain Rd., at the southeast end of the Two Rivers Park peninsula. We'll scope the river from the parking lot and bridge, then walk the dirt and paved trails as far as people wish to go.

Next we'll drive to the west entrance of the park and walk the field and horse trail. Both areas have a diverse population of sparrows. Knee-high rubber boots are recommended because of copious sand burrs. Bring water, snacks, and a scope if you have one. We should finish around noon.

If interested we can continue on to Lake Maumelle. Loons and waterfowl are easily found on the lake this time of year.

Directions-take Exit 9 west off I-430 onto Cantrell Rd. At the first stop light, turn right (north) onto River Mountain Road. Go to the bottom of the hill then bear right to the main parking lot. GPS coordinates: 34.797458, -92.383017.
Bona Dea Trails and Sanctuary  
September 21, 2019

Twenty birders assembled at the first Bona Dea Trail parking lot on the west side of Russellville. It was cloudy and very muggy but not unbearably hot. We made a quick loop of the trail. Very few birds were moving except for Blue Jays.

We moved to the loop trail at the second parking lot hoping our luck would change. This longer loop was as slow as the first. Birds were few and far between. We enjoyed seeing several Brown-headed Nuthatches, Wood Ducks, Gray Catbirds, Belted Kingfishers, Green Herons, a quick fly-by of Double-crested Cormorants, White-eyed Vireos, and more Blue Jays. We saw all the expected woodpeckers except for Northern Flicker, with several quite close. We were excited for two of our birding buddies who each saw a life bird, one a Hairy Woodpecker and the other a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Even our more common birds can still be a real treat for our newer birders.

We worked hard for every bird and managed to rustle up a total of 39 species. It was still a fun day because we visited a lot with each other in between the sparse bird sightings. --Karen Holliday

Bell Slough Wildlife Management Area  
October 26, 2019

Eleven wet birders braved the threat of heavy rain, which never came, to spend a few hours searching the Waterfowl Rest Area at Bell Slough WMA. It proved to be worthwhile.

We found Northern Rough-winged Swallows (4), Sedge Wrens (10), Marsh Wrens (3), LeConte’s Sparrows (2), Indigo Buntings (3), and 26 other species.

It is very likely that the wren totals are way below the number that actually were in the wet area.
--Allan Mueller

DeGray Lake Resort State Park  
November 23, 2019

It was cloudy, windy, and the temperature hovered in the low 40s all day. With a small group of six people, we were able to tuck into several inlets and sheltered areas to view the lake out of the wind. Not much in the way of waterfowl was present. Seen were a raft of 70 Gadwalls, a couple of groups of Mallards, a female Common Goldeneye, several big groups of Canada Geese, 15 Pied-billed Grebes, a few Horned Grebes, and surprisingly, no American Coots. One group of geese had a juvenile white morph Snow Goose transitioning into adult plumage, which took us a bit to figure out what it was.

Highlights were several Bald Eagles, including a strongly mottled second year Bald Eagle up close, standing on the shore feeding on a dead fish with a group of crows waiting at a respectful distance to dash in and grab any leftovers. Common Loons were at every stop with one calling, a first for a couple of birders. A very cold, puffed-up Brown-headed Nuthatch was a life bird for the couple from Bentonville.

After lunch at the lodge, we headed to the fields near the Arkadelphia Oxidation ponds to look for the recently reported Sandhill Cranes. Unfortunately no cranes, just lots of Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, American Crows, an American Kestrel, Northern Harriers, and a mix of sparrows. With it getting to be late afternoon, the group headed back home having seen 44 species for the trip. --Karen Holliday
Rufous Hummingbird discovered in North Little Rock | Photo: Michael Linz

Audubon Society of Central Arkansas
P. O. Box 6213
Sherwood, AR 72124

Forwarding and return postage guaranteed.
Return service requested.

Audubon Society of Central Arkansas
Chapter Only Membership Application

Name _____________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________________________ 

City _____________  State _______ Zip _______

E-mail address ____________________________________________

ASCA Dues Proration for New Members

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*New Memberships paid in the last quarter (Oct-Dec), will include full membership for the following calendar year.

All Membership renewals are due January 1 of each calendar year and can be paid online via credit card at www.ascabird.org or mail a check to the address below.

Make check payable to ASCA and mail to:  Jim Dixon, Treasurer, 11805 Birchwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72211. Please note that “Chapter Only Members” will not receive Audubon magazine. To receive Audubon magazine, you will need to join the National Audubon Society (NAS).

Address changes should be sent to the following: If Chapter Only Member, notify both Leon Brockinton, c/o Brockinton Company, LLC at P.O. Box 6213, Sherwood, AR 72124, and Jim Dixon, Treasurer, 11805 Birchwood Dr., Little Rock, AR 72211. If 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.

Reporting a Banded Bird

To report a bird with a Federal Band or Color Marker you can visit the U.S. Geological Survey website at: www.reportband.gov/.

Find an Injured Bird?


Wild Birds Unlimited, 1818 N. Taylor Street, Little Rock, AR 72207. Phone: 501-666-4210
*Mention you are an ASCA member and receive 10% off your next purchase.