

Flicker Flashes

Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society



For conservation and greater knowledge of
all wildlife, wilderness and natural resources

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

Member's Favorite Slides

Thursday, April 27, 2006 at 7:00 PM

Birmingham Zoo Auditorium

We're calling on our members to provide the program for the April meeting. You might ask, how can I possibly provide the program for the meeting? The answer is simple, of course: bring your favorite slides!

Dig into your slide collection and begin assembling your favorites. Everyone is invited, BAS members and guests, to share with us their favorite slides of birds, flowers, scenic sights, animals and other images of nature at her finest. Your photos can be from vacations or trips you have taken, either here in Alabama or abroad, or from your own backyard even. This is a great opportunity to share with everyone your experiences with nature, and what insights you may have gained in the process. Let your imagination move you and turn it into a multimedia presentation! For those who have digital images in a Power Point presentation let us know and we can make arrangements for a digital projector.

We ask you to limit your presentation to 5 minutes so that we may give everyone a chance to show his or

her slides. A slide projector and extra slide trays will be provided. Please contact our Master of Ceremonies Bob Tate (967-0304; actrgt@bellsouth.net) and let him know if you plan to bring slides, how many and any special equipment requests you may have. We will try to accommodate you.

Please note that the meeting date is the FOURTH Thursday in April. This date was selected to avoid conflicts with the AOS meeting in Dauphin Island on April 21 - 23.

Come Early for Refreshments and Conversation



Tom Imhof Family Bird walk Saturday, April 8, 2006 Birmingham Zoo

Our half-day field trip, in memory of long-time BAS member Tom Imhof, will be a stroll along the perimeter road adjacent to the parking area. And, since we will be at the Birmingham Zoo, this is the perfect time to bring your children and grandchildren! This outing is an excellent choice for beginners and those who like short trips since we will limit our walking to the woods surrounding the zoo. Spring migrants will be passing through and with any luck some may be

singing. We will not be entering the Zoo proper as part of the field trip.

Meet: 7:00 A.M. at the Birmingham Zoo Auditorium. Patty Pendleton, Zoo staff, will provide coffee, juice and donuts.

Trip Leaders: Harriett Wright, 967-0955 and Elberta Reid, 879-1935

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Shirley Farrell

The New Year for BAS began on a sad note with the passing of a dear friend, Bob Reid. I knew Bob was active with the environmental community, working tirelessly for anyone who would ask or for whatever cause he knew needed the most attention. Now as the days have gone by, I have come to realize how Bob was a catalyst for many of our activities, including field trip leader and bird count host and coordinator, to name a few. I know that one person can not replace Bob. We need an army! We miss you, Bob!

Our Christmas Bird Count coverage areas had to be rearranged due to many people not participating. The bird count data is vital to research not only about the bird species but also about our environment. Birds are environmental indicators and help us not only know the health of the environment but our health within the environment. We have three bird counts in Birmingham every year. Usually in late April or early May we have the Spring Bird Count. Likewise, late September or early October we hold our annual Fall Bird Count, and the Christmas Bird Count occurs in late December.

On April 29th we will conduct the Spring Bird Count. We need volunteers more than ever to help cover areas. Even if you don't feel like you are "good enough" to help, you really are. Frank and I started going with Harriett Wright, and Stan and Dana

Hamilton. They have helped Frank and I to be better birders. While in the beginning we could not identify all the birds (okay, many of the birds), they talked about field marks, habitat, silhouettes, etc. as they identified the different species. What a great way to learn. Mind you, the pace was quick to cover the whole territory but we saw rare birds, uncommon warblers, and our own loveable locals.

That was 6 years ago and now Harriett has passed her territory to us. We still feel unsure of ourselves at times but we are better birders now, thanks to the count trips we have taken. I hope some of you will decide that it's time to help. This past December we participated in the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count, along with counts in Birmingham, Guntersville, and Gulf Shores. It is so exciting to try to find as many species as possible and hope to see something different, unusual, or rare. Okay, we are hooked!

As a participant of an Audubon bird count you are a citizen scientist. You are going in the field to collect data for other scientists to use. Trends and patterns form to be able to predict and learn what is going on in our area, our state, region, and nation. I urge everyone to come out and join a group, at least once, to know the excitement of trying to see and count ALL the birds in the area.

B A S B I R D A T H O N 2 0 0 6

Greetings to all of our BAS members! This year's Birdathon fundraiser will continue to support the Birmingham Audubon Society's mission, "to promote conservation and greater knowledge of all wildlife, wilderness and natural resources." Your generous contributions will maintain our popular environmental education programs to local schools as well as provide habitat conservation projects for our beautiful and diverse state.

Our four funding categories will be named for owl species and will include the Great Horned Owl, the Barred

Owl, the Eastern Screech Owl and the Elf Owl. Additional information will be sent to each member by letter within the next few weeks.

We look forward to a successful campaign and in advance, we appreciate your worthy contributions.

~Cathy and Lee Nick
Birdathon Chairmen

FORTY-FIRST ANNUAL SPRING BIRD COUNT

Saturday, April 29, 2006

All BAS members and friends are encouraged to join us for the 41st annual Spring Bird Count! This is a fun count, when we venture out to welcome our returning neotropical migrants. The count provides a wonderful opportunity to spend some time outdoors and watch the feathered parade as the birds follow their migration route north! Many of the local breeding birds will be well on their way to raising young too.

This all-day count will cover parts of Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Blount counties, and we'll need as many participants as possible to adequately cover the area. Make arrangements now to join a party on count day. Feel free to call me at 251-2133 for the names and phone numbers of party leaders in your area, or you may wish to count the birds at your feeders and call in your report. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks will surely reward those who take the time to watch at home! We will compile our list totals at the end of the day and swap stories about the day's exciting sightings and adventures. The compilation will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Maureen Shaffer's house at 2313 Chestnut Road, Vestavia Hills; phone: 822-8728.

Directions to Maureen's house: from the intersection of

US 31 and Shades Crest Road, at the top of the mountain above Brookwood Medical Center, proceed east on Shades Crest for about 0.3 miles. Turn right onto Sunset Drive (third right after turning off US 31). Drive one block and turn left onto Chestnut Road; 2313 will be on your right. From US 280, turn onto Rocky Ridge Road and bear right at the light onto Shades Crest Road. Travel 1.2 miles and turn left onto Monterey Place and go one block. Turn right onto Chestnut Road and travel approximately 0.25 miles. 2313 will be on your left before the next intersection.

~Greg Harber,
For Bird Counts committee



Bald Eagle Nest Cam

A note from our friend, J.T. Dabbs

The BioDiversity Research Institute in Gorham, Maine is partnering with Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to operate a web camera at a bald eagle nest on the coast of Maine. The web site <http://briloon.org/ed/eagle/> is now open for public viewing. The camera provides a unique nest-side window into the life of eagles.

Real-time images of the birds and archived still photos are available 24 hours a day. The birds have been adding sticks to the nest for the last several weeks and it looks like

the female is just about to lay eggs. We hope they will be successful in hatching and raising young so we can view the entire nesting cycle from this unique perspective. There will also be links to the web camera from National Wildlife Federation, Maine Audubon, MDIFW, and USFWS web pages.

The USFWS recently announced a proposal to remove the bald eagle from the federal list of threatened and endangered species, which shows the success that the Endangered Species Act and partners working together can achieve.

As part of the web site, Maine eagle biologists Charlie Todd, Bucky Owen, and Mark McCollough will write a "Biologist Notes" section to interpret the eagle activity, explain the bald eagle delisting process, and reminisce on 25 years of bald eagle recovery in Maine. Tune in and watch the birds, and help us celebrate the recovery of the bald eagle in Maine!

Please feel free to share this information with teachers, friends, etc. who may be interested in learning more about eagles.

APRIL FIELD TRIP

Saturday, April 15, 2006

Sipsey River Swamp

If there is any better spot in central Alabama in which to find a wide and unpredictable variety of spring migrants, we don't know about it. Please plan to join us as we travel to the Sipsey Swamp on April 15th. This beautiful area of wetlands, cypress stumps, and bottom-land hardwood forests is always host to numerous varieties of warblers and vireos. Some species are passing through and some have come to stay for the summer. Besides warblers, birders on previous trips have also seen Mississippi Kites, Bobolinks, and Sandpipers. The variety has been amazing — so come prepared to expect anything!

We will spend the morning birding the road and bridges along the Sipsey River. Lunch will be a picnic

on the grounds of a local church. Afterwards we will travel to an industrial park adjacent to a swamp and nearby farmland, which makes for a varied habitat.

Travel Plans: Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the McDonalds on U.S. 31 in Hoover across from the Galleria. We will take I-459 to Tuscaloosa-Northport area and stop briefly for a coffee/restroom break. From there we will proceed to the Sipsey River Bridges. Remember to bring water, drinks and a lunch. Also insect spray and canvas chairs, if you wish, for lunching outside on the church grounds.

Trip leaders: John Swann (933-6469) and Ty Keith (933-8711).

.....

Walls of Jericho Field Trip

Saturday, April 22, 2006

A Special Invitation

The Friends of Shades Creek has organized a field trip to the Walls of Jericho and has invited the members of the Birmingham Audubon Society to join them on their journey to this special and magical place. A staff member of The Nature Conservancy of Alabama, most likely Paul Freeman, will serve as the trip leader so this is indeed a unique opportunity. Spring wildflowers will be blooming and numerous neotropical migrants will be in full song as they establish breeding territories.

Plans are to meet at 7:00 a.m. at Shades Cahaba Elementary School on US 31 in Homewood and caravan from there in as few cars as possible. Bring a sack lunch and sturdy hiking shoes. The hike is rated moderate to strenuous but is well worth the trip. For more information contact Michelle Blackwood, President of Friends of Shades Creek, at (205) 879-6866.

March 4th Field Trip Report

Frank Farrell

Nine BAS members participated in the half-day field trip to Roebuck Springs and East Lake Park. A total of 43 species were seen, including 7 female Hooded Mergansers and 3 pairs of Wood Ducks. Breeding bird activity was evident everywhere with Brown-headed Nuthatches and a Downy Woodpecker working on nest holes and a copulating WD pair. Further breeding activity was seen at East Lake, where Ty Keith located a pair of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons building their nest in a tree on the island. The trip ended at Golden Rule BBQ where we enjoyed a typical Southern meal of BBQ sandwiches, iced tea, and chocolate pie.

From the news wire:

U.S. increasing bird flu screening Scientists keeping an eye on birds arriving in Alaska from Asia

NEW YORK (AP) — The spring migration of birds from Asia to Alaska is expected to start next month, and this year it will encounter a beefed-up federal effort to look for bird flu.

The screening project, in Alaska and elsewhere, is projected to test five to six times as many birds this year alone as the government has screened since 1998.

Scientists worry that birds arriving in Alaska from Asia may bring in the H5N1 virus and pass it along to other birds, which will fly south this fall.

Scientists already had been watching for the deadly flu strain in wild birds in Alaska and North American migratory flyways. But the effort is being dramatically stepped up this year, said John Clifford, chief veterinarian for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is working with other agencies on the program.

Scientists will study live birds, others that are found dead or killed by hunters, and environmental samples that might carry the worrisome form of bird flu. While most concern about birds flying south through the United States focuses on their Pacific route in the western states, other migratory paths will be included, Clifford said.

The goal is to test 75,000 to 100,000 live or dead birds this year, said Angela Harless of the USDA. The testing, which also will include some Pacific Ocean islands, will focus on waterfowl and shorebirds.

At the same time, Clifford said, officials will continue to monitor other activities that may introduce the virus to the United States: importing and smuggling of birds.

The chief concern about the H5N1 flu in wild birds is that the virus might make its way to some of the 10 billion or so chickens produced every year in the United States. That could damage the poultry industry and pose a hazard for people who work with chickens. Virtually all bird flu cases in people reported so far are blamed on close contact with infected poultry.

Human cases are uncommon, but scientists worry that the virus may mutate into a form that can pass easily between people. That could lead to a worldwide flu epidemic.

It makes sense to focus the wild bird monitoring on Alaska, but migratory routes are so complex there's no guarantee that Alaska is where the virus will first arrive in North America, or that it will follow recognized fly-

ways from there, said Ken Rosenberg, director of conservation science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y.

Migrating birds can show up "virtually anywhere and come from virtually anywhere. That's just the nature of birds and bird migration," he said.

Rosenberg said he expects the deadly flu now wreaking havoc in Asia and parts of Europe and Africa will show up in wild birds in the United States, and wouldn't be surprised if it was in the next year. It might not appear in an outbreak that kills many birds, but rather in isolated cases, he said.

Rosenberg also said he's heard reports of people wanting to slaughter wild birds to protect against bird flu. "From a conservation perspective that would be a horrible thing to do, and it would be totally unwarranted given the situation we have today," he said.

Peter Marra of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center at the National Zoo in Washington said it's clear migratory birds have played a role in the spread of bird flu elsewhere, and that Alaska is an important place to look for it. But that's not the only way the virus could reach the United States.

"I would say movement of birds through the illegal pet trade is probably the most likely way it's going to get here," Marra said.

That's just a guess, he quickly added, but there is precedent. Taiwan, where bird smuggling is common, confirmed last October that its first case of H5N1 bird flu appeared in birds smuggled from China. A Nigerian official also has blamed illegal poultry imports for delivering the virus to that country.

Clifford agreed that smuggling birds or bird products is a possible route into the country, and said the government will boost its anti-smuggling efforts as well. Those efforts include not only inspections at the border, but also teams within the United States that survey exotic food markets, live bird markets and restaurants for signs of illegal animals.

As for legal imports, virtually all live birds that enter the United States have to go through a 30-day quarantine and be tested for bird flu and other viruses, Clifford noted. The government doesn't allow imports of birds from countries that have H5N1 in poultry flocks.

The Birmingham Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges the following contributions in memory of Robert R. Reid, Jr. to support land conservation efforts on Dauphin Island.

Bob was an avid supporter of the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. and dedicated in his work toward bird conservation efforts.

Jane Alexander
Claude Bennett & Frances Caldwell
Mr. & Mrs. Johnson Boothby
The Harry B. & Jane H. Brock Foundation
Patricia Byrne
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Cooper
Mr. & Mrs. John Grenier
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph H. Johnson, Jr.
Patricia Ann Kelly
William M. Kinnaird
Miriam J. McClung
Deveaux J. Robinson
Charlotte H. Schnittker
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Shepherd
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Stockham
Mr. & Mrs. William Bew White III
Kathryn L. Woehle
Lee L. Woehle
Mary & Terry Woodrow
Alan Zeigler

You can honor a special person with a gift to the Birmingham Audubon Society. Your gift will help BAS as we work for the conservation and greater knowledge of all wildlife, wilderness and natural resources.

OUTDOOR ALABAMA

2006 has been designated The Year of OUTDOOR ALABAMA. Take a look at the following website and find a place to discover the birds in your neck of the woods.

Visit: <http://touralabama.org/yooa/birds/>



Plan on Doing A Good Deed and Enjoying Good Company at the Audubon Sessions Sanctuary Workday

Saturday April 1, 2006 - 9:00 A. M. to noon-lunch after at Golden-Rule BBQ

The Sessions Sanctuary is underdeveloped property in Mountain Brook on Shades Creek that was donated to Birmingham Audubon as a bird sanctuary by the late Mr. & Mrs. Sessions. The BAS Sanctuary also helps protect the Cahaba River watershed.

Please join us for the workday at the Sessions Sanctuary on Saturday April 1st 9:00 A. M. Bring your tools and gloves. Plans are to meet at the end of Forest Glen Drive, near the Sanctuary.

To reach the Sanctuary, in Mountain Brook, proceed east (away from the Zoo) on Montevallo Road, at the Crestline area, turn right at the signal light on to Montrose Rd, bear right onto Old Leads Road, turn left onto Forest Glen, proceed to the end of Forest Glen and meet us at 9:00.

John Swan, 933-6469 and Ellen McLaughlin, 595- 0806.
Co-Chairs Sessions Sanctuary Property

.....
clip along dotted line

~ Membership Application ~ Birmingham Audubon Society/ National Audubon Society

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: () _____

Membership Levels:

- Introductory membership ~ \$20.00**
Includes quarterly subscription to Audubon magazine and 8 issues of *Flicker Flashes*, the chapter newsletter.
Senior (62 & older) and student (full-time) memberships available for \$15.00.
(Preferred method of payment for all new members is through the chapter, using this form).
- Regular membership/Renewals ~ \$20.00**
The National Audubon Society handles membership renewals through their Membership Data Center. Contact them at 1-800-274-4201 or write them at P.O. Box 52529, Boulder, CO 80322-2529. Submit renewals directly to NAS.

My check for \$_____ is enclosed.

Please make check payable to: National Audubon Society
Mail this form and check to: Birmingham Audubon Society
P. O. Box 314
Birmingham, AL35201

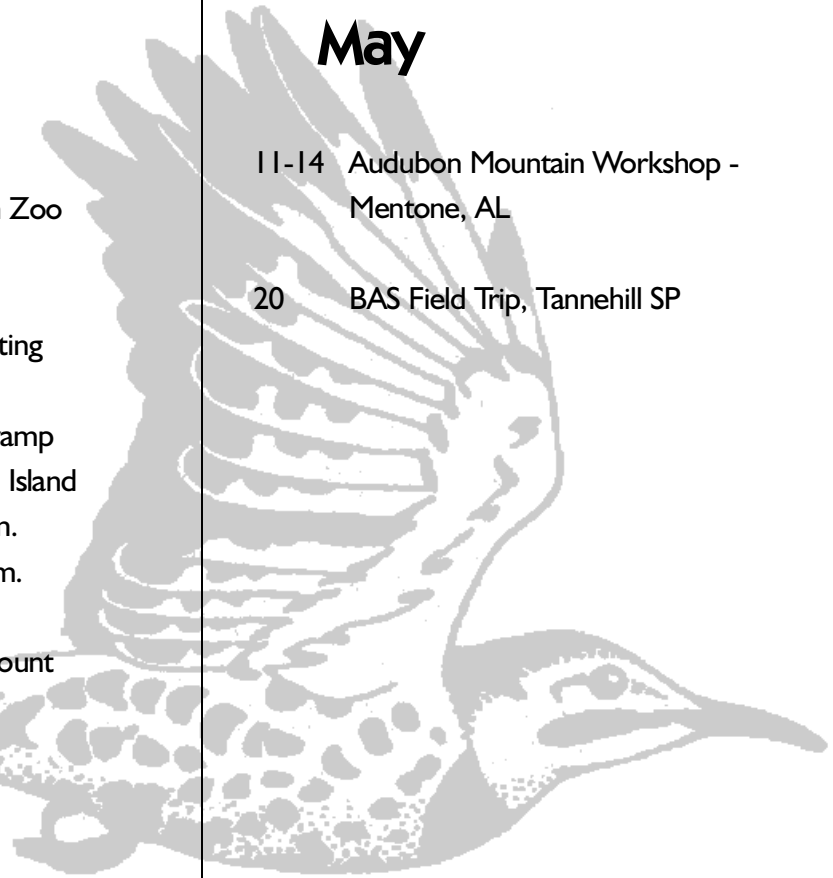
Birmingham Audubon Society * AOO 7XCH8

April

- 1 BAS Sanctuary Workday
- 8 Family Bird Walk - Birmingham Zoo
7:00 a.m.
- 10 *Flicker Flashes* articles due
- 11 Conservation Committee meeting
7:00 p.m., Homewood Library
- 15 BAS Field Trip, Sipsey River Swamp
- 21-23 AOS Spring meeting - Dauphin Island
- 27 Board Meeting, (BZA) 5:45 p.m.
General Meeting, BZA 7:00 p.m.
"Members Favorite Slides"
- 29 41st Annual BAS Spring Bird Count

May

- 11-14 Audubon Mountain Workshop -
Mentone, AL
- 20 BAS Field Trip, Tannehill SP



Birmingham Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 314
Birmingham, AL 35201

DATED MATERIAL
Please deliver by April 1st



Printed on Recycled Paper

Birmingham Audubon Society
www.birminghamaudubon.org
(205) 879-7709

Flicker Flashes
Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society  For conservation and greater knowledge of
all wildlife, wilderness and natural resources

Flicker Flashes is published eight
times a year by the Birmingham Audubon Society.
Editor: Kathryn Rowan (205) 970-0844
Asst. Editor: Greg Harber (205) 251-2133

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3794
Birmingham, AL