

# Flicker Flashes

Published by  
The Birmingham Audubon Society

For conservation and greater knowledge  
of birds, their habitat, and natural world

Audubon Teaches Nature

## **Native Plants for Wildlife: Attracting Birds to Your Garden**

Presented by **Michelle Reynolds, Guest Speaker**

**Sunday, April 12, 2015 - 2 P.M. - Alabama Wildlife Center Auditorium**

Michelle Reynolds will be our featured speaker for the April, "Audubon Teaches Nature" program, and her program will focus on a topic that I think many of you will enjoy - attracting birds and other wildlife to your garden with native plants. It also happens to be one of Michelle's areas of expertise, so we are in for a real treat!

Enjoying birds and other wildlife doesn't have to entail a trip to the local park or birding hotspot. With careful planning you can turn your backyard into a haven for wildlife both for their benefit and your viewing pleasure. As habitats change in response to a changing climate, creating a backyard habitat attractive to birds could help stem the tide of their decline.

Be sure to come early and enjoy some refreshments and conversation in the Observation Room at the Alabama Wildlife Center, then, when it is time for the program, we will proceed to the auditorium for the presentation.

Also, bring your binoculars and field guides for a bird walk after the program. We will visit a site within the park to look for spring migrants, and we may encounter some lingering winter birds, too.



Wildflower garden - Photo by Michelle Reynolds

**Next:**

**"Audubon Teaches Nature"**

**May Seminar: What's Buzzing in Your Garden?**

Sunday, May 3, 2015, 2 P.M. - Sallie Lee, Guest Speaker  
(Oak Mountain Interpretive Center)

# April 2015 - Half-Day Field Trip

## Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve

Saturday, April 4, 2015 - 7 A.M.

Please join us for this half day field trip lead by Scot Duncan at the Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, which sits on the extension of the Appalachian ridges as they pass through Jefferson County. The area was initially important to the beginnings of Birmingham's industry as sources of raw materials in the form of iron ore and limestone, two of the ingredients needed to make iron. The land was set aside in 1977, and now its 1,000 plus acres of wild land and trails serve an important role as Birmingham's preeminent urban nature preserve.

This locale has been deemed a hot spot for local migrants that come through Birmingham; two thirds of the warbler species found residence or have been recorded here in migration. Expect to see early spring migrants as well as year around residents such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, and wrens.

### MEETING PLACE:

Please meet in the parking lot of Ruffner Mountain at 7a.m.  
1214 81st Street South  
Birmingham AL 35206



Ruffner Mountain - The Crusher  
Artifact on a Ruffner Mountain trail

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Susan Barrow 205-942-8667 or 205-253-8667

Binoculars will be available

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## All Day Bird Count

# 50th Annual Spring Bird Count

Saturday, April 25, 2015

Goodness, what a winter it has been! Cold, wet wintry precipitation has been the norm of late, so it's heartening to be able to write about the April 25 Birmingham Audubon Spring Bird Count, when the weather hopefully will be more befitting of spring! Already neo-tropical migrants are making their way north and that means it is time for the 50th annual Spring Bird Count!

This is a fun count as we venture out to welcome our returning neo-tropical 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 will need as many participants as possible to adequately cover the area. Even though this is an all-day count, you may join a party for any part of the day if you only have a limited amount of time. It is essential though that you 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.** You may also participate by simply counting the birds at your feeders or calling or e-mailing your report to me. Rose-breasted grosbeaks will surely reward those who take the time to watch at home!

At the end of the day we will gather to compile our results, swap stories and share our adventures of the day. Those fortunate enough to find a real rarity should expect to provide appropriate written documentation. **Sharon Hudgins will handle compiling duties and Maureen Shaffer will host** our compilation at her home, located at 2216 Mountain Lake Terrace, Hoover AL 35226. Call Maureen if you need directions: 205-822-8728. The compilation will begin at 7 p.m. and light refreshments will be provided.

Greg Harber, For Bird Counts Committee



## April Membership Program

# Membership Appreciation Program and Pot Luck Supper

Share Your Photos or Un-narrated Slide Show

Birmingham Botanical Gardens  
Thursday, April 23, 2015 - 6:30 P.M.

Please join us for the Second Annual Membership Appreciation Program. With this program we want to honor you as we look back at the fun we have had and our many accomplishments.

Do you have any Birmingham Audubon memories, photos or objects from past illustrating our organization's rich history? Perhaps you have a photo of a group outing, a road trip, a birding trip, images from past Audubon Mountain Workshops, perhaps an old Audubon Film Series program - be creative! Any items you have to share will be added to the display of photos and artifacts the membership committee is preparing for everyone to enjoy. If you want to donate them to our archives, we will gladly accept them - if you are not ready to part with your objects, we will return them to you at the end of the evening or when convenient for you.



Bring a friend and your favorite dish to share. Birmingham Audubon will provide drinks and BBQ sandwiches.

April is also the meeting where we elect our new officers, so we will mix a little work with lots of fun.

As we did last year, we will have an un-narrated slide show during the evening. Submit your favorite slides for inclusion in the slide program.

We are accepting digital images of Birmingham Audubon programs

and activities for potential inclusion in the slide show. Please submit your electronic images for consideration to Hans Paul (cooterpl4@gmail.com) by April 15.

This will be an enjoyable fun filled evening with a little laughter, outstanding images, some good food and many pleasant memories.

## April Half Day Field Trip Vulcan Trail

Saturday, April 11, 2015 - 7 A.M. - Meet at Vulcan Park



Winter wren -  
Thinkstock by Getty Images

Please join us for a half day field trip to Birmingham Vulcan Trail. This is a mile long trail that parallels the ridge of the 1,025-foot Red Mountain. On a clear day we will have a bird's eye view of some breathtaking scenery. This is a former Louisville & Nashville Birmingham Mineral Railroad bed, so the trail is lovely, flat and paved. Expect to see spring migrants along with our regional residents.

### MEETING PLACE:

Please plan to meet in the parking lot of Vulcan Park at 7a.m.  
1701 Valley View Drive,  
Birmingham Al. 35209

**TRIP LEADERS:** Ken Wills and Matt Hunter  
Binoculars will be available.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Susan Barrow 942-8667 or 253-8667



## SoSo for the Record

Sightings February 3, 2015 through February 24, 2015

**Pine siskins** are erratic visitors to our area during the winter. But this has been a good year for them possibly due to our unusually inclement weather. They are known to mingle with the **goldfinches**. On February 2, Sharon Hudgins counted as many as 106 at one time at her bird feeders in McCalla.

### Other Sightings:

2/3 **Ruddy Duck (40); Bufflehead (15);** Walker County Public Lake (DH).

2/14 **Rusty Blackbird (8);** Audubon Tom Imhof field trip (JN,MN,reported by GH)

**Gadwall (60); Bufflehead (small flock); Hooded Merganser (a pair);** Logan Martin Lake (RC).

2/16 **Snow Goose (2);** Fultondale, Bonaparte's Gull (3); East Lake (DH).

2/19 **Lesser Scaup (40);** Limestone Park (DM).

2/20 **Field Sparrow; Hermit Thrush; Vestavia (HWV).**

2/24 **White-winged Scoter (2);** Guntersville (AH) .

### Contributors:

Ross Cohen  
Amber Hart  
Greg Harber  
Sharon Hudgins  
Donald Hulsey  
Dick Mills  
Jamie Nobles  
Mandy Nobles  
Harriett Wright



Pine siskin - Thinkstock by Getty Images



Lesser Scaup - Thinkstock by Getty Images

Please, send sightings for May/June Flicker Flashes at least five days before the April 1, deadline to Ann Miller, 520 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209 [annmiller520@aol.com](mailto:annmiller520@aol.com)

## Don't Forget to Register for Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop!

Don't miss the fun on May 7-10 at Mentone, AL for the Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop. **See page 6 of this newsletter for registration information.**

Below are photos from previous Workshops. (From top to bottom) 1. Exploring aquatic wildlife in Little River, 2. Finding shark teeth in the paleontology class, 3. Staying in a comfy rustic cabin in the woods. Other interests offered: birds, wildflowers, pottery, fish prints, lichen, amphibians and more. . . .



All Birmingham Audubon field trips are free and open to the public.

# A Bird Call

By Michelle Reynolds

Whenever I visit a place, I imagine its past. I explore, I discover and learn as much as I can of the place, and I think of the natural beauty. Who inhabited the place? What was it like before we left our mark? What alterations are we responsible for now, and what kind of shape will we leave it in for our future generations? What actions must we take to preserve the wonders the place holds? Is there something I can do? Who else might I join forces with to make this land a better place?

This kind of mindset goes with not only preservation of land, but to organizations as well. I believe in looking back at the interests and actions of the founders and members, and I hold myself accountable to live up to their expectations and successes. I believe in following a course put forth by the founders, and I strive to keep on a trajectory set by the organization.

In thinking about the history of Birmingham Audubon and the transition made early on from a bird club to a formal chapter of the National Audubon Society, and the changes we are undergoing today as we evolve from a society to a professionally run organization, I feel a sense of pride. I admire our founders. I feel a sense of honor to be in the position once held by Millard Prather, Blanche Dean, Elberta Reid, Bob Tate and others, and I feel a responsibility to the organization to live up to the confidence you had to put me in this position.

In going through Birmingham Audubon's archives, a newspaper article about the history of the Birmingham Audubon Society stands out. The Birmingham Bird Club started out small with only six members. It was the Christmas bird count that got the ball rolling. Morton Perry, Millard Prather, and Bill Caruthers were the early pioneers, birding on weekends and growing their interests in birds. They would soon be joined by three ornithologists, Tom Imhof and Dr. Samuel and Isabel Tipton, Ph.D. "A notice in the local paper announcing the December 1946 bird count caught the attention of three other birders," the newspaper story stated. "It rang a bird-call, and they moved in on Perry, Prather, and Caruthers. The combined dynamics of a half-dozen bird enthusiasts touched off the fuse for an organized bird club."

I especially like and I am impressed with the next phase. From the newspaper article - "Blanche Evans Dean, of the science department of Woodlawn High, saw a notice of the meeting of the Birmingham Bird Club. It rang another bird-call. She did not know how or why or whom it had been organized, but birds and everything else connected with the world of nature were right up her alley. So she gathered together four friends of like interests, Elizabeth Eddy, Mary Todd, Mary Hafling, Mrs. Bill Powell, and they crashed the meeting of the Bird Club and became members forthwith."

Early in 1947, the Birmingham Bird Club officially became a chapter of the National Audubon Society. By 1951, the Birmingham Audubon Society had a mission and purpose - "The Society encourages the protection and conservation of all wildlife. Among



Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop - Morning Walk  
Photo by Bob Farley

the people of this area, it especially cultivates a greater knowledge of birds because of their important contribution to the life of man."

From here, the article tells of the vigorous growth of the society's membership, participation of field trips, and the growing attendance to lectures and programs. Activities were planned by volunteers and steered by their enthusiasm and passion for birds and the natural world.

Today, we have the opportunity to put out another bird call - To engage a broader audience, get younger people involved, better utilize social media (and we might need those younger folks to help us with that), and to forge ahead as our founders did in those early days. The need for volunteers has never diminished from those early years, and volunteerism is still critical to the success of our mission. Strategic and efficient use of volunteers and efforts will be key to our future goals.

Through outreach, exploration, and conservation projects, we have the opportunities to engage and grow programs. As a member and volunteer of Birmingham Audubon, it is my job and yours to communicate to the greater community, call for participation, and broaden the society so that we may sustain the organization for many decades to come - to teach, write, speak about, and photograph the things we love. Share your knowledge, your enthusiasm, your joy for the birds, their habits and their habitats, and combine your efforts and modes of communication to connect others to the wonders of the natural world.



Tom Imhof - August 1970  
Photo from Archives



## 38TH YEAR

# Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop

Thursday, May 7 - Sunday, May 10, 2015

**The Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop offers hands-on nature-based classes in a broad range of topics.** Campers enjoy classes during the day, an evening keynote speaker, and a selection of evening outings from spider walks to night birding to the Saturday evening dance. Classes are scheduled 8:30-11:30 am and 2:30-5:30 pm, offering each camper five different class options.

**The Workshop promotes a better understanding and appreciation of the natural history and ecology of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.** A broad overview is provided through classes on topics including animal ecology, beginning and advanced bird identification, stream biology, mammals, insects, reptiles and amphibians, geology and fossils, canoeing, mountain crafts, and many more. Classes take place on the campus of Alpine Camp and around Mentone, an old Alabama resort area featuring rustic cabins and lodges, broad mountain vistas and clear streams. Little River flows for almost its entirety atop Lookout Mountain carving Little River Canyon on the way to the Coosa River Valley. Little River Canyon is the deepest canyon east of the Mississippi. Alpine Camp is situated directly on the West Fork of the Little River. Recreational opportunities in the Little River canyon area include canoeing, fishing and hiking. Miles of trails are within easy access of the camp.

**Our faculty** includes professors from regional universities and colleges, recognized experts, and Alabama artists.

**Participants**, whether beginners or seasoned naturalists, enjoy a relaxed atmosphere in small classes.

**Staff** consists of Birmingham Audubon employees and volunteers who coordinate daily activities for the workshop.

**The Young Naturalist Program is a curriculum based program for children ages 5 to 12.** The Young Naturalist courses and activities are taught and supervised by our academic adult faculty along with Birmingham Audubon's teaching naturalist staff. Kids love this program that includes lots of hands-on activities and extensive science and nature based learning.

### **Lodging and Facilities:**

There are two options for lodging during the Workshop. You may stay in the rustic dormitory style cabins at Camp Alpine or you may be a "Mountain Resident" and make your own arrangements for lodgings. If you choose to obtain lodging outside the camp, indicate that on your registration form.

**Camp Alpine lodging** is typically in a rustic cabin with a detached communal bath house. A limited number of spaces are available in the Ridge Cabins which have in cabin toilet and shower facilities. These cabins are available for an incremental

charge of \$27 per person. All cabins typically accommodate 8 to 12 individuals and are assigned in categories defined by gender and familial relationship.

**Mountain Resident Lodging** - Desoto State Park, which is less than ten minutes from Alpine Camp, offers a variety of lodging options from campground rental, to cabins to hotel rooms at the lodge. ([www.alapark.com/desotoresort/](http://www.alapark.com/desotoresort/)) Mentone has a variety of bed and breakfasts and Fort Payne also has many lodging options. As a Mountain Resident you are welcome to participate in as many or as few camp activities as you like.

**Camp Alpine Facilities** - Meals are served in a central dining hall. The Alpine Lodge, located on the bluff overlooking Little River, serves as an informal gathering place and is home to the Workshop Canteen.

No smoking is allowed in any building on campus. No pets allowed.

### **REGISTRATION:**

This year's workshop requires online registration. You register for the workshop and make all class selections on line. Class sizes are limited. Timely registration insures best class selection. To begin your registration visit:  
[www.regonline.com/birminghamaudubonmountainworkshop](http://www.regonline.com/birminghamaudubonmountainworkshop)

Birmingham Audubon member (1).....	\$275
Birmingham Audubon nonmember (2).....	\$300
Young Naturalist (includes t-shirt).....	\$250
Mountain Resident member (3).....	\$260
Mountain Resident nonmember (4).....	\$285

Registration prices will increase by \$25 after April 22, 2015  
Onsite registration will be \$350 per person

(1) Registration includes tuition, room and meals, beginning with Thursday evening meal and ending with Sunday lunch.

(2) Registration includes tuition, room and meals beginning with Thursday evening meal and ending with Sunday lunch, as well as a 1 year Birmingham Audubon membership.

(3) Registration includes tuition and meals, beginning with Thursday evening meal and ending with Sunday lunch.

(4) Registration includes tuition and meals beginning with Thursday evening meal and ending with Sunday lunch, as well as a 1 year Birmingham Audubon membership.

Birmingham Audubon members must be on our member roll. A good indicator of whether you are a member is if you get our Flicker Flashes publication. Please email registrar if you are unsure of your membership status.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Registration is fully refundable less a \$25 administrative fee through April 15. Half of the registration fee will be returned for cancellations made from April 16-22, 2015. No refunds after April 22.  
ANY QUESTIONS??? Email: [registrar@birminghamaudubon.org](mailto:registrar@birminghamaudubon.org)

# Join and Support Birmingham Audubon

Are birds, wildlife and our natural habitat of interest to you?

If so, we invite you to be a part of a community that enjoys, values and protects birds and our natural world.

Founded in 1946, the Birmingham Audubon Society is Alabama's leading non-profit organization engaging people in the enjoyment and conservation of birds, their habitats and the natural world. With your support, we involve people through recreational birding, by extending their horizons with education programs, and by engaging them in conservation actions such as planting trees, counting birds, and working with local, state, and national policy makers.

## There are many ways you can support Birmingham Audubon

Please join us and make a difference for birds and your quality of life, right here in Alabama!

### Membership

Take the first step and become a Member of Birmingham Audubon. Get connected with our *Flicker Flashes* newsletter. See birds by participating in one of our free field trips, and learn something at one of our free monthly programs.

### Make a Donation

We rely on your support and are proud to work on your behalf to restore wildlife habitat, conserve areas that are important to birds, and inspire appreciation and understanding of our natural world. Your generous donation, above and beyond the basic membership dues, is an important source of funding which allows Birmingham Audubon to facilitate our vital mission of connecting people with birds and the places they live.

### Your memberships and donations support:

- Free monthly programs on natural science topics
- Free field trips led by expert birders to great birding / cultural locations
- Opportunity to attend Annual Banquet and Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop
- Introduction to great locations to see and observe birds
- Exposure to knowledgeable birders
- Travel opportunities to regional, national and international birding locations
- Graduate student research grants
- Local and statewide conservation initiatives
- Adult and student education initiatives
- Local, state and national conservation initiatives
- Alabama Birding Trails support

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## Birmingham Audubon Society Membership Application

Join  Renew Annual Membership: \$ 20.00

Donation to support the programs & projects of Birmingham Audubon: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to:  
**Birmingham Audubon Society**

Please charge my credit card  
 Visa  MasterCard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Birmingham Audubon Society is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Your donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Please keep my donation anonymous

Yes  No

I want to receive communications electronically

Yes  No

I want to be contacted to learn about volunteer activities

Yes  No

If you are interested in joining National Audubon Society, visit: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

**Birmingham Audubon's policy is to not share or sell our mailing list. Your privacy is of the utmost importance to us.**

Birmingham Audubon Society  
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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Please check your mailing label for your membership expiration date.

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## Consider gifting a membership to Birmingham Audubon

[www.birminghamaudubon.org](http://www.birminghamaudubon.org)  
or 205-719-3678

### April 2015

- 4 Ruffner Mountain Field Trip (Half-day)
- 11 Vulcan Trail Field Trip (Half-day)
- 12 Audubon Teaches Nature, Native Plants for Wildlife
- 17-19 Alabama Ornithological Society Spring Meeting,  
Dauphin Island
- 23 Monthly Program 7 p.m. Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- 25 Birmingham Audubon Spring Bird Count

### May 2015

- 1-3 Wings over Oak Mountain Birding Festival
- 3 Audubon Teaches Nature
- 7-10 Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop
- 23 Hamilton Indian Mounds/Marion County Field Trip  
(Full Day)



Copies of *Flicker Flashes* can be viewed and downloaded from the Birmingham Audubon web site: [www.birminghamaudubon.org](http://www.birminghamaudubon.org)