

# Flicker Flashes

Published by  
The Birmingham Audubon Society

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

Announcing the 2015-2016 Season

## Audubon Teaches Nature

Co-sponsored by the Birmingham Audubon Society, Alabama Wildlife Center,  
Oak Mountain Interpretive Center and Friends of Oak Mountain

During this twenty-fifth year of Audubon Teaches Nature, we will explore and celebrate the diversity of Alabama's natural history. These seminars will provide you with the knowledge and skills to allow you to more fully enjoy your time in the field, whether birding, botanizing, hiking or biking. Audubon Teaches Nature will give you the unique opportunity to meet and learn from some of Alabama's leading naturalists - authorities who are willing to share their years of experience and special knowledge to make your outdoor experiences more enjoyable. Our programs are designed to showcase the beauty and natural history of Oak Mountain State Park and the central Alabama region. Long-time Birmingham Audubon member, Dick Mills, will present our inaugural seminar.



Hoary Bat - Walls of Jericho

### Alabama's Bats and an Introduction to The Alabama Bat Working Group

**Dick Mills, Guest Speaker**  
Sunday, October 18, 2015, 2 p.m.  
Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

Forty-seven species of bats occur in the United States, and of these 16 occur in Alabama. Many of them are insectivores, but some are also frugivores (fruit eating) and serve important roles as pollinators. All of Alabama's bats eat insects and help control mosquitoes and insects that are harmful to crops. This program will introduce you to the bats found in Alabama, their status and the work of the Alabama Bat Working Group.

### Other topics, speakers and dates in this year's series:

#### Reptiles - A Sampler

Alabama 4-H Science School and David Frings,  
Guest Speakers  
Sunday, November 22, 2015, 2 p.m.  
Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

#### Birds of Prey - Masters of the Skies

Callaway Gardens' Birds of Prey Program, Guest Speaker  
Sunday, January 24, 2016, 1 p.m. & 3 p.m.  
Alabama Wildlife Center

#### Swallow-tailed Kites - Their Incidence and Conservation Status in Alabama

Eric Soehren, Guest Speaker  
Sunday, February 28, 2016, 2 p.m.  
Alabama Wildlife Center

#### Becoming a Better Birder, Using Field Marks to Identify Birds

Greg Harber, Guest Speaker  
Sunday, March 20, 2016, 2 p.m.  
Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

#### Baby Bird Season

Scottie Jackson & the AWC Team  
Sunday, April 24, 2016, 2 p.m.  
Alabama Wildlife Center

#### Exploring Wild Alabama

Larry Davenport and Ken Wills,  
Guest Speakers  
Sunday, May 22, 2016, 2:00 p.m.  
Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

*Programs are held at the Alabama Wildlife Center at Oak Mountain State Park, and the adjacent Oak Mountain Interpretive Center. Admission to the park is \$4.00 per person, but the program itself is free.*

# Half-Day Field Trip Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve

Saturday, October 3, 2015 - 7 A.M.

One of the special natural places in Alabama is Birmingham's own Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve located mere minutes from the city center in the South East Lake neighborhood. This 1,011 acre park will be the site of Birmingham Audubon's October half-day field trip.

The preserve is many things: a wildlife sanctuary, a historic park showcasing the region's industrial and mining heritage, host to a wetland complex, a leading example of LEED Gold construction and the host of two sites on the Appalachian Highlands Birding Trail.

The second growth forests of the preserve are comprised of mixed oak-hickory forests with basswoods, pawpaw and hackberry adding to the mix. These elements attract both migrant and resident birds.

Travel Plans: Please meet in the parking lot of the preserve near the Treehouse Visitor's Center at 7 a.m.

Address: Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve  
1214 81st Street South  
Birmingham, Alabama 35206  
Phone: 205-833-8264



Historic Mining Artifacts at Ruffner Mtn. - Photo by Michelle Blackwood

GPS: 33.559635 86.699038

Websites: [www.ruffnermountain.org](http://www.ruffnermountain.org)

[Alabamabirdingtrails.com/sites/ruffner-mountain-nature-center](http://Alabamabirdingtrails.com/sites/ruffner-mountain-nature-center)

## TRIP LEADERS:

For more information, please contact trip leader:

Maureen Shaffer 205-822-8728 (home), 205-222-2662 (mobile)

# October Field Trip Tuscaloosa County / Sipsey River Swamp

October 17, 2015 - 7 A.M.

Our October field trip will be a tour of two unique habitats in West Alabama. Starting just south of Tuscaloosa, we will drive through the fields and farmlands of south Tuscaloosa County looking for various fall migrants and late summer birds, including cliff swallows. Following this late morning drive through the Fosters area, we will visit the pristine wetlands and bottomland hardwood forest of the Sipsey River Swamp.



Great egret - Thinkstock by Getty

The Sipsey is one of the last wild, free-flowing swamp streams in Alabama, and is considered one of "Alabama's Ten Natural Wonders." Wandering through west Alabama, this 92-mile long river contains thousands of acres of bottomland wetlands and swamps, which ranks it as one of the State's largest wetland regions. The vegetation, trees and wildlife are diverse and varied, ranging from bald cypress swamps to tupelo gum trees, swamp cottonwood, red oak, elm, sweetgum, poplar and beech. This distinctive and mystical habitat, the northern-most cypress/tupelo

swampland in Alabama, is used by migrating and wintering waterfowl along the river. Expect to see various egrets, herons and fall migrants including woodland and wetland warblers throughout this enchanting bottomland.

Please bring water, lunch and a full tank of gasoline. Binoculars, cameras and spotting scopes are all welcome. Birmingham Audubon will also have binoculars for anyone who needs them to borrow for the day.

## TRIP LEADER:

Matt Hunter: 205-915-8186 with Ken Wills. In case of inclement weather, contact the trip leader for last-minute information.

**MEETING PLACE:** McDonald's, 1547 Montgomery Hwy, Hoover. Please park across from the McDonald's in the parking area next to the restaurant. Tuscaloosa-area friends may meet us about 8:30-8:45 a.m. at the Chevron station, northeast corner of U.S. Highway 11 and Tuscaloosa County Road 10, just off I-20/59 at Exit 62.

**MEETING TIME:** We plan on a 7 a.m. departure, so please allow at least 15 minutes for sign-in and pre-trip instructions.

# October Membership Program

## Updates from Walter Coxe Research Award Winners

Andrew Cantrell, Alabama A&M University and Emily Seubert, University of South Alabama  
Birmingham Botanical Gardens - First Floor Conference Room  
Thursday, October 15, 2015 - 7 P.M.

For the October membership program, two graduate students will present updates on their research that was supported by Walter F. Coxe Research Awards from the 2014-2015 academic year. Andrew Cantrell, a doctoral student from Alabama A&M University, is investigating habitat use of whooping cranes at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in northern Alabama as well potential impacts of methyl mercury contamination in this population.



Whooping Crane - Thinkstock by Getty Images

Emily Seubert, a graduate student from the University of South Alabama, is studying the predator-prey interactions between young tiger sharks and migrating songbirds.

Please come early for refreshments and conversation. Fellowship and snack time begins at 6:30 p.m.

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## November 2015 - Half-Day Field Trip Avondale Park and Zion Prairie

November 7, 2015 - 7 A.M.

Avondale Park is one of the locations hosting a Birmingham Audubon Urban Bird Habitat Initiative, which is the planting of native flowers in the revived formal rose gardens to attractive wildlife to the area. The 40-acre park is also rich in local history as it was the site of Birmingham's first zoo and its famous elephant, Miss Fancy.

Our visit will start out by the rose garden and follow a hill to the pavilion known as the Villa. Open fields, brushy grasses and tree-lined paths will provide varied birding habitat along the way. We hope to see some late fall migrants and common woodland species such as nuthatches, woodpeckers and hawks.

After birding this area, we will caravan to a site near Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport known

as Zion Prairie. This former neighborhood was condemned and razed in an airport expansion project. This has left behind a lovely prairie-type habitat which has attracted many bird species that prefer open grasslands. We hope to encounter various sparrow species, meadowlarks and other species that enjoy this type of habitat.

Please meet by the rose garden at Avondale Park near 40th Street South at 7 a.m. You may contact the trip leaders regarding any questions that you have about this event.

### Trip Leaders:

Maureen Shaffer 205-822-8728 (home)  
205-222-2662 (cell) or  
Susan Barrow 205-942-8667



## Citizen Science Needed at Avondale Park, Rose and Habitat Garden

I would like to invite anyone who is interested in participating in a bird survey program at the Avondale Park Rose & Habitat Garden. This is the site of one of Birmingham Audubon's Urban Bird Habitat Initiatives:  
[birminghamaudubon.org/conservation/urban-bird-habitat-initiative/](http://birminghamaudubon.org/conservation/urban-bird-habitat-initiative/)

The protocol was developed with the help of Scot Duncan. The survey time is short, and can be done any time during the daylight hours. The data will be important in monitoring the conservation impact of this Urban Bird Habitat site. If you are interested, please email [andycoleman@birminghamaudubon.org](mailto:andycoleman@birminghamaudubon.org).



## SoSo for the Record

Sightings August 22 through August 31, 2015

A family of red-shouldered hawks was a special event in a Vestavia Hills neighborhood for several weeks. They were hosted by Harriett Wright. Many of her birding friends have enjoyed watching the devoted parents care for their two youngsters. Thanks to the generous hostess for sharing this memorable experience.

### Other Sightings:

- 8/22 **Golden-winged Warbler**; Great surprise! Ruffner Mountain (SD).
- 8/23 **Common Nighthawk, (60+)**; UAB's Jefferson Tower (GH).
- 8/29 **Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Warblers - Blue-winged; Northern Parula; Chestnut-sided; Kentucky**; Ruffner Mountain (SD,SH) **Canada** (seen earlier SD).
- 8/30 **Warblers - Prairie; Cerulean (2); Black-and-white; American Redstart; Ovenbird**; Ruffner Mountain (SD).

### Contributors:

Greg Harber  
 Scot Duncan  
 Stan Hamilton  
 Harriett Wright

Please, send sightings for November/December Flicker Flashes at least five days before the October 1, deadline to Ann Miller, 520 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209  
 annmiller520@aol.com



Red shouldered hawk -  
 Thinkstock by Getty Images



Ovenbird - Thinkstock by Getty Images

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

## Birds and Brews

Sunday, October 25, 2015

2 P.M.

**Avondale Park**

509 40th St. S, 35222

Birmingham's Avondale Park provides a wonderful example of the rich birdlife which may be found in an urban park. Join Birmingham Audubon for a leisurely stroll around the park and its variety of habitats while we look for resident and migratory birds. Learn which birds can logically be found in which habitat.

This event will provide information regarding Birmingham Audubon's Avondale Park Project which in cooperation with a variety of community groups will introduce numerous native plants to the gardens around the pavilion. When completed this garden will demonstrate how a planting of native plants can be both beautiful to humans and attractive to wildlife. Following our walk and garden talk, we will visit the Avondale Brewery and / or Post Office Pies for refreshments and a snack.

### MEETING PLACE:

We will meet at the old rose garden pavilion behind the library for a fun and educational afternoon. We will have binoculars to loan to those who need them.

### Location:

5th Avenue South and 40th Street South

### TRIP LEADER:

For more info please e-mail: Hans Paul  
 cooterpl4@gmail.com



# Birmingham Audubon Staff and Volunteers Monitoring Bird Mortality Downtown

It is well known that collisions with buildings can be a significant source of bird mortality. In the September/October 2015 issue of Audubon magazine, the cover story details how a Minnesota-based photographer is using bird carcasses that were collected in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area to recreate the moment of impact. These birds were collected as part of Audubon Minnesota's program Project BirdSafe, which is a partnership with the state wildlife agency and private organizations, including local Audubon chapters. In addition to documenting bird collisions along established urban routes, this program aims to engage the public about how to make buildings more "bird-friendly."



Birmingham Audubon started to collect the same type of data in spring 2015 to assess the extent of this threat in the Birmingham area. Program director Andy Coleman surveyed a route amongst the high rises on the north side of downtown Birmingham. Birmingham Audubon member, Greg Harber, monitored buildings on the UAB campus. Few mortalities were documented, but amongst the tallied were an indigo bunting, a wood thrush, and a worm-eating warbler (pictured). The fall survey is currently underway, and Josiah Wooten, a senior UAB undergraduate majoring in biology, is surveying selected downtown buildings.

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## Education Committee Seeks Volunteers

If you like to help children learn about wildlife, then your help is needed as Birmingham Audubon meets busloads of school children to take them on bird walks at various public parks in the metro area. Fall is the perfect time to sign up as an education volunteer.

Volunteers guide small groups of children as they learn to use binoculars and spot birds in the wild. This hands-on atmosphere allows

us to foster an appreciation of birds, conservation of their habitats and nature in these bright young minds.

If there are occasions when you can help, please email our teaching naturalist, Helena Uber-Wamble at:

huberwamble@birminghamaudubon.org  
or call 205-719-3678 to volunteer.



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## Birmingham Audubon Fall Bird Count

The Fall Bird Count was a success on September 26th. Thank you to all that participated in the count. Greg Harber is compiling the results and Elberta Reid hosted the compilation at her house. Thank you both for tracking the data for the 51st Birmingham Fall Bird Count. All party leaders should have provided someone from their party to present their party's list and count details.

Greg Harber - for the Bird Counts Committee

### Other count dates of interest :

#### **Birmingham Christmas Bird Count**

Monday, December 28, 2015

Compiler: David George - Compilation host: TBA

#### **Spring Bird Count**

Saturday, April 30, 2016

Compiler: Sharon Hudgins - Compilation host: TBA

# Birmingham Audubon Society

## Calendar of Events

### December 2015 - February 2016

December				
3	Winter Banquet	TBA		Cissy Bennett
19	Wheeler NWR Christmas Bird Count	Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge		Greg Harber
26	Guntersville Christmas Bird Count			Greg Harber
28	Annual Birmingham Audubon Christmas Bird Count			Greg Harber
January				
1-3	Gulf Shores Christmas Bird Count			Greg Harber
2	Half Day East Lake Park/Roebuck Springs Field Trip			Keith Hunter
10	Winter Audubon Coastal Bird Survey	Until February 20		
16	Full-day Guntersville and Environs Field Trip (NABT)			TBD, Linda Reynolds
18	Hands On Birmingham Day of Service	Locations still being determined		
18	Beginner's Bird Walk	Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge	8 AM-3PM	Helena Uber-Wamble
21	Membership Program,AL Coastal Bird Stewardship Program	Birmingham Botanical Gardens	7PM	Suzanne Langley
22-24	Winter AOS Lakepoint State Park	Eufaula		
24	Audubon Teaches Nature	Oak Mountain State Park	1PM & 3PM	Greg Harber
25	Birds and Warm Beverages		2-4 PM	Hans Paul
30	The Salamander Festival	Homewood Sr. Center	2-5:30PM	Helena Uber-Wamble
February				
6	Half-day Logan Martin Dam field Trip (AHBT)			Miller & Shaffer
12-15	Great American Back Yard Bird Count Event	TBA		Helena Uber-Wamble
14	Great American Back Yard Bird Count Event	Birmingham Zoo	8AM-2PM	Helena Uber-Wamble
18	Membership Program, Stop-over Biology of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds	Birmingham Botanical Gardens	7AM	Suzanne Langley
20	Full-day Shoal Creek Field Trip	Talladega NF	7 PM	Greg Harber
28	Audubon Teaches Nature	Oak Mountain State Park	2PM	Greg Harber

## Birmingham Audubon 69th Annual Banquet

### December 3, 2015

Walker Golder (photo at right), Audubon North Carolina Deputy Director and Director of Coasts and Marshes, is the Diane and Tram Sessions Speaker at Birmingham Audubon's 69th Annual Banquet December 3. Look for additional information in the November/December issue of Flicker Flashes or visit [www.birminghamaudubon.org](http://www.birminghamaudubon.org)



**September Membership Meeting Update:** Team Moa pulled ahead of Team Albatross in the first Bird Trivia Program September 17 at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Program Director Andy Coleman served as host sharing trivia questions including those shared by National Audubon staff via audio and video clips including: Chris Canfield, VP for Gulf Coast and Mississippi Flyway; David Ringer, Communications Director; Lynn Tennefoss, VP for Chapter Services; Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation for Gulf Coast and Mississippi Flyway; and Connie Sanchez, Director, Important Bird Areas. Great fun and door prizes enjoyed by both teams.

# 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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Andrew T. Coleman, Ph.D., Program Director

Helena Uber-Wamble, Teaching Naturalist

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Web Site: [www.birminghamaudubon.org](http://www.birminghamaudubon.org)

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## Consider gifting a membership to Birmingham Audubon

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

### October 2015

- 1-4 Alabama Coastal Birdfest, 5 Rivers Delta Center
- 3 Half-day Ruffner Mountain, Ruffner Mtn. Dr.
- 11 AOS Fall Meeting, Dauphin island
- 12 Beginner Bird Walk - Avondale Park
- 15 Membership Program, Walter Coxe Award Research
- 17 Full Day Field Trip, Tuscaloosa County/Sipsey Swamp
- 18 Audubon Teaches Nature, Oak Mountain St. Park
- 25 Birds & Brews, Avondale Brewery
- 27 Dedication of Sessions Plaque, Audubon Sessions Sanctuary
- Oct. Alabama Audubon Coastal Bird Survey  
(Through October 30)

### November 2015

- 7 Half-day Avondale Park, Zion Prairie Dr.
- 11 Beginner Bird Walk - Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- 19 Membership Program, Birds & Bears of the Arctic
- 21 Full-Day Wheeler NWR Field Trip (NABT)
- 22 Audubon Teaches Nature, Oak Mountain St. Park



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