

Flicker Flashes

Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society

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



Aububon Teaches Nature Swallow-tailed Kites, Their Incidence and Conservation Status in Alabama

Eric Soehren, Guest Speaker
Sunday, February 28, 2016, 2 P.M.
Alabama Wildlife Center



Swallow-tailed Kites-
Thinkstock by Getty Images

Swallow-tailed kites are among the most striking of all birds, and their graceful flight is a sight to behold. Although they breed in southern swamps and riparian areas, they undergo a post-breeding dispersal that takes them well north of their breeding range. During this program, Eric will discuss the status of the swallow-tailed kite in Alabama and the results of a 2009-2011 survey of roost sites in the state. Regular attendees on our summer trips will especially enjoy this program.

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 \$5.00 per person, but the program itself is free.

Come early to enjoy refreshments at the Alabama Wildlife Center and the birds at the feeders. When it is time for the program, we will proceed to the auditorium.

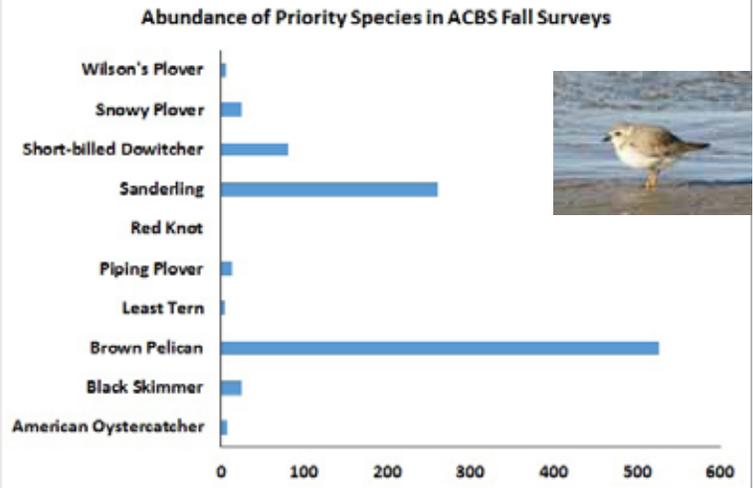
Next month's program:

Becoming a Better Birder - Using Field Marks to Identify Birds

Greb Harber, Guest Speaker
Sunday, March 20, 2016, 2 P.M. - Oak Mountain Interpretive Center

Review of the 2015 Fall Alabama Coastal Survey Period

We had another successful period of surveying resident and migrating species along the Alabama Gulf Coast during the fall season of 2015. Eleven volunteers from Mobile Bay Audubon, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and US Fish and Wildlife Service spent over 50 hours documenting all bird species at 6 of the 12 established transects. Overall, 103 species were observed. The three top documented species were laughing gulls, brown pelicans, and royal terns. The associated graph shows the number of observed individuals for each of the 10 priority species.



Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop is Coming!

Thursday, May 5 - Sunday, May 8, 2016
See page 6 for additional information.

February Half-day Field Trip

Logan Martin Dam

Saturday, February 6, 2016 - 7 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Logan Martin Dam on the Coosa River is a magnet for birds of many species as the shoals below the dam offer first-rate fishing for waders, gulls, ducks, cormorants, and most notably, bald eagles. This half-day trip will take us to an Alabama Power Company observation area overlooking the water just below the dam. Some time will be spent here, and then we will take a stroll along a wooded trail that follows the river, looking for some of our winter land birds such as hermit thrush, winter wren, and yellow-rumped warbler. Later in the morning, we will cross the dam to the picnic area overlooking the deep water above the dam. Here we will look for divers such as common loons and red-breasted mergansers, which are occasionally seen here in winter. Meanwhile, we will continue to scan the skies for bald eagles, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks.

Meeting Place: Eastwood McDonalds, 1569 Montclair Road, at 7 a.m. We'll take I-20 east to the first Leeds exit (Exit 140), and then take U.S. Highway 78 East to a right turn on Alabama Highway 25 South at the old wooden railroad trestle in Leeds. We will stay on this road for roughly 18 miles through very scenic country as we pass through Sterrett and the small



Bald Eagle - Thinkstock by Getty Images

community of Calcis. Our path will next take a left fork onto County Road 60, which will cross U.S. Highway 231 and lead to the entrance of the lower dam parking lot on the right.

Please bring layered outerwear, snacks and beverages, and a picnic lunch. Scopes and cameras are welcome. Birmingham Audubon will have binoculars to borrow for those that may need them.

Trip Leaders: Anne Miller - 205-902-1389
and Susan Barrow - 205-253-8667

February All-day Field Trip

Coleman Lake - Talladega National Forest Shoal Creek District

Saturday, February 20, 2016 - 7 A.M.

Red-cockaded woodpeckers and red crossbills are among the two most uncommon species in Alabama, but we hope to see both species on our day-long field trip to Coleman Lake and the nearby Pinhoti Trail in the Talladega National Forest. Fox and Bachman's sparrows may also be found here with some regularity, and golden eagles have been seen on this trip in past years.

Following a picnic lunch in the field, we can continue birding at scenic Pine Glen Campground just south of Coleman Lake in the national forest. Shoal Creek flows through the campground, and we can expect to find typical winter woodland songbirds while walking the easy trails here.

Travel plans: Depart at 7 a.m. from the Eastwood McDonald's, 1569 Montclair Road, 35210, and caravan east on I-20 to the Hardee's in Heflin, Alabama at exit 199. We expect to arrive at approximately 8:30 a.m., if you wish to meet us here. To reach Coleman Lake and the Pinhoti Trailhead, follow U.S. Highway 78 east for 8.5 miles to Edwardsville. Turn left at the sign for

Coleman Lake on County Rd 61 in Edwardsville and follow this road for approximately 7.5 miles. Turn right at the sign for Coleman Lake on County Road 532, then right onto County Road 500 in approximately 0.7 mile. The entrance to Coleman Lake Recreation Area is about 1.5 miles ahead on the right.

Remember to bring your picnic lunch and plenty of fluids for a day in the field, and be sure to dress in layers to stay warm.

Trip leader: Greg Harber, 205-251-2133 (home),
or 205-807-8055 (cell; day of trip only, please)
or gharber@mindspring.com
GPS: 33.7817328 -85.557492



Red crossbill -
Thinkstock by Getty Images

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



February Membership Program A Special Screening of “America’s Amazon”

Documentary on Alabama’s Mobile-Tensaw Delta
Written and Co-produced by Ben Raines

Birmingham Botanical Gardens - First Floor Adventure Classroom
Thursday, February 18, 2016 - 7 P.M.

Our February membership program will feature a screening of the documentary feature on Alabama’s Mobile-Tensaw Delta, “America’s Amazon.” This special habitat is home to amazing bio-diversity, and it is mere hours away from the Birmingham metro area. Please visit the film’s website for additional information: <http://americasamazon.net/>.

Following the screening, the writer and co-producer of the film, Ben Raines, will be available for questions.

Because Birmingham Botanical Gardens’ facilities are under renovation, please check birminghamaudubon.org for any changes in program location.

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



The 80th Birmingham Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Results Recorded on Monday, December 28, 2015

Inclement weather in the form of locally heavy rain showers and gusty wind was the story of the day as seven parties and one feeder watcher participated in the 80th edition of Birmingham Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count. Thankfully, the temperature range for the day remained in the moderate range between 54 to 72 degrees.

The group effort resulted in 53.5 hours (.5 owling) of observation over 328.5 miles. Our species total was 73, which is good considering the weather and fielding fewer parties than usual.

Thanks to Dick Mills for serving as compilation host.

Participants: Christina Hare, John Imhof, Jeremy Bearden, Hans Paul, Ken Marion, Andy Coleman, Matt Hunter, Marj Young, Meegan Dale, Christine Underwood, Rick Kittinger, Ranny Kittinger, Ron Kittinger, Anne Miller, Richard Mills, Dee Gertler, Lydia Johnson, Sharon Hudgins, Kristie Mazzoni, Marjorie Walz, David George, compiler.

Canada Goose	221	Red-headed Woodpecker	4	Mockingbird	56
Wood Duck	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	26	Brown Thrasher	9
Mallard	31	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	9	European Starling	1692
Ring-necked Duck	29	Downy Woodpecker	16	Cedar Waxwing	635
Lesser Scaup	1	Hairy Woodpecker	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	64
Bufflehead	2	Northern Flicker	45	Pine Warbler	3
Hooded Merganser	6	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Eastern Towhee	54
Pied-billed Grebe	26	American Kestrel	3	Chipping Sparrow	32
Double-crested Cormorant	1	Eastern Phoebe	18	Field Sparrow	20
Great Blue Heron	18	Blue-headed Vireo	1	Song Sparrow	139
Black-crowned N Heron	7	Blue Jay	63	Swamp Sparrow	37
Turkey Vulture	7	American Crow	139	White-throated Sparrow	92
Bald Eagle	1	Fish Crow	CW	Vesper Sparrow	1
Osprey	CW	Tree Swallow	1	Dark-eyed Junco	85
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Carolina Chickadee	44	Northern Cardinal	152
Cooper’s Hawk	8	Tufted Titmouse	27	Red-winged Blackbird	849
Red Shouldered Hawk	10	White-breasted Nuthatch	6	Brewer’s Blackbird	5
Red-tailed Hawk	12	Brown-headed Nuthatch	8	Rusty Blackbird	32
American Coot	4	Brown Creeper	1	Common Grackle	3094
Killdeer	5	House Wren	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	17
Rock Pigeon	302	Carolina Wren	45	Un-identified blackbirds	2500
Mourning Dove	161	Golden-crowned Kinglet	6	Purple Finch	7
Great Horned Owl	CW	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	34	House Finch	69
Barred Owl	1	Eastern Bluebird	52	Pine Siskin	CW
Rufous Hummingbird	1	Hermit Thrush	3	American Goldfinch	98
Belted Kingfisher	12	American Robin	1800	House Sparrow	60



SoSo for the Record

Check next month for our bird sightings.

There will be no So-So for the Record column this month due to circumstances beyond our control. We hope to see the column return in the next issue. Thank you.

Here are some birds to be looking for in the month of February: fox sparrows, white-crowned sparrows, white-throated sparrows, kinglets, sandhill-cranes, whooping cranes and siskins.



Fox sparrow -
Thinkstock by Getty Images



White-crowned sparrow -
Thinkstock by Getty Images



White-throated sparrow -
Thinkstock by Getty Images

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

Request for Raptor Nests Locations for Research Purposes

Andy Coleman, Birmingham Audubon's program director, is interested in surveying areas around raptor nests for turtle remains. So, he is requesting the locations of raptor nests from anywhere in Alabama, particularly in the Birmingham metro area.

Please contact him at andycoleman@birninghamaudubon.org with locality data of nests that can be legally accessed. No nests will be disturbed; he is only interested in surveying the ground under nests for discarded remains. Thank you.



Results from the Fall 2015 Bird Mortality Surveys

Josiah Wooten, a senior biology major at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, performed surveys of downtown buildings to monitor bird mortality resulting from collisions. Greg Harber and Charles Ball also contributed their observations. A total of 15 mortalities were documented and nine of these were recorded as window collisions. Included species were ovenbird, common yellowthroat, and gray catbird. The other six mortalities were deemed killed by predators and included yellow-billed cuckoo and eastern phoebe.

We will continue these surveys in 2016 to better understand the true impact (no pun intended) of window collisions to resident and migrating species. We will also expand our survey areas to include additional buildings at UAB with the help of other UAB students.

Tom Imhof Bird Walk at the Birmingham Zoo

Saturday, February 13, 2016 - 10 a.m.

How many birds can you count? Contribute to the Great Backyard Bird Count by attending the Tom Imhof Bird Walk at the Birmingham Zoo on Saturday, February 13, 2016.

Birmingham Audubon and The Birmingham Zoo are hosting a two-hour guided birding trip through the zoo. The walk begins at the Junior League of Birmingham – Hugh Kaul Children's Zoo gate and continues into the natural areas of Alabama Wilds. Bird lovers of all ages are invited to bring their binoculars, bird field guides and cameras for an experience like no other!

The Birmingham Zoo is located at 2630 Cahaba Road Birmingham, Alabama 35223.

Gifts in Memory

Thank you to donors who have made gifts to Birmingham Audubon in memory of late members, leaders and friends. Gifts to remember or honor individuals can be made online at www.birminghamaudubon.org or by forwarding to Birmingham Audubon, Attn: Suzanne Langley, 3720 4th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35222.

Maureen Shaffer Memorial Gifts

Liz Rozzelle
Kathy Freeland
Ellen McLaughlin

Why It Matters

By Suzanne Langley, Executive Director, Birmingham Audubon

Before joining Birmingham Audubon three and a half years ago, I completed what I refer to as an extended education in what matters.

My days were spent, for five years, watching and learning 42 acres of half prairie and half mixed hardwood/pine forest in the north Mississippi hill country. My property was largely isolated from neighbors, but surrounded by about 10,000 acres of the same habitat mix. This acreage drained into the neighboring valley where the headwaters of the Coldwater River are located.

While I thought I was taking a break from my career and consulting, I was really being prepared to learn the beauty of prairie after fire management and the plant, bird and other wildlife that benefit and thrive there. In the first year of working the management plan shaped by the Strawberry Plains Audubon ecologist and Fish and Wildlife Service biologists, I observed daily the connection between eleven species of native grasses and grassland bird species. In year one, I could stand on the screened porch hearing an occasional whippoorwill, chuck-will-widow and woodcock. My last summer there before moving to Birmingham, I had to close the windows at night because the whippoorwill had responded so well to habitat management that they were very loudly flying from prairie patch to prairie patch surrounding the small footprint of my home.

The education in what matters for me was that habitat is essential to the abundance and diversity of not just birds, but of all wildlife, plants, biophilia. This is what composes the ecological quality of our life as a species. Habitat is also important to the health benefits we enjoy from hiking, hunting, fishing, and birding.

It's important that we all telescope out to the birds-eye view and consider the large habitats we set aside and protect in our communities and state, and then focus in on our own back yards for how we can provide sections of habitat that also matter. We are fortunate that Alabama has a program like Forever Wild to ensure our children and grandchildren are able to enjoy and benefit from habitat. We're also fortunate to have donors and the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham that invest in programs like Birmingham Audubon's Urban Bird Habitat Initiative.

So now you know where and when it happened. Those five years spent learning the connection between my investment in nurturing a productive landscape and



the species that became more diverse and more abundant are when I became a habitat girl.

My small one-acre plus yard in Birmingham is now the habitat I study. I'm fortunate to live in a community that benefits from older tree canopy and the urban habitat provided through Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve. I'm fortunate that my neighbors join me in my enthusiasm for the birds that use the small habitat garden that wraps around my kitchen. In a yard where I can hear sounds of the interstate and the nearby airport, I also hear red-headed woodpeckers and barred owls and see palm warblers, indigo buntings and cardinals.

I hope you'll share your love and appreciation for habitat with your family, friends, colleagues and elected officials. Contribute to critical habitat in your own backyard. Most importantly tell the story of why it matters.





Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop

Thursday, May 5 - Sunday, May 8, 2016
Alpine Camp, Mentone, Alabama

NEW THIS YEAR! A one day participation rate of \$175!

Join Birmingham Audubon in exploring the natural history and ecology of the southern Appalachian Mountains at the 39th Annual Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop on May 5 through 8 at Alpine Camp.

A broad overview of the natural sciences and regional culture 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, around Mentone, an old Alabama resort area, and on the waters of the Little River.

The rich tradition of our nature-based workshop was inspired by Blanche Dean's Nature Workshops, which began in the 1950s exploring a blend of local fauna, flora and geography of Alabama. In 1984, the late Dan Holliman of Birmingham Southern developed a broad curriculum for the workshop he described as an activity that "has attracted naturalists who are intrigued by the concept of 'outdoor' education."

We invite you to look over the schedule and the faculty/course descriptions to get a better understanding of why the Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop has attracted nature lovers for generations. There are separate programs for adults and Young Naturalists. You will find the curriculum and registration information at this link (available March 1, 2016): www.regonline.com/birminghamaudubonmountainworkshop

This year we will be offering a one day participation rate of \$175. Come stick your toe in the Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop water. At this price, you can sample a Friday or Saturday at camp. Try this one-day experience by taking classes, eating camp meals, and enjoying the scenic beauty for a special price.

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

The 2016 Birmingham Audubon Mountain Workshop requires online registration. You register for the workshop and make all class selections on line. Class sizes are limited. Timely registration ensures best class selection.

Birmingham Audubon member (1).....	\$290
Birmingham Audubon nonmember (1).....	\$315
Young Naturalist (includes t-shirt).....	\$265
Mountain Resident member (2).....	\$275
Mountain Resident nonmember (2).....	\$300
One Day Participation (3)	\$175

Registration prices will increase by \$25 after April 22, 2016
Onsite registration will be \$370 per person

- (1) Registration includes tuition, room and meals, beginning with Thursday evening meal and ending with Sunday lunch.
- (2) Registration includes tuition and meals beginning with Thursday evening meal and ending with Sunday lunch.
- (3) Registration includes one day (either Friday or Saturday) of camp activities (classes and evening activities) and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner).

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 the 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 between April 16-22, 2016. No refunds after April 22.



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

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

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

Office Address and Mailing Address:

Birmingham Audubon Society
3720 Fourth Avenue S, Second Floor
Birmingham, AL 35222
Phone: 205-719-3678



Suzanne Langley, Executive Director
Andrew T. Coleman, Ph.D., Program Director

Please check your mailing label for your membership expiration date.

Email: basoffice@birminghamaudubon.org

Web Site: www.birminghamaudubon.org

Join us on social media:

Facebook: Birmingham Audubon

Instagram: @bhamaudubon

Twitter: @bhamaudubon

PRINTED ON
RECYCLED PAPER
NO BLEACH USED

Flicker Flashes

Published by
The Birmingham Audubon Society

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

Flicker Flashes is published eight times a year by
the Birmingham Audubon Society

Editor: Ty Keith 205-602-8037

Graphic Design: Michelle Blackwood

Consider gifting a membership to Birmingham Audubon

www.birminghamaudubon.org
or 205-719-3678

February 2016

March 2016

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 6 | Logan Martin Dam - Half-day field trip
(See page 2) | 5 | Limestone Park/Ebenezer Swamp Field Trip (Half Day) |
| 13 | Tom Imhof - Bird Walk at the Birmingham Zoo
(See page 4) | 17 | Membership Program |
| 18 | Membership Program - A Special Screening of
"America's Amazon" (See page 3) | 19 | Perry Lakes Park Field Trip (Full Day) |
| 20 | Coleman Lake - Talladega National Forest,
Shoal Creek District (See page 2) | 20 | Audubon Teaches Nature, Becoming a Better Birder -
Using Field Marks to Identify Birds |
| 28 | Audubon Teaches Nature, Swallow-tailed Kites
(See page 1) | 26 | Birds and BBQ |
| | | 26 | Beginner's Bird Walk |



Copies of *Flicker Flashes* can be viewed and downloaded from the Birmingham Audubon web site: www.birminghamaudubon.org