



Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society Since 1971

Forever Wild Vote November 6

By Bee Frederick, Alabamians for Forever Wild

The Mobile Bay Audubon Society is proud to support the reauthorization of the Forever Wild Land Trust on the November 6th ballot. As part of a broad-based and bipartisan coalition of almost 200 environmental groups, business entities, outdoor recreation groups, and others, we are jointly expressing favor of extending Forever Wild as-is for twenty years.

Established in 1992 by a Constitutional Amendment, the Forever Wild Land Trust is a program that works to protect Alabama's most beautiful and environmentally sensitive lands and waters – all without tax dollars. To date, over 227,000 acres of land have been protected and serve as recreation areas, nature preserves, state parks, and Wildlife Management Areas.

Forever Wild greatly expands the available and accessible areas for public recreation in Alabama. The program is an economic engine that directly contributes to the local economy throughout the state by promoting birding, photography, canoeing, camping, hiking, biking, hunting and fishing, and much more. Additionally, Alabama ranks 5th in the country in total biodiversity, and Forever Wild tracts throughout the state support rare plant and animal species, habitat, and habitat restoration.

Alabama lags behind every neighboring state in percentage of public

lands. Even if Forever Wild were to be extended for another twenty years, buying land at the same rate, Alabama would still rank last among Southeastern states. There is much progress to be made in terms of protecting Alabama's unique outdoor heritage and increasing public accessibility to these areas.

The numerous benefits of Forever Wild are of no cost to the taxpayer, as the program is funded through a small portion of the interest earned by royalties from offshore natural gas reserves – not from taxes. Essentially, we are preserving a variety of natural resources throughout Alabama with funds secured from a depleting natural resource.

The Mobile Bay Audubon Society is proud to work with various entities to promote awareness, understanding, enjoyment, and science-based stewardship of our environment. Our mission is to promote the conservation of Earth's biological diversity by encouraging an appreciation of birds and other wildlife, along with an understanding of the ecological requirements necessary for their survival.

The Forever Wild Land Trust directly supports our mission. As such, we encourage everyone to **vote yes on November 6th** to ensure that Alabama's Forever Wild Land program continues to promote the enjoyment of the great outdoors and protect Alabama's special places, unique plants and animals.

Third Annual Trip

Atchafalaya Basin, Louisiana

By Eleanor Livadaus

Our third annual birding trip this year took us to the Atchafalaya, the largest river basin in the United States, and one of the best birding spots in the northern hemisphere. Every year thousands of migratory waterfowl winter in the swamps and lakes of the Basin.

We left early on Friday morning, and arrived in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana in time for our 5pm boat excursion. Beginning at McGee's Landing, we experienced the shallow basin up close. The scenery was spectacular, with moss draped cypress and other trees reflected in the still water. Our guide took us into the overgrown bottomlands in search of wildlife. We saw Great and Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons as well as the ever present alligators. Afterwards we were treated to a delicious dinner in the Restaurant. Crawfish was the main attraction and most of us tried them in one of the many ways they were prepared.

We left early on Saturday morning for Lake Martin. Another boat trip there brought us even closer to the busy nesting grounds of the Egrets, Herons, Spoonbills and Anhingas. The beautiful day was accentuated by a kaleidoscope of blues, pinks, and blacks from the

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birds' feathers. We also saw Wood ducks and Black-Bellied Whistling ducks. We drove right up to a Wood Duck nest with more than a dozen eggs in it. Our guide, Bryan, knew everything about Lake Martin and shared his knowledge and deep appreciation of it with us. This was a great tour. Lunch at Café des Amis in Breaux Bridge was next on the agenda. The Crawfish Pies, the Crawfish Etouffee over Crawfish Cornbread, and the Coconut pie made it some of the best Cajun food most of us had ever tasted. Then we drove through the beautifully landscaped Jungle Gardens on our way to Avery Island, where we visited the famous Snowy Egret rookery. Millions of Egrets, Herons, Spoonbills and others now make their home there. The Snowy Egrets were on the brink of extinction in 1892, until Mr. McIlhenry started his efforts to save them from the Plume trade. Sunday we stopped at Whiskey Bay in the Sherburne Wildlife Management area on our way home. We had heard that many warblers were being seen in this area, but as it sometimes happens, they just were not there for us. Just before we were about to call it a day we ran into a member of Baton Rouge Audubon who showed us where to look for the birds. Then we saw Prothonotary, Kentucky, and Hooded Warblers, Common Yellow-throats, Indigo and Painted Buntings, a Summer Tanager and some of the usual kids on the block. All in all, we had a great trip and maybe we will do it again next year.

Alabama Coastal BirdFest and You

By D. Fran Morley

Hard to believe, but it's been nine years since the first Alabama Coastal BirdFest in 2004. In that time, BirdFest has welcomed thousands of birders and (and millions of migratory birds!) to our beautiful Alabama Gulf Coast. There have been visitors from more than 20 states and Canada, and some of those far-distant birders have returned for a

second, third, or fourth visit. We must be doing something right.

Registration for this year's BirdFest, Oct. 6-8, 2012, is well underway. There are repeat trips to favorite birding sites, such as Bayou La Batre, Dauphin Island, and Fort Morgan; always popular boat trips on Weeks Bay, into the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, and onboard the research vessel from Dauphin Island Sea Lab. There are kayak trips in the Delta; and—as a bonus to those who register online—additional kayak and boat trips in the Delta that you will only see online, you won't read about them the print brochure. Have you registered yet? You can do so at www.AlabamaCoastalBirdFest.com. Registration closes this year at 4pm on Friday, Sept. 28.

Both evening events will be held in Delta Hall at 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center. Wednesday night's orientation and reception will include a light meal and a new presentation of bird, wildlife, and nature photos, featuring the work of this year's poster photographer, Jeff Johnston, and other area photographers. The Friday night dinner features a talk by popular BirdFest guide Roger Clay about the great diversity of birding opportunities in our area. Don't miss it!

As BirdFest looks towards the future, the need to bring in new people to help is vital. If you would like more information about how you can help in any of the following areas, contact BirdFest coordinator Fran Morley at AlabamaCoastalBirdFest@gmail.com or call 928-0987

Help Promote

Help put out BirdFest signs on the causeway, to help people find the turn into 5 Rivers, or around Fairhope to help people find Saturday's Expo. These jobs need to be done a day or two in advance of the event.

Help Guide or Assist on a Trip

If you've been birding our area for a few years, you probably have enough knowledge to assist on a birding trip. Trip assistants help the guides make sure

everyone is on the bus and help hand out drinks and lunches.

Help with Hospitality

BirdFest provides water and soft drinks on our trips. Typically we need about 200 soft drinks and 300 bottles of water. If you can pick up a few cases of either and bring them to 5 Rivers in advance, that would be a great help!

Help with the Silent Auction

Every year, Eleanor Livaudais has coordinated the silent auction. This year, we need help taking items for the auction from Fairhope to 5 Rivers, and we always need help setting up and selling the merchandise.

Help Sell BirdFest Merchandise

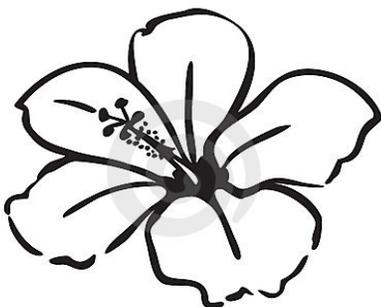
Last year BirdFest sold several hundred dollars worth of merchandise—T-shirts, caps, posters, etc. The ‘merch’ table was slammed all Wednesday night. Want to help? You need to be comfortable handing money and using the credit card machine. Don’t worry—we’ll show you what to do. We can also use help on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Help Decorate

Help is needed a couple of hours before the events Wednesday and/or Friday night to put out tablecloths and centerpieces. Another option is to pick up the vases and silk flowers a week or so in advance and ‘freshen’ the arrangements for this year.

Help with the BirdHouse Build

During the Expo, we invite parents and children to build actual bluebird houses as well as little kit birdhouses (for the younger children). Volunteers are needed to assist with the build.



Mobile Bay Audubon Society Calendar

SEPTEMBER

11 General Meeting “Perfect Storm of Stressors May Have Led To High Dolphin Strandings in Spring, 2011” presented by **Dr. Ruth Carmichael**, marine scientist, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00p.m. Bring a friend.

OCTOBER

4-6 The 9th Annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest.

For more information about tours and events, go to www.mobilebayaudubon.org and click on Alabama Coastal BirdFest or go to www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com. Look at the 23 tours and events and the free Bird and Conservation Expo that feature the Beautiful Alabama Gulf Coast. Register and bring a friend.

9 General Meeting “Oil Dispersants Promote Microbial Growth and Disrupt Food Chains” presented by **Dr. Alice Ortmann**, marine scientist, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00p.m. Bring a friend.

NOVEMBER

13 General Meeting “Travels in Borneo” presented by **Thelma Topper**, 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00p.m. Bring a friend.

DECEMBER

10 Annual Christmas Party and General Meeting TBA 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 6:30 p.m. Bring a friend.

Eastern Shore Birding Fall 2012 Calendar

September 12 – Meaher Park, Battleship Park

September 26 – Fairhope Falls

October 10 – Bird Banding at Ft. Morgan

October 24 – Dauphin Island

November 7 – Gulf Shores Water Treatment Plant, Gulf State Park

November 14 – Daphne Bayfront, Meaher Park

November 28 – Brookley Golf Course and Arlington Park

December 12 – Blakeley Mud Flats

To receive detailed information on these trips, please email Gaye Lindsey, gplindsey@bellsouth.net

Mobile Bay Audubon Wants You!

Join Us Today!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife and natural habitats.

As a member, you'll become an important part of our dynamic chapter and receive a host of benefits including:

- ◆ A 1-year subscription (6 bi-monthly issues) of our chapter newsletter.
- ◆ Automatic membership in National Audubon Society, and a 1-year subscription (4 issues, one per quarter) of Audubon, its award-winning magazine;
- ◆ Admission to Audubon Centers across the country
- ◆ A 10% discount on products at select Audubon Nature Stores, and more!

Yes! I want to join Mobile Bay Audubon and National Audubon Society!

\$20 – 1 year Introductory Rate

\$15 – 1 year Student/Senior Rate

\$30 – 2 year Special Rate

My check is enclosed.

\$1,000 – Individual Life Membership

\$1,500 – Dual Life Membership

Please bill me.

Name:

Address:

City/ST/Zip:

Telephone:

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and Mail to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, P.O.Box 52529, Boulder, CO 80322-2529

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