

# Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SINCE 1971



VOLUME XXIII NO. 6



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## Alabama Coastal BirdFest 2004

The first Alabama Coastal BirdFest was a great success. The four day festival featured guided birding tours along the 240 mile long Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, evening socials with guest speakers, and a free BirdFest Expo for new birders and children.

Registrants come from 16 different states, and all of the different events were full. It was good for ecotourism, good for education, good for the environment, and good for the birds.

Thanks to generous donations from sponsors and profits from registration fees, merchandise sales, and a silent auction, the BirdFest had approximately \$47,000 in profits which will be used in various ways to purchase stopover habitat for migrating birds.

The sponsors of the event include the City of Fairhope,

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Alabama Power, Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant, the Munson Foundation, Faulkner State Community College, The Forum, Conoco Phillips, Baldwin County Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation and the Mobile Bay Audubon Society.

The next Alabama Coastal BirdFest is planned for October 20-23, 2005. As details develop, information will be available at 251-929-0922 and on the BirdFest website at [www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com](http://www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com).



*A picture's worth a thousand words, so come along.. . .*

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2004

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*Dr. Bill Summerour, Roger Clay and Eric Soehren greet birders before daylight at the Nix Center*



*Birders ready to go on field trips early in the morning at the Nix Center*



*Guide Eric Soehren and birders at the Forever Wild Grand Bay Savanna*

# Glimpses of field trips



*Two of our excellent guides, Roger Clay and Eric Soehren*



*Birders make a brief stop at the Pelican's Nest in Fairhope to learn about Brown Pelicans on Gaillard Island*



*Birders breaking for lunch which were provided as part of most field trips*



*Guide Eric Soehren and birders at the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve*



*Jim Griggs and Greg Lrin show Deputy Secretary of the Interior Steven Griles protected lands in the Mobile Tensaw River Delta*



*Guide and birders at Bayou LaBatre*



*US Representative Jo Bonner and Azalea Trail Maids at evening reception about the USS Alabama*

# Highlights from the social events



*US Representative Jo Bonner, ADCNR Commissioner Barnett Lawley, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Steven Griles, Marianne Worley and Bald Eagle, evening reception, USS Alabama*



*BirdFest sponsors: Bernie Fogarty, Jim Griggs, John Borom, Steve Perry with Marianne Worley and Bald Eagle, evening reception, USS Alabama*



*US Representative Jo Bonner speaking at the reception USS Alabama*



*Evening reception on the deck of the USS Alabama,; 115 people*



*Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Steven Griles, and John Borom at the evening reception, USS Alabama*



*180 people attended the barbeque and seafood social and heard an excellent presentation on the*



*Dr. Van Remsen, Curator of Birds at the LSU Museum of Natural Science, gave a touching and interesting presentation on the Ivory Billed Woodpecker at the Nix Center*



*Silent auction at the Nix Center*



*Birders getting coffee during seafood feast at the Gatra Wehle Nature Center, Blakeley.*



*BirdFest Helpers: Otilie Halstead, George Hinds, celeste Hinds, Roger Clay, Melvin Long and Alicia Craig shot at the evening reception aboard USS Alabama*



*Young birder Warner Wiggins and his father, Dr. Warner Wiggins, building a bird house at the Home Depot tent during the BirdFest Expo.*

*Special guest speaker at the Gatra Wehle Nature Center, Dr. Doug Phillips, star of the PBS series, Discovering Alabama*



*Marianne Worley holding a Golden Eagle. The Auburn University Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center presentations were interesting and enjoyable at the BirdFest Expo.*



*Young birder Collin Davidson and John Borom at the BirdFest Expo, Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus. Over 1,000 people attended this even.*



*BirdFest Expo, Faulkner State, Fairhope campus.*

## Newsletter Deadline

Any member is welcomed and encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter. I would be happy to include anything you think would be of interest to the membership.

Please send your articles for the January/February issue to Delane Small by December 20nd.

Address:

1 Fiesta Drive

Spanish Fort, AL 36527

Email: dhs9700@bellsouth.net

# Some of the sights at the Expo



*Lynn Garris, Conservation Education Specialist, spoke at the Faulkner State Community College, Farhope Campus*



*Elizabeth Williams selling items to help birds at the*



*Dr. John Dindo is Chairman of the Discovery Hall Programs and a senior marine scientist at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. made a slide presentation on his reasearch at Faulkner State Community College on Saturday, October 16th.*

# Dauphin Island Bird Count

Dauphin Island, Alabama

October 16, 2004

06:15-18:15

Birders: Remsen, J.V.

Cagnolatti, D.A.

+ approx. 25 participants in the

Alabama Coastal Birdfest from

08:35-11:20 on Sand Island

Itinerary:

06:15-06:40 Dauphin Island Bird

Sanctuary

06:45-07:20 Airport

07:50-08:20 Isle Dauphin Golf

Club

08:35-11:20 Sand Island with

Birdfest Group

11:50-14:05 Shell Mound Park

14:15-16:15 Dauphin Island Bird

Sanctuary

16:20-16:35 East End, Fort

Gaines

17:30-18:15 Beachfront at Forney

Johnson St.

1. brown pelican 1600

2. double-crested cormorant 200

3. great blue heron 22

4. great egret 4

5. snowy egret 10

6. tricolored heron 3

7. cattle egret 2

8. black-crowned night heron 10

9. gadwall 1

10. mallard 30

11. green-winged teal 1

12. lesser scaup 1

13. osprey 1

14. American kestrel 1

15. clapper rail 20

16. black-bellied plover 15

17. snowy plover 3

18. semipalmated plover 1

19. piping plover 15

20. killdeer 1

21. greater yellowlegs 1

22. willet 17

23. ruddy turnstone 3

24. red knot 12

25. sanderling 100

26. western sandpiper 2

27. dunlin 2

28. dowitcher sp. 2

29. laughing gull 1300

30. ring-billed gull 1

31. herring gull 6

32. Caspian tern 200

33. royal tern 150

34. Forster's tern 4

35. black skimmer 60

36. rock pigeon 2

37. Eurasian collared dove 21

38. mourning dove 120

39. yellow-billed cuckoo 1

40. great horned owl 1

41. ruby-throated hummingbird 1

42. belted kingfisher 7

43. red-bellied woodpecker 10

44. yellow-bellied sapsucker 7

45. downy woodpecker 2

46. barred owl 1

47. eastern wood peewee 4

48. least flycatcher 1

49. eastern phoebe 1

50. northern rough-winged  
swallow 2

51. white-eyed vireo 2

52. blue-jay 38

53. Carolina wren 22

54. house wren 1

55. sedge wren 1

56. marsh wren 20

57. blue-gray gnatcatcher 2

58. eastern bluebird 2

59. wood thrush 1

60. gray catbird 25

61. northern mockingbird 60

62. brown thrasher 5

63. European starling 10

64. blue-winged warbler 1

65. golden-winged warbler 1

66. Tennessee warbler 3

67. northern parula 2

68. magnolia warbler 4

69. black-throated green warbler 5

70. pine warbler 4

71. palm warbler 2

72. black and white warbler 1

73. American redstart 20

74. northern waterthrush 4

75. common yellowthroat 5

76. hooded warbler 1

77. summer tanager 6

78. northern cardinal 15

79. rose-breasted grosbeak 4

80. blue grosbeak 3

81. indigo bunting 16

82. eastern towhee 3

83. seaside sparrow 2

84. swamp sparrow 3

85. red-winged blackbird 75

86. eastern meadowlark 4

87. house finch 2

88. house sparrow 5

89. reddish egret 1

90. American oystercatcher 1

91. Franklin's gull 2

92. red-breasted nuthatch 1

93. clay-colored sparrow 3

94. northern flicker 1

Brief trip to mainland across

bridge to Bayfront Park:

95. brown-headed nuthatch 1\*

96. boat-tailed grackle 4\*

\*not on Dauphin Island

*David A. Cagnolatti*

Manager, State Government

Affairs, Conoco Phillips

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Not a bad total number of species considering the numerous fall birds that had not yet arrived and the summer birds that had already departed.



# National Audubon Releases “State of the Birds”

On Tuesday, October 19, The National Audubon Society released the “The State of the Birds”, a report documenting the health and abundance of North America’s birds. Appearing in the October issue of *Audubon Magazine*, “The State of the Birds” paints a disturbing picture. Almost 30% of America’s bird species are in “significant decline,” a situation that signals seriously degraded environmental conditions in the habitats these birds call home.

The bottom line: the state of the birds in 2004 is not sound. In particular, a disturbing 70 percent of grassland species; 36 percent of shrub-land bird species; 25 percent of forest bird species; 13 percent of wetland species; and 23 percent of bird species in urban areas are showing “statistically significant declines.”

According to “State of the Birds,” these declines are abnormal. Not part of the natural, cyclical rise and fall of bird populations, “statistically significant declines” are due to outside factors such as loss of native grasslands, overgrazing, development of wetlands, bad forest management, invasive species, pollution, and poor land use decisions.

Audubon’s President John Flicker sees a clear message in this report. “Like the canary in the coal mine warning the miner of danger ahead, our birds are an indicator of environmental and human health,” he said. “Birds signal that we are at risk next.”

But, Flicker also sees a clear path out of trouble. “People may have created these problems, but people can solve them, if we act

now,” he stated. To that end, Audubon is now addressing the findings of “State of the Birds” in its conservation agenda at the legislative and policy making level, and in the states where the greatest conservation challenges exist.

Compiled by Audubon Scientist Greg Butcher, “State of the Birds” analysis makes the case for private and public action. Based on



the report’s findings, Audubon is advocating for improved grassland, forest, and wetland protection, stronger pollution controls, partnerships with private landowners, and backyard habitat programs for homeowners.

“State of the Birds” summarizes the status of nearly 700 bird species native to the continental United States, focusing on the condition of species in each of five habitat types: grasslands, shrublands, forests, wetlands, and urban areas (the fastest growing habitat type in the U.S.). Written using USGS Breeding Bird Survey and Audubon’s WatchList - cross-referenced with Audubon’s Christ-

mas Bird Count data, the report will be issued on a yearly basis, and will inform Audubon’s conservation agenda, identifying key areas requiring immediate action.

Birds not only serve as reliable indicators of environmental conditions, they also contribute greatly to the U.S. economy. Keeping birds - and their home habitats - in good condition is not only a good conservation policy, it is also good business. The worth of birds beyond their aesthetic and conservation value is something that is beginning to be more fully appreciated, a situation that has created allies for bird conservation in small and large business, and local governments - entities that have been historically unlikely conservation partners.

“According to the U.S. Forest Service, 70 million Americans - one-third of all adults in this country - call themselves birdwatchers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service notes that they contribute at least \$32 billion in retail sales, \$85 billion in overall economic output, and \$13 billion in state and federal taxes, creating 863,406 jobs,” continued Flicker. “Birds also contribute to the bottom line in more subtle ways, providing free pest and weed control, distributing seeds, and pollinating flowers and crops. American businesses and communities simply cannot afford to ignore the state of the birds.”

A digest of the report was published in the October issue of *Audubon* magazine and a further analysis is available on the Audubon website, [www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds](http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds).

# Calendar

## November

- 9 Board Meeting, 6:30 pm  
General Meeting 7:00 pm  
Nature video “Audubon Society’s Video Guide to Birds of North America III” (61 minutes)  
Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. Bring a friend. For more information, contact John Borom at 990-0423.
  
- 3 Sponsored by The Coastal Birding Association: Baldwin County for winter hummingbirds. Meet at 8:00 am at the Spanish Fort Overlook (northwest corner of I-10 and Hwy 98). [for info: Bill Summerour, (251) 945-3188]
  
- 20 Sponsored by The Coastal Birding Association: Bayou la Batre/Coden ponds and shoreline for ducks and shorebirds. Meet at 8:00 am at the Hardee’s on Hwy 188 in Bayou la Batre. [for info: Mike Wilson, (251) 649-5760]

## December

- 14 Annual Christmas Party 7:30—The program will be John and Bev Winn’s trip to Poland at the Government Street Baptist church in Mobile. Bring your favorite finger food and a friend. We will share food and fellowship around the “waissal bowl”.



# New Members

Welcome to the Mobile Bay Audubon Society, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society. We thank you for your support. A few facts about our chapter: Monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday from September thru May at 7:30 PM alternately in Fairhope and Mobile (See calendar for details of programs and locations.) Programs of interest are planned for each meeting and field trips are scheduled regularly. We are a non-profit organization—all donations are tax deductible. A list of officers is listed in the newsletter; feel free to call any of them for information. Join us as often as you can—we want to get to know you.

*Otilie Halstead, Membership Chairman*

*Bay Minette*

Luke Adams  
Janice E Styron

*Coden*

Camilo Amezquita

*Daphne*

Ann L Humphrey  
Katie Evans

Jeanne Maes

*Fairhope*

Elaine Littleton  
Diane Findley

Tress Hess

*Foley*

Valerie Preston

*Grand Bay*

Devin Sprinkle

*Gulf Shores*

Verla Nicholas

*Mobile*

Carolyn Cranford

Jerri Davis

Jimmie L Hall

Gaynell Van Hoof

Renee Dillard

Robert Gard

Allen Reimber

Kimberly Saxton

Richard Vinson

*Robertsdale*

Edith Staley

*Semmes*

Chas H Caldwell

*Transfer into Chapter*

Gerald E Lindenmuth

Kimberly Collum



## Film Week

January 24-28, 2005

There will be two night showings of the film, *An Alaskan Autumn*. Tuesday, 7:30 pm, January 25, Faulkner Community College, Fairhope and Thursday, 7:30 pm, Government Street Baptist Church, 3401 Government Blvd, intersection I-65 and Government Blvd. Tom Sterling, artist, photographer and award winning naturalist, will narrate his film, *An Alaskan Autumn* in 10 public and private schools during the week of January 24-28, 2005, and at two night showings for the public. Tom



forsakes the hurried pace of most Alaska films. Instead, we stop, sit down and absorb the essence of Alaska—her wildness. We'll visit bird rookeries on coastal islands, watch a grizzly family preparing for winter, brown bears praying, swimming and capturing chum salmon. Striking fall and winter scenery are a backdrop for rutting bull moose, caribou and a wolf taking a dall sheep. Foxes, parka squirrels, ptarmigan, pike marmots and beaver play intriguing roles in this feast for the senses. Come see and enjoy, *An Alaska Autumn* at one of the night showings.

## 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

ChapterCode: A01

7XCH

“The long fight to save wild beauty represents democracy at its best. It requires citizens to practice the hardest of virtues—self-restraint.” Edwin Way Teale, Circle of the Seasons, 1953

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