

Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society Since 1971

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Second Annual Coastal BirdFest

The second annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest, held Oct. 20-23, was a great success despite this summer's nerve-wracking weather. Over 340 people from 13 different states visited Baldwin and Mobile counties to take part in BirdFest's guided birding tours and evening events. The free, daylong Bird & Conservation Expo, held on Saturday Oct. 22, on the grounds at Faulkner State Community College in Fairhope, attracted thousands more.

"We are very pleased with how this year's BirdFest turned out," said John Borom, president of Mobile Bay Audubon Society and one of the event organizers. "It's wonderful that so many people came to see birds and to learn more about what an important area this is for migratory birds and why it is necessary that we do all we can to preserve our Gulf Coast habitats." Visitors came to BirdFest from California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Ohio, as well as from throughout the Southeast.

Proceeds from this year's

Alabama Coastal BirdFest will be used to preserve and protect habitats on the Alabama Gulf Coast. With last year's proceeds, organizers were able to make sizable contributions toward the purchase of habitats on Dauphin Island and at Weeks Bay National Estuarine Reserve.

This year's BirdFest featured several outstanding speakers

Nearly 150 people turned out to hear Dr. Van Remsen of Louisiana State University, who spoke at the Opening Night



John Borom, President of the Mobile Bay Chapter of the Audubon Society and guest speaker Dr. Van Remsen with the spectacular chocolate Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Reception at the Gulf Coast Exploreum in Mobile about his part in the search and recent discovery of the Ivory-bill woodpecker. "He was an excellent, very entertaining speaker," said Borom. "He was also at last year's BirdFest, and he knew all about the Ivory-bill at that time, but he was sworn to secrecy. This year, he shared everything with us." The Reception also featured what might be the most unique Ivory-bill woodpecker in the world – a solid chocolate life-size creation by Chef James N. Hurtubise of the Faulkner State Community College Culinary Department.

Friday night's speaker was Bob Sargent, founder with his wife, Martha, of the Hummer/Bird Study Group, one of the nation's top volunteer bird banding and research organizations. "Bob's talk and slide show was really informative. I think he presented some information that was new to most all of us. The work he and Martha do is so important, and we really appreciate their taking time from their schedule to come to BirdFest."

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Friday night's Barbecue and Seafood Social drew nearly 160 people to the Nix Center in Fairhope.

Another Ivory-bill expert spoke during Saturday's Expo in Fairhope. Bobby Harrison, one of the first two people to have a confirmed sighting of an Ivory-bill in more than 60 years, gave three presentations in Giddens Auditorium, speaking to over 150 people.

This year's Expo expanded on last year's event with participation from the entire Alabama State Conservation Department. Representatives of State Parks, Outdoor Alabama, State Lands, Marine Police, and other departments set up in a huge tent on the grounds of Faulkner. Other booths on the campus featured vendors, artists, and various non-profit agencies and organizations.

Borom said all of the guided tours went off as planned. "After the hurricane, when there was so much bad news, we were worried that people from out of state wouldn't come. But it turned out all right. We took nearly 130 people to Blakeley and the Mobile/Tensaw Delta in four trips, 50 people to Dauphin Island in two trips, 35 people to Bayou La Batre, and over 60 people to Weeks Bay in three trips." Other guided tours took crowds of birdwatchers to Bellingrath, Fort Morgan, Bon Secour, and Blakeley Island Ponds.

Organizers are already looking forward to next year. The third annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest is scheduled for Oct. 19-22, 2006. Visit www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com for news as it develops as well as photos from this year's festival.

Film Week

January 30 thru
February 3, 2006

This week Tom Sterling, artist, photographer and award-winning naturalist will show his film, "The Gift of the White Moose," to students in 10 schools in Mobile and Baldwin county. The students will learn about the rarity and significance of albinism. While albinism occurs in all mammals, including humans, it is especially rare in large mammals. The students will learn about the causes and effects of albinism and will be given a unique view of how an albino animals adapts to its environment.

At the two night showings (Thursday, January 21st, 7:30 p.m. at Faulkner State University and on Thursday, February 2 at 7:30 p.m. at the Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile), Tom will show the film "Bhutan, The Cloud Kingdom."

Tom says equal in size to Vermont and New York, the tiny buddhist kingdom of Bhutan lies high in the world's tallest mountains, the Himalayas. Closed to outsiders until late in the 20th century Bhutan, with its rural way of life, unspoiled natural wonders and Buddhist philosophy, is considered by many to be a modern day ShangriLa. The viewers will go on a delightful journey through the countryside of Bhutan on a road that winds its way through the mountains.

Sights along the way include bamboo homes, farming, harvesting, monasteries called dzongs; from small villages to the capital, Thimphu, you'll see wondrous mountain scenery and wildlife that is unique to the Himalayas which includes the rare Black-necked Cranes that winter in Bhutan.



Calendar

December

3

Mariculture Center (Alabama Coastal Birding Trail Site 16) in Gulf Shores for ducks, shorebirds, and western vagrants. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot just south of the Hardee's in Foley (Hwy 59) near the red Family Dollar sign (for info: Howard Horne (251) 605-9043) Coastal Birding Association Field Trip.

13

Annual Christmas Party. 7:30 p.m.

“Let’s Talk Turkey,” John and Bev Winn will talk about their trip to Turkey. The meeting will be held at the Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile. Bring your favorite finger food and a friend. We will share food and fellowship.

January

10

6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. General Meeting—Natural History Film. **“Private Lives of Dolphins”**

Graceful, intelligent and playful, bottlenose dolphins are not only the friendliest wild animals, they’re also the most complex. (60 minutes) Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall.

21

7:30 Tom Sterling presents, **“Bhutan, the Cloud Kingdom,”** Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall.

February

2

7:30p.m. Tom Sterling presents **“Bhutan, the Cloud Kingdom,”** Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile.

14

6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. General Meeting—Natural History Film. **“Eagles the Masters of the Skies”** This program includes eagles from across the globe. It is a breathtaking film packed with memorable moments in stunning locations. (50 minutes) Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile.



Happy Thanksgiving

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"There is no other door to knowledge than the door nature opens; and there is no truth except the truths we discover in nature," Luther Burbank

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