

# *Mobile Bay Audubon Society*



A Chapter of the National Audubon Society Since 1971

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## **Fourth Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest is Big Hit**

The rains came down on two days, but the wet weather didn't keep the birds or the birders away from the Fourth Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest. "We didn't have to cancel a trip," said John Borom, president of Mobile Bay Audubon and one of the event's organizer. "We tell people that if the weather is wet, we might rearrange a trip, and we did do that on the first two days, but everyone saw birds, and we think everyone had a great time. Of course, Saturday and Sunday were beautiful, so we had great weather for our Bird & Conservation Expo and for the tours that went out on those days."

As in previous years, birders from all over the United States attended the four-day festival. "We had visitors from 18 states this year, including California, Maine, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Texas. We also had a visitor from Canada again this year. I think the work is getting out that the Alabama Coastal BirdFest is a great spot for birding," said Fran Morley, BirdFest coordinator.

Proceeds from BirdFest are used to help preserve and protect habitat on the Alabama Gulf Coast, Borom said. "Our proceeds are used to purchase habitat land; we've donated \$30,000 so far, and we hope to make a donation from this year's BirdFest. But the festival also serves to educate people about the need to preserve our vital Gulf Coast habitats."

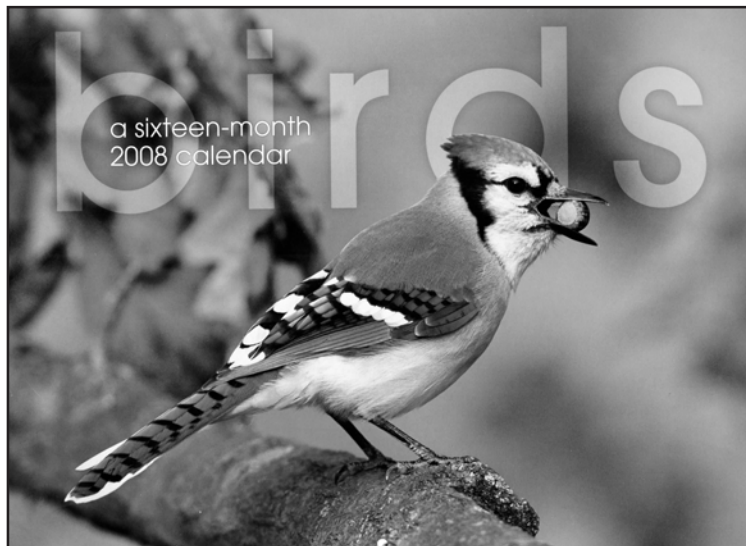
In addition to 18 guided tours, the 2007 Alabama Coastal BirdFest included two evening events and a free, day long Bird & Conservation Expo, with exhibits, speakers, vendors, artists, live birds and other animals, and kid's activities. On Thursday night a 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort, visitors enjoyed a presentation of works by photographer Terry Hartley of Mobile. Friday night's dinner at the Nix Center in Fairhope featured a talk by Dr. Geoff Hill, professor of ornithology and director of the Hill Lab at Auburn University.

Sponsors and supporters of the Alabama Coastal BirdFest include Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resource, Lands Division; 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, Alabama Power, The Forum; Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Faulkner State Community College, Degussa, Baldwin County Commission, Mobile County Commission, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary, Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Talking Phone Book, City of Fairhope, Eastern Short Chamber of Commerce, Gulf Shores Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The see more photos from this year's festival, visit [www.alabamacoastalbirdrest.com](http://www.alabamacoastalbirdrest.com). The First Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest will be Oct. 16-19, 2009. Details will be posted online when they are available.

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## 2008 Calendars

Our 2008 Feathered Friends calendars have arrived and are more beautiful than ever. Yes I know that I say that every year, but the Maslowskies have outdone themselves this year with pictures of the Common Redpoll, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Water Thrush, Indigo Bunting, and the Scarlet Tanager to name a few. Each print has an interesting note about habitat and food. The calendars are for 16 months beginning with September.

We all receive free calendars but they don't compare with these so buy one for yourself and several to give away. At \$5.00 they are a bargain. We gave out last year early in the season so if you would like 5 or more, call Elizabeth (643-7257) and she will hold them for you. They will be for sale at each meeting and at the Birdfest.

## Christmas Party

**7:00 p.m. Five Rivers Resource Center on the Causeway**

Annual Christmas party and program by John and Bev Winn—Ethiopia, the Gift of the Nile. Bring a friend and a plate of your special holiday goodies (finger food only)



# The Ivory-billed Woodpecker Foundation

## Second Annual Fundraising Celebration Gala

In September of 2007 Bobby Harrison, co-discoverer of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker established The Ivory-billed Woodpecker Foundation. The foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization whose main purpose is to obtain further photographic documentation of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and to establish if the Ivory-bill persists in other drainage systems throughout its historic range.

On February 23, 2008 The Ivory-billed Woodpecker Foundation will hold its Second Annual Fundraising Celebration Gala. The event will be held in Huntsville, Alabama at the Jaycee's Facility located at 2180 Airport Road. The evening begins a 6:00 pm with a social hour, dinner at 7:00pm and keynote address at 8:00pm. Attire for the evening will be professional (coat and tie). The keynote speaker for this year's event will be Dr. Jerry Jackson. Jackson is the Whitaker Eminent Scholar in Science at Florida Gulf Coast University in Naples, Florida. He is the author of numerous books, including, *In Search of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker*, and is recognized world wide as an authority of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Jackson is also an outspoken critic of the evidence presented as scientific proof of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's existence. This year's program should prove to be informative and entertaining since it will be given from a critic's perspective. It is a program that you will not want to miss! (*Gala ticket required*)

Emcee's for this year's event will be Bobby Harrison and Tim Gallagher, co-discoverer's of the ivory-billed woodpecker in eastern Arkansas on February 27, 2004. In addition to Emcee duties, Bobby and Tim will give an update on the current ivory-bill search, as well as keeping the evening flowing and on schedule. Entertainment for the evening will be vocal artist Curt Carter, who has been inspiring students to take a closer look at the natural environment for over 25 years. The rediscovery of the ivory-bill inspired him to compose "Ghost Bird" a song, which he will perform along with other great songs of his own creation. For those who would like to make a full day of the event, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge located in Decatur, Alabama will host car caravan tours to areas that are of great interest to birdwatchers. Beginning at 8:00am refuge personal will lead a group through the White Springs Dike compound. This is one of the premier birding sites of the Tennessee River Valley. Bald Eagles, Ospreys and hawks are often seen in the area, as well as wintering songbirds and shorebirds. The tours will also include Arrowhead Landing, which attracts large numbers of Snow Geese, White Pelicans, loons, and a large variety of waterfowl. Your own transportation will be required to enjoy this event. At 10:00am at the Jaycee's Facility, Bobby Harrison and Tim Gallagher will present a program on how to conduct a low impact

search. Bobby has long been an advocate of using a stealth approach to locating and documenting Ivory-bills. Bobby will discuss techniques of camouflage for your canoe and person, using video cameras and search strategies. (*Gala ticket required*)

At 11:00am at the Jaycee's facility, Bobby will show his September 4, 2004 video. Bobby has been working with a NASA video analysis to create a clearer and sharper version of his video. Although this work is still in progress, the results should prove to be quite interesting. (*Gala ticket required*)

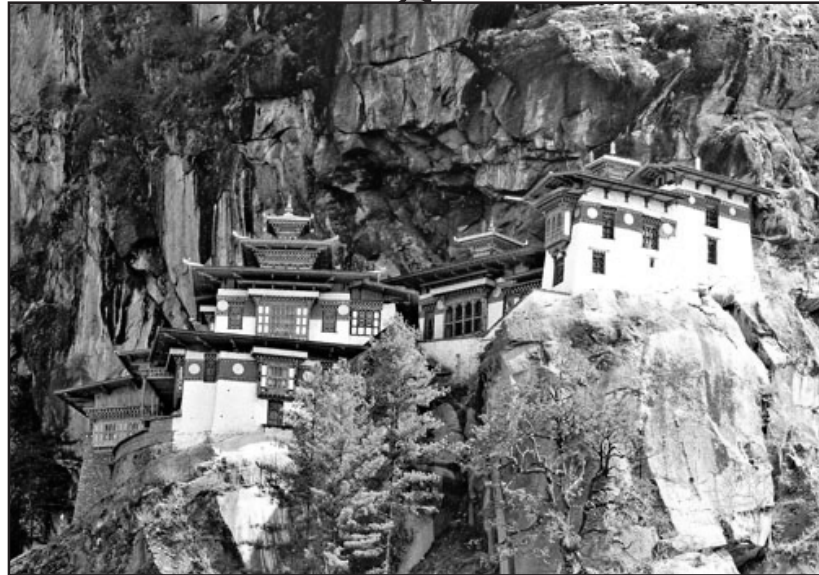
At 1:00pm, Jamie Hill, who has lead both the Arkansas and Florida camera deployment search will give a presentation on how to use time lapse cameras in the search for the Ivory-bill. Jamie's knowledge of time lapse camera usage is unsurpassed. For those interested in learning how to use time-lapse cameras or, would like an entertaining behind the scenes look at the ivory-bill search, this program is for you. The event location will be at the Jaycee's facility, (*Gala ticket required*) Last years fundraising gala was a great success with more than 135 people from 10 states in attendance. With this year's expanded program, the event is expected to be an even greater success. Reserve you tick soon, and support the Ivory-billed Woodpecker Foundation in its on going mission to search and document the this icon of conservation.

## MBAS Board Member Named Alabama's Outstanding Science Teacher

Anita Bryan, MBAS board member was recently named Alabama's Outstanding Biology Teacher by the National Association of Biology Teachers. Anita teaches physical science and environmental science at Murphy High School. She will go to Atlanta in November to be honored and accept the award. Anita is our Mobile County Audubon Adventures coordinator and sponsors the student Audubon Club at Murphy. We are proud to have this award-winning teacher on our Board



## Bhutan, The Cloud Kingdom



Tom Sterling, narrator, naturalist, photographer, has recently made three trips to this fascinating country of Bhutan. He has captured the spectacular landscape, lush rainforests, glorious monasteries, quaint villages, festivals, and wildlife that is unique to the Himalayas. Bhutan, nestled between Tibet and India, because of its mountainous terrain, has remained isolated from the outside world for centuries—television was not introduced here

until 1999. The country is now open to visitors allowing us to explore its breathtaking beauty and wonderland of birds. Some 600 species have been recorded in this tiny country. Tom will take us for a walk through oak and rhododendron forests and beneath trees festooned with lichens, mosses, ferns and orchids. (Yes, orchids!) Join Tom Sterling on Tuesday, January 29, as he takes us on this journey to Bhutan, the Cloud Kingdom—a true Shangri-la.

## Calendar

**Dec. 11** Annual Christmas Party and Special Presentation, "Ethiopia—The Gift of the Nile," presented by John & Beverly Winn, Five Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7:00 p.m. Bring a friend and a plate of your special holiday goodies (finger food only) to share.

**Jan. 8** Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. General meeting 7:30 p.m. "Grand Canyon National Park, June 2007," presented by John Borom. Five Rivers Delta Resource Center. Bring a friend.

**Jan. 29** Film: "Bhutan, the Cloud Kingdom," 7:30 p.m. presented by Tom Sterling. Five Rivers Resource Center. Bring a friend.

**Feb. 12** Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. General meeting 7:30 p.m. "Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, July 2006," presented by John Borom. Five Rivers Delta Resource Center. Bring a friend.

# Great Backyard Bird Count

**In February, volunteers throughout the US and Canada are invited to “count for Fun, Count for the Future!”**

New York, NY & Ithaca, NY- Millions of novice and accomplished bird watchers can make their fascination with nature add up for science and for the future during the 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, led by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During “President’s Day” weekend, February 15-18, 2008, anyone can count birds from wherever they are and enter their tallies online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). These reports create an exciting real-time picture of where the birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation. “These volunteers are counting not only for fun but for the future,” said Tom Bancroft, Chief Science Officer for Audubon. “It’s fun to see how many different kinds of birds can be seen and counted right in your backyard or neighborhood park. Each tally helps us learn more about how our North American birds are doing, and what that says about the health and the future of our environment.” “The GBBC is a great way to engage friends, family, and children in observing nature in their own backyard, where they will discover that the outdoors is full of color, behavior, flight, sounds, and mystery,” said Janis Dickinson, Director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

People of all ages and experience levels are invited to take part wherever they are--at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges, even counting birds on a balcony. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. Then they enter their tallies on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

The web site provides helpful hints for identifying birds. Participants can compare results from their town or region with others, as checklists pour in from throughout the US and Canada. They can also view bird photos taken by participants during the count and send in their own digital images for the online photo gallery and contest.

In 2007, Great Backyard Bird Count participants made history, breaking records for the number of birds reported, and the number of checklists. Participants sent in 81,203 checklists tallying 11,082,387 birds of 613 species. “Literally, there has never been a more detailed snapshot of a continental bird distribution profile in history,” said John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Imagine scientist 250 years from now being able to compare these data with their own!”

Already, the count results show

how the numbers of some birds species have changed in recent years, such as a decline in Northern Pintails and an increase in Hooded Mergansers, consistent with trends from the Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey.

“People who take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count see the results of their efforts in the news and in bird conservation work taking place across the country, said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus. “Whether the counts occur at home, at schools or nature centers, they’re more than engaging and education science activities for young people and adults, they’re a way to contribute to the conservation of birds and habitat nationwide.”

Lt. Daniel Britt, who served in Iraq 16 months, is glad to be back home in Zimmerman, MN, where he and his sons plan to join the GBBC. “We get a bunch of birds in our backyard,” Britt said, “but my oldest son, Daniel, and I may cross country ski into the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge to count birds there.”

For more information on how to participate, including identification tips, photos, bird sounds, maps, and information on over 500 bird species, visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited.

# Mobile Bay Audubon Wants You!

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 (3 issues, one per quarter, excluding summer) 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	_____ \$1,000 - Individual Life Membership
_____ \$15 - 1 year Student/Senior Rate	_____ \$1,500 - Dual Life Membership
_____ \$30 - 2 year Special Rate	
_____ My check is enclosed	_____ Please bill me

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Make check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to: National Audubon Society,  
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"It is not half so important to know as to feel when introducing a young child to the natural world." *Rachel Carson*

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