



Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society

www.nwarkaudubon.org

NEWSLETTER

February 2012

Birding Basics Workshop

This workshop is hosted by the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society and will be held at Hobbs State Park headquarters on the morning of Saturday, March 31st, 2012. The program has both indoor and outdoor elements: participants will first spend some time indoors learning how to use binoculars and how to use field guides to identify birds. The outdoor element of the workshop will consist of a field trip to actually go out and work on identifying birds. Please call Michelle Viney at 479 527 0700 if you would like more information or to sign up for this workshop.

Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 17-20 this year. This four day event allows birders all over the country to help create a "snapshot" of bird life across the nation and record those findings for scientists to use. It takes as little as fifteen minutes on a day of observation and participants can bird anywhere they wish over the four day period. One can count longer too on any of the count days, and even at different places. Record the birds seen for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. Submit a separate list for each new day and for each location. To record your findings for the 2012 GBBC, please go to <http://birdcount.org>. For more information about this event, please visit <http://birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html>.

Public Meeting on Kenyon Birds

Dr. Dan Scheiman of Audubon Arkansas will describe on the evening of July 7, 2012, in Fayetteville his recent safari to Africa. He will lead a field trip that morning. See bottom of page 2 and top of page 3 for details.

Message from the President

by Doug James

Sad Tale of Two Whimbrels

Whimbrels are large shorebirds, one of the bigger sandpipers. It occurs worldwide, nesting in the high Arctic, migrating south for winter to tropical environs. In North America Whimbrel numbers have been declining.

Recently migratory paths of two tagged Whimbrels were monitored on computer screens followed through satellite telemetry. A total of eight migrations were plotted between Canada and Brazil, the birds commonly flying 2,000 miles or more non-stop. Normally they bypassed the Caribbean but storms caused them to land on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. There the telemetry signals ceased. Guadeloupe is notorious for creating artificial shooting swamps to attract migrating shorebirds where shooting club patrons fire away indiscriminately.

This tragedy is similar to conditions in the USA before 1900 when it was customary for family men at Christmas to shoot as many birds as possible, all species vulnerable. In the year 1900, Frank Chapman, ornithologist with the American Museum in New York City, proposed that birds should be counted, not shot. He went to Central Park across from the museum and conducted what became the first Christmas Bird Count, an activity that now annually includes thousands of participants. Damage was done by 1900. Rampant shooting in the USA led to the extinction of the Eskimo Curlew, previously the most abundant shorebird numbering in the millions. I once traced Frank Chapman's steps and joined the Christmas count in Central Park.

**Northwest
Arkansas
Audubon Society**
P.O. Box 4751
Fayetteville AR
72702

Doug James, President
479 575 6364 or
479 443 1704
djames@uark.edu

Joanie Patterson, Vice
President/ Programs
479 442 7869
joanie.patterson@yahoo.com

Bill Beall, Treasurer
479 783 1802
billtoka@mynewroads.com

Stephanie Barr,
Secretary/Newsletter
479 445 6481
timandstephbarr@hotmail.com

Joe Neal, Field Trips
479 521 1858
joeneal@uark.edu

Richard Stauffacher,
Publicity/
Webmaster
479 442 8446
richard@etchings.org

Michelle Viney,
Education/
Membership
Recruitment
479 527 0700
mviney@audubon.org

Louise Mann,
Conservation
479 582 1928
lmann2@earthlink.net

2012 FIELD TRIPS & BIRDING CALENDAR

by Joe Neal

All NWAAS field trips are free and open to the public. Membership in NWAAS is not a requirement. We try to make our field trips accessible to everyone, all ages & all abilities. Beginning birders are always very welcome. We try to have field trips on Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate different schedules. We try to arrange carpools where possible.

For maps and more information about these places, check the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society web site <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/index.html> and the section "Places to bird in northwest Arkansas."

If you are interested in being added to the NWAAS field trip email list, please send a message to: joeneal@uark.edu. Some of the information on the trips below can change, so additional details & updates about trips are sent via email a few weeks before the announced date.

Saturday February 4, 2012. Eagle Watch Nature Trail on SWEPCO Lake just west of Gentry. Meet in the parking lot at 9 AM. Co-leader for the trip is Terry Stanfill. There is a short walk on the trail through open field habitat to a viewing platform with good potential to see Bald Eagles, several species of ducks, and other water birds. More information at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/1514017.pdf>

Saturday February 18, 2012. American Woodcock field trip to Wedington Wildlife Management Area (Ozark National Forest west of Fayetteville). Woodcock expert Dr. David Kremetz is the leader. Meet at 5:30 PM at Wedington WMA. More information at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/977213.pdf>

Friday February 17-Sunday February 19, 2012. Great Backyard Bird Count. We have been invited to join this count at Devil's Den State Park.

Saturday March 24, 2012. Trip to mature shortleaf pine habitat in the Shores Lake-Fern area of Ozark National Forest. Leader is Bill Beall, veteran birder from Ft Smith (and now the NWAAS Treasurer). We will be seeking Brown-headed Nuthatches and other birds typical of pine forests. Meet at 9 AM at the Shores Lake picnic area entrance on the west side of the lake. You can show up earlier if you wish! <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/1439038.pdf>

Sunday April 29, 2012. Ninestone Land Trust in Carroll County. Meet at Ninestone by 9 AM. More information at <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/1287399.pdf>

Friday May 4-Sunday May 6, 2012. Birder's Weekend at Devil's Den State Park. The joint NWAAS and Devil's Den SP field trip will be on **Saturday May 5**; meet at Lee Creek bridge parking area at 9 AM. More information at <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/950081.pdf>

Saturday and Sunday May XX, 2012. International Migratory Bird Day in Benton and Washington counties, with additional counts in at least Carroll County. Coordinated by Mike Mlodinow for Washington and Benton counties. Dates to be formally set, but probably May 11 and 12.

Sunday June 3, 2012. Cave Mountain and the upper Buffalo River in Newton County. Meet at the Boxley Bridge at 8 AM. More information at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/950078.pdf>

Saturday July 7, 2012. Chesney Prairie Natural Area near Siloam Springs. Meet at Chesney at 9 AM. We will be birding with Dr Dan Scheiman, staff ornithologist for Audubon Arkansas, an affiliate of the National Audubon Society. In the evening Dr Scheiman will present a program at Nightbird Books on Dickson Street in Fayetteville starting at 7 PM. Information about Chesney at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/957092.pdf>

Dan Scheiman's Presentation on Birding in Kenya, East Africa

by Joanie Patterson

Dan will share sights, sounds, and stories from his July 4-17, 2011, Kenya birding safari. He, his wife Samantha, and three other birders hired a guide to introduce them to the wonders of Africa during the peak of wildebeest migration. They visited a variety of habitats from rainforest to arid scrubland in several national parks and reserves including Maasai Mara, Samburu, and Lake Nakuru, the latter famous for hosting millions of flamingos. They got up-close looks at most of Kenya's large mammals like lions, elephants, and zebras. Of Kenya's 1100 birds they saw 433 species, including hornbills, sunbirds, mousebirds, greenbuls, barbets, and bustards.

Dr. Dan Scheming is Bird Conservation Director for Audubon Arkansas, state office of the National Audubon Society. Dan has a B.S. from Cornell University, M.S. from Eastern Illinois University, and Ph.D. from Purdue University. He and his staff monitor birds and other wildlife, restore wildlife habitat, and help Arkansans improve their local environments. He has been birding for 24 years. In the six years he has lived in Arkansas he has seen 340 of the 411 bird species documented.

Dr. Scheiman's presentation will be at Nightbird Books on Dickson Street in Fayetteville at 7 pm on July 7, 2010. That morning at 9 am he will lead a field trip to Chesney Prairie near Siloam Springs (see bottom of page 2 for details).



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Audubon—preserving the natural world

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Mail to: Bill Beall, Treasurer, 2204 Hendricks Blvd. Ft. Smith, AR 72903-3422

Name: _____

Street: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email Address: _____

PLEASE SELECT:

_____ **\$20 Introductory Membership to the National Audubon Society** which is for 1 year and includes subscriptions to both the Audubon Magazine and the NWAAS newsletter, and membership in both the National and Northwest Arkansas Audubon Societies. **Please make check payable to the National Audubon Society.** (Note that after the first year, annual membership is \$40.00 per year.)

_____ **\$15 Local Chapter Membership**—which includes 1 year's membership in the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society only. You will receive the NWAAS Newsletter. 100% of your membership fee is used for NWAAS activities in Northwest Arkansas. **Please make check payable to the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society**