

THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 26, NO. 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING 2006

...to foster a greater knowledge of birds and to promote conservation of all natural resources

FOUNDED 1952



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BVIOUSLY, ARTICLES FOR THE *Yellowhammer* must be written and submitted quite some time prior to publi-

cation. So after negotiating icy winter roads to the office today, I sat down to try to turn my thoughts toward spring. Winter birding was particularly good this year. We marveled at the state's first wintering Costa's Hummingbird, stood incredulous as a young Pomerine Jaeger repeatedly flushed Wheeler Refuge's entire wintering flock of Snow Geese, enjoyed long looks at Guntersville's Rough-legged hawks, froze while picking out Pacific and Red-throated loons, and delighted at the aerial skills of a Vermilion Flycatcher. We counted thousands of coots (seemed like millions), ducks, geese, and Sandhill Cranes, and were honored by rare visits from Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. But you know, nothing is as thrilling for me as the arrival of those first spring passerines!

I would guess that most of us can point to one species or one birding trip that took us from being an interested but casual birdwatcher to the wild-eyed, passionate, nearly obsessive birders we are today. For me, that has to have been my first look at a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak during our first major fallout in April at Fort Morgan many years ago. We were new enough at birding that it even took a while to realize we were viewing the bird pictured on the cover of our field guide. I've eagerly awaited spring birding ever since.

Hearing the first singing Northern Parula, Prothonotary or Yellow-throated Warbler of the spring is one of the highlights of the year for me. I know many of you are unwilling to agree that it's finally spring until you've heard your first Louisiana Waterthrush. We're incredibly fortunate to have such an exceptional variety of birds that either stop by for a few days on the way to breed farther north or, even better, breed in Alabama.

I'm sure you know where this is going. This is the final year for our Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project. We have made very good progress under the capable, and frequently amazing, leadership of Rick West. His seemingly tireless efforts have provided us with detailed species maps that



clearly reveal those areas where we need additional visits.

I want to thank all of you who've contributed to the atlas project and to ask that each of you contact your regional coordinators to ask how you can help in this final year. Most of our efforts this year will be directed to adding species to areas previously canvassed. You all can help with this. If you're going birding, share your day list with us. Ask your coordinator where work is needed and just go birding there for the morning, rather than your usual areas. You'll find new birding spots you never knew existed, and we can use your data to help make our atlas as complete as possible. This is going to be very good; you'll want to say you've contributed.

I hope to see you all at our spring meeting on Dauphin Island, April 21-23. Canceling two consecutive fall meetings makes this spring's meeting all the more special. I'm really excited to have Kimball Garrett joining us as our speaker for the weekend. His contributions to birding in North America are extensive and I've wanted to meet him for several years. If you'll take a look at the cover of that Peterson's Guide to Warblers that you always carry with you for birding Dauphin Island during migration, you'll soon see one of the many reasons why.

We will long mourn the loss of our friend Bob Reid. We can all hope to live long, happy, loving, productive lives without the loss of our sense of childlike wonder and serendipity. Unfortunately, few of us will actually pull that off. No one I've known was more successful at it than Bob. Will any of us ever hear someone say "That sign doesn't mean birders!" and not think of Bob? Happy trails, Bob.

Of course, Bob leaves some huge shoes to fill, not just for us, but throughout the state's birding and conservation communities. Greg Harber has agreed to become chairman of our Conservation committee and Larry Gardella will now chair the Membership committee; we are in very capable hands. As many of you know, one of the hats worn by Bob Reid was as state coordinator for the USGS Breeding Bird Survey. Bob would be very pleased that the hat is now worn by Eric Soehren; certainly, I am.

Desert California (Part 2)

Colonel Bob and Pat Reed are in Joshua Tree National Park, November 2005.



WE MADE OUR BELATED ARRIVAL at the Joshua Tree National Park Visitor's Center. Cactus Wrens lounged about the parking lot. I had talked to Andy, a park naturalist, on the phone from Alabama, so I asked for him, and he gave us directions to the best places to see Canyon Wrens, one of our target birds.

Desert birding is totally different from birding in Alabama. First, it's much more open in the desert; you can see birds at much greater distances. Second, birds are relatively scarcer in the desert; there just aren't as many of them to see. Third, almost by definition, many of the birds are different species, so, combined with the increased distances, identification challenges are somewhat greater in the desert, particularly for folks like me who are ID challenged.

We spotted a Ladder-backed Woodpecker flying from one Joshua tree to another. We stopped and watched him for several minutes, and, while it wasn't a lifer, it was a much better look than when we'd added it to our list in north Texas a few years ago.

We hiked through Hidden Valley, the first good location for Canyon Wren. We saw Oak Titmice (one with a badly deformed bill), Spotted Towhee, Rock Wren, Bushtits, dozens of kinglets, but no Canyon Wren. Hidden Valley was spectacular, a valley at about 4000 feet elevation with no natural outlet. It was completely surrounded by an enormous wall of bare rock. Entrance was gained by a hole blasted well over 100 years ago through one side by cattlemen who used the valley as a natural livestock corral.

Leaving Hidden Valley, we headed toward Barker Dam, another vestige of a bygone era and a place for The Wren. Mr. Barker discovered this small spring-fed pond that emptied through a very narrow and deep little canyon. He decided to



dam the little stream by building a dam from wall to wall of the canyon. He piped the water down to water troughs for his cattle. The dam is small, only about 30 feet long, and about as high. Below it we saw Song Sparrows. The dam still forms a pond—or tank in western vernacular—that provided habitat for hundreds of Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warblers, two dozen American Coots, and a handful of Eared Grebes. It was very strange to find this tiny pond—maybe two acres—in the midst of the desert, and to find grebes and coots there. But no wren.

We headed back to the Visitor's Center to check out the birds at the oasis behind it. A roadrunner that was obviously accustomed to people allowed us to look from about 20 feet. Gambel's Quail were everywhere; we must have seen 100. A dozen Phainopeplas called their gentle call from every bush. A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher teased us from a mesquite bush.

The next morning we headed back to JTNP in search of the wren. We returned to Hidden Valley, on the off chance that they had simply been out of earshot the day before. They still were, but we found a rock formation that looked just like a very large person's seated backside. Not the kind of thing Pat will appreciate me telling. However, in one little box canyon where Andy had sent us, we discovered two roosting Long-eared Owls, which more than made up for the lack of wrens. They circled around us for several minutes, but, even though I had a camera in hand, I was too enchanted by the birds to use the darned thing.

We spent considerable time chasing sparrows on the high desert plain. Most of them were Vesper, Song, and Brewer's, but we also saw Black-throated, Lincoln's, and Dark-eyed (Oregon) Juncos. We were fortunate enough to see a pair of Golden Eagles in what appeared to be mating ritual or just playing. They soared and called above us for perhaps five minutes before disappearing.

The brochures and Andy both said that the best birding on JTNP was at Cottonwood Spring, on the far side of the park from 29 Palms. Of course we had to go, but after we drove about 90 minutes to get there we were somewhat disappointed. We did see California and Green-tailed Towhees, and a very distant look at a White-tailed Kite, but little else. On the way back, Pat saw a distant falcon alight on a crag far above us. We stopped just in time to see a Prairie Falcon stoop directly toward us, striking something just out of sight behind a rise. He passed within 30 feet of us.

The next day was Saturday, our last day before I had to report for work in Palm Springs. We planned to join a bird walk at Big Morongo Canyon. When we arrived, there were about eight people in the parking lot, all wearing binoculars, but as we walked up similarly attired, no one welcomed us at all, as if we'd taken an invisible pill. As we arrived, we saw a back-lit thrasher with a long curved bill, but we couldn't determine anything about color, so I asked the first person I saw for help. He informed me that it was a California Thrasher, and went back to his friends. That darned pill!

We introduced ourselves, and joined the walk, which started immediately. The first bird out of the chute was a Western Scrub Jay. One of the ladies raised her hand palm up in a feeding gesture; nothing happened. Within moments we saw another jay, and the woman repeated the gesture, and this time the jay took an unshelled peanut from her hand. We learned that she'd been feeding at least one jay for several years after the jay had come down one day and eaten part of a sandwich out of the hand of one of her guests.

I pointed out a Black-tailed Gnatcatcher that no one else had seen, and the group began to notice us. When I pointed out an Oak Titmouse, we were accepted as part of the group. Shortly after that, our leader, who was ahead of us, saw a Gray Flycatcher, determined after referring to a neat little table of traits of wee western flycatchers. We all got good looks at it.

Our leader spotted a Hermit Thrush in a dense tree. He used a small pocket mirror to show us where the thrush was. It was a neat idea, and I saw no reaction from the bird at all. We proceeded to a yard rich with feeders, and immediately saw Anna's and Costa's Hummingbirds and a Nuttall's Woodpecker. We departed after over three hours of birding, and everyone was very nice to us as we left. Our pills had worn off.

One lady had told us of a sure spot to see Pinyon Jays, so we decided to go. But first, we had one more place to look for

Canyon Wrens—a valley near Barker Dam. Two hours there yielded a Rock Wren and several Chipping Sparrows. Driving by one of the enormous piles of rock as tall as 10 to 20-story buildings, we spotted about 20 White-throated Swifts, lifers for both of us. We drove all around and walked a good bit looking for the jays. Finally, I found someone to ask, and they said the only time they were likely was early morning and late afternoon. By late afternoon, we had to be 80 miles away. She suggested that they might be "down in the neighborhoods" below us in the valley, so we looked, but to no avail. Time was running out, so we headed to our resort in Palm Springs, very tired and hungry.

We ate breakfast on the veranda Sunday, eyed carefully by Brewer's Blackbirds who stood on the wall less than 18 inches away, waiting to pirate anything not guarded. Breakfast was served buffet style, and one of us had to stay back to guard while the other went to get food. We had a few moments on Sunday to drive around. Walking to the car, we saw a Verdin in a shrub near the parking lot. We had rented a convertible, and as we drove we kept smelling a very enticing fragrance, but before we could place it, it would be gone. We finally stopped to look at a Cooper's Hawk and realized that the fragrance was an eighty-acre dill field. The aroma was tantalizing. This was date palm groves country. We stopped and bought some; they were delicious. The only new trip birds we added were several Vaux's Swifts we spotted above the car.

During the three days at the resort we saw Say's Phoebe, Great and Snowy Egrets, Double-crested Cormorant, and Canada Goose from the room.

We came home with 83 species, including 14 lifers for Pat and 10 for me. Alas, we ended the trip without seeing a Canyon Wren.

"On the Road Again" Articles

FOR SOME TIME I HAVE NOT NEEDED ANY "ON THE ROAD AGAIN" articles, as we had several in reserve. *The cupboard is bare.* Please send me your OTR stories. Electronic versions are easier for me to copy and paste, but send them by carrier pigeon if you have one. The addresses are on the back cover.

Please send other articles about your birding adventures, yard sightings, or just short things that were interesting, different, or funny.

Alabama Bird Records Committee Review List Update

By STEVE McCONNELL, *Secretary, ABRC, 2006-2008*



THE ALABAMA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE RECENTLY updated the list of species for which documentation of occurrence within Alabama is highly desired and solicited. In general this list includes species with 10 or fewer accepted Alabama records or less than three records within previous the 10 years.

No matter what your level of birding experience, observations (especially field notes, drawings, video or audio recordings, or photographs) of any species on this list

observed within Alabama are valuable and deserve a permanent place in our state database.

Forms and instructions for summarizing your observations into a reviewable record may be found on the AOS website at: <http://www.bham.net/aos/abrc/>

Please forward your records to either:

- Steve McConnell, 29 Village Drive NE, Hartselle, AL 35640 (swmavocet@aol.com), or
- Greg Jackson, 2220 Baneberry Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244 (g_d_jackson@bellsouth.net).

ALABAMA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REVIEW LIST

Revised February 2, 2006

Black-bellied Whistling Duck	2	(1996)	Whooping Crane	3 H	(1899)
Brant	6	(1996)	Mountain Plover	1	(1978)
White-cheeked Pintail	1	(1970)	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	(1988)
Garganey	1 H	(1968)	Purple Sandpiper	1	(1999)
Cinnamon Teal	4	(1995)	Curlew Sandpiper	2	(1980)
Eurasian Wigeon	8	(2005)	Ruff	6	(1903)
King Eider	1 H	(1964)	Eurasian Woodcock	1 H	(1889)
Harlequin Duck	5	(1904)	Long-tailed Jaeger	3 H	(2004)
Western Grebe	4	(1905)	Little Gull	8	(2003)
Audubon's Shearwater	9	(2000)	California Gull	5 H	(2004)
Leach's Storm-Petrel	4	(1997)	Thayer's Gull	5	(2005)
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	7	(2002)	Iceland Gull	5	(2005)
Red-billed Tropicbird	2	(2001)	Sabine's Gull	3	(1984)
White-tailed Tropicbird	2 H	(1969)	Roseate Tern	3	(1979)
Neotropic Cormorant	1	(1988)	Brown Noddy	6	(2004)
Great Cormorant	14	(1999)	Band-tailed Pigeon	1 H	(1971)
White-tailed Kite	11	(1996)	Flammulated Owl	1	(2003)
Northern Goshawk	5	(2005)	Snowy Owl	2	(1975)
Short-tailed Hawk	1	(2003)	Burrowing Owl	18	(1991)
Ferruginous Hawk	2 H	(1985)	Northern Saw-whet Owl	7	(2003)
Crested Caracara	1	(2001)	Lesser Nighthawk	4	(1994)
Prairie Falcon	4	(2004)	Vaux's Swift	1 H	(2003)
Limpkin	2	(2000)	Green Violet-ear	1	(1995)

Broad-billed Hummingbird	4	(2004)
Blue-throated Hummingbird	1 H	(1995)
Magnificent Hummingbird	2	(1994)
Anna's Hummingbird	3	(2004)
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	10	(2004)
Hammond's Flycatcher	1	(1992)
Dusky Flycatcher	1	(1997)
Cordilleran/Pacific-slope Flycatcher	1	(2003)
Brown-crested Flycatcher	1	(2000)
LaSagra's Flycatcher	1	(1963)
Say's Phoebe	3	(2000)
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	3	(2001)
Couch's Kingbird	1	(1988)
Couch's/Tropical Kingbird	3	(2001)
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	3	(1993)
Rock Wren	3	(1984)
Northern Wheatear	3	(1993)
Varied Thrush	1	(1992)
Sage Thrasher	5	(2004)
Yellow/Eastern Yellow Wagtail	1	(2003)
Yellow-green Vireo	1	(2003)
White-winged Crossbill	1	(2002)
Clark's Nutcracker	1	(2002)
Common Raven	10	(2002)
Black-throated Gray Warbler	11	(2001)
Kirtland's Warbler	3 H	(1966)
MacGillivray's Warbler	1	(2000)
Painted Redstart	1 H	(1978)
Green-tailed Towhee	3	(2004)
Spotted Towhee	1 H	(2001)
Lark Bunting	6	(1998)
Smith's Longspur	7	(1992)
Chestnut-collared Longspur	1	(2001)
Snow Bunting	1 H	(1999)
Western Meadowlark	24	(1995)
Great-tailed Grackle	1 H	(2000)
Bronzed Cowbird	10	(2005)
Bullock's Oriole	18	(1999)
Common Redpoll	10	(1994)

KEY
 Number = number accepted records
 H = hypothetical
 () = year last accepted record

JULY 1, 2005—DECEMBER 31, 2005

AOS Financial Report

STARTING BALANCE July 1, 2005 **\$8935.05**

INCOME

Deposits	\$ 0.00
AOS Dues	2409.00
CBA Dues	120.00
DIBS	60.00
Interest	7.75

TOTAL INCOME **\$2596.75**

EXPENSES

Deposit Joe Wheeler State Park	\$ 300
Printing	2566
Post Office Box	38
Website	75
Postage	290.05
Operation Migration	500
Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce	50
Petty Cash	27.19

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$3846.24**

ENDING BALANCE December 31, 2005 **\$7685.56**

Important Dates

THIRD FRIDAY—April 21-23, 2006
 Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama
SECOND FRIDAY—October 13-15, 2006
 Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama
FOURTH FRIDAY—January 26-28, 2007
 To Be Announced
 2006—Last year for Breeding Bird Atlas Data

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT RAYMOND REID, JR.

November 12, 1927–January 13, 2006

Excerpts from Eulogy delivered by Donald B. Sweeney, Jr.



BOB REID WAS AN EXTRAORDINARILY TALENTED AND enormously generous person. He made a difference. Bob was always loyal. An incredibly esteemed birder, Bob's importance to the birding community of this state could hardly be exaggerated.

Bob's data collection from bird counts and point counts were deemed the best and most reliable resource of birding information by the U.S. Forestry Division for programs such as the Breeding Bird Survey. Officials from the U.S. Forestry Division knew that Bob's data would be carefully collected, scrupulously accurate, and painstakingly gathered.

In the official Alabama Coastal Birding Trail brochure which is distributed nationwide, the following credit appears:

"The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail was originally the brainchild of Bob Reid, a birder by avocation, conservationist and avid supporter of Partners in Flight and a member of the Alabama Ornithological Society."

If you traveled by car anywhere with Bob, you could count on taking a delightful, extra long time because every bird in the brush, every bird on the wing, and every bird on the wire had to be observed, listened to, commented on and delighted in.

Greg Harber, Bob's dear friend from the Audubon Society, shared a wonderful illustration of this aspect of Bob Reid.

A report came to Bob that two Swallow-tailed Kites had been sighted near Odenville. Bob got directions, called Greg and then picked him up and they drove to the area where the kites had been spotted. They saw nothing. Still nothing after driving around for an hour and a half. Finally, Bob told Greg to drive back to the area which they had first visited.

When they got there Bob had Greg stop at a farm house. Bob got out of the car and proceeded straight to the farm house taking his *Peterson's Field Guide* with him. After Bob knocked on the door, the owner of the farm—a total stranger—came to the door. What Bob said to this stranger,

Greg didn't know. But five minutes later the farmer, Greg and Bob were on the farmer's back patio keenly waiting for a Swallow-tailed Kite. Bob was irrepensible. A tsunami of enthusiasm, he no doubt engulfed that stranger the way Bob's cheerful enthusiasm engulfed and embraced all of us, one way or the other.

And incidentally, the Good Lord delivered that morning not just two Swallow-tailed Kites, but two Mississippi Kites as well.

And that farmer is probably still talking about the stranger that visited him that morning—a stranger with infectious enthusiasm.

Bob Reid was a brilliant lawyer (*Summa Cum Laude* graduate of Washington and Lee; *Magna Cum Laude* graduate of Harvard Law School), a consummate musician, a truly esteemed birder, a passionate conservationist, and, a person absolutely devoted to his wife, his sister, and his extended family.

"The magic moments he created are beyond belief. He truly lived to make everyone he met see and appreciate the wonders of nature. The world will be dimmer without Bob."

—Mary Waldrop and Harriet Wright

"In so many ways we remember his exuberance and enthusiasm in showing and sharing the special birds he had spotted, especially with new birders and children."

—Jessica Germany and Bob Tate

"I sure hope God loves to talk about birds with his newly arriving folks. If so, God—pull up a chair and sit down. You are in for a good time."

—Bob Sergeant

"I am in tears. I will never know Bob's equal."

—Colonel Bob Reed

"If a state could weep, Alabama would."

—Lucy Duncan

ALABAMA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

*Closing in on a Great Finish!*By RICK WEST, *State Coordinator, Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas Project**Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas
Objectives for 2006**Primary Objective*

Revisit blocks in the statistical set to add new species. These are the Central East blocks in every quad (every other quad on the Coastal Plain). This is the must-do core science of the Project; the minimum obligation we undertook. Particularly keep in mind Greg's list of "Boundary" species needing delineation. (Please see "Boundary Species.")

Your guide is how many new species you can find in a block, not how many already reported. The list of species found in the quad, but not yet in the block, is a starting point for species to look for. The primary results from this Project will be the per cent of sample blocks in which a certain species was encountered within the state, county or certain ecoregion.

Secondary objectives

ADD ADDITIONAL SPECIES TO THE QUAD (or double quad). This will provide the best maps for publication. Do this in several ways—

Certainly visit "Special Habitat" blocks for new species if not already done.

Visit promising bird habitats which may offer new species. For example:

- Towns for House Sparrows, etc., but also for certain goodies like House Wren and Song Sparrow.
- Fields for Meadowlarks, also goodies like Dickcissel, Horned Lark, and Lark and Grasshopper Sparrows.
- Rivers, streams and ponds for Wood Ducks, Kingfishers, and floodplain passerines. Take or promote boat canoe trips on waterways, as a way to fill in the distribution pattern of these species.



- Marshes for Green Heron, Red-winged Blackbird, also Least Bittern, King Rail.

Look for distribution "holes" that need filling in, and for distribution edges where your observation may extend a breeding distribution.

VERIFY IMPORTANT SPECIES—Confirm breeding Yellow Warbler in the north, Goldfinches in the south, and Marsh Wren on the coast. Also try to confirm reports of species seemingly out of range.

BE ALERT FOR SPECIAL AND UNDER-REPORTED SPECIES—This includes Accipiters, Herons & Egrets in rookeries, Turkeys [in the north],

Whip-poor-wills, Bachman's Sparrow, Least Bittern and Rallids (Rails) away from the coast, locally-breeding or colonial maritime species such as Willet, Least Tern, etc.

VISIT SOME OF THE 1500 REMAINING UNTOUCHED BLOCKS—We have averaged roughly 900 new blocks/year.

This will even out the state distribution maps for common species, and add detail for those with discontinuous distribution. New hot spots and special habitats are just waiting for you, and these should be put on the map. Canoe trips, etc., help with access.

UPGRADE BREEDING CODES. On all your field trips be alert to upgrade breeding codes and add confirmations to the database. Trips just for upgrading codes should not be made.

*Congratulations! You Missed a
Common Bird!*

ONE OF THE HARDEST PIECES OF INFORMATION to get for the Atlas is a "white space" representing a bird that was not found in the midst of reports for this species found in surrounding blocks. Don't feel bad if you missed a Bobwhite, Pewee, Summer Tanager, or Grackle in a block where

you know it should occur. This will lead to a gap on the distribution map. But to have a gap, we must first find the species in all the surrounding blocks. Then it is prudent to go take a second look to be sure it isn't present in your block. Having done that, you have added the information that the species is sufficiently uncommon that it was not located by the Atlas method. This does not guarantee its absence, but does contribute to the interest of the map for that species.

So, congratulations for missing a common bird!

Boaters Wanted— Good Birding, But Not for Sissies

ERIC SOEHREN GREATLY CONTRIBUTED to Alabama ornithology by undertaking to survey 25-mile stretches of four rivers in Alabama. Geoff Hill paddled the Pea River looking for warblers and reported his results to the Atlas.

That still leaves hundreds of miles of unexplored Alabama rivers where Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and other wonderful birds may live in primeval isolation. We really need help getting a better picture of what is out there—hundreds of Redstarts and other warblers, Wood Ducks, kites and others.

I have two aluminum canoes, complete with paddles and life preservers to loan.

If you have a license, and the skill and inclination to operate safely, I also have small motors and motor mounts to go along with them. All it takes is sufficient warning for me to bring them to you. Any takers?

"Boundary" Species to Delineate

ASPECIAL EFFORT WILL BE MADE THIS YEAR to better define the distribution boundaries of some species that breed more commonly in one part of the state than in other parts. These boundaries are not clear and are different for each species. So we encourage Atlasers to keep these species in mind and on their "hit list," particularly along the edges where they occur.

This is the last year before we close the project, so everyone is encouraged to help by reporting sightings after mid-May.

For your report to be usable we only need: the species, the location (within a half mile), the date, and your name.

If you locate a nest (please do not disturb), or notice breeding behavior such as carrying food or behaving like a pair, that is a bonus.

Please report sightings to your Regional Coordinator or to Rick West at RickLWest@aol.com, phone 334-324-6477, or PO Box 1325, Dauphin Island, AL 36528.

Anhinga
Swallow-tailed Kite
Mississippi Kite
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Purple Gallinule
Common Moorhen
American Woodcock
Common Ground-Dove
Whip-poor-will
Eastern Phoebe
Blue-headed Vireo
Fish Crow
Horned Lark
Tree Swallow
Cliff Swallow
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Nuthatch
House Wren
Cedar Waxwing
Blue-winged Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Swainson's Warbler
Ovenbird
Louisiana Waterthrush
Scarlet Tanager
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Dickcissel
Baltimore Oriole
American Goldfinch

Distribution Maps and the Task Ahead

THE ADJACENT MAPS FOR FOUR SPECIES illustrate where we stand with one aspect of the Atlas Project. These maps are simplified so they show only the results from the 586 CE blocks selected to provide a statistical sample for the state. We have worked these blocks intensively to approach a complete list of species breeding in each of these blocks.

When the Atlas is done, we can use the results in these blocks to determine differences in distribution of each species in parts of the state, or between Alabama and other states, or between Alabama now and a future Alabama. For our comparisons to be valid, each of the blocks needs to have as complete a species list as possible.

We are not finished with these blocks, yet, as discussed below.

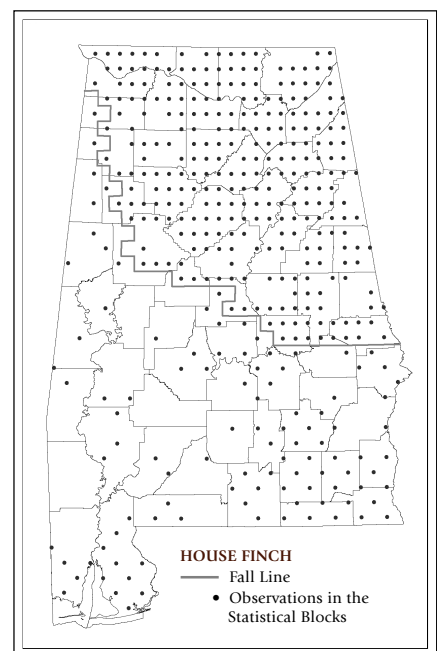
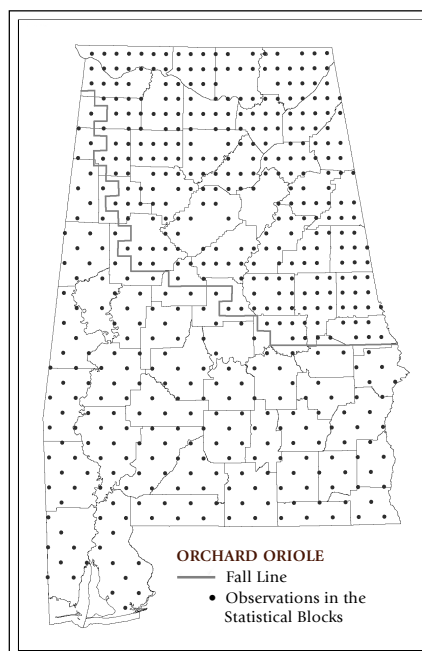
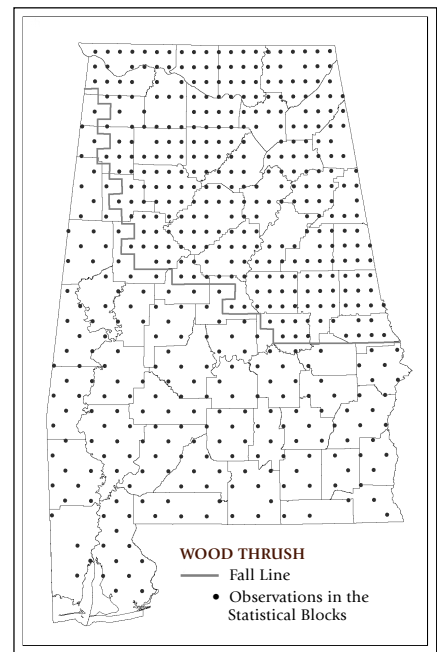
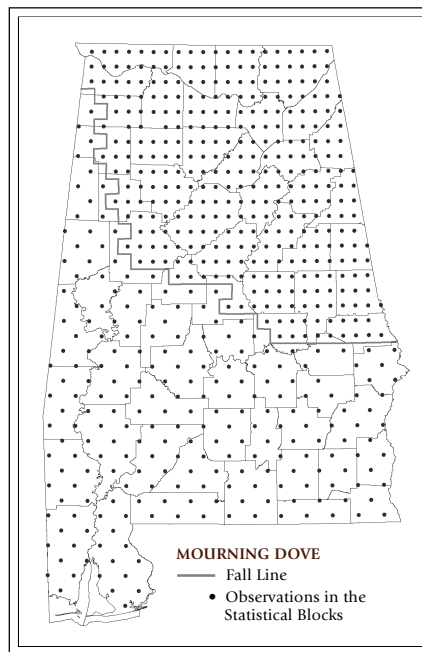
MOURNING DOVE—Its map demonstrates we have covered most of these blocks. It is probably truly missing in the Bee Branch Wilderness of the Bankhead National Forest, and on the often-flooded area between the forks of the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers. We have 4 other unworked blocks to visit and find this species.

WOOD THRUSH—Considered a species of conservation concern, Alabama seems to serve as an important breeding area. Yet it has not been reported in 66 blocks. Some of the gaps are clumped up, suggesting ecological reasons rather than incomplete surveys. Gaps must be checked.

ORCHARD ORIOLE—It is obviously scarce in the highland urban areas in Jefferson, St. Clair and northern Shelby counties. Small patches where it was not reported, particularly at the Mont-

gomery latitude, should be revisited to confirm its scarcity in those blocks.

HOUSE FINCH—It favors the highlands, and prefers farmsteads to the forested river bottoms of southwest Alabama. Will it continue to expand or perhaps retrench following its apogee? If we have thoroughly surveyed for this species we will be able to tell by a follow-up study 20 or 50 years hence.



The smaller gaps and even the isolated locations should be revisited.

These four species maps illustrate what we must accomplish for the relatively common species. Please also notice the list of 37 less common species for which we must better delineate the distribution boundaries. (Please see "Boundary Species.")

When you consider all 586 blocks and some 150 or more species, it mounts up to a huge task of visiting and eeking out a few more species from each of these blocks. Doing this is essential.

We must have all the help you can provide during May–July, but especially right after May 15. Please mark off your calendars right now.

Bird Survey is not just for Bird Watchers Hunters and Fishermen Needed

Please show this news release to your hunter friends and others, and submit it to your local press.

A WILDLIFE SURVEY OF BOTH GAME and non-game birds, conducted across Alabama for the past four years, will be completed in 2006. In close cooperation with the Department of Conservation's Non-Game Wildlife Section, the Alabama Ornithological Society has assembled an army of volunteer professional and amateur bird watchers who have the skill to identify by sight or sound every species that breeds in Alabama. These birders have brought this project close to successful completion, but now they need added input from hunters and other outdoorsmen who are, of course, experts in detecting turkeys, wood ducks and other species.

They urgently need from you information on:

- Barn Owls (monkey-faced owls) between May 1 and August 31 (often nesting in blinds or farm buildings).
- Woodcocks (timber doodles) doing their sky dance after February 1 or any found after March 1
- Wild Turkeys in the Tennessee Valley southward through Blount, Jefferson and Shelby Counties between March 15 and July 31.
- Other owls between March 1 and July 5 if you recognize the species.

From fishermen and others:

- Kingfishers between April 1 and June 10.
- Wood Ducks between April 1 and August 31.
- Hawk and Vulture nests if you know the species.

This is a breeding season survey, so the date ranges given above are important. Each report, in order to be useful for scientific purposes, must include all of these items: species, date, location within a half mile, and the observer's name.

We would like additional breeding evidence you may have noticed, such as a brood, pair, courtship, or nest.

What we will publish is ONLY species, location within 10 square miles, and breeding evidence. The remaining information will not be passed on or published, but is needed to prepare and edit the study.

Alabama is the last state east of the Mississippi to complete this type of survey. The published results will provide a reliable picture of the breeding distribution of all species of birds in Alabama in far greater detail than has ever been available. These maps will be useful to scientists, land managers, conservationists, and government agencies. They are greatly informative to those interested in birds.

To report your observations, please contact Rick West at Email RickLWest@aol.com or leave a message at 334-324-6477 or mail a note to him at PO Box 1325, Dauphin Island, AL 36528.

Your outdoor observations can make our study complete. Please share them with us so that we will have a permanent record.

We Are Closing In on a Great Finish

OUR BREEDING BIRD ATLAS IS AN IMPORTANT PROJECT, producing a view of our birdlife for us and the world to see—conservationists, scientists, land managers, and birders.

It is important to have as good a result as we can possibly squeeze out. In one more year we will have accomplished that, with your help.

When I guessed at goals for the finished project back in 2002, I set them too low. That is, I did not fully appreciate the richness of Alabama's birdlife. The Project is going so well that we have already almost accomplished the 2006 goals I had provisionally set!

*Number of Species found in the
623 Important CE Blocks*

(includes the 586 Statistical and 37 Habitat and Edge Blocks)

No. of Species	Done 2005	Projected		Revised 2006
		2005	2006	
80+	9	12	15	13
70-79	71	35	40	100
60-69	256	230	260	300
50-59	189	240	260	200
40-49	62	66	48	10
10-39	29	40	0	0
<10	7	0	0	0

The only thing to do is to raise our goals. We can do better. An Atlas is never “finished” because we can never be sure we have detected every breeding species in the areas we visit. All we can do is our best to provide a good record of what is here, now.

We need help from all birders. For the past and present Atlases, we need to revisit as many of the Statistical blocks as possible, choosing those in which we think we can add the most new species. For all birders, we need a lot of trips through some of the 1500 unstudied blocks just to see what is there. (Please see Goals and New Atlases.)

The compensation I get from leading this project is the reward for doing a good job. I am getting a great reward. Thank you very much for all your help.

*Special Note for Those Who Have Not
Fully Participated in the Atlas Project*

“Certainly having a purpose and focus to our birding in one of the atlasing blocks will make our time more interesting.”

—Harriett Wright

ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ATLAS IS EASY, fun, and does not require more time or skill than you have. It does require good timing—between May 15 and June

30, and early is better. It makes me sad not to have you try out such a wonderful way to bird before the project closes—forever!

What I ask is that you select one or more Blocks near you that have not been visited. Drive out some morning and just go birding. Record the species you see, and send them in. It is as easy as the GBBC, done at a much birdier time of year, and has much more lasting value. The Regional Coordinators can email or mail you a map, field card for the area, and what to do.

The field card is, itself, a work of art—with three lists on it:

- A list of all breeding species found in a 7-county area;
- A list of all breeding species found in the surrounding 100 square miles; and
- A list of all breeding species already found in your assigned 10-square-mile area.

That, alone, should be enough to get you interested.

*Quantitative Summer
Bird Projects—
the “Whats and Whys”*

By GREG D. JACKSON

SOME AOS MEMBERS HAVE WONDERED about the purpose of the various quantitative summer bird censuses, and how they differ from and interact with our Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) program. I’ll make a stab at answering these questions, focusing on active projects in the state. Hopefully better understanding will lead to increased participation in all the breeding bird projects.

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), administered in Alabama by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 1966, is familiar to many members. This is a system of routes involving most counties of the state, with 50 consecutive stops one half-mile apart designated for three-minute point counts. (A point count basically involves recording birds in one spot for a timed period.) The same route and stops are repeated annually, with some routes now having decades of cumulative data. Surveys are run in our area from late May to the end of June.

One of the primary uses of this longstanding project is to look for trends in breeding populations throughout the country. By examining years of data obtained under similar conditions each time, one can postulate whether certain species are increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable over the long haul. This can be applied on regional and continental scales, and is probably the most important aspect of the BBS. These results are helpful in determining conservation priorities and strategies, particularly for birds that are not rare and do not occupy limited and isolated habitats (which may not be sampled well by random, roadside counts).

Another use of the BBS program is to show relative abundance of various species. Any bird count is just a sample, and never should be expected to truly demonstrate the number of birds in an area. However, relative approximations of many species can be made from one area to the next, given enough data points. The BBS can show the general distribution of many birds, and maps have been generated to show broad approximations of breeding ranges.

All points on the BBS routes in Alabama are correlated with specific BBA blocks, and the data generated by the BBS each year is fed directly into the BBA program. These data can be used to show presence of species in a block, and used to help determine relative abundance. So the BBS data are vital parts of our BBA program.

The BBA program also can benefit from shortened versions of the BBS-type routes, known as mini-routes, to help with quantitative assessments in blocks. These consist of 15 three-minute point counts along routes totally within one block, preferably sampling a variety of habitats. The mini-routes are not as randomly assigned as the BBS routes, but still provide useful information if established properly. Other point counts, such as those conducted by the U.S. Forest Service in our national forests, also hopefully will be incorporated into the atlas project.

Point counts are not the only way to accumulate quantitative data. We've done Summer Birds Counts (SBCs) in nine counties since 2000. These are roughly six-hour counts, from dawn to 1100 hours, occurring within a two-week period of mid-June. This period was selected to be within the safe dates for most species, and therefore most birds discovered should not be migrants. The SBCs are conducted somewhat like a Christmas Bird Count, with parties assigned to specific areas; counting in a particular area is done

on a single morning. Though finding species and counting numbers are paramount, as in a Christmas count, notes are made of observed breeding activity using atlas designators. Since 2001, the party areas have been atlas blocks, feeding data directly into the BBA program.

Our SBC program has two major goals. Counties are selected at this point with emphasis on areas needing data for the BBA program. In effect, the SBC acts as a blockbusting method, quickly acquiring data in areas of the state without much atlas work. Though most blocks are not "completed" in one morning for atlas purposes, a tremendous amount of information is generated and these areas are well on their way toward completion. An advantage of the SBCs over the BBS program is that observers can bird wherever they wish in a block, searching specific habitats for special species. This gives the SBC program an advantage in detecting unusual species with limited distribution, as compared with the far more random nature of stops in the BBS program.

The other goal of these counts, of course, is to provide quantitative assessments of birds. Again, this is just a sampling technique, but does provide birds-per-party-hour values (like Christmas counts), and population information can be gleaned for species relative to others. We may be able to correlate the data gleaned in this fashion with the point count data generated by the BBS and other projects, at least in broad terms of relative abundance.

A variant of the SBCs is the "timed count," where you count birds in a BBA block for at least three hours early in the morning in prime breeding season and gather the same type of data as on the SBC. This can be done in any block, but those conducted outside the mid-June period may need certain species adjusted for safe dates.

Participation in all these quantitative evaluations requires experience with the songs of the expected breeding species. Birding by ear is essential on these surveys, far more than on many other ventures such as Christmas counts or even, at basic levels, the Atlas. So leading a party on an SBC, or running a BBS route, does require a reasonable amount of field experience to gather accurate data. However, a great way for inexperienced birders to participate and sharpen their skills is to accompany and assist more seasoned observers, such as helping on the SBC as a party member. These quantitative surveys thus are open to participation in some manner by interested birders at all levels.

JOE WHEELER STATE PARK, JANUARY 27-29, 2006

Winter Meeting Report

By GREGORY J. HARBER



THE WINTER MEETING WAS HELD JANUARY 27-29, 2006 at Joe Wheeler State Park, on the banks of the Tennessee River near Rogersville. The weather for the weekend was near perfect, and the birds didn't disappoint either.

The meeting opened as customary with the Friday night Social Hour, attended by members who had come from far and wide to enjoy the birds of north Alabama for the weekend. I was encouraged to see so many of our coastal-dwelling members, knowing that while their lives and homes are still recovering from last summer's hurricanes, they were able to join us for at least this little respite.

Dr. Paul Kittle presented a historical perspective of the birds of north Alabama to open the Members' Favorite Slides segment of the evening program. His informative narrative was followed by a PowerPoint presentation by Dana Hamilton, featuring splendid images from trips she and Stan have taken in recent years. Captured in the lens of their camera were stunning close-up images of familiar lions and cheetahs from Africa, and not-so-familiar lemurs and other critters and birds from Madagascar and Malaysia. I closed out the segment with a musical tribute in memory of our beloved friend Bob Reid, showing slides of the many places to which Bob has introduced me through the years.

Saturday morning dawned a bit overcast and cold—a reminder that this was north Alabama and it was the end of January. The sailboats in the marina were perfectly reflected in the mirror-still waters of the river. Far off in the deeper reaches of the river, gulls flew in lazy circles. The two field trip parties went in different directions after breakfast; one headed east to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and one went west to meet with Paul Kittle in Florence, for a trip to Waterloo and the surrounding area. Ron and I went west.



The low-hanging morning clouds began to lift as we drove westward across the rural landscape, with the morning sun bathing the barns and farmhouses a stark white in contrast to the faintly purple clouds associated with a cold front moving in from the west. The sinkhole ponds and rolling fields of cornstalk stubble was a scene worthy of a Wyeth landscape.

Our first stop at a large gravel bar did not yield as many birds as one would have expected but we did find a Bald Eagle perched in a tree across the river, and some Common Goldeneyes downstream of where we were standing. Off we

went in search of more birds in Waterloo, at Second Creek. Here we found a smattering of ducks and, as a bonus, the Bald Eagle nest near here held one adult.

The vibrant plumage of the Hooded Mergansers remained with us as we headed back east to the Natchez Trace rest area on the south side of the river. Again, the scarcity of birds was notable; but as is often the case, when one doesn't have a wide selection you tend

to focus on the ones that are present. The large mudflat appeared devoid of bird life initially, but a sweep of the brown expanse revealed upwards of 60 cryptically colored Wilson's Snipe. Also present were Water Pipits, their little forms poring over the flat.

Lunch at the Oakland Café was a study in leisurely dining, after which we drove south to Key Cave NWR. A new kiosk and observation tower showcase the features of this seemingly arid landscape. Truth be told, while there are no surface water streams in the region, the porous limestone beneath our feet cleanses the water seeping from the sinkhole ponds into the caves below. This unique hydrology helps to explain why the protected cavefish are found here and nowhere else.

The Hamiltons and I left the group to return to the lodge for the board meeting, but the others enjoyed tramping through the winter grasses to try and flush up a few spar-

rows. White-crowned Sparrows were seen briefly by a few quick eyes, but as anyone familiar with this species knows, they don't offer many second looks. Fox Sparrows were more accommodating.

Meanwhile, the Wheeler group was enjoying the birds at the Beaverdam Peninsula, and then on to White Springs dike to try and locate the signature bird of the weekend for many—an adult male Vermilion Flycatcher! Like the Hooded Mergansers of the morning, the flycatcher proved the point that the winter dress code is not necessarily a drab one, which makes viewing them all the more spectacular in a landscape dominated by gray and brown with only a smattering of green from pines and cedar trees.

Dr. Geoff Hill, as Stan Hamilton said in his introduction, is one of "our own." Geoff's Saturday evening program about plumage coloration in birds was fascinating, detailing the research that he and his students at Auburn University are conducting. As with many biological processes, even the simplest subject is underlain with numerous factors impacting the final outcome. In this case, we're talking about the brilliant hues that decorate the birds we so deeply enjoy.

Earlier I mentioned a weather front approaching from the west. The initial wall of clouds seen in the morning were a precursor to the business end that followed Saturday night. A steady drizzle fell in the darkness, scrubbing the slate clean so that by dawn Sunday the palette was fresh and new.

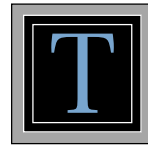
The morning field trip was closer to home. The water sluicing through the spillway at Wheeler Dam served to attract large numbers of gulls attracted to the fish caught up in the roiling flow. Time and again, as if on an invisible conveyor belt, the gulls would fly up to the foot of the dam and follow the action downstream, dipping into the water to catch their morning meal. There were no lazy circles here! Among the many Ring-billed Gulls were a Glaucous Gull, a Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Thayer's Gull hybrid. Three spectacular birds, hidden among the wheeling masses. It pays to be persistent with gulls.

As I stood watching the gulls, the fits of laughter emanating from the clusters of birders gathered by their scopes struck a chord that resonated within me. How blessed and lucky we are that a group as diverse as ours can come together from points north and south, east and west, and find enjoyment in each other's company. And in some pretty neat birds too.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2006

Board of Directors Meeting

By MIKE AND KAREN WILSON



THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 3:07 pm. Bob Reed reminded the Board that the general membership had never voted on the new officers approved by the board in the fall meeting in Birmingham, so he was going to start the meeting Saturday night and put that before the membership for a vote. Also, up for a vote would be the board's decision to raise membership dues and add a late registration fee for meetings. He was then going to turn the meeting over to Stan Hamilton.

President Stan Hamilton reported several committee changes. (See inside front cover.)

Treasurer Frank Farrell reported the AOS checking account has been moved from Colonial Bank to Compass Bank for convenience, but the AOS certificate of deposit remains at Colonial Bank for now.

Annabel Markel presented to the board an idea she has for a new AOS tee shirt and Bob Reed suggested AOS publish a new brochure. The board appointed groups to undertake these tasks.

Rick West gave the board an in-depth report of where we stand with the Breeding Bird Atlas and reminded us that this is the last year. Financial compensation and matching state grants were discussed.

Greg Harber gave a report from Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries in which he lauded the general membership of AOS for their response to a fund drive that netted almost \$31,000 for land acquisition.

Under New Business, the board voted to cancel AOS participation in the North American Migration Count, citing the fact that nothing is being done with the data that is compiled. The board will also be looking into alternative sites for a fall meeting in case another bad hurricane season knocks Dauphin Island from contention. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

*Winter 2006 AOS Compilation List
Joe Wheeler State Park,
January 27-29, 2006*

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS WERE THE THAYER'S, LESSER BLACK-backed, and Glaucous Gulls, Ross's Goose, and Vermilion Flycatcher.

Greater White-fronted Goose
Snow Goose
Ross's Goose
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Gadwall
American Wigeon
American Black Duck
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Northern Bobwhite
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
American White Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk

Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Virginia Rail
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Killdeer
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Least Sandpiper
Dunlin
Wilson's Snipe
Bonaparte's Gull
Thayer's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Glaucous Gull
Forster's Tern
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Vermilion Flycatcher
Loggerhead Shrike
Blue-headed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Horned Lark
Carolina Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Carolina Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
Hermit Thrush
American Robin
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
American Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler

Pine Warbler
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

All reported sightings will be accepted and published in *The Yellowhammer*. However, the meeting compilation list in *The Yellowhammer* is not an official record. Species that are **bold-faced**, or listed in the Hypothetical section of the AOS Field Card must be supported by complete written details and submitted to, and accepted by, the Records Committee to become an official AOS record. *Italicized species* usually need written details but these may be brief. Out of season and locally rare birds should also be documented. Refer to the front page of the AOS Field Card for additional details.

Electronic Yellowhammer?

IT COSTS WELL OVER A DOLLAR AND A HALF TO PRINT AND MAIL the *Yellowhammer*. We are delivering, on a totally voluntary basis, *The Yellowhammer* via the Internet. If you would like to receive your *Yellowhammer*, in color, as a pdf file, please email the editor at Robert.Reed@psc.alabama.gov.

Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions

Summer 2006	June 5, 2006
Fall 2006	August 15, 2006
Winter 2006	November 15, 2006

AOS SPRING MEETING 2006

Meet the Speaker: "Go East, Young Bird!"

By KIMBALL GARRETT



IMBALL GARRETT has been the Ornithology Collections Manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County since 1982; a lifelong Californian, he has been birding since the late 1960s.

He has co-authored with Jon Dunn the standard regional reference for his area (*Birds of Southern California: Status and Distribution; now out of print*), and more recently the Peterson Field Guide to Warblers of North America (1997). A long-time member of the California Bird Records Committee, Kimball has also served on the ABA Checklist Committee; he is co-editor of the Southern California Region for North American Birds and a co-author of the forthcoming Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas. He recently contributed several family accounts to the National Geographic Complete Birds of North America.

Kimball's research interests center on the status, distribution, field identification and geographic variation of the birds of western North America and Mexico; he has also been studying populations of parrots and other naturalized non-native bird species in California for over a decade.

THE TIMING AND GEOGRAPHY of bird vagrancy in North America is as complex as the migration routes of the continent's diverse avifauna. Nevertheless, some general patterns have emerged that allow us to predict with some confidence when and where vagrants might appear. A couple of decades back it seemed that vagrancy was a one-way street, with far more "eastern" birds ending up on the West Coast than "western" birds on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. For various reasons there are still some imbalances, but increased observer awareness of identification criteria and the "when and where" of vagrancy has resulted in an impressive list of western North American species now found as vagrants or even regular visitors to the Gulf Region.

Kimball Garrett's talk at the AOS spring meeting will give a brief overview of the geography and seasonality of bird migration in western North America (especially California

and adjacent regions) and discuss how these patterns impact which species show up in the East (including the Gulf states) and when. Most of the talk will consist of a review of the field identification criteria of a selection of western vagrants (actual or potential) to Alabama.

What would bring a Costa's Hummingbird to Alabama, and how would you know one if you found one? Why should you not hold your breath to find a Wren in Alabama, and why can you be sure that a Yellow-billed Magpie in Alabama probably came out of a cage? Could you pick out that Pacific Golden-Plover, California Gull, Hammond's Flycatcher, MacGillivray's Warbler, or Western Tanager from their regularly occurring relatives? Will that Spotted Towhee show up in spring, summer, fall, or winter? Could that White-crowned Sparrow or Swainson's Thrush be a vagrant from a western breeding population? Finally, why is it important to fully document sightings of unusual species and what can we learn about bird biology and conservation from patterns of vagrancy?

Important Spring Meeting Banquet Changes

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, THE SEAFOOD GALLEY WAS DESTROYED by one of the hurricanes. Therefore, the Saturday night banquet will be different. *This means that we will have to make changes* to comply with the requirements of a new caterer.

The menu will be different, and improved, to include barbeque along with seafood. At the time of this writing, the exact menu is not nailed down completely. However, it will include at least two kinds of barbeque; shrimp and catfish; and three sides: potato salad, coleslaw and baked beans. The dessert will be banana pudding. We are still negotiating to see if we can add crab claws.

The cost will be \$15.00 per person.

Now, the really important part. The caterer requires a total count *two weeks* in advance. This means that *no registration for the banquet will be accepted unless received, regardless of postmark, by April 10, 2006*. You may still register for the meeting after April 10, but the registration fee increases to \$20.

I know that this is a change, and it may prove inconvenient to some, but I hope each of you will appreciate the necessity of bidding by the requirements of putting together a meeting of this nature.

— Stan Hamilton

AOS SPRING MEETING 2006

Dauphin Island, Alabama, April 21-23, 2006

FRIDAY, APRIL 21

- 3:00 p.m. Sea Lab Registration at the Chamber Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Check-in begins at the Chamber Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Pot Luck snack and open bar
(Bring your favorite snack or dessert)
- 7:00 p.m. Member slide show

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

- 6:00 a.m. Complimentary Danish and coffee at the Sea Lab
- 7:00 a.m. Field trips—Meet at Sea Lab parking lot
- 2:00 p.m. Board meeting—Galathea Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Open bar social
- 6:45 p.m. Seafood banquet
- 8:00 p.m. Program—Kimball Garrett

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

- 6:00 a.m. Complimentary Danish and coffee at the Sea Lab
- 7:00 a.m. Field trips—Meet at Sea Lab parking lot
- 12:00 p.m. Compilation—Goat Tree

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INFORMATION

Sea Lab—Double occupancy rooms with bath on hall available for 42. (First come, first served.) Bring your own linens, blankets, and towels. Available at 5 p.m. Friday, April 16. See registration form.

Motels—Gulf Breeze and Harbor Lights Motel:
(800) 286-0296

Rentals—Boardwalk Realty, Inc: (877) 861-3992; Dauphin Island Real Estate: (888) 707-6444; Tyson Real Estate: (251) 861-8312; Pickett Real Estate: (800) 861-3646; Island Realty Corp.: (877) 219-7392; Angel Realty: (888) 473-5534

Websites—www.gulfinfo.com and www.dauphinisland.cc

FRIDAY NIGHT POT LUCK

Don't forget to bring your favorite appetizer, snack, dessert, etc. for the social hour before the Members Slide Show at 7:00 p.m. on Friday night.

AOS SPRING MEETING 2006 REGISTRATION FORM

Complete and return to:

Frank Farrell, 2744 Darlene Circle, Birmingham, Alabama 35235
Telephone: (205) 815-3554 • E-mail: frank_far@msn.com

Please make checks payable to AOS. Checks must be received by April 10, 2006. After April 10, registration fee is \$20.

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 E-mail Address _____

AOS DUES Student: \$10 • Individual: \$20 • Family: \$30 • Sustaining: \$40
 Life (individual): \$300 • Life (family): \$500

SEA LAB
(See Box Opposite)

Friday Night
 How Many _____ Amount \$ _____

Saturday Night
 How Many _____ Amount \$ _____

Registration @ \$15 per person (\$20 after April 10)	\$
Banquet @ \$15 per person	\$
Sea Lab @ \$15 per person per night	\$
AOS 2006 Dues	\$
DIBS Land Purchase Fund Contribution	\$
Coastal Birding Association 2006 Dues (\$5)	\$
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$

THE YELLOWHAMMER

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Life (family): \$500



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