

# THE YELLOWHAMMER

VOLUME 26, NO. 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SUMMER 2006

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

FOUNDED 1952



## IN THIS ISSUE

4

ON THE ROAD AGAIN  
THE WALLS OF JERICHO  
*by Col. Bob Reed*

6

THE MARION STATE FISH  
HATCHERY  
*by Nick Nichols*

7

PERRY LAKES PARK  
CANOPY TOWER  
*by Gregory J. Harber*

10

AOS 2006 SPRING MEETING  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
*by Karen Wilson*

10

AOS MEMBERSHIP  
CONTEST!  
*by Larry Gardella*

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OVER 200,000 BREEDING BIRD records for Alabama? You've got to be kidding! As you read this, the field work for the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project is winding down after five years. The number of reports and distribution of species has far exceeded our expectations. This is going to be very good!

We can never adequately thank Rick West for his tireless dedication to the Atlas project; for his leadership and knowledge of what should be done; and for knowing how to accomplish it. Many, many thanks to Greg Jackson and the Regional Coordinators for the endless hours of work "behind the scenes," in addition to their contributions to the field work. Finally, thanks to each of you who has contributed to the project; whether by sending records of the birds that nest in your yard or by going out to cover atlas blocks in places that you've never considered as birding destinations before.

Prior to this year, Dana and I have only birded the far west portion of the state in late summer to look for Swallowtail and Mississippi Kites in the grasslands near Aliceville. I confess to some serious procrastination about covering some of the areas such as Fernbank, Hightog, Millport, and Pickensville. Although a life-long Alabama resident, I had not previously had a reason to venture into this part of the state. Instead of locating endless red dirt fields, we were amazed that the area has broad expanses of swamp as far as one can see, mixed deciduous forests, and lots of hilly terrain. The variety of breeding bird activity in these remote, seldom-birded locations in the far west central portion of the state startled us. Of course, discovering unexpected diversity is one of the things that we had hoped to find when the atlas project began five years ago. We have added new areas to our list of locations that warrant return visits for spring and summer birding.

Certain aspects of this have been particularly satisfying for me. I've been delighted to locate breeding Prothonotary Warblers literally from one side of the state to the other; from the swamps of Fernbank, to the woody banks of Choccolocco Creek, with good numbers observed at



Wheeler Wildlife Refuge. I suspect that we have all become more aware of how fortunate we are to live in a state with such rich diversity of habitat and a climate that provides the opportunity for year-round birding.

The recently established North Alabama Birding Trail provides excellent opportunities for locating first-rate birding spots from Waterloo to Little River Canyon and lots of fantastic locations in between.

In May, the first annual North Alabama Birding Festival in Decatur, under the leadership of Dwight Cooley, was a rousing success. For those of us who have primarily birded Wheeler NWR in the fall and winter, birding Wheeler during mi-

gration was a real treat!

We highly recommend it for next year.

Each month, the River Region Birding Club, under the leadership of Tommy Pratt, sponsors an organized field trip to one of the best birding locations in Alabama. If you haven't already done so, check out their web-site at [www.bamabirds.com/rrbc/index.htm](http://www.bamabirds.com/rrbc/index.htm) for a schedule of their upcoming events.

Whether you go out on your own or with a group, get out and enjoy some late summer birding. The Kites and Wood Storks should be dispersing and the shorebirds are probably passing though by the time you read this. Have a great time birding—see you at the Fall AOS meeting!

### *Important Dates*

**SECOND FRIDAY**—October 13-15, 2006  
Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

**FOURTH FRIDAY**—January 26-28, 2007  
To Be Announced

**THIRD FRIDAY**—April 20-22, 2007  
Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

## The Walls of Jericho



LAST YEAR TOMMY PRATT founded the River Region Bird Club as a chapter of AOS. The RRBC has one field trip monthly. In May 2006 the field trip was to hike to the Walls of Jericho, above Skyline, Alabama.

Sixteen of us assembled at Ruby Tuesdays in Scottsboro on Friday evening. After a meal of bison burgers and other things, we headed to watch the Gray Bats emerge from Blowing Cave. As we neared, some of us thought we smelled a skunk. Before long, we concluded that the musky odor was the bats. The cave entrance is large enough to drive a semi through, but it has been barred to protect the bats. The cave used to be a bomb shelter during the Cold War; it was a night club before that. Now it is a maternity cave where a quarter of a million bats each go to give birth to a single baby.

The bats emerge at dusk and spiral up to the open sky above the board walk and then to the Tennessee River. They return before dawn, having eaten millions of insects.

Eric Soehren was our field trip leader. While he explained the history of the cave, he also mentioned that he had seen a Mourning and a Canada Warbler that morning. He volunteered to take anyone interested in rising early to try for them before we hiked to the Walls. Several of us took him up on his offer. At the appointed time we met Eric. He took us to the spot. As we disembarked from the vehicles, we heard the Mourning Warbler clearly. He was in a thicket no more than 25 feet away. However, no amount of pishing would entice him out. In fact, he moved away. Eric went around to see if he could flush the bird toward the group. He got a glimpse of him, and called us around, but the bird proved to be elusive. Barry Fleming produced a Mourning Warbler tape. That did the trick. Within a short time, almost everyone had enjoyed good looks at a very annoyed Mourning Warbler, a life bird for several of us. His green back, charcoal gray face,



black chest band and yellow belly were clearly seen.

The Canada did not make an appearance, and while we were disappointed, it was fairly difficult to be less than jubilant. During the entire search, a pair of Field Sparrows with food in their bills waited impatiently for us to leave so they could feed the babies in a nest very close to where we were standing.

We gathered at the Walls of Jericho trailhead just before 8 o'clock. Besides Eric and his lovely wife, we were joined by Nick Sharp, enforcement officer for the Walls. Almost everyone

was wearing a backpack and carrying a walking stick. We started down at an easy but steady pace, and almost immediately ran into a family of Worm-eating Warblers. Eric pointed out the abandoned nest that had held six eggs a couple of weeks earlier. From the looks of the family, at least most of the youngsters had fledged; there seemed to be worm-eaters everywhere. The nest was perfectly camouflaged. It was built on the side of a steep slope, under the downhill side of a little seedling of about 18 inches. The seedling was sloping downhill, and the nest had been built under the overhang, then leaves were piled on the uphill side of the tiny trunk to form a cozy grotto that was invisible from two feet away unless one knew where to look. From above, it was absolutely indistinguishable from the leafy forest floor.

Eric is a gifted leader and teacher. He was faithful to point out the tremendous biodiversity of the region. We learned what Hound's Tongue, Yellowwood Tree, and a dozen other plants were, most of them growing in Alabama only at this location. He told us the history of the area, and of the Walls in particular.

We crossed a stream where a hollow log served as a culvert. Every effort has been made to keep this Forever Wild tract just that. Very few changes have been made. There is a

very accommodating path with switchbacks to keep the climb in and out more manageable and to prevent the erosion that would have been inevitable if the original path, which went straight down the hill, had remained.

Before we reached the bottom, Eric pointed out one of the target birds: a singing Cerulean Warbler. Before long, we could hear three of these sharply declining birds singing at once, something that many of us would never have thought possible. What a joy to the ears and the heart. We got fleeting glimpses of one very high up in a white oak tree.

After walking for about two miles, we had dropped 1,000 feet in elevation. We suddenly came to a crystal-clear stream, Hurricane Creek, over which a bridge made of a single log stretched five or six feet above the water. American Redstarts sang on both banks, and Blue-winged Warblers buzzed from an old black walnut grove. Northern Parulas and Kentucky Warblers allowed us to enjoy their beauty and songs. Barry Fleming spotted a Canada Warbler, but the little devil left before anyone else got a peek.

We stopped for lunch in the dry stream bed of Turkey Creek. The salts in the bed were attracting dozens of butterflies. We each picked a "soft" rock and sat down to enjoy raisins, granola bars, bananas, apples and the like. The sunlight dappled everything with a soft, pleasing pattern of light and shadow. It was not yet hot, but there was a promise of warmth to come.

After lunch, we passed by a little cemetery and started on the last half mile to the Walls. We were paralleling Turkey Creek, and, for a while, we were 50 or so feet above it, with a sharp rise that in places was bare vertical rock on one side and a sharp drop-off toward the creek on the other. It had rained the night before, and parts of the 18-inch wide path were as slick as greased ice. Most of us violated one of the rules of the Walls, the one about removing nothing. Several of us carried out a few pounds of mud on our backsides.

We finally reached the Walls of Jericho: high rock walls towering on two sides, and tremendous waterfalls on a third. On the day we were there, only two of the falls were being fed by a stream from the side. The other three waterfalls were dry, and we climbed them. Cliff Swallows were nesting in little holes in an overhang that reminded me of the overhangs in Colorado where the Cliff Dwellers built their towns. An Eastern Wood-Pewee nested in a tree partially sheltered by the wall. We discussed recording them for

the Breeding Bird Atlas, but Eric pointed out that we were actually in Tennessee, having crossed the line a few hundred yards back.

When we arrived, several dozen boy scouts were swimming, noisily, having a blast. It was a little disappointing to have to share the place. Eric said it was the most people he'd ever seen there. But we out-waited them. By the time we left, peace had returned. It was exquisite.

The walk out proved to be easier than some had expected, and harder for others. By any account, it is a challenge, especially as the temperature and humidity rose after noon. We had gone down as a group; we came out in ones and twos and threes. A couple of people had some problems, and I want to acknowledge here that Eric Soehren is one of the most amazingly gentle and helpful men I have ever known.

We ended the day, strictly by my count, with 14 warblers, two tanagers, two thrushes, and assorted other birds. It is a day that none of us will ever forget.

Regrettably, it is not for everyone, as the challenges are real, but the hike is something everyone should do if they are able.

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### *"On the Road Again" Articles*

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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.

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### *Electronic Yellowhammer?*

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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](mailto:Robert.Reed@psc.alabama.gov).

A BRIEF HISTORY AND PLANNING FOR ITS FUTURE MANAGEMENT

# The Marion State Fish Hatchery

By NICK NICHOLS

*EDITOR'S NOTE—There has been much discussion about the plans regarding the Marion State Fish Hatchery. A management plan is being developed, and AOS and BAS, among many others, will have a voice in the final plan. Moreover, our own Eric Soehren is intimately involved in the process and committed to protecting the bird habitat. In this article, Nick Nichols explains the history of the tract.*



FOR DECADES, THE PROPERTY THAT IS NOW KNOWN AS the Marion State Fish Hatchery has been a popular site with the public for wildlife watching, particularly birds. With approximately 100 acres of fish culture ponds and a variety of other habitat types, this location can offer visitors the opportunity to observe a wide cross section of birdlife. Depending on the season, wading birds, shorebirds, waterfowl, migratory and resident perching birds, and several birds of prey can all be sighted there.

This 600-acre property located near Marion, Alabama, in Perry County was acquired in 1932 by the predecessor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), for development of a national fish hatchery. At that time, most of this property was comprised of agricultural fields and pasture land. The Marion National Fish Hatchery, which was developed on approximately 200 acres of this tract, became operational in 1934. The remaining crop and pasture land eventually converted to woodland areas dominated by loblolly pines with a mixed hardwood understory.

By the late 1960s, this property was the location for two separate USFWS facilities. The Marion National Fish Hatchery was one of the largest warm-water sport fish production hatcheries then being operated by the USFWS. Located next door was the Southeastern Fish Cultural Laboratory (SEFCL), which had as its primary mission the research and development of fish cultural science and techniques. In addition to these two fish culture facilities, the USFWS developed a public use recreation area at Perry Lake, an oxbow

lake adjacent to the Cahaba River. This area provided a picnic area and access to Perry Lake for fishing and boating.

In 1974, the USFWS transferred operation of the Marion National Fish Hatchery to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), Game and Fish Division, now the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF). The USFWS retained title to the property. Then, and continuing to the present day, the mission of this facility has been to produce sport fish fingerlings to support Alabama's fisheries management programs. As a state operation, the core funding for this activity is derived from the sale of fishing licenses which is in turn matched with Federal funds provided through the Sport Fish Restoration Program.

In 1995, the SEFCL, being operated as the Claude Harris National Aquacultural Research Center by the U.S. Geological Survey on the same tract as the Hatchery was closed. In 1998, Congress passed Public Law 105-239, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to convey the entire property to ADCNR for the authorized purpose of supporting the fish culture programs of the State of Alabama. This Act and the subsequent deed that was filed in 1999, contained reversion clauses that specified that if the property were to ever be used for purposes other than supporting this authorized activity, there would be cause for the property to revert to Federal ownership.

In late 1999, Perry County requested permission to reopen and operate the Perry Lake Recreation Area which had been closed to public use in the mid-1980s. ADCNR was agreeable to this request; but since this use of the property was not specifically authorized in the conveyance act, ADCNR was required to obtain approval from the USFWS before this agreement could be finalized. In 2000, a 20-year memorandum of agreement was executed between ADCNR and the Perry County Commission that provided for Perry County to develop and operate the Perry Lake Recreation Area on approximately 171 acres of the hatchery property that surrounded Perry Lake. In the time since this agreement

has been in place, Perry County has successfully sought funding and partnerships that have allowed a number of improvements to be made at the recreation area including a new pavilion, restrooms, potable water stations, a pedestrian bridge and, most recently, the erection of an observation tower overlooking a portion of Perry Lake.

In late 2004, a new program was initiated by WFF. The former Claude Harris National Aquacultural Research Center, that had been idle since 1995, was set to a new purpose. In October of that year, funding became available through the State Wildlife Grants Program that provides Federal matching funds to support the renovation and operation of this facility for the conservation and propagation of aquatic species of high conservation concern in Alabama. This facility, which has been renamed the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center (AABC), is expected to be one of the largest facilities of this type in the nation. When it becomes fully operational, projects will be undertaken to culture freshwater mussels, snails, non-game fish species and other aquatic species with the long term goal of reintroducing these species into restored aquatic habitats throughout the state.

With the development of the AABC underway, the need for WFF to develop a long-term management plan for the entire 600 acres of this property became apparent, as this location would likely be the site for any future expansion of WFF aquaculture facilities. The Fisheries Section of WFF, which is charged with the responsibility for this property, initiated a planning process in 2005. With the Fisheries Section having maintained a presence on this property since 1974, it was understood that this property was highly valued by the public as a location for recreational and educational activities not entirely related to the facility's operational mission. From the beginning, it was determined that this planning process would incorporate extensive stakeholder input well before anything was finalized. When completed, the plan will provide ADCNR with guidance for the utilization of this property to the fullest extent possible for its authorized purpose, while also identifying opportunities to enhance its potential as both wildlife habitat and as a location for public recreational and educational use.

The Fisheries Section has already sought and obtained preliminary recommendations from non-game wildlife experts from within ADCNR regarding steps that can be taken

to protect, improve and diversify the wildlife habitats that are there, and will continue to work with these experts as the plan is further developed. Once a draft version of the resource management plan has been completed, the Fisheries Section will solicit additional technical comments and recommendations from experts outside of the Department for further refinement of the plan. The revised plan will then be presented to stakeholder groups for additional input, and it will be made available for public review and comment before it is accepted.

For further information on the operations of the Marion State Fish Hatchery, the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center, or for additional information on the development of the management plan for the Marion Hatchery property, please contact Nick Nichols with the Fisheries Section of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries at (334) 242-3883, or [Nick.Nichols@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:Nick.Nichols@dcnr.alabama.gov).

## *Perry Lakes Park Canopy Tower*

By GREGORY J. HARBER



THE BIRDING COMMUNITY NOW HAS ANOTHER fabulous location to indulge our hobby, in perhaps the most unique way possible: at the 100-foot Canopy Tower at Perry Lakes Park. A converted fire tower, this customized structure rises above the bottomland hardwood forest canopy surrounding Middle Lake, an oxbow of the Cahaba River, in the park located behind the Marion State Fish Hatchery in Perry County. It is a place you'll want to visit time and again, sometimes for the birding and sometimes for the solitude and the solace nature offers.

The tower is a project of the Auburn Rural Studio program in Auburn University's School of Architecture. Students Paul Howard, Coley Mulcahy, Natalie Butts, and Adrienne Brady set out to build the finest birding canopy tower they could envision, and in building their vision they built an entire support community too. Their perseverance and dedication to the project inspired a legion of supporters

who provided donations of time, talent, and guidance, plus funds for the items that only money could buy. On Saturday, April 22, 2006, we all gathered to celebrate their achievement and dedicate the tower to the people of Perry County. It might seem cliché to say it was a special moment, but in all honesty, it truly was a crowning moment in the nearly two-year effort to build the tower.

Three times now I have been to this lovely place and each time I left yearning for more time to spend there than I had allotted for my visit. I have experienced the thrill of watching a male Prothonotary Warbler zoom past my face, as he earnestly sought to establish his territory in the early spring. Equally thrilling, but probably more unique, was looking down at a Northern Parula singing his buzzy song. The plumage on their backs is a lovely shade of green and it is a view we can't absorb often enough. Watching a male Yellow-throated Warbler belt out his song—85 feet above the ground in the limbs of a grand pine tree—gave me an entirely new appreciation for the efforts these birds expend establishing and maintaining their breeding territories. His tiny black, white and yellow body shook with the all-consuming effort!

The canopy tower offers us birders the chance to leave our earthly bonds behind and enter the unfettered realm of birds, where the sky is literally the limit. Perhaps the most vivid memory I have from my few visits to the tower best exemplifies this new dimension: the privilege of hearing four Barred Owls, their calls echoing across the shallow river valley, as I stood atop the tower with three friends. Below us, the sweet melodic song of a Wood Thrush wafted up through the leafy canopy, reaching our ears on its way to the heavens. It was an experience unlike any I had ever held, as though a sixth sense had been awakened within me, allowing me to appreciate yet another facet of nature I had never before even considered. It is true that the details of life are exquisite. I plan to return there many times through the seasons of the year, sometimes for the birds, and sometimes just for me.

To learn more about the Canopy Tower and Perry Lakes Park, and for directions to the park, visit [www.extremebirding.org](http://www.extremebirding.org) and click on the SITE link. The park and tower are open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset. Alabama DeLorme Atlas and Gazetteer coordinates: page 36, H3.

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IN MEMORIAM

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*Walt Burch*

1926 – 2006

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**M**R. WALTER "WALT" GALLOWAY BURCH PASSED AWAY JUNE 4, 2006. He was just eight days shy of his 80th birthday. A memorial service was held at Chisholm Hills Church of Christ on Friday, June 16, 2006.

Walt was born June 12, 1926, in Lawrence County, Alabama. He attended Duke University on a Navy scholarship and graduated in 1948. He was a chemist in Hanford, Washington, when he met his bride, Dottie. In 1954 they moved to Lauderdale County, where he was a research chemist at TVA.

Walt loved everything outdoors. He cared deeply about nature and the environment. When he wasn't in the garden, he was reading or taking photographs, often of birds. Besides being a keeper of the AOS slides, and an active member of AOS, he was also an active member of the Audubon Society. He traveled the world and loved to photograph the animals, landscape and people. He preferred to stay off the "beaten path" so that he could know and understand each society in its authenticity.

Walt is survived by his wife of over 50 years, Dottie.

Walt was a familiar figure at the bottlebrush bush on Cadillac. His art, in the form of photographs, has graced many a Friday night slide show. It also hangs in many AOS member homes.

We will miss him greatly, and we all hope that Dot will continue to honor us with her presence.

(Partially adapted from the *Florence Times Daily*.)

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*Ramblings*

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**I**N ALL THESE YEARS OF BIRDING AND THE THRILL OF FINALLY SEEING that elusive bird of the moment, I have found that there are so many other memorable occasions that fill my mental scrapbook.

The buzzing bugs zipping past, some with stingers, some just loud, deer flies and 'skeeters that like to stop and try to dine on you. Shiny beetles of green, gold and black. Caterpillars schlepping along never even noticing those giant humans watching them. Butterflies in every size and color

flitting about. Crickets and grasshoppers surprising you when they leap from their hiding places.

Surprising a turtle laying her eggs along the edge of a dirt road, unable to stop her natural urge as we slowly pass her by. Assorted snakes, some that run at the sight of us, others who just lay still while we check them out. Dull ones who are near time to shed and those who have just done so and are so brilliantly colored they look like slick plastic. Lizards crawling among the leaves looking for a snack.

A Bobcat sitting in the middle of a wooded road licking the dew off his paws. A newborn fawn, still wet from birthing, trying to walk on those long "sticks" that mom moved so gracefully. Mother 'possum with her six-pack of babies on her back heading home after a night of hunting.

A rainbow bouquet of flowers blooming everywhere, high and low. Trumpet vines and Carolina Jasmine high in the trees. Teeny pink and purple ones no bigger than the head of a pin that I don't know the name of. And the Black-eyed Susans, so yellow that in the sun it hurts just to look at them.

And last—the banquet—fruits and berries to munch on as you go along. Apple, pears, blackberries, mulberries, plums and cherries. Warm juicy and sweet—what a way to go birding.

— *Judy Self*

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### Briefs

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I HAVE JUST RETURNED HOME FOR REST AND DESK WORK AFTER A month afield. Today was a great final day. A friend and I were atlasing in Brundidge: CE (Pike County) trying to find Brown-headed Nuthatch and a few others to add to the 68 breeding species already found.

After birding separately for an hour, my friend, Ron Christen, returned to say he had found birds I had never expected—Least Bittern and American Bittern. I immediately questioned him (as I often impolitely do) suggesting he had mistakenly identified an immature Night-Heron. So he took me to the spot. Shortly, an American Bittern flew over close by and we both clearly saw the dark wingtips that contrasted strongly with the lighter brown back. I also saw the dark mark up the neck and the longer head profile resulting from a longer bill. I am convinced, and this was his second observation of it this morning.

Now for the Least Bittern—I fetched my tape recorder and played the Least Bittern calls. Within a few minutes Ron saw a Least Bittern fly up and directly toward the tape recorder until a Red-winged Blackbird drove it back down out of sight. I missed it, but then it started calling. Ron, and then I, heard it sing? several series of guttural COO's. Unmistakable.

When we added up our Atlasing results at 9 a.m. we had added 8 more species to bring the block total to 76 breeding species—Least Bittern, Common Moorhen, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Prothonotary Warbler, and Hooded Warbler.

American Bittern does not count as a breeding species, and we never found the Nuthatch.

Wow, what a morning!

— *Rick West*

FOR REASONS HARD TO EXPLAIN, EVA AND I FOUND OURSELVES in the vicinity of Priceville, Alabama in Morgan County.

We decided to head down Bethel Road to see if we might luck up on any Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. Short answer: no. Lots and lots and lots of everything else but no scissor-tails. However, we followed Bethel Road north, to and then through the one and only stoplight on Bethel, and continued north for about two miles. It was there, just before the road takes a 90-degree left turn, I heard, then saw, a good number of Tree Swallows. Six were perched on power wires, and we watched two juvenile birds begging adults for food.

— *Paul Franklin*

THIS AFTERNOON, FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW, I SAW LARK Sparrows carrying food in the field next to my yard. I am located in eastern Madison County. This was already reported to the BBA last year, but I thought some might be interested.

— *Neill Cowles, Moontown, Alabama*

#### *Deadlines for Yellowhammer Submissions*

Fall 2006	August 15, 2006
Winter 2006	November 15, 2006
Spring 2007	February 10, 2007

AOS SPRING MEETING 2006

## AOS Executive Board Meeting

By KAREN WILSON, *Secretary*



THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF AOS MET ON DAUPHIN Island, April 22, 2006. The meeting was called to order by Stan Hamilton at 2:05 pm. The minutes of the January 28 meeting were approved as written.

Frank Farrell presented the treasurer's report which showed AOS having a balance of \$12,405, noting the spring meeting costs had not been yet entered. The past president's report encouraged AOS to move toward sending more e-newsletters as postage costs continue to rise.

The Conservation report was presented by Greg Harber and the board reviewed a letter he had sent to the USDA Forest Service regarding sale and loss of public lands due to proposed federal budget cuts.

Larry Gardella presented the Membership Committee report informing the board he will be sending out a revised welcome letter to new members. We also discussed recruiting of new members and plans are in the works for a membership drive with prizes for the person who recruits the most new members.

The Bird Records Committee reported that many new records have been approved and will be added to an updated Field Checklist for Alabama.

Rick West reported that the Breeding Bird Atlas regional coordinators have their materials and are ready to start the final season gathering data.

John Porter gave a DIBS report and announced that our participation in the America's Birdiest City / County competition had produced a total of 170 species. The winners of this year's competition will not be announced until later in June. We were told that next year DIBS is planning to move the dates of the count to coincide with the spring AOS meeting. Also, DIBS is purchasing new lots in the Steiner Block.

Annabel Markel presented the final design for a new AOS t-shirt that should be available by the fall meeting. Work also continues on a new AOS brochure.

President Stan Hamilton is looking for an alternate location for the fall meeting in case Dauphin Island is affected by another hurricane.

Eric Soehren made a presentation to the board concerning the Marion Fish Hatchery in Perry County. The hatchery property has been obtained from the federal government by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Fisheries Section of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, which operates the facility, is developing a long-term management plan for the property's resources. The board was made aware that we will need to take an active role during the comment period when the plan is made available to the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

AOS MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

## Membership Contest!

By LARRY GARDELLA



IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE HAD A CONTEST TO SEE what AOS member can recruit the most new members. Too long.

At its last meeting, the AOS Board decided to launch a contest. We are still putting together a prize package for the person who brings in the greatest number of new members before the spring 2007 meeting, where the winner will be announced. But one part of the contest may continue even after the fall meeting. Until we have a big winner.

The first person to bring us 25 new members after July 1, 2006, will get a grand prize: a free life membership in AOS.

I say all this with some trepidation. As membership chair, I send the letters welcoming new members. But I'm ready to send a bunch!

One thing I do in the welcoming letter is to give a new member the addresses and emails of many of the officers and a few others. A directory would also be nice, so that the new members could learn of others in their areas with whom they might bird.

Our last directory went out about as long ago as we had our last membership contest. It was so long ago that it was not practical to make it an electronic directory and email it

to the membership. We could do that now. Actually, we could use our address list to get a running start.

If we release a new directory and you DO NOT want your name, address and phone number included, please let me know by email at [tapaculo@knology.net](mailto:tapaculo@knology.net) or snail mail at 33549 Audubon Road, Montgomery, Alabama 36111 no later than September 15, 2006.

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### *Spring 2006 AOS Compilation List Dauphin Island, Alabama, April 21-23, 2006*

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**B**IRDS OF NOTE ON THIS COMPILATION are the Pacific Loon and Glossy Ibis.

Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Mallard  
Mottled Duck  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
*Pacific Loon*  
Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Horned Grebe  
Northern Gannet  
American White Pelican  
Brown Pelican  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Magnificent Frigatebird  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Snowy Egret  
Little Blue Heron  
Tricolored Heron  
Reddish Egret  
Cattle Egret  
Green Heron  
*Glossy Ibis*  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Osprey  
Swallow-tailed Kite  
Mississippi Kite  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
American Kestrel  
Peregrine Falcon  
*Black Rail*  
Clapper Rail  
Virginia Rail  
Sora

American Coot  
Black-bellied Plover  
Snowy Plover  
Wilson's Plover  
Semipalmated Plover  
Piping Plover  
Killdeer  
American Oystercatcher  
Black-necked Stilt  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Willet  
Spotted Sandpiper  
Whimbrel  
Marbled Godwit  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Red Knot  
Sanderling  
Semipalmated Sandpiper  
Western Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
Dunlin  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Wilson's Snipe  
Laughing Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Gull-billed Tern  
Caspian Tern  
Royal Tern  
Sandwich Tern  
Common Tern  
Forster's Tern  
Least Tern  
Black Skimmer  
Rock Pigeon  
Eurasian Collared-Dove  
White-winged Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
Common Nighthawk

Chuck-will's-widow  
Chimney Swift  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Eastern Wood-Pewee  
Empidonax species  
Eastern Phoebe  
Great Crested Flycatcher  
Eastern Kingbird  
Loggerhead Shrike  
White-eyed Vireo  
Yellow-throated Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Philadelphia Vireo  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Black-whiskered Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Fish Crow  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
Brown-headed Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
Sedge Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Eastern Bluebird  
Veery  
Gray-cheeked Thrush  
Swainson's Thrush  
Wood Thrush  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
Cedar Waxwing  
Blue-winged Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Northern Parula  
Yellow Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Cape May Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Yellow-throated Warbler  
Pine Warbler

Prairie Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Black-and-white Warbler  
American Redstart  
Prothonotary Warbler  
Worm-eating Warbler  
Swainson's Warbler  
Ovenbird  
Northern Waterthrush  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Kentucky Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Hooded Warbler  
Yellow-breasted Chat  
Summer Tanager  
Scarlet Tanager  
Eastern Towhee  
Savannah Sparrow  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow  
Seaside Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Blue Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Painted Bunting  
Dickcissel  
Bobolink  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Boat-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowhead  
Orchard Oriole  
Baltimore Oriole  
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.

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