

THE YELLOWHAMMER

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

FOUNDED 1952



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W

ELL, WE WEATHERED OUR FIRST meeting at Mary's Place in Coden, and I thought it went rather well. There were a few glitches but nothing that cannot be ironed out between now and October. Our speakers were quite good and I appreciate their sharing with us. Also, congratulations to the lucky new owners of some fantastic artwork. Thank you for your participation.

We are now entering the summer let-down of the passing migration but we can assuage that down feeling by getting out and enjoying what's going on in our yards and by going on some good summer field trips. We can watch Common Night-hawks flying at dusk, Mississippi Kites and Broad-winged Hawks cruising over some of our Alabama cities. And there are a few places where we can still listen to the "surround sound" of Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-Will's-Widows on a sultry summer evening. We can watch Purple Martins as they go cheerfully about their business and the Barn and Cliff Swallows under every bridge and overpass.



There are Breeding Bird Surveys going on and if you are not currently signed up to help, email or phone Eric Soehren, and he will put you to work. Also, Dwight Cooley at Wheeler Refuge will need help with a fall migration count on the last Saturday in September. We just finished helping with the spring migration count at Wheeler Refuge on April 26 and had a delightful day.

So don't just sit inside this summer. Get out there with the bugs and snakes, sweat a little, and enjoy. There is always something to see.

ALABAMA HERITAGE LICENSE

I have mentioned before that there is a voluntary license for non-consumptive users of the outdoors. This license is issued by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Again it is voluntary, but for a \$10 price, \$30 more will be sent to Alabama in Federal funds for land acquisition. This license can be purchased anywhere hunting and fishing licenses are sold. Please get one. We need this.



Southern South America

IN FEBRUARY 2008, ANDREA and I took a 3-week trip to southern South America that featured a 12-day Valparaiso-Buenos Aires cruise. We combined excellent land birding in central Chile, Patagonia, and the Falklands with some of the most comfortable pelagic birding in the world.

First, two days with a hired guide brought us lots of birds, including several endemics. We scoped a Humboldt Penguin colony from someone's driveway and then got invited into the yard for some better views. Although the family started out rather skeptical of us, they ended up delighting in scope views of the penguins.

As we started our cruise, Peruvian Pelicans and a contingent of Peruvian Boobies escorted us.

February 8 we had the first of what turned out to be well over 500 Black-browed Albatrosses for the trip, plus one Shy Albatross (Salvin's), three species of petrel, Sooty Shearwaters and Peruvian Diving-Petrels. The footing on a cruise ship is far more stable than on any boat I have been on for pelagic birding, so I could use a scope to get details on birds.

Our first port was Puerto Montt. A car-rental mess-up made us settle for visiting a relatively nearby national forest with many Black-chinned Siskins, Thorn-tailed Rayaditos and White-crested Elaenias, one beautiful White-throated Treerunner and a heard-only Chucao Tapaculo. Best birds en route were a small flock of Austral Parakeets.

Back at sea, we saw albatrosses: many Black-browed, some Buller's and one Gray-headed, and our first giants: Wandering and Royal (both Southern and Northern) and various petrels and storm-petrels. The next day started with scenic cruising in the fjords. We saw groups of King Cormorants and also spotted Dusky Dolphins. A collection of approximately twelve South American Terns feeding at the surface caught our attention. In with them were five Magellanic Diving-Petrels.



At Punta Arenas, we enjoyed Lesser (Darwin's) Rheas and various geese, as well as Chilean Flamingos and Black-necked Swans, but loved walking in a Magellanic Penguin colony. Other highlights were Andean Condors, Magellanic Oystercatchers and Flightless Steamer-Duck.

February 13 we got good looks at both Magellanic and Common Diving-Petrels, as well as skuas and giant-petrels. However, the best view of Common Diving-Petrel was from the 14th floor. A bird had flown onto the ship and become stunned and disoriented. I took it by elevator down to the

7th floor promenade deck, trying to keep the talkative bird calm. When I loosened my grip, the diving-petrel flew out over the water.

At Ushuaia, the world's southernmost city, Andrea and I visited Tierra del Fuego National Park (barely outside the city) and Glaciar Martial (just above the city), enjoying the beautiful views and almost all the birds that we had hoped to see.

Our last major shore stop was the Falklands, where we had booked a locally organized tour to Volunteer Point. As the ship neared its anchoring place, I spotted a Peale's Dolphin and then a Southern Fulmar. The trip to Volunteer Point takes two hours or more each way, over road to a farm and then four-wheeling over a peat bog to the penguin colony. Our local driver had much to say about the Falklands and the 1982 war, even as he negotiated a good route through the bogs. We had almost two wonderful hours at the colony. The Gentoo and King Penguins allowed close approach—and would even come to check out people who bent down and stayed still. Because the Kings have a different breeding schedule, there were young babies and some adults still on eggs. Other birds at the colony included more than 100 Two-banded Plover, one immature Rufous-chested Dotterel and a single Black-throated Finch. Ruddy-headed Geese were

common. At the waterline, a single Snowy Sheathbill was being harassed by penguins. Later, I saw it feeding in a pile of kelp.

I had expected the Atlantic to be slow for pelagics. However, I was pleasantly surprised. When we came up to Horizon Court for lunch, Andrea and I saw several albatrosses. While staring out to sea, I saw a large black body rise out of the water and yelled out "WHALE," getting everyone in that portion of the lunch area to the windows. The whale came up again, showing clearly the white bodies on its head that

climbed the identification as Southern Right Whale. We saw the blows of two quite close together.

In Buenos Aires, I made two trips to Costanera Sur. Dried-up ponds meant few waterfowl, but there was a good assortment of land birds. Mendoza had many Spot-winged Pigeons, but we concentrated on wine rather than birds.

The last new bird for the trip came as we crossed the Andes by minibus to get back to Santiago. I walked up to several of the Thick-billed Siskins along the side of the road, including one sampling a piece of pizza near the border stop.

A Chat at Cheaha

By LIN FAGAN



AS ONE OF THE FAR-FLUNG MEMBERS OF AOS, I seldom get to participate in the weekend events held at Dauphin Island. The last time was in April 2004, a few months before Hurricane Ivan dealt a fatal blow to the house on the near West End that my grandmother built in 1967. Last July, my sister-in-law finished an all-new (all-improved since the 1960s design) house on the same location. So, in April 2008, I was able to spend five great days on the Island, including the AOS Spring Meeting weekend.

Afterwards, I made a brief stop in Birmingham to visit old friends and relatives and then headed north toward my current home in Kingston, New York. Before leaving my native state, however, I decided to visit Cheaha State Park. The idea of going from sea level to the highest point in Alabama was intriguing. Plus, I had never been to Cheaha. My parents were great travelers and historians, and by the time my brother and I were in high school, we had been to all of the (then) 48 states and had visited the capital cities of many of them. Why had we never been on Mt. Cheaha? Neither my brother nor I have a clue.

By late afternoon, I was on a scenic route driving from the west (exit 179 of I-20 and via Mumford) through Talladega National Forest to the state park. I was charmed by Lake Chinnabee and by the stone buildings from the CCC era. A walk on the "Silent Trail" was indeed uninterrupted by human voices, but bird song filled the evening air: Chickadees, nuthatches, Black-and-White and Pine Warblers, and an East-

ern Phoebe at Cheaha Falls. Trillium bloomed along the trail, their thin, curling pink petals very different from the species I know in New York.

When I checked into the lodge, the person at the front desk was too busy to discuss the history of the park, so I wandered over to the country store. A minor crisis had occurred at one of the campgrounds, so no one to talk to there. Two newsmen in a TV van in the parking lot were more chatty. They had finished an interview at the Talladega Racetrack about the upcoming 500 race and had driven up the mountain in order to "feed" it back to the station in Birmingham. Once that was done, however, they rushed off to their next assignment. The weeknight staff in the restaurant was pleasant but too busy to linger with a single customer. So, with no interesting conversation this evening, off to bed at nearly 2400' above sea level.

At sunrise I planned to walk the short distance from the lodge to the tower on the summit. It was a lovely morning as I started up the loop road. Indigo Buntings, Eastern Towhees, Chipping Sparrows, a little flock of Palm Warblers, and a Black-throated Green Warbler also greeted the morning. And then I heard a gurgling, raspy song from the brushy area between the two uphill drives. It was a sound I associated with lowland, swampy areas instead of mountaintops. I pished, and it gurgled back. I crept into the bushes and pished again; the bird moved closer. I took a few steps; he moved to the right. I pished; he called, so close, but completely out of sight. After fifteen minutes of this exchange, I backed away and continued

uphill to the tower. While I was snapping a photo, a yellow bullet flashed by. The bird perched for a fraction of a second beyond me, gave a song of triumph over its vanquished foe (me!), and flew back downhill. Well, at least I had a glimpse.

After admiring the stone building and tower on the summit—and a pair of Brown Thrashers on the lawn—I turned downhill on the lower drive. Halfway down, I heard that familiar gurgle and raspy song! “What a sucker I am,” I thought

as I tried to imitate the call. Again, the bird moved closer, and I pished in response. Now he jumped out on an exposed limb and gave his best song. Yes, indeed! A Yellow-breasted Chat! His throat and breast was *intensely* yellow; the spectacles brilliant white; the culmen (top) of his beak subtle in its curve. We enjoyed each other’s conversation for a few minutes, and then it was time for both of us to move on. I returned to the road north with the memory of a great Chat on Cheaha.

REVISED MAY 7, 2008

Alabama Bird Records Committee Review List

STEVE McCONNELL, *Secretary*

Black-bellied Whistling Duck	5	(2007)	Mountain Plover	1	(1978)
Brant	6	(1996)	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	(1988)
Cackling Goose	4	(2005)	Purple Sandpiper	1	(1999)
Trumpeter Swan	1	(2006)	Curlew Sandpiper	2	(1980)
White-cheeked Pintail	1	(1970)	Ruff	7	(2007)
Garganey	1 – H	(1968)	Eurasian Woodcock	1 – H	(1889)
Cinnamon Teal	5	(1997)	Little Gull	9	(2005)
Eurasian Wigeon	8	(2005)	California Gull	5 – H	(2004)
King Eider	1 – H	(1964)	Thayer’s Gull	5	(2004)
Harlequin Duck	5	(2004)	Iceland Gull	7	(2007)
Western Grebe	5	(2006)	Sabine’s Gull	5	(2005)
Audubon’s Shearwater	9	(2000)	Brown Noddy	6	(2004)
Leach’s Storm-Petrel	4	(1997)	Roseate Tern	3	(1979)
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	8	(2005)	Arctic Tern	1 – H	(2006)
Red-billed Tropicbird	2	(2001)	Long-tailed Jaeger	4 – H	(2005)
Neotropic Cormorant	1	(1988)	Band-tailed Pigeon	1 – H	(1971)
White-tailed Kite	**	(1996)	Flammulated Owl	1	(2003)
Northern Goshawk	5	(2005)	Snowy Owl	2	(1975)
Short-tailed Hawk	1	(2003)	Burrowing Owl	**	(1991)
Ferruginous Hawk	3 – H	(1986)	Northern Saw-whet Owl	7	(2003)
Crested Caracara	1	(2001)	Lesser Nighthawk	5	(2003)
Prairie Falcon	5	(2005)	Vaux’s Swift	1 – H	(2003)
Limpkin	2	(2000)	Green Violet-ear	1	(1995)
Whooping Crane	3 – H	(1899)	Broad-billed Hummingbird	4	(2004)

Blue-throated Hummingbird	1 - H	(1995)
Magnificent Hummingbird	2	(1994)
Anna's Hummingbird	3	(2004)
Costa's Hummingbird	1	(2006)
Hammond's Flycatcher	1	(1992)
Dusky Flycatcher	1	(1997)
Cordilleran/Pacific-slope Flycatcher	2	(2003)
Brown-crested Flycatcher	2	(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	4	(2007)
Varied Thrush	1	(1992)
Sage Thrasher	5	(2004)
Yellow/Eastern Yellow Wagtail	1	(2003)
Yellow-green Vireo	1	(2003)
White-winged Crossbill	2	(2005)
Clark's Nutcracker	1	(2002)
Common Raven	10	(2002)
Black-throated Gray Warbler	**	(2001)
Townsend's Warbler	1 - H	(2006)
Kirtland's Warbler	3 - H	(1966)
MacGillivray's Warbler	1	(2000)
Painted Redstart	1 - H	(1978)
Western Tanager	**	(2004)
Green-tailed Towhee	3	(2004)
Spotted Towhee	1 - H	(2001)
Lark Bunting	6	(1998)
American Tree Sparrow	**	(2000)
Smith's Longspur	7	(1992)
Chestnut-collared Longspur	1	(2001)
Snow Bunting	1 - H	(1999)
Western Meadowlark	**	(2006)
Great-tailed Grackle	1 - H	(2000)
Common Redpoll	10	(1994)

H = hypothetical

() = year last accepted record

** >10 records but <2 in last 10 years

After AOS Compilation

AFTER AOS COMPILATION APRIL 20, 2008, THE MISSISSIPPI birders and one Missouri birder drove to Henderson Camp Road in search of Swallow-tailed Kites and Whimbrels. We had no sightings, so we rode to Leroy Hill Ranch. What a hot spot! We found three Swallow-tailed Kites, 200 plus Whimbrels, Canada Geese, Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egrets, White Ibis, two Bald Eagles, Black Bellied Plovers, Lesser Yellowlegs, a Caspian Tern, Least Terns, Peeps, American Crows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Killdeer, Meadowlarks, and probably some species we missed, but we enjoyed the variety.

—Dianne Patterson, Columbus, Mississippi

EDITOR'S NOTE: These were probably the only Swallow-tailed Kites and Bald Eagles seen during the entire weekend.

Thanks for the Stories

THANKS TO LIN FAGAN AND DIANNE PATTERSON FOR THEIR accounts of events right after AOS. This is your newsletter; please send more like this. We all enjoy hearing what others are seeing and doing.

If you have an article, story, or amusing incident you would like to share, please send it to the Editor. Electronic versions are much easier to copy and paste, but send them by carrier pigeon if you have to. The addresses are on the back cover.

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

Important Dates

SECOND FRIDAY—October 10-12, 2008

Fall Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

FOURTH FRIDAY—January 23-25, 2009

Winter Meeting, 5 Rivers—Spanish Fort

THIRD FRIDAY—April 17-19, 2009

Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island, Alabama

SPRING MEETING REPORT

Moonlight on Mobile Bay

By COLONEL BOB REED



ISAAC ASIMOV, AMONG MANY OTHERS, SAID THE ONLY constant is change. The Dauphin Island Chamber Hall has been razed, replaced by parked machinery. The east end has been dumped on—by tons of dredge sand, not real dirty, but not normal white Alabama beach sand. The drainage ditches on the west end, long the habitat of choice by many birds and missing since being covered by a parade of hurricanes, have reappeared, and are slowly being revegetated. Sand Island has joined Dauphin Island; you can now walk to Sand Island without getting your pant cuffs wet. And Mary's Place is the new site of the spring and fall meetings for the Society. Aah, such is life.

The Alabama Ornithological Society gathered on Dauphin Island to meet the migrating birds and welcome them back to Alabama. Scarlet Tanagers, Summer Tanagers, and vireos were plentiful. Many of us saw Red-eyed, White-eyed, and Blue-headed Vireos, giving us a red, white, and blue day. Several Worm-eating, Kentucky, Blue-winged, Black-poll, and Hooded Warblers kept the buzz of excitement alive. Several members were fortunate enough to see a flock of perhaps 20 Marbled Godwits. Of course, the star of the show was the Inca Dove found by the Duncans at Fort Morgan on Saturday. It stayed around overnight, but disappeared by midmorning Sunday. If it is accepted, it will be the first state appearance by this really neat bird.

On Friday night we had the normal members' slide show, featuring Mary Frances Stayton's beautiful slides. Normality ended with the show. What followed was very pleasantly *not* normal. Bert Harris shared his Ecuador experiences with us. He discussed two birds: the Joco Toco Antpitta (pronounced "Hoco Toco") and the Esmeralda's Woodstar. He discussed the challenges of saving a bird that has a territory of perhaps 60 acres per pair, and a native range that appeared to be about the size of a large Alabama city.

He also related the incredible story of the tiny Esmeralda's Woodstar, a hummingbird that measures only about six cen-

timeters (2.35 inches!) from tip to tip and weighs only 1.6 grams (a dime weighs 2.3 grams). It has long been misidentified, with the male and females being considered different species. He and his team have proven that the male and females are quite different in appearance, including photos of copulation between formerly "different" species.

Bert was leaving Saturday for Australia, where he will be attending school.

On Saturday night Mark Bailey spoke to us about management efforts for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers on private lands. There are currently about 175 pairs in Alabama, about 20 on private lands and 155 on public lands. The 20 pairs on private lands is an encouraging number from what it could be, given that the local mantra for decades has been, "Shoot, shovel and shut up."

One of the most promising trends is the first ever event, at least in Alabama, of RCWs being translocated from public land to private land in an attempt to keep a dwindling population on Cam Lanier's property from disappearing. Mark showed us slides of this operation, which started and ended in one very busy night.

Though he didn't need it, Mark brought his own cheering section, including his wife Karan, daughter Ava, and parents Anne Marie and Allen Bailey.

The moon was full during the weekend, and the drive back across the Mississippi Sound was beautiful. Even the lighted oil and gas platforms did not detract too much. The moonlight shinning off the water, illuminating the occasional boat, reminded me of how I regret not being poetic. The night was warm, the sky clear, and winds brisk: a perfect night for riding with the top down. I mentioned this to Pat, who very practically pointed out that we didn't have a convertible. So much for romance.

The total count for the weekend was 204 species. The other interesting aspect of the weekend was the birds that were conspicuously absent. We saw not one Bald Eagle, not one Swallow-tailed Kite and not one Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

2008 AOS Spring Meeting Compilation List, Dauphin Island, AL, April 18-20, 2008

NOTEABLE BIRDS OF THE WEEK-
end included Inca Dove,
Bronzed Cowbird and Shiny
Cowbird.

Canada Goose
Mallard
Mottled Duck
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Scoter species
Red-breasted Merganser
Wild Turkey
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
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
White Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Clapper Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
American Coot
Black-bellied Plover
American Golden-Plover
Snowy Plover
Wilson's Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover
Killdeer

American Oystercatcher
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Spotted Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Greater Yellowlegs
Willet
Lesser Yellowlegs
Upland Sandpiper
Whimbrel
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Knot
Sanderling
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Dunlin
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Wilson's Snipe
Laughing Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Sooty Tern
Least Tern
Gull-billed Tern
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Royal Tern
Sandwich Tern
Black Skimmer
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
White-winged Dove
Mourning Dove
Inca Dove
Common Ground-Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Black-billed Cuckoo
Eastern Screech-Owl
Common Nighthawk
Chuck-will's-widow
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Western Kingbird
Gray 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
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
House Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Blue-winged Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Pine Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler

Blackpoll Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Swainson's Warbler
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Seaside Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Painted Bunting
Dickcissel
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Boat-tailed Grackle
Shiny Cowbird
Bronzed Cowbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
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 boldfaced, 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.

Summary of Minutes from the Spring AOS Board Meeting

By JOAN SIEGWALD, *Secretary*



THE AOS EXECUTIVE BOARD MET SATURDAY, April 19, 2008, at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Galathea Hall. President Linda Reynolds called the meeting to order.

Treasurer's Report: Frank Farrell reported an AOS checking account balance of just over \$20,000 with spring meeting expenses still to be paid.

Minutes: The minutes from the winter meeting were approved.

Membership Report: Larry Gardella suggested that AOS probably needed a new chair of the membership committee who can devote more time and energy to the task. Following a comment that several people have indicated that AOS's higher late registration fee showed an unfriendly and unwelcoming attitude, there was a discussion about reconsidering the late registration fee. The board decided to leave the fee as is but to let people know that **their registration fee will be refunded if they register for the meeting and later find out they cannot attend.** We should also let people know that as long as AOS meetings are held at Mary's Place, people who do not register for the meeting in time to sign up for the banquet can order off the restaurant menu. In response to a question about future meeting places, Linda Reynolds replied that we will be at Mary's Place for at least two years. Although two new facilities (Dauphin Island Community Center and Sea Lab Research Facility) may eventually offer meeting sites, those facilities will not be available for several years.

Bird Records Committee Report: Larry Gardella reported that Steve McConnell is the permanent secretary without

vote. A recirculation of the Black Swift and a new circulation on several records are ongoing. An election to select three new committee members is also in progress.

Education Report: Shirley Farrell reported that Legacy has produced a new poster, "Common Birds of Alabama," that features pictures of 50 of Alabama's common summer birds. Several of the pictures used in the poster were taken by AOS members. The poster is free and can be ordered by mail, phone, or e-mail (www.legacyenvd.org).

Publications Report: Annabel Markle reported that the new AOS brochure has been completed and is now available. She thanked Robin McDonald and Bill Summerour for their work on the brochure.

DIBS Report: John Porter reported that the ani tree lot now belongs to DIBS. DIBS is currently working on two additional lots in the Steiner block; we have an agreement and the money, so the lots should be ours in about a month. DIBS also has money for the two lots adjacent to the previously mentioned lots because of a grant from the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. If the DIBS board approves tomorrow, we will begin intense negotiations for the remaining Steiner block lots. Bob Reed said that AOS had previously set aside \$5,000 for a donation to DIBS for land acquisition when the time was right and asked if the time is right. John replied that the time might be right when DIBS concludes negotiations with the owner of the rest of the Steiner block properties. Bob Reed made a motion



that the board authorize the donation of \$5,000 to the DIBS land acquisition fund when the time is right and authorize the AOS treasurer and DIBS President Greg Harber to determine the appropriate time; the motion was approved.

John also mentioned that the town of Dauphin Island is lobbying to get an \$11 million appropriation through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to restore the beach from the east end to Audubon Street. This is separate from the west end beach restoration project. Its purpose is to protect the east end of the island, especially Gaillard Lake and the Audubon Sanctuary swamp which have been flooded twice by hurricane storm surges. There is a

petition at Mary's Place in support of this funding, and John asked board members to sign it and to encourage other AOS members to sign it too. The petition will be sent to Senators Sessions and Shelby and Congressman Bonner.

John discussed International Migratory Bird Day and Malcolm Boothroyd's Big Year. Malcolm is a 16-year-old young man who is doing a 15,000-mile bird trip by bicycle. We had a challenge to match contributions for conservation to DIBS in Malcolm's name; a DIBS supporter offered to match all donations up to \$5,000. We have a way to go to reach the \$5,000 goal, but we are doing well.

OLD BUSINESS

Membership CD: Linda Reynolds said that one long-time AOS member strongly objected to having information put on a CD and distributed to AOS members. After a discussion about various membership directory options, the board agreed to proceed with the membership CD as decided at the winter meeting. Anyone who does not want his/her name and address information in the membership directory CD must contact Larry Gardella by June 1 and opt out.

Breeding Bird Atlas Material: Greg Jackson reported that Rick West has finished putting in the data and Greg is now reviewing the data. After the data are finalized, Tom Haggerty and Howard Horne will begin working on the maps.

AOS Website: Eric Soehren discussed the results of his research on improving the AOS website and making it more user friendly. After discussing several options, the board agreed to explore other ornithological societies' websites to get ideas about what changes we want to make. Eric asked the board members to e-mail their ideas to him by July 1.

NEW BUSINESS

Alabama Birdlife: Eric Soehren reported on his correspondence about getting all issues of *Alabama Birdlife* online. Several members have suggested that the online issues of *Alabama Birdlife* be searchable. Greg Jackson has already scanned *Alabama Birdlife* for the years 1953–1972 issue by issue as PDF files. For the issues to be searchable, the PDF files would have to be run through an OCR (optical character reader) program like SORA. Issues for 1973–1995 need to be scanned, and Tom Siegwald volunteered to do this if he can get the issues. After a brief discussion, members agreed that it might be better to go ahead and get all issues online and

then address the searchable question later. Linda Reynolds and Larry Gardella said they had almost complete sets of *Alabama Birdlife*; Linda said that she would get her copies to Tom for scanning.

Eric mentioned that we had also discussed putting the AOS 50-year history online. Tom Siegwald said that he has already scanned the history. Eric asked Tom to send a copy to either him or to Chris Price.

Banning ALBIRDS website participants: Linda reported that an individual has been banned from the ALBIRDS website after responding inappropriately to an AOS member who had posted a message.

Alabama Coastal Birding Trail: John Porter said that the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail is being taken over by the state lands division. Future updates will be made online. John also commented that the *Birder's Guide to Alabama* either needs to be updated or not published again.

Recent Life Members

JOE JOHN	Birmingham, Alabama
TY KEITH	Birmingham, Alabama
DONALD MCKEE	Pascagoula, Mississippi
LORNA WEST	Opelika, Alabama

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

Fall 2008	August 20, 2008
Winter 2008	November 10, 2008
Spring 2009	February 10, 2009

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Annual Membership:
Student: \$10 • Individual: \$25 • Family: \$40
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Life (family): \$550



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