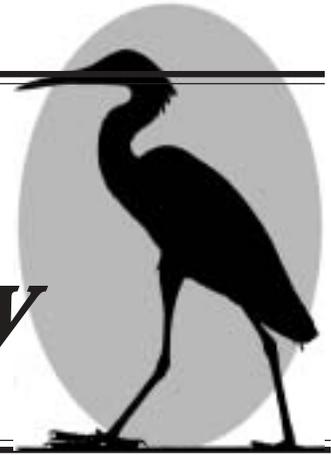


Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SINCE 1971



VOLUME XXIV NO. 3



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Not gone after all . . .

Staff writer Thomas H. Maugh II of the Los Angeles Times says:

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker, a symbol of the fading American wilderness that was thought to have been pushed into extinction has been spotted by scientists for the first time in 60 years, taking wing in the wild swamplands of Arkansas.

The reappearance of the bird, one of the world's largest woodpeckers was hailed Thursday as a validation of the efforts to preserve and restore forested areas throughout the country. "This is huge," said Frank Gill, a former president of the Audubon Society. "It's kind of like finding Elvis." . . .



The creature is sometimes called the "Lord, God Bird," he said. "It's such a striking bird that when people would see it, they would say "Lord, God, what a woodpecker!"

from Larry Schweiger, National Wildlife Federation:

"Today's announcement of a confirmed sighting of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Arkansas, a species last seen in the wild in the 1930's and long considered to be extinct, is simply terrific.

The discovery is a wondrous glimmer of life that had been feared forever dimmed!

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Mobile Bay Audubon Society

Birdathon

2005



On Friday, April 8, three old ladies, Edith McClinton, Lois Cassity and I, with two young ones, Ginny McClinton and Diana Seaman, took off for Dauphin Island to count species for the annual Bird-a-thon. We can't see. We can't walk and our ears are suspect, but we love birds. We love our beautiful, natural world and we love children. We realize that if we're going to protect our cherished natural wonders for generations to come, we need to start today. We feel that raising funds to place Audubon Adventures into classrooms is an important project. We need to teach students early about wildlife and conservation issues. This classroom magazine does that. So we count birds to raise funds to place Audubon Adventures into classrooms in Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

Everyone needs to get involved and help—no contribution is too small or too large. Contributions are tax deductible.

Make check out to Mobile Bay Audubon Society and mail it to the address below.

For the procrastinators who plan to contribute but just haven't gotten around to it—here is a round tuit to help you.



Elizabeth Williams
MBAS—Birdathon
P O Box 483
Fairhope, AL 36533



Alabama Coastal BirdFest 2005

by John Borom

Building on the success of last year's inaugural festival, the second Alabama Coastal BirdFest is scheduled for October 20-23, 2005. It coincides with the annual fall migration of many birds from North America to Central and South America. Coastal Alabama is a critical stopover point during this migration. There is something for all birders—from beginners to experts. Every trip features a very special facet of the beautiful Alabama Coastal Birding Trail. The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation is the new fiscal agent for BirdFest and proceeds will be used to acquire habitat for birds in south Alabama.

This year we have added several new trips and events to enhance your birding experience. The most popular trips from last year are again offered for new visitors and for attendees who want to revisit these wonderful locations.

Last year birders raved about the mix of wonderful birding sites, top-notch guides, and Southern hospitality. Be sure to join us on Thursday night at the reception at the Mobile City Museum and IMAX. The seafood social and silent auction on Friday night at the Nix Center in Fairhope will be really special. **Bob Sargent**, founder of the Hummer Bird Study Group that bands neotropical migrants at Fort Morgan, will be the

speaker. The free Bird and Conservation Expo on Saturday at the Faulkner State Fairhope Campus has been expanded to include all the divisions of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as many other conservation organizations. There will also be free activities Saturday at Bellingrath Gardens in Mobile. For more information, call **John Borom** (251)990-0423 or visit alabamacoastalbirdfest.com.

Come join us for some fantastic birding and a really good time.



About the Speakers

Bob Sargent and his wife **Martha** of Clay, Alabama founded the non-profit organization known as The Hummer/Bird Study Group (HBSG) in 1994. It is dedicated to the study and preservation of hummingbirds and other neotropical migrants (songbirds). The only way to preserve all species of birds for future generations is to know what they require for survival. The best way to accomplish this is to learn as

much about them as possible. Banding is one of the tools in that effort.

Through memberships and numerous fund raising activities, HBSG is able to support the research of dozens of banders and raise the environmental awareness of many thousands of people each year. As of October 2004, the membership totals over 2,000 members from 43 states and five countries.

HBSG-trained associate banders hold a high percentage of all the hummingbird banding permits in the world. These federally required permits authorize banders to capture and band hummingbirds in over 30 states. All of the banding activities are monitored by the United States Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Bird Banding Laboratory.

HBSG is an active partner in education with local school districts and places great emphasis on the environmental education of children. The long-term survival of birds and their habitat is dependent upon the attitudes of the young people of today. The hands-on approach to educating children allows each child present to experience birds as living, breathing creatures deserving of our protection. The HBSG banding station at Fort Morgan, Alabama is open to the public and hosts over 6,000 guests annually. During these banding sessions the general public is exposed to all aspects of identification, behavior and habitat needs of migratory birds. Visitors of all ages have the chance to touch, hold and release many of these birds. Preserving the birds and their habitat is the mission of HBSG.

Alabama Coastal Birdfest 2005 Schedule



Thursday, October 20

1. Fort Morgan Peninsula Trans Gulf Migration Flyway – Hummer Bird Study Group
2. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and *Estuarine Queen* Cruise
3. Dauphin Island Trans Gulf Migration Flyway
4. Mobile Tensaw River Delta, Blakeley State Park, and *Delta Explorer* Cruise
5. Bellingrath Gardens, Fowl River, and *Southern Belle* Cruise
6. Reception Mobile City Museum IMAX

Friday, October 21

7. Fort Morgan Peninsula Trans Gulf Migration Flyway – Hummer Bird Study Group
8. Mobile Tensaw River Delta, Blakeley State Park, and *Delta Explorer* Cruise
9. Bayou La Batre, Forever Wild Grand Bay Savanna, Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and Point aux Pins
10. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and *Estuarine Queen* Cruise
11. Eastern Shore, Mobile Bay Causeway, Meaher State Park, and Battleship Park

12. Seafood Social, Speaker, Silent Auction, Nix Center

Saturday, October 22

- Free Bird and Conservation Expo
Faulkner State Community College
Fairhope Campus

13. Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

14. Mobile Tensaw River Delta, Blakeley State Park, and *Delta Explorer* Cruise

15. Dauphin Island, Sand Island Shorebirds

16. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and *Estuarine Queen* Cruise

17. Gulf Shores, Orange Beach Loop, and Gulf State Park

18. Photo Workshop with Dennis Holt

19. Lower Mobile Tensaw River Delta Photo Shoot with Dennis Holt

Sunday, October 23

20. Blakeley Island Ponds, Mud Lakes, and Polecat Bay

21. South Baldwin County Loop

22. Mobile Tensaw River Delta, Blakeley State Park, and *Delta Explorer* Cruise

23. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and *Estuarine Queen* Cruise

24. Dauphin Island Trans Gulf Migration Flyway



Up from the Egg: The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avoider

By Ogden Nash

Bird watchers top my honors list.
I aimed to be one, but I missed.
Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,
My aim turned out to be erratic,
And I, bespectacled and binocular,
Exposed myself to comment jocular.
We don't need too much birdlore, do we,
To tell a flamingo from a to-whee;
Yet I cannot, and never will,
Unless the silly birds stand still.
And there's no enlightenment so obscure
As ornithological literature.
Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,
Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?
You rush to consult your Nature guide
And inspect the gallery inside,
But a bird in the open never looks
Like its picture in the birdie books—
Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage,
And plunges you back into ignorant gloomage.
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,
Watching the clock instead of inches,
But I sometimes visualize in my gin
The Audubon I audubin.



Great Backyard Bird Count 2005

Tens of thousands of bird enthusiasts focused their eyes, ears, and cameras on North America's birds for a single weekend during the 8th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 18-21, 2005. The results are now in. The event produced 52,000 checklists, 24 percent more than last year. It produced 613 species of birds surpassing the previous record of 567 and the birders counted more than 6.5 million birds, shattering the previous record of 4.8 million set in 2002. They also sent in more than one thousand photographs of the birds they saw, some of which can be seen at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

While Snow Goose was the most numerous bird counted this year (835,000 birds counted), the Northern Cardinal was seen by more people (29,457) on the

count than any other species. Participants in New York (2,991) sent in more checklists than in any other state, and Pennsylvania reported the most birds (623,317), boosted by counts of Snow Geese. In Gautier, Mississippi, where the mayor issued an official proclamation for his citizens to go out and count birds, the result was that Gautier was the town submitting the greatest number of checklists (433). Top Ten lists are all featured on the website www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

There is a wealth of other material and plethora of in-depth stories and information the GBBC website at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. Check out animated maps of bird sightings in your own community. Be sure to save the date for next year, February 17-20, 2006, for the 9th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count!

Great Louisiana Birdfest

by Delane Small

Once again I was lucky enough to attend the Great Louisiana Birdfest this year which was held this year April 14-17 and all I have to say is **WOW!** Mobile was well represented with Audubon members Elizabeth Williams, Nancy Hora, Cookie Darowich, John Borom and Delane Small.

On Thursday we took the long bus ride to Grand Isle and it was definitely worth the ride. We saw over 80 species of birds including pelicans, herons and egrets, White Ibis, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, terns, Loggerhead Shrike, Summer and Scarlet Tanager, hummingbirds, vireos, cormorants, Anhinga, Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Mottled Duck (with babies in tow), Blue-winged Teal, Sanderling, Willet, all kinds of warblers and grosbeaks plus many more. Some saw a Magnificent Frigatebird but I missed the sighting.

Most of us on the trip I think agreed that our favorite birding site was the back yard of Bob

Santini, a local resident who has developed his own bird sanctuary with careful selections of plants and many bird feeders. As an extra bonus Mr. Santini offered fresh shucked oysters to those interested.

As hard as it was, we were once again up and ready to go at 5:00 am the following morning for the trip to Lake Martin and Whiskey Bay Road. Our first stop was along Whiskey Bay Road where we were able to view warblers and vireos. As a matter of fact, we were so close to the birds (and there were lots of them) two Summer Tanagers kept sweeping back and forth over our heads almost close enough to touch. As it got later in the morning we were able to see more hawks and kites.

After lunch we headed to Lake Martin Cypress Island which hosts an average of 10-15,000 nesting pairs of birds on its 9,000 acres. These include the Great Egret, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Cattle Egrets, White Ibis,

Great Blue Herons, Anhingas, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Green Herons but the most impressive to me were the beautiful and elegant Roseate Spoonbills.

It was the first time I've ever seen and Roseate Spoonbill and I saw hundreds! It was truly fascinating to be so close to the nest of all these birds. We were able to see everything from mating, just hatched, fledglings ready to leave the nest, on up. As an extra little aside we saw a few alligators hanging around to catch any babies that we unfortunate enough to fall from their nests.

All in all, it was a wonderful trip. The weather was great, the birds were abundant, the trips were well-planned and executed, and the guides were very knowledgeable and helpful. I believe that anyone interested in bird watching would definitely find attending the Great Louisiana Birdfest next year worthwhile adventure!



Trail in residential area of Grand Isle



Pier at Grand Isle



Looking around on Whiskey Bay Road



Elizabeth Williams, Nancy Hora and Cookie Darowith looking at the exhibit in the Atchafalaya Swamp Welcome Station



Roseate Spoonbill photo taken at Lake Martin



John Borom ready for the shot



Nancy Hora, Elizabeth Williams and John Borom Boarding The Cotton Blossom for a seafood social.

THREAT TO MAJOR ALABAMA BIRDING SITE — ACTION NEEDED!

A proposal has been made that would seriously degrade birding at one of the most important sites in Alabama, Monte Sano State Park. Tom Brindley of Huntsville has researched the issue and has worked to alert many birders to the threat. I wanted to engage MBAS members, as your help is needed to thwart this proposal in its early stages. Please pass this information to others who may not have seen it.

Monte Sano SP in Huntsville is an important site for birds at all seasons, but particularly during migration. Monte Sano Mountain towers above Huntsville and forms a high island of forested habitat irresistible to transient passerines. One of the best areas in the park is the old Bankhead Parkway running obliquely from the northeast corner of the mountaintop over a mile down the northern slope. Closed for many years to traffic, this paved

section has become a magnet for birders, walkers, and cyclists. This road is my favorite site in the park and is a joy to bird. Most years I drive the 2-1/2 hours from Birmingham just to experience it, sometimes more than once in a spring, despite the many good woodland areas much closer to home.

The old parkway passes through a beautiful area of tall hardwood forest, with many tulip poplars and a wide variety of other plants. Abandoned for so many years, the vegetation has grown right to the roadside, as if a paved road had just materialized in the forest without damaging it. Birding is phenomenal in spring, with trees virtually bursting with songs of transient and breeding warblers, vireos, orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, and others. Working down the slope, you have the opportunity to view many tree-tops at nearly eye level to see these

beautiful songsters. While the remainder of the (mostly) hardwood forest in the park also is productive, the old parkway is by far the most special.

Unfortunately, it is this area that is under threat. A proposal has emerged to reconstruct the old road to permit vehicular traffic. According to available information, including an article in the "Huntsville Times," \$100,000 has been allocated to study the proposal, with the construction costs estimated at a minimum of \$1,000,000. This at a time when the state is in a budget crisis!

Obviously, reconstruction and widening of a road on a steep mountain slope would result in significant habitat damage. Birding along this road, even if a sidewalk was included, would then be difficult due to traffic noise, and we would lose one of the finest sites in Alabama to enjoy masses of spring migrants in song.



The current park entrance on Nolen Road might be closed if the Bankhead Parkway was reopened. Though Nolen Road may need some repair, certainly upgrading this entrance would be less consumptive of taxpayers' dollars than re-working the old parkway up the mountain. Traffic problems at peak times in the park could be alleviated by simply charging a small admission, as is done in several parks in the state; this should tremendously reduce "joy riders" just cruising the park. If the two roads made a loop, this type of traffic would likely increase, having a negative impact on birding through much of the park.

It's a shame we have to exert so much collective effort to

preserve what is already "protected."

This is a similar situation to a recent proposal to pave the Red Trail in Oak Mountain SP near Birmingham, except that the current situation in Huntsville would have far more impact on birders. The Oak Mountain proposal was stopped by citizen action, and you can make a difference here as well by taking a few minutes of time. I ask that you write polite letters to the following officials to object to this plan.

Joe McInnes, Director
Alabama Department of
Transportation
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36110

Mark Easterwood
Director, Alabama State Parks
Alabama Dept. of Conserva-
tion and Natural Resources
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-456

Barnett Lawley, Commissioner
Alabama Dept. of Conserva-
tion and Natural Resources
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-456

Kent Wilborn, Manager
State Park
5105 Nolen Avenue
Huntsville, AL 35801
Thank you for your help.
Birmingham, AL
g_d_jackson@bellsouth.net

US House of Representatives Disappoints America by Including Arctic Drilling in Energy Bill

On April 20, in a vote of 231 to 200, the US House of Representatives voted to keep provisions in the Energy Bill that open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. Due to the tireless efforts of countless Audubon advocates and our conservation partners in the Alaska Coalition, we came closer than we have in recent years to stopping this attack in the House of Representatives, on our great natural heritage. We thank you for all of your efforts to help us move Congress in the right direction!

To find out how your lawmaker voted, please visit our Protect the Arctic website, devoted to protecting the Arctic



Refuge and let your representative know how you feel about their vote by using our website's

feature to send an instant letter to your lawmaker!

Unfortunately, this is only one of the ways pro-drillers are trying to pursue drilling in the Arctic Refuge! As you'll recall, last month, the Senate voted to add provisions to the FY'06 budget resolution allowing drilling in the Refuge. Negotiations are ongoing between the House and Senate on the budget resolution and the Arctic Refuge is still in danger in that process! Stay tuned to future issues of the *Audubon Advisory* as the energy bill moves to the Senate and budget negotiations continue. We will fight this every step of the way!

*The Audubon Advisory, April 22, 2005
(Vol. 2005, Issue 8)*

Coastal Birding Association Schedule:

May

14 North American Migration Count. Teams are needed to document local birds for this nation-wide count. Contact local coordinators for Mobile County, Mike Wilson, 251.649-5760, and Baldwin County, Venetia Friend, 251.928-4437.

21 Weeks Bay area, including the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Reserve, Baldwin County. Howard Horne will be our guide. The focus of the trip will be collecting data for this year's Breeding Bird Atlas. Meet at 8:00 am at Mullet Point County Park (Alabama Coastal Birding Trail site 20A) Directions: From Fairhope, take Scenic Highway 98 to Mullet Point where Scenic 98 takes a sharp left curve and County Road 1 goes straight. Stay on County Road 1 and go approximately 0.4 mile to the park on the right (west) side of the road. (For info: Howard Horne, (251)605-9043.

28 Dauphin Island End-of-Season Get-Together. Mike and Karen Wilson have graciously offered their house on Dauphin Island for this get together. Meet at 11:30 am at their house, 910 Cadillac Avenue. Bring lunch and a drink for a picnic meeting; we will discuss plans for next year's events. (For info: Tom/Joan Siegwald, (251)666-1762 or (251)605-2989)

Audubon Schedule:

9 Board Meeting 6:30 pm – General Meeting 7:30 pm

“Cat Island restoration and Rookery,” by Dr. John Dindo, Chairman of the Discovery Hall Programs and senior marine scientist at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. Bring a friend.

14 Annual Picnic—Pavilion in RV park across from Weeks Bay Interpretive Center, Highway 98; 10:00-2:00 Bring a picnic lunch to share at noon.

Activities: There are trails and a boardwalk, lots of interesting things

27 Field Trip to Gaillard Island in Mobile Bay to observe Brown Pelicans as well as gulls, terns and Black Skimmers. Meet at Dog River in Mobile County. Going south, take the first left at Dog River Bridge. There will be a \$15 per person fee. Limited to 20 people. 9am-1pm. For reservations call John Borom 251-990-0423



Newsletter Deadline

Any member is welcomed and encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter. I would be happy to include anything you think would be of interest to the membership.

Please send your articles for the July/August issue to Delane Small by June 24th.

Address:

1 Fiesta Drive

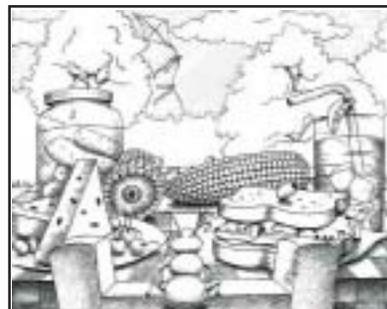
Spanish Fort, AL 36527

Email: dhs9700@bellsouth.net



Dr. Bill Summerour spotted this adult male Buff-bellied Hummingbird at his feeder in Silverhill on March 27.

The Buff-bellied Hummingbird is primarily a resident of Mexico but occasionally wanders as far as the Gulf Coast. There have been more sightings in recent years as more Mexican habitat is being lost to development.



Annual Picnic

May 14, 2005

RV Pavilion in RV park
across from Weeks Bay

Interpretive Center

10:00 - 2:00

Bring some friends and a
picnic lunch to share .

Lots of fun, outdoors
things to do

New Members

Welcome to the Mobile Bay Audubon Society, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society. We thank you for your support. A few facts about our chapter: Monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday from September thru May at 7:30 PM alternately in Fairhope and Mobile (See calendar for details of programs and locations.) Programs of interest are planned for each meeting and field trips are scheduled regularly. We are a non-profit organization—all donations are tax deductible. A list of officers is listed in the newsletter; feel free to call any of them for information. Join us as often as you can—we want to get to know you.

Ottilie Halstead, Membership Chairman

Daphne

June Martin
Jen Polewoda Meriam
William A Ryan
Wallis Griffis
Martha D Myers

Elberta

Evelyn Evans

Fairhope

Dexter Horton
M T Michael

Foley

William A Fanchr

Gulf Shores

Mary Gilbert

Lillian

Judy Gaut
Mary M Muench

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james R McGahagin
Louise D Smith
Bill Stoudenmire
Dean Stracener
Pat Thompson
Anna Weber
Eric Floyd
Linda Floyd

Tracy Baker

Mrs. Richard Frankowski

Orange Beach

Esther M Hellmich

Perdido

Jo Vickery

Robertsdale

Janic Dyal

Lise Waters

Semmes

Mary & Charles Rodning

Silverhill

Luch B Morris

Spanish Fort

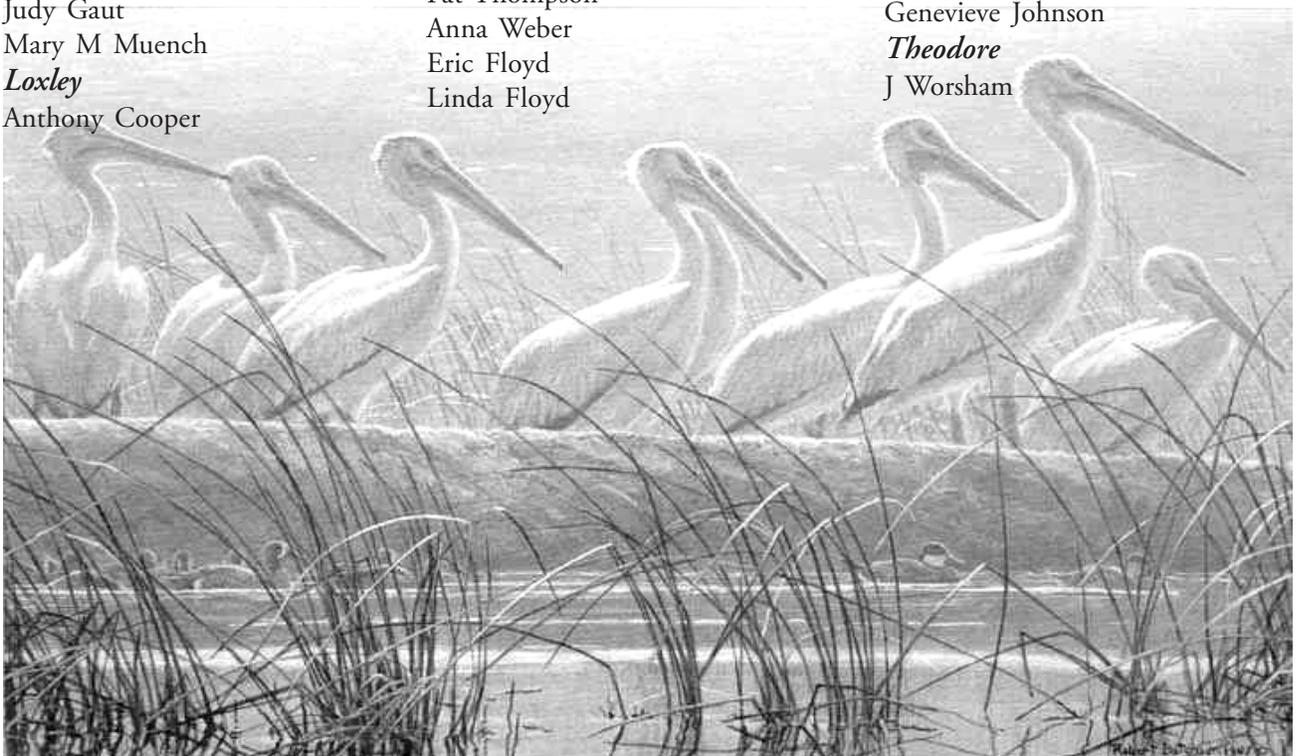
Maggie T Schnitzer

St Elmo

Genevieve Johnson

Theodore

J Worsham



Mobile Bay Audubon Wants You!

Join Us Today!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife and natural habitats.

As a member, you'll become an important part of our dynamic chapter and receive a host of benefits including:

- ◆ A 1-year subscription (6 bi-monthly issues) of our chapter newsletter.
- ◆ Automatic membership in National Audubon Society, and a 1-year subscription (4 issues, one per quarter) of Audubon, its award-winning magazine;
- ◆ Admission to Audubon Centers across the country
- ◆ A 10% discount on products at select Audubon Nature Stores, and more!

Yes! I want to join Mobile Bay Audubon and National Audubon Society!

\$20 – 1 year Introductory Rate

\$15 – 1 year Student/Senior Rate

\$30 – 2 year Special Rate

My check is enclosed.

\$1,000 – Individual Life Membership

\$1,500 – Dual Life Membership

Please bill me.

Name:

Address:

City/ST/Zip:

Telephone:

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and Mail to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, P.O.Box 52529, Boulder, CO 80322-2529

ChapterCode: A01

7XCH

“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees.” Revelation 7:3

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