

Mobile Bay Audubon Society

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Top Ten Reasons to Visit the Alabama Coastal BirdFest

Oct. 14-17, 2004

According to a national survey of recreational pursuits, almost twice as many people travel for bird watching than travel to play golf. Early registrations for the first annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest include eager birders from as far away as Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Kentucky. Why? It's the number-one reason cited below.



1. **See new birds.** Bird watchers love to add to their list of "life birds," that is, birds they will see for the first time in their life. The Alabama Gulf Coast is a prime spot on the Central Flyway, a migration route for millions of birds that spend their summers as far north as Canada and the Arctic and their winters in Central and South America.



2. **Learn about birds.** The free, day-long Bird Expo, held on the grounds of Faulkner State Community College in Fairhope on Saturday, Oct. 16, will be entertaining and educational for both serious and backyard birders. Visitors of all ages can enjoy award-winning bird and nature films, workshops, seminars, birdhouse construction, mini-birding tours, children's activities, and environmental displays.



3. **See celebrities.** Several outstanding and well known

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2004

| | |
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Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuaries

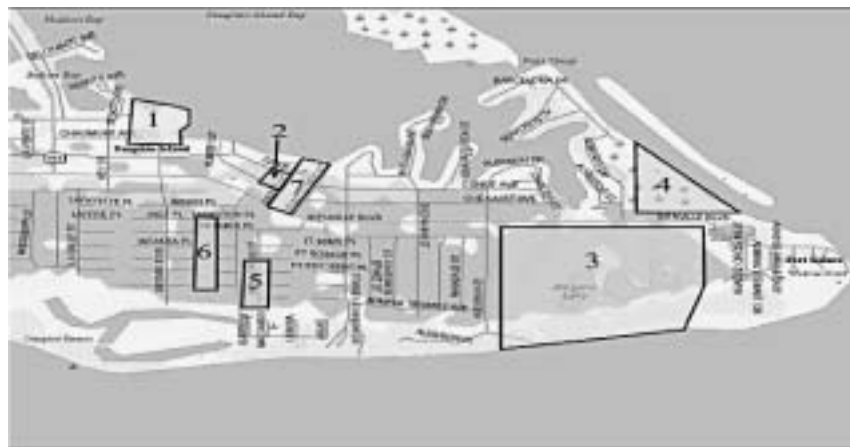
by John Porter

The Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuaries is an informal collaboration between conservation minded agencies and organizations dedicated to the preservation of critical bird habitat on the Island and to the promotion of birding and other forms of ecotourism activities. Agencies included are the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board (DIPBB), and the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. (DIBS).

Over the past four years DIBS has raised some \$400,000 for the protection of critical habitat, through hundreds of generous donations from individuals and the support of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Shell Marine Habitat Program. Other generous partners include

the Nature Conservancy, the Birmingham Audubon Society, the Cullman Audubon Society, the Alabama Audubon Council, the Alabama Ornithological Society, Partners in Flight, the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, the Moorer Foundation and the Diane and Tram Sessions Foundation.

The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc., a community land trust, is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the island's stopover habitat for all North American migratory birds, to work government and other agencies to ensure a balance between human land uses and conservation, to educate landowners about practices that strengthen the island's unique ecosystem and to promote the economic value of ecotourism by attracting more birders to Dauphin Island.



These are the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries:

1) Shell Mound Park, ACBT #39 , ALDCNR & DIBS2) Goat Tree Reserve, ACBT #40, DIBS3) Audubon Bird Sanctuary, ACBT #42, DIPBB (DIBS) 4) Sea Point Saw Grass Marsh, ALDCNR5) Gorgas Swamp, DIBS & Privately Held (In process)6) Tupelo Gum Swamp, DIBS & Privately Held (In process) 7) The Steiner Block, DIBS & Privately Held (In process)



environmentalists will be featured at different events including Dr. Doug Phillips, popular host of the award-winning and long-running Alabama Public Television program, *Discovering Alabama*, who will also be autographing copies of his new book, *Discovering Alabama Wetlands*.

4. **Enjoy group birding.** Bird watching is often a solitary pastime. On your own, can you really be sure that you saw what you think you saw? The Alabama Coastal BirdFest will feature guided birding tours to stops along the 240-mile long Alabama Coastal Birding Trail with local experts. Trips are by chartered coach and depart from the James P. Nix Center in Fairhope.
5. **Help the local economy.** Bird watching has a big impact on the economy. According to a national survey of recreational pursuits, more people travel for bird watching than travel for golf. In the state of Alabama in 2001, more than \$600 million was spent on bird watching.
6. **Help preserve bird habitats.** Proceeds from the Alabama Coastal BirdFest will be used to help preserve and protect migratory bird habitats along the Alabama Gulf Coast.
7. **Make new friends.** Birdwatchers love to “flock” together. Many people who met at various birding festivals stay in touch and travel together to other festivals throughout the years. Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife are devoted bird watchers. Who knows whom you will rub shoulders with while bird watching?
8. **Do a little shopping.** During the free, day-long Bird Expo on Saturday, Oct. 16, you can shop for bird and wildlife-related art, supplies, books, and other goodies.
9. **Have fun!** The Alabama Coastal BirdFest includes a variety of social events: An opening night reception, Thursday, Oct. 14, on board the USS Alabama, with special guest J. Steven Griles, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Interior. A barbecue and seafood social with silent auction and music from Mithril, Mobile Bay area’s favorite Celtic band on Friday, Oct. 15 at the James P. Nix Center in Fairhope. Dr. J.V. Remsen, Curator of Birds at the LSU Museum of Natural Science in Baton Rouge, is the guest speaker. Birding by Night and Seafood Feast, hosted by Alabama Seafood Association, at Blakeley State Park on Saturday, Oct. 16. Dr. Doug Phillips, host of the popular show *Discovering Alabama*, is the guest speaker.
10. **Discover your own backyard.** Alabama Coastal BirdFest is a perfect opportunity for locals to enjoy the sites that visitors come hundreds of miles to appreciate. Sit back, relax, and take a guided tour of such spots as Dauphin Island, Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge, Weeks Bay Reserve, Fort Morgan, Grand Bay Savannah, and the Mobile Tensaw River Delta.



Advance registration is required for all BirdFest tours and dinners. To register or for more information, visit www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com or call 251-990-0423 or 251-929-0922.

Free Events

Saturday, October 16,
2004

Faulkner State Community College
Fairhope Campus

Centennial Hall – Giddens Auditorium – Bird Videos
8:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m.
Amazing Birds of America (55 minutes)
9:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.
Earth Navigators (60 minutes)
11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon
A Celebration of Birds (60 minutes)
1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.
Winged Migration (89 minutes)
3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
Adventures in Bird Watching (60 minutes) Centennial Hall – Room 1
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Landscaping to Attract Wildlife– Learn how native plants support birds, bugs, and other beneficial wildlife, and how you can use them to design a beautiful and pleasing garden in your own yard. Ken Schwartz, Faulkner State Community College. Centennial Hall – Room 2
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Live Snake Demonstration–Enjoy an up close look at these interesting reptiles with Dr. Robert Hastings, Director of Alabama Natural Heritage Program, The Nature Conservancy.
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Audubon Public Policy–The Audubon mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and earth's biological diversity. Obtain literature and learn about Audubon programs from Kristen Berry, Regional Grassroots Coordinator. Dahlgren

Hall – Seminars
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
How Do They Do That? Amazing Raptor Features and Adaptations–Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
From Hummingbirds to Pelicans– Different Beaks for Different Treats, Lynn Garris, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Cat island A Great Place for Birds and No Cats! Dr. John Dindo, Dauphin Island Sea Lab
11:00 a.m. 12:00noon
Alabama Snake Identification Dr. Robert Hastings, Alabama Heritage Program, The Nature Conservancy
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
What You Can't See Through Binoculars, A Close-up Look at Bird Identification, Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
The Government's Role in Migratory Bird Conservation: A Perspective from the Field. Darren LeBlanc, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Daphne Field Office
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Audubon's Birds, A Look at Audubon's Paintings and the Raptors Represented Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center Fowler Science Building
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Owls and Owl Pellets–Learn about the natural history of owls through a hands on Discovery exercise—dissecting owl pellets! Dr. Henry Spivey, Faulkner State Community College Campus Grounds
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Bird House Construction and Distribution Children and Adults

assemble pre-cut bird houses, Home Depot
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Bird Feeder and Seed Distribution Degussa and Mobile Bay Audubon Society
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Shade Grown Coffee Sale Audubon Premium Shade Grown Coffees are grown in Harmony with nature, without pesticides, and with fair treatment and conditions for workers, Mobile Bay Audubon Society
9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Guided Campus Bird Walk for Children Mobile Bay Audubon Society
11:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Guided Campus Bird Walk for Children Mobile Bay Audubon Society Environmental Educational and Birding Displays
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
· Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources–Lands
· Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources–Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
· Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind
· Alabama Wildlife Federation
· Auburn University Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center
· Dauphin Island Sea Lab
· Faulkner State Community College
· McCoy Outdoors
· Mobile Bay Audubon Society
· Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
· The Nature Conservancy
· U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
· Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation
Environmental Studies Center, Mobile
10:00 am-12:00 noon
Workshop, Creating a Bird Friendly Habitat, Alicia Craig, Bird Conservation Alliance.

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

Bayou La Batre

Belinda Boon

Daphne

Dorothy Lisk

Dauphin Island

Connie Roan

Fairhope

Kay Allen

Michele & Arnold Berg

Donald & Margaret Mulh

Barbara & Bryan Stewart

Mary Van Antwerp

Foley

Stanley J Zenisek

Grand Bay

Laura Clark

C H Heflin

Gulf Shores

Melanie G Breckner

Augusta Hankins

Irvington

Teresa Rester

Lillian

Robert Larson

Nell Kellgren

Loxley

Haline Urbaniak

Mobile

Diane Curry

Billy M Hightower, MD

Cindy Johnson

David LaGoy

Rose Patrick

Lucine Pennington

Joan B Siegwald

Charles Steadham

Roberta Stone

Perdido

Neva Nowatka

Silverhill

Gary Spray

Summerdale

Joyce Rochford

Wilmer

Doug Ward

Transfer Into Chapter

Mrs. James F. Mahon

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 November/December issue to Delane Small by October 22nd.

Address:

1 Fiesta Drive

Spanish Fort, AL 36527

Email: dhs9700@bellsouth.net



2005 Calendars

\$4.50

The 2005 Feathered Friends calendars are here—more beautiful than ever. This year it is a 16-month calendar beginning with September. Last year many members were disappointed because we sold out. They will be for sale (\$4.50 each) at the Bird Fest, at each meeting and field trip. Purchase yours early this year.

If you'd like Elizabeth to hold some for you, you must call her at 643-7257.

Audubon Adventures

School program changing leadership

After coordinating the Audubon Adventures school program for several years, Than Morris has given the reins over to two teachers—Cheryl Searcy will coordinate the program in Baldwin County and Connie Rosan in Mobile County.

A big thank you to Than for the good job she did in hearing up this worthwhile school program.

Welcome aboard Cheryl and Connie.

Minnie Nonkes

Birder, Botanist, Conservationist Protector and Lover of Nature

Minnie was born in the Netherlands where her first interest in nature was botany. After taking nursing training in Amsterdam during WWII, she came to America where she met a dashing young Dutchman, Albert, who shared her interest in nature. After only a few months of courtship, she and Albert married in 1948 beginning a life of traveling, camping, shelling, birding, etc. Through the years Minnie and Albert became activists on many conservation issues. When Albert retired they returned to Fairhope in the early '70's. Both became board members of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society.

As a popular field trip leader, Minnie shared her love and knowledge of plants and birds with many—beginners and experts. Everyone gained as we followed Minnie letting her keen ears and eyes to guide our focus. Helping to save the Dauphin Island Sanctuary was just one of Minnie's special conservation interests. She taught birding for a number of years at the Eastern Short Life Long Learning Center.

A bench has been placed in honor of Minnie under the trees close to the north entrance to the Shell Mounds on Dauphin Island by the Mobile Bay Audubon Society, a small way to honor a very special person who has enriched so many lives by sharing her love of nature.

"We love you, Minnie, and wish you many more years of sharing your birds and plants with us." "Yah!"

Elizabeth Williams



Audubon Meetings

Sept 14

Nature Video. “*Audubon Society’s Video Guide to Birds of North America I* (94 minutes). Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. 7 pm. Bring a friend. For more information, contact **John Borom** at 251-990-0423. A brief board meeting will precede the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Oct. 12

Nature Video. “*Audubon Society’s Video Guide to Birds of North America II*. (78 minutes). Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile, 7pm. Bring a friend. For more information, contact **John Borom** at 251-990-0434. A brief board meeting will precede the meeting at 6:30 pm.



The Mobile Coastal Birding Association has invited Audubon members to join with them on their scheduled field trips! This is a wonderful opportunity for us to make new friends and see new places. Many thanks to the Coastal Birding Association.

September

11 Pelican (aka Sand) Island for shorebirds. Meet at **8:00 am** on Dauphin Island at the Isle Dauphine Club at the south end of Orleans Drive. John Stowers will provide the short boat ride to the island. Bring water, sunscreen, and a hat. We may have to wade in shallow water getting to and from the boat so wear pants and shoes that you don’t mind getting wet. [for info: Tom and Joan Siegwald, (251) 666-1762]

18 Muddy Creek Wetlands Management Area for early migrants. Meet at **8:00 am** to walk the interpretive nature trail (2.3 miles). Directions: From Tillman’s Corner, take Hwy 193 south, cross over ship canal, and go 2 miles to Degussa Road; turn right, go over railroad tracks, and turn left onto Industrial Road. Drive about 200 yards to the parking lot on right (marked by bright yellow posts). [for info: Howard Horne, 605-9043]

25 Bayfront Park and Dauphin Island for migrants. Meet at **8:00 am** at Bayfront Park (Alabama Coastal Birding Trail site 47, located on Hwy 193 between Alabama Port and the bridge to the island. [for info: Tom and Joan Siegwald, (251) 666-1762]

October

2 Fort Morgan for hawks and other migrants. Meet at **8:00 am** at the stable area at the fort. [for info: Laurie Bailey, (251) 344-3452]

8-10 Alabama Ornithological Society fall meeting on Dauphin Island. For meeting information, check your fall issue of *The Yellowhammer* or the AOS website <www.bham.net/aos/>.

14-17 Alabama Coastal Birdfest, headquartered in Fairhope, Alabama, with field trips to various birding sites in Baldwin and Mobile Counties. For information and schedules, call (251) 929-0922 or check the birdfest website at <alabamacoastalbirdfest.com>.

23 Fort Pickens in Gulf Breeze, Florida, for late migrants and western strays. Lucy and Bob Duncan will be our leaders. Meet at **8:00 am** in the parking lot on the north side of the road adjacent to the entrance to the park. There is a park entrance fee of \$8.50 per car. [for directions or other info call: Tom and Joan Siegwald, (251) 666-1762]

30 Fort Morgan for late migrants and western strays. Meet at **8:00 am** at the stable area at the fort. [for info: Venetia Friend, (251) 928-4437]



List of BirdFest Field Trips

Field trips have been arranged for the four days of the BirdFest. They will meet at the Nix Center in Fairhope and travel will be by bus unless otherwise noted. All field trips require pre-registration so register now. Don't miss out; register now! For your convenience a registration form is provided in this newsletter. If you need additional information go to the Mobile Bay Audubon website, mobilebayaudubon.org and click on BirdFest.

Thursday, October 14

1. Dauphin Island—Trans Gulf Migration Flyway

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

Wild Bird Magazine recently selected Dauphin Island as one of the top four locations in North America for viewing neotropical migrations! It is their final feeding and resting place before their return flight each fall. It has also been sited as one of the ten most globally important sites for bird migrations. Dauphin Island is a long-time favorite with serious local birders. We will visit woods, marshes, and seashore spots, all of which offer excellent birding. Among the favorite birding sites are the Audubon Bird Sanctuary, Shell Mound Park, Goat Trees, Cadillac Square, Pelican Point and Airport Marsh. This field trip includes a stop at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab to see the Estuarium.

2. Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1980 to protect and preserve rapidly vanishing coastal barrier habitat. The site supports one of the finest examples of the globally imperiled coastal scrub remaining in Alabama. The maritime forests, coastal marsh, beaches, and open waters of the refuge provide essential habitat for an amazing diversity of birds. The refuge's strategic location along the flyway of millions of spring and fall migrants, combined with habitat provided, makes Bon Secour one of the most important refuges in the refuge system. It has been designated as one of Alabama's Ten Natural Wonders. Birders from near and far come to view the marvelous array of diverse species. Hundred of hawks pass over, particularly during fall migration. Mid-October is the peak of the annual Monarch butterfly migration and fall wildflowers light up with a spectacular array of color.

3. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

7:00 am—12:00 noon Pre-Registration Required: \$20

Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve was established in 1986. Weeks Bay, the nation's 16th national estuarine reserve, is Alabama's best remaining unspoiled estuary. The boundaries encompass nearly 6000 acres of land and water in and around Weeks Bay and along Mobile Bay. We will explore the boardwalk through a bottomland hardwood swamp leading to an observation platform viewing Weeks Bay. We will also visit a boardwalk over a rare native pitcher plant bog leading to an observation pier viewing Fish River. Prepare for an easy two miles of walking on the boardwalks. Guides will have scopes, but bring your own if you wish.

4. Mobile Causeway and Battleship park

7:00 am—12:00 noon Pre-Registration Required: \$20

Located at the head of Mobile Bay, the grassy southern reaches of the Mobile Tensaw River Delta mingle with the open waters of the bay. This is an excellent opportunity to view large numbers of waterfowl and waders. Raptors are frequent, especially where large numbers of shorebirds congregate. We will visit Meaher State Park and walk along the boardwalk over a marsh. Unusual species recorded at the park include Tundra Swan and Groove-billed Ani. The extensive lawns at Battleship Park can be excellent for shorebirds such as

Long-billed Curlews. The boardwalk and gazebo is a prime spot to see waders and rails. Prepare for an easy mile of walking on the boardwalks and around the parks. Guides will have scopes, but bring your own if you wish.

5. Reception for BirdFest Participants on the fantail of the Battleship U.S.S. Alabama, Battleship Memorial Park

6:00 pm—8:00 pm. Pre-registration Required: \$20 (includes hors d'oeuvres and a pass into the park during the four-day BirdFest).

Relive America's history. Tour World War II Battleship U.S.S. Alabama, winner of nine Battle Stars, and experience great Southern hospitality and sunset birding. The extensive lawns can be excellent for shorebirds and large waders. Swallow are often seen in good numbers feeding over the lawns. Brown Pelicans, gulls and terns are common. The adjacent boardwalk over the Pinto Pass Marsh can be a good place to observe large waders, rails, Black-necked Stilt and Boat-tailed Grackle. This is a self-drive trip.

Friday, October 15

6. Fort Morgan Peninsula Trans Gulf Migration Flyway

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

The American Bird Conservancy recently selected Fort Morgan as one of the 100 Globally Important Bird Areas in the United States. It can be an excellent place to see migrants when ding over the lawns. Brown Pelican's, gulls and terns are common. The adjacent boardwalk over the Pinto Pass Marsh can be a good place to observe large waders, rails, Black-necked Stilt and Boat-tailed Grackle. This is a self-drive trip. The funnel effect can create major hawk flights overhead and major passerine concentrations at ground level. In the fall, the extensive open area of Fort Morgan Historical Park are attractive to western strays and land birds. Early mornings are usually the best times for locating passerine migrants. Raptors are commonly seen in the autumn. Shorebirds appear on the park's extensive lawns. We will also visit the Hummer/Bird Study Group banding sites where the population and health of 2,000-4,000 birds of 85-90 species are banded and recorded over a two-week period each fall. HBSG possess 11 or only 60 hummingbird banding permits in the world. We will be exposed to all aspects of identification, behavior and habitat needs of migratory species we encounter. It is a treat for many visitors of all ages to have a chance to touch, hold and release many of these birds.

7. Bayou La Batre, Forever Wild Grand Bay Savanna, Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge and Point aux Pins

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

The lands in this area are so biologically diverse that they are included in one of The Nature Conservancy's Last Great Places on Earth.

Fishing, shrimping, and oyster harvesting are big business in the fabled land of Forrest Gump. Birding concentrates on waterbirds, shorebirds, and marsh species. Passerines and raptors are often abundant in the fall. We will visit Heron Bay salt marsh, Coden Belt Road, University Road, large dikes ponds and Point aux Pins. These are excellent locations to view Marsh and Sedge Wrens, Seaside Sparrow, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt and Osprey. Large waders are easy to see. Eared Grebe may be present as well as Mottled Duck.

8. Eastern Shore Mobile Bay

7:00 am—12:00noon Pre-Registration Required: \$20.00

The beautiful Eastern Shore offers a variety of places to view birds. We will visit Pelican Point County Park, a good location to observe hundreds of Brown Pelicans as well as gulls, terns, shorebirds and Marsh Wrens. Mullet Point County Park provides an excellent view of the Bay and is a good site for ducks and waterfowl.

Fairhope Municipal Pier and Beach is a good location for ducks, grebes, loons, and American Coot. Daphne Bayfront Park provides a good place to view ducks, waders, and shorebirds. D'Olive Bay Overlook provides an excellent view of wading birds and ducks.

Prepare for easy walking. Guides will have scopes, but bring your own if you wish.

9. Barbeque and Seafood Social, Van Remsen talk on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and silent auction, Nix Center in Fairhope.

6:00 pm—9:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$25

Here at the Alabama Coastal BirdFest, we like to show our guests some down home southern hospitality. That is why our Barbeque and Seafood Social, special guest speaker and silent auction is such an exciting event. For starters, feast on southern specialties like gumbo, jambalaya, brisket, fried catfish boiling shrimp and more, washed down by your favorite beverage.

Our special guest speaker is Dr. Van Remsen, Curator of Birds and a professor of biological sciences with the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science in Baton Rouge. His talk will be on the recently reported sighting and efforts to confirm the presence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, a species long thought to be extinct in the 34,000 acre Pearl River Wildlife Management Area.

In addition to being a delightful, interesting and fun event, tonight's festivities benefit efforts to acquire birding habitat in Coastal Alabama. Perhaps the best part of this BirdFest event is The Silent Auction. Before and after eating, or between bites if you like, bid on items donated by dozens of area artists and businesses. This is a great opportunity to find deals on works by many of our most talented local artists and photographers. Nature related products, art, wine and many practical items will be taken home by the highest bidder. Treat your senses to the wonderful tastes, sounds and sights offered this year and be a high bidder so that you can take home some good buys.

Saturday, October 16

10. Mobile Tensaw River Delta, Historic Blakeley State Park

8:00 am—2:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

One of the wildest regions of Alabama is the tangle of rivers, bayous, and swamps known as the Mobile Tensaw River Delta. The waters of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers converge below Jackson, and out of the labyrinth of channels flow the Mobile and Tensaw Rivers. This birder's paradise is about 30 miles long and 12 miles wide and has been designated as one of Alabama's Ten Natural Wonders. Over 300 bird species have been recorded here. We will tour aboard the *Delta Explorer* and then explore the boardwalks and the Wheeler Nature Center at Historic Blakeley State Park. Naturalists from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-State Lands Division will guide this fieldtrip.

Prepare for a comfortable ride on the *Delta Explorer*. This large pontoon boat is equipped with a toilet and will accommodate 50 adults. The trails at Blakeley State Park involve moderate walking.

11. Dauphin Island, Sand Island Shorebirds

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

Dauphin Island spans 1250 acres, including approximately nine miles of undeveloped coastal habitat on the west end of the island. Salt marshes on the island provide habitat for a variety of marsh birds, and tidal pools provide feeding areas for many shorebird species. This is probably the best single spot for birding in Alabama, and is a top focal point for migration in the Southeast. Approximately 350 species have been reported from Dauphin Island, nearly ninety percent of the state list. We will travel by bus to Isle Dauphine Country Club, walk to the beach and travel across a short distance to Sand Island by boat. A naturalist from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division will help us identify shorebirds and waters. This is a good place to see Reddish Egret, Red Knot and Snowy

Plover.

12. Mobile Tensaw River Delta Swamp Tour

7:00 am—12:00 noon Pre-Registration Required: \$30

Wildland Expeditions provides swamp tours up Chickasabogue Creek exploring parts of the 190,000 acre Mobile Tensaw River Delta aboard the *Gator Bait*. The Delta was designated as a national Landmark in 1974. The tour takes about two hours.

Prepared for a comfortable ride on the *Gator Bait*. The pontoon boat will accommodate 20 adults.

13. Historic Blakeley State Park by Night

5:00 pm—9:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30

Have you ever birded at night? You may be in for a treat. While the number of species you can see at night is much lower than by day, you might have the privilege of hearing or actually getting to see owls up close during their nocturnal hunt. We may also hear night herons and the sounds of the Delta at night. Naturalists from the State Lands Division will guide this fieldtrip.

This field trip includes an outdoor feast hosted by the Alabama Seafood Association and features Dr. Doug Phillips, host of the popular show *Discovering Alabama*, as the guest speaker.

Sunday, October 17

14. Gulf Shores—Orange Beach Loop

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

This part of Baldwin County has many different habitats to offer the visiting birder within a radius of about ten miles. This is the beginning of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail and includes the following sites:

Perdido Pass/Alabama Point East, Perdido Pass/Alabama Point Wet, Boggy Point, Gulf State Park Pavilion, Natural Center-Gulf State Park Campground, Marsh Bridge, Shelby Lake Picnic Grounds, Gulf State Park Fishing Pier, Little Lagoon Pass and Wade Ward Natural Park.

15. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

7:00 am—12:00 noon Pre-Registration Required: \$30

Weeks Bay is a small estuary in Baldwin County that receives waters from the Fish and Magnolia Rivers. It is connected by a narrow opening to Mobile Bay. Naturalists from The Reserve will lead a tour of the rivers and bay on the pontoon boat *Estuarine Queen*. We will gather at the Nix Center just as we do for bus trips, but you will drive yourself to the meeting place for the start of the trip. Map provided.

16. Blakeley Island Ponds, Polecat Bay, State Docks Mud Lakes and Pinto Pass

7:00 am—12:00 noon Pre-Registration Required: \$20

This area provides an opportunity to view large numbers of waterfowl and waders. Blakeley Island is near the west end of the Mobile causeway, and is best known for its large dredge disposal ponds. Eared Grebe occurs regularly and large waders are abundant. When conditions are good, Blakeley Island is the best shorebird spot in Alabama. Black-necked Stilts sometimes occur in large numbers. Wilson's Phalarope occur here in the fall and gulls and terns are common. Swallow are often abundant. This is a self-drive trip. We will gather at the Nix Center just as we do for bus trips, but you will drive yourself to the meeting place for the start of the trip. Map provided.

17. South Baldwin County Loop

7:00 am—3:00 pm Pre-Registration Required: \$30 (includes lunch)

This part of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail includes the following birding sites: Mariculture Center, Sod Farms, Glenlakes Country Club, Magnolia Landfill, Pelican Point and Bon Secour River.

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