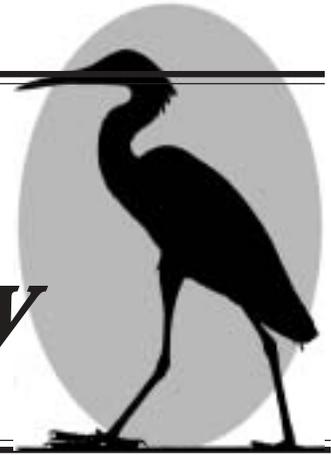


JANUARY, 2003

Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SINCE 1971



VOLUME XXII NO. 1

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Happy New Year



This year I will do all I can to help protect the environment and I will actively participate in and support the projects of my local chapter of the Audubon Society!



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A Cold Day on the Delta

by Celeste Hinds

In spite of liquid blue skies and very little wind, November 23rd was a frigid day on the *Delta Explorer*. Heavy coats and warm hats helped to keep the 45 hearty souls warm as we left the Blakeley Docks and meandered up the Mobile Tensaw River Delta looking for Osprey and Kites. The big birds were smarter than the Audubon members. They stayed out of sight, perhaps hunkered down in low vegetation.

A few Great Egrets, Cormorants, Little Snowy Egrets and plenty of Forester and Caspian Terns were spotted. One Northern Harrier flew low over the marshes. Laughing Gulls lived up their name and laughed at the shivering humans.

Captain Robert Estices steered the *Delta Explorer* along interesting shorelines and pointed out historical sites. He said Osprey nests atop power structures were badly damaged by Tropical Storm Isidore in September.

Resident botanists, Keith Carter and Melvin Long, looked for exotic wetland plants. Noted birder, Minnie Nonkes, identified Golden Crowned Kinglets in the brushy area before we left the dock.

In spite of temps in the 40's Audubon members and guests enjoyed a full morning on the *Delta Explorer*. By the time the picnic got underway, coats were shed and lunch was enjoyed in the sunshine. After lunch Audubon President John Borom led some of the group on a tour of the nature center under construction in the northern end of the park.

All in all, a fine day. Brrrrr!!!

A Plurality of Birds

By Celeste Hinds

Over the years men have coined a host of special terms to describe birds in groups. Here are some that survive the English language. I copied some of these from an old *National Geographic* and added others as I came across them in different publications.

A siege of Herons
A gaggle of Geese (on the ground)
A skein of Geese (in flight)
A herd of Swans, Cranes or Curlews
A badelyng of Ducks
A sord (or sute) of Mallards
A spring of Teal
A company of Widgeon
A cast of Hawks
A bevy of Quail
A covey of Partridges
A muster of Peacocks
A nye of Pheasants
A brood of Chickens
A covert of Coots
A congregation of Plovers
A desert of Lapwings
A wisp of Snipe
A fall of Woodcock
A bazaar of Murres
A flight of Doves or Swallows
A murmuration of Starlings
An exaltation of Larks
A watch of Nightingales
A chattering of Choughs
A host of Sparrows

I clip and paste this list in my field guides. Comes in handy for impressing new birders.

Arctic Drilling Back in the News

*From The Audubon Advisory, October 4, 2002
(Vol. 2002, Issue 20)*

In the coming days, a House-Senate Conference Committee is expected to make a decision on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Last year, the US House of Representatives passed a provision to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. This provision was included as a part of the overall House energy bill. **In April, the Senate voted to keep the drilling provisions out of its version of the energy bill.** As the two energy bills differ, a Conference Committee comprised of members of both the Senate and House will make the final decision. *And now, six months later, they appear ready to do so!* Conference Committee members need to be reminded that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, including its coastal plain—where they look to drill—has extraordinary value as an

intact ecosystem, with all its native birdlife. Millions of birds nest, migrate through, or spend the winter in the Refuge. Their migrations take them to each of the 50 states, and they cross great oceans and follow distant coastlines to reach the lands and waters of six continents. Keeping this Refuge intact is critical for the survival of these birds. The Refuge also provides important habitat for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, polar bears, musk ox, wolves, grizzly bears and other wildlife.

It comes as no surprise that pro-drilling special interests are using their political influence and power to pressure Conference Committee members to open the Refuge to drilling. They erroneously claim that opening the Refuge to oil drilling will

help reduce our reliance on oil from the Middle East, while others are using the possible war with Iraq to heighten the pro-drilling rhetoric. These claims are baseless. Here are the facts:

Experts agree that drilling for oil in the Arctic Refuge will do little or nothing to reduce US dependence on foreign oil, nor will it address America's long-term energy needs. There is only a 6-month supply of oil, and even oil industry officials admit that oil wouldn't be available for 10 years. Even with the most optimistic estimates of Arctic Refuge oil added to the oil fields off our coasts and everywhere else in the US, we still have only 3 to 4% of the world's oil reserves.



For the New Birder – About Bird Cradles

By Celeste Hinds



Bird nests are not bird homes. Nests are cradles, nothing more...I like to think of them as maternity wards.

When birds sit on eggs, they are not simply relaxing. They are regulating the temperature of the clutch. If too hot, the parent bird may need to cool the eggs by shading or moistening them. Some birds make frequent trips to bird-baths or watering places to soak their belly feathers, then return to the nest to cool the eggs. Some species cool the eggs by waving their wings.

Keeping the eggs warm may be a challenge for early spring nesters. April can be cool and wet and parent birds must sit on the eggs for long periods of time, without food or water.

According to “Birdscope” News and Views from Sapsucker Woods of Cornell Lab of Ornithology, ambient temperatures may also play a role in determining the clutch size and determining how hard birds must work to keep the eggs at proper temperature.

Mourning Doves, *Zenaida macourea*, must be architecturally challenged for their nest construction leaves much to be desired. A pair built their flimsy nest above our patio and the eggs could be seen from below. The first little breeze blew the cradle right off the limb. Their second nest survived and hatched three babies that promptly fell out on to the ground. I put them in dense brush nearby and hoped the parent birds would come to their rescue. Although poor nesters, Doves prosper and seem to grow in number each year.

Someone brought me the nest of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, *Poliophtila caurela*, and it is a work of art. Not only is it lovely to look at, it is sturdy and glued to the limb on which it sat. This work of a master craftsman (or craftsbird, if you will) was saddled to a small horizontal branch of a water

oak, and built of plant down, fiber, oak catkins; bound together with insect silk, spider web and covered with bits of lichen and plant down.

Last year a Carolina Wren, *Thoryothorus ludovicianus*, raised its brood behind the shampoo in our outdoor shower. After the nestlings had fledged I removed the nest and saw that its interior was white as snow. Upon further examination I saw that the clever wren had lined its cradle with fine white fur from our cat that was brushed daily. The wads of fur fell onto the grass where the wren retrieved and made good use of it.

I always put lint from the dryer outside on twigs for easy use of Northern Mockingbirds, *Mimus polyglottos*. Once a Mockingbird was seen pulling strings from a dirty mop!

Peterson Field Guides “Eastern Birds’ Nests” is a good source for learning more about nests and nesting habits.



Bird Treaty Takes Wing

From Houston Chronicle
© Dina Cappiello

For migrating birds, cities can be a deadly pit stop. Mirrored skyscrapers create the illusion of an endless sky to the wary travelers—then, whack. Telephone wires and electrical lines can catch even the swiftest of wings and the landing strip of manicured lawns is nothing more than giant dinner plates for hungry cats.

But the trip might be eased a bit for the millions of birds that pass through Houston each season. In an agreement signed this fall between the city and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Houston became the fourth metropolis in the country to agree to actively protect migratory birds. National and local dignitaries will officially announce the signing early next year. Under the two-year pact, known as an Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds, several local educational and environmental groups will match \$160,000 in federal and corporate dollars to provide more bird-friendly habitat and better monitor annual migrations.

“Houston is in a strategically very important location. Anything we do good for birds here benefits literally all of North America,” said Peter Stangel, regional director for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The nonprofit, a funding arm of the service, donated \$80,000 to the treaty. Half of that money was donated by Houston-based Conoco Phillips, an oil and gas company.

When it comes to bird traffic, Houston is a major rest stop on a

superhighway running from Central and Latin America to the Arctic. Each year millions of neotropical birds, geese and other waterfowl, representing hundreds of species, pass through the area en route to warmer weather as the seasons change. Some stay and nest here, others just pause for refueling.

While some of the projects in the new treaty could potentially lure more birds to the area—by planting vegetation in a number of local parks and building bird houses and feeders—others will enhance researchers’ understanding of the migration.

The projects will be done by August 2004 and include:

- Installation of 20 microphones on schools and telephone company buildings to record migratory bird calls at night and to count populations.

- Replacement of invasive species with native shrubs and trees in Little Thicket, Hermann, Memorial, and E.R. and Ann Taylor Parks.

- Development of educational materials.

- Construction of an interpretative trail and bird houses and feeders along the White Oak Bayou.

“The scope of these projects will add to the quality of life here in Houston,” said Roksan Okan-Vick, director of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department, which is matching the \$80,000 provided by the federal government largely through in-kind services.

Like many major cities, Houston’s bird habitat has slowly been eaten away by development and sprawl. The native plants that birds have adapted to for shelter and food have been taken over by exotic shrubs. Domestic animals—most notably the cat—have become bird predators. And pesticides and

diseases such as West Nile virus have taken serious tolls on avian populations.

Of the 836 migratory species protected under federal law, wildlife experts estimate one-quarter to be in trouble. Of these, 78 are endangered and 14 are listed as threatened on the federal endangered species list. More than 250 species pass through Houston each year, according to the estimates. “We sit in a place where the birds have been coming through for eons,” said Ron Jones, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Houston.

One of the groups that applied for funding wants to use the money for research. The South Texas Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers of America, a group of Southwestern Bell Co. employees and retirees, plans to erect microphones on buildings around the city to record the calls of migrant birds at night. The recordings will be fed into a computer to determine the species from the sound. “For some years, we have only been doing radar tracking at night,” said Gary Woods, a member of the group. “That only tells us the approximate number of birds, it tells us nothing about the species.”

New Orleans, Chicago and Philadelphia are the other three cities that signed treaties since the project began in 1999. Portland is expected to endorse a treaty in spring 2003. And four other cities have applied, said Julie St. Louis, national coordinator for the program. In Chicago, one of the initiatives called for dimming disorienting lights on skyscrapers. (Houston will not follow suit). “The program is flexible,” St. Louis said. “We expect the number of cities to increase.”

Remembering the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

by John Borom

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis principalis*) is or was one of the rarest and largest woodpeckers in the world. The genus comes from the combination of two Greek words *campa* (a caterpillar) and *philos* (loving). The species name is Latin meaning “principal,” referring to the earlier belief that caterpillars were the primary food of this species.

Adults are about 20 inches in length, mostly black, with a red crest on the male. The female has no red on the head. A large white stripe runs from behind the eye and down the neck on both sides of the head. When the bird is at rest, large white patches are visible near the ends of the wings. While it is flying, white is visible



on both the upper and lower portions of the inner flight feathers. The bill is an ivory color.

Its former range was in the southeastern United States, including all of the Southeast north of southeastern North Carolina, west to Missouri, and southwest through Oklahoma and Texas. The subspecies in Cuba is *Campephilus principalis bairdi*.

The habitat where this species once occurred was mature old-growth forest and cypress swamps. Its diet consisted mostly of wood-boring insects such as beetle larvae, but it also ate other insects, fruits and seeds. It is or was the only woodpecker in the United States able to pry unloosened bark off trees. It more commonly fed on insects in trees that had recently died, or dying portions of live trees.

The known breeding occurred from January to April and required snags in mature old-growth forest for nesting. Nests ranged from 15 to 70 feet in height and the female laid from two to five glossy white eggs. Both adults incubated for approximately 20 days. The male incubated at night and the female incubated during the day. The young fledged within 35 days of hatching. The male did most of the brooding and nest sanitation. A breeding pair required about three square miles of forest.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the species is thought to be extirpated from the wild in North America.

However, it has not been officially declared extinct. The story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is a vivid symbol of a conservation failure of 20th Century America.

By 1900, millions of acres of virgin pine, cypress and hardwood still existed in the Southeast. For a variety of reasons, those who had opportunities to do so failed to save even a single tract of this primary forest. A severe population decline occurred between 1885 and 1900, along with logging activity. Hunting by collectors for museums hastened the decline of the species.

The last confirmed sighting of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Alabama was in 1907. By 1938, the U.S. population had been reduced to only about 22 individuals. Despite the National Audubon Society's suggestions that the Singer Preserve in Louisiana be selectively logged, leaving old trees for woodpeckers, the last great virgin bottomland swamp on the whole North American continent was logged out in 1943. One tree that was felled contained an Ivory-billed Woodpecker nest and eggs. A lone female lingered about that year.

The last confirmed sighting in Florida was in the Apalachicola Swamp in 1950. However, an unconfirmed sighting of a bird in Gulf Hammock was reported in 1963. In 1961 and 1963 unconfirmed reports came from the Santee Swamp in South Carolina. The last confirmed sightings in Texas were in Big Thicket in 1960, 1961 and 1966. In Cuba, mixed hardwood forests were

slashed away not only for lumber but also to make way for the sugar industry. The last confirmed sighting was in Cuba in 1987.

Since then, there have been unconfirmed reports that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker has been seen or heard in the U.S. In 1999, a LSU forestry student reported that he had seen a pair in the 35,000-acre Pearl River Wildlife Management Area while turkey hunting in April. His perfectly described sighting led to renewed efforts to find the species, including a series of cooperative expeditions conducted by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Zeiss Sports Optics, the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the LSU Mu-

seum of Natural Science.

From late January through mid-March, 2002, acoustic recording units (ARU's), developed by the Cornell Lab's team of bioacoustics engineers, recorded sounds, natural and otherwise, from 12 different positions throughout the forests of the Pearl River drainage. The ARUs had been deployed by researchers following rugged hikes through bayous, brambles, and mud. Analysis of more than 4,000 hours of digital data have shown no indication of the species' presence.

At one point, two different research teams independently heard loud double raps that sounded suspiciously like the

distinctive display drum of the genus *Campephilus*. Sadly, analysis proved that the sounds were distant gun shots that only sounded to human ears like drumming on a hollow snag. Researchers do not consider the results of this winter's work to be conclusive as to the presence or absence of the species in the Pearl River forests and investigations will continue.

The real importance of saving such things as Ivory-billed Woodpeckers is not so much that we need them as that we need to save them. It is time we recognize where the threat comes from: not from our enemies but from ourselves.

The Highlands of Scotland

We are indeed fortunate that Tom Sterling will be with us again during Film Week, January 13-17. During this week, Tom will be showing the film, *The Highlands of Scotland*, to students in 10 public and private schools. He will also show the film Monday, January 13 at the Government Street Baptist Church and Thursday, January 16 at 7:30 pm at Faulkner Community College.

Tom has taken a fresh look at an old and revered land. The casual visitor tends to see neat and tidy coastal villages, the large cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness; castles, bagpipes and thousands of sheep. We'll see all of this and much, much more.

As a trained field naturalist, Tom takes us to the wilder parts of Scotland—the highlands. Here we'll see the beautiful Loch Ness, visit Hadrian's Wall, watch a sheep dog trial, visit a weaver, a pottery and Balmorals Castle, the royal family's autumn residence. When we visit the Highland Wildlife Park, Scotland's only drive-through wild animal park, we'll see red deer, arctic fox and much more. High in the Cairngorm Mountains we'll see the native reindeer. Touring the north and west coast, our trip will conclude with some of Scotland's most magnificent mountain scenery.

This is a trip to Scotland you'll not want to miss. Join us at one the night showings—Monday, January 13 in Mobile and Thursday, January 16 in Fairhope.



Calendar

January 13 General Meeting--Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge update
7:30 pm Centennial Hall, Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope
Speaker: Allyne Askins, Reserve Manager

February 11 General Meeting--National Audubon Conservation Issues and Legislative Priorities
Speaker: Emily Byram, Grassroots Coordinator, NAS, Washington, DC
Government Street Baptist Church, 3401 Government Blvd.
(Intersection of Highway 90 and I-65)

March

Flocks of graceful White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) are feeding in estuarine marshes.

Resembling plant stems, Gulf pipefish (*Syngnathus scovelli*) are abundant in estuarine submerged aquatic vegetation.

- 11 Board Meeting. 6:30 p.m.
General Meeting. **“The Galapagos Islands”** presented by **Bill and Becky Jones**. Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 12 Film Series. **“The Life of Birds—To Fly or Not to Fly”** by David Attenborough.
Where: Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall.
10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided.
- 19 Film Series. **“The Life of Birds—The Mastery of Flight”** by David Attenborough.
Where: Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall.
10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided.
- 26 Film Series. **“The Life of Birds—The Insatiable Appetite”** by David Attenborough.
Where: Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall.
10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided.

April

When flocks of Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) grace slightly damp, weedy fields, the world seems a brighter place.
Young spot (*Leiostomus xanthurus*) are abundant in estuarine submerged aquatic vegetation.

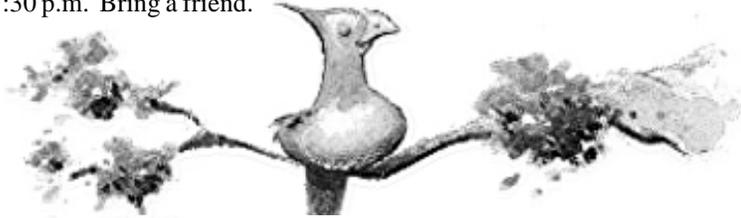
- 2 Film Series. **“The Life of Birds—Meat Eaters”** by David Attenborough.
Hall. 10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided.
- 5-19 Hummer Bird Study Group—Spring Banding at Fort Morgan, AL. A flood of neotropical migrants in their finest breeding plumage! Don't miss it. For more information call **Bob Sargent** 205-681-2888.
- 8 Board Meeting. 6:30 p.m.
General Meeting. **“Alabama's Land Trust Program—Forever Wild”** presented by **John Borom**. Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile.
7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 9 Film Series. **“The Life of Birds—Fishing for a Living”** by David Attenborough. Where: Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. 10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided
- 10-13 The Great Louisiana Bird Fest, an event of the Northlake Nature Center, Mandeville, Louisiana. For more information log on to:
www.northlakenature.org/BirdFest2003

- 16 Film Series. “**The Life of Birds—Signals and Songs**” by David Attenborough. Where: Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. 10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided.
- 18-20 Alabama Ornithological Society spring meeting at Dauphin Island, 6:00 a.m. Friday until noon Sunday. For more information call **Dr. John Porter** 861-2120.
- 23 Film Series. “**The Life of Birds—Finding Partners**” by David Attenborough. Where: Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. 10:00 a.m. No charge. Refreshments provided.
- 30 Film Series. “**The Life of Birds—The Demands of the Egg**” by David

May

Beautiful Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) are nesting in shrub-covered wetlands.
Young Pinfish (*Lagodon rhomboides*) are abundant in estuarine submerged aquatic vegetation.

- 3 Kid’s Fishing Fun Day. Safe Harbor R.V. Park. 8:00 a.m.-1:30p.m.
 A project of the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation and ADCNR.
- 13 Board Meeting. 6:30 p.m.
 General Meeting. “**The Natural History of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta**” presented by **Eric Soehren**, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division. 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.



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.) A door prize is offered at each meeting. 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
 Mrs. John C. Horn
 Mr. & Mrs. R. Woods
Fairhope
 Nancy Miller
 Jule Moon
Gulf Shores
 Judy Hocutt
Lillian
 M. Baxter

Songbird Challenges

by John Borom

The fact that hundreds of millions of tiny neotropical (New World) songbirds, many weighing no more than a few pennies each, make a grueling journey between two continents twice a year is one of nature's greatest marvels. The urge to fly north in spring and south in fall is most likely triggered by changing day lengths. For weeks before they depart, the songbirds gorge on food, building up fat reserves for the demanding flight. Some warblers may get 200 miles of flying at peak efficiency from stored energy in one gram of fat.

They leave Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean after the sun sets, fly at night when temperatures are cooler and predators are not as prevalent, and continue up to 20 hours nonstop over more than 600 miles of the Gulf. They navigate using the location of the setting sun, the moon and other natural light, the pattern of the stars, topographic features, and the Earth's geomagnetic field. That such tiny living fluffs of colorful feathers can travel such great distances against many odds is among the reasons humans are so entranced by wild songbirds.

Their goal is to make a rest stop in the first line of extensive forest on the mainland, perhaps 20 to 30 miles inland. Untold numbers never make it that far. Some simply run out of fuel from fighting head winds, and they fall into the Gulf. Others may struggle until they see the first sliver of land along the coast where there is any woodland and simply plop down.



The millions of songbirds that do continue their journey rest for a day or so, and consume hordes of insects, spiders, and fruits and seeds to rebuild their fat. Then, flying only at night, they make a series of four to six hour flights, each spanning 50 miles or so. These flights are punctuated by stopovers that last from a few hours to a few days.

As the songbirds move northward, they often follow river corridors, where dense foliage offers protection against daytime predators and abundant food. Many choose Alabama for their nesting place. Others will fly as far north as the Canadian tundra to nest. Stopover areas are vitally important for migrating songbirds. Unfortunately, they are disappearing at alarming rates.

Coastal wild places vital to songbirds are now prime real estate. Critical habitat is giving way to vacation resorts, malls, houses and other development.

Other resting stops—forests, grasslands, old fields and pitcher plant bogs have become partitioned by development into small plots, places where predators are a major menace.

Fragmentation can be devastating to songbirds. Study after study shows that the birds have trouble raising their young in small blocks of woods surrounded by clear cuts, farmland and suburbs, as compared with large forest tracts. Fragmentation creates places where predators such as house cats, snakes, raccoons and opossums are virtually funneled into nesting sites.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that there are more than 100 million domestic and feral cats nationwide. Clawed or declawed, well-fed or hungry, bell or no bell, all cats that spend time outside will hunt and kill wildlife including birds. Nationwide the number of songbirds killed by cats is certainly in the hundreds of millions.

Human-made structures are an increasing hazard to migratory songbirds. It is estimated that 100 million birds are killed each year by collisions with buildings and skyscrapers. Many millions more are killed by towers, such as those erected for cell phones. A study released by the American Bird Conservancy released last summer says the grim toll runs as high as 40 million birds annually. Presently, there are over 1400 towers in Alabama. The number continues

to increase. The more towers, the more dead birds. Other problems confronting migrating songbirds include collisions with automobiles, pollution and nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

In the fall, they make their return trip to the tropics. From Mexico to Colombia, many songbirds winter in coffee plantations, where coffee bushes have traditionally been grown under a shady canopy of native forest trees. Unfortunately, this habitat is disappearing as plantations intensify and replant with higher yielding, sun-tolerant coffee varieties that do not require shade. The result is that songbirds must search even harder to find suitable wintering territory.

In recent years, spring has grown noticeably quieter and fall skies more still. Dozens of Alabama's most colorful, sweet-sounding songbirds are in serious trouble.

Week's Bay Field Trip

By Celeste Hinds

Audubon member Cindy McDonald missed the boat, but she was determined not to be left behind. She hailed a fisherman and begged a ride out to catch up with the *Estaurine Queen* making way out of Week's Bay down to the Magnolia River.

It was a cool crisp morning on October 19 and we enjoyed a slow boat ride on smooth waters. Eric Brunden was captain for the morning and Sarah Johnston was first mate. Eric is Research Technician at Weeks Bay Reserve and Sarah's position is GIS (geographic information systems).

The boat had a full complement as we searched for water fowl along the banks. Osprey were

sighted, along with Cormorants, Laughing Gulls, Caspian Terns, Foresters Terns and Brown Pelicans. Trees along the banks held a Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, Kingfisher, Red-Winged Blackbirds and Red-Bellied Woodpeckers. Someone thought they saw a Bald Eagle but I didn't see it.

Although we did not find an abundance of birds we enjoyed the water and the foliage. Seeing mailboxes where mail is delivered by boat to homes along the Magnolia River was new to some of the passengers. It was fun to observe the remote brackish areas along the river and learn that a few very pristine areas still exist in beautiful Baldwin County.

Thanks to John Borom for arranging this trip. He was otherwise engaged and but we managed to have a good time without him. Thanks to Eric Brunden and Sarah Johnston for keeping us safe.



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: _____

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“The United States invented the national park. Have we so lost our way a century later that we are prepared to sacrifice a one-of-a-kind wilderness for a shot at a small and temporary supply of oil? Similarly, are we so desperate for a fast buck that other natural treasures in Alaska are for sale to the highest bidder?” Jimmy Carter, *Los Angeles Times*, 1 December 1990

