



Arkansas Birds

Newsletter of the Arkansas Audubon Society

Autumn 2016 | Volume 61 | No. 3 | arbirds.org

The 37th Year of Arkansas Audubon Society Ecology Camps was Muggy but Good

By **RENN TUMLISON** and **TAMZEN TUMLISON BRYANT**

Weather during the 37th year of the Halberg Ecology Camps was generally hot and humid, though rain fell only a couple of days the first week. Still, the resiliency of the camp personnel allowed us to conduct another great pair of sessions with some good experiences for the campers and staff.

This year accomplished the 53rd session of the Halberg Ecology Camp, it being the 17th year the camp has held two sessions and the 37th year to hold the camp. The first session of the camp was held June 12–17, and the second session was June 19–24.

Campers originated from 23 counties of Arkansas (it was the same last year), with out-of-state campers from Arizona, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Tennessee,

see **CAMP**, continued on page 3



Geology students at the Ecology Camp look for pyrite hidden within the shale. | Photo: Tamzen Bryant

Since I took up birding, the paradox of birding in the late summer and early fall has always fascinated me. My outings into the woods this time of year can seem remarkably unproductive. In the late spring the woods here were covered up with Red-eyed Vireos. Then I probably spent more time walking in deep woods hearing a Red-eyed Vireo than not hearing one. Yet, where are they now? The females can lay up to five eggs in a nest and may have had two broods, so there should be gobs of vireos. In fact, there should be more than ever. They're just hiding in the treetops, quietly Hoovering caterpillars in preparation for migration. There must be a point of maximum abundance in the early fall when the hordes of youngsters are joined by early migrants from

the north. That is probably the day that I will head out and have trouble netting even a single observation for my list. By the spring, a great many will not have survived their two-way multi-continental migration, and their population will actually be at its lowest.

Our spring meetings always draw in a bit larger crowd than our fall conferences. Fewer birds mean more birders of course! For now I will head out again to enjoy the fall's muted fecundity while paradoxically looking forward to the return of the bold sparseness of spring. I look forward to seeing even more of you than as well.

-ADAM SCHAFFER

President, *Arkansas Audubon Society*

Newsletter and Membership Information

The Arkansas Audubon Society Newsletter is a quarterly publication of Arkansas Audubon Society, Inc., a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization, 472 Rock Creek Rd., Hot Springs, AR 71913-9261. Issue dates are March, June, September, and December.

PLEASE NOTE: Announcements, articles, information, and/or photographs to be considered for an upcoming edition of *Arkansas Birds* should be submitted to the editor no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication.

The newsletter is provided to those who pay membership dues to AAS.

Send newsletter submissions to samantha.scheiman@gmail.com.

Membership renewals are due Jan. 1 of each calendar year.

Please enter my membership in the Arkansas Audubon Society as a:

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CAMP, continued from page 1

and Texas. Little Rock, Hot Springs, and Fayetteville were the most common sources of Arkansas campers.

Junior campers went to six classes twice through the week (Aquatic Biology, Botany, Entomology, Geology, Ornithology, and Mammalogy/Herpetology). Classes were enriched by early morning bird walks, evening herp (amphibian and reptile) walks, and “bug” watches aided by a lamp set up against a white sheet.

Senior campers took a field trip away from camp on Wednesday. They toured the Poteau-Cold Springs Ranger District of the Ouachita National Forest to study fire ecology, habitat restoration, and plant ecology. They also saw Red-cockaded Woodpecker nests, chicks, and adults. The camp appreciates the support of the Forest Service personnel who guided the trip.

Several activities were available during recreation time, including swimming, canoeing, volleyball, and story-telling. Later, evening learning programs kept the campers entertained. The same presentations were given in both sessions: Herpetology instructor Kory Roberts presented about alligators and showed a live specimen; ornithology teachers Donna and Kelly Mulhollan (otherwise known as the folk group “Still on the Hill”) gave a small concert for the campers; Deanna Hughes and Beth Auld with Raptor Rehab of Central Arkansas showed a live Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Screech Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, and Harris’ Hawk for the campers to see and photograph; and Raven Lawson (Watershed Protection Manager at Central Arkansas Water) made a presentation and conducted a game to help campers understand human use of water. Other programs held both weeks were get-acquainted games, a showing of the classic (original) “The Lorax” film by Dr. Seuss, other learning games related to nature, and a camp review slide show set to music and shown Thursday evening.

Director (“Camp Boss”) this year was Robin Buff, aided by Assistant Director Matt Wilson. Publicity Coordinator was Tamzen Bryant. Senior campers were taught by Janet McAllister and Adam Schaffer the first week, and Jessa Thurman (a former camper) replaced Adam the second week. Aquatic Biology teachers were Ella Caraway and Bill Rosser the first week, and Bill was replaced by Cathleen Lowe the second week. Botany was taught by Jackie Scott and Susan Bolding the first week, then Jonathan Harris replaced Susan the second week. Brian Baldwin and Raven Bough taught Entomology during week one, and Adaire Middleton replaced Raven for week two. Geology was taught by

Ikram Bahran and Adaire Middleton during week one, and Luke Leshe replaced Adaire for week two. Kelly and Donna Mulhollan taught Ornithology both weeks. Renn Tumilson did Mammalogy, and Kory Roberts did Herpetology both weeks.

Camp nursing duties were expertly handled by Michael Gartin, and Erin Schaffer served as Activities Director. The Food Director was Michael Wilson, assisted by cooks Joe Alexander and Penelope Starr (week one), and Virginia Buff replaced Joe during the second week. Helpers who insured that utensils were clean were Amelia McAllister and Michael Gartin. Custodian was Jonathan Harris for week one. Lifeguard/Counselors were Robin Campbell and Cathleen Lowe. Anna Feldman volunteered during week one, and Karen Hicks and Cathy Melvin also were volunteers week two.

Financial assistance to help some of the campers attend was generously provided by several individuals, local organizations, and state agencies. The campers wrote “thank you” notes to their benefactors, and their comments reflect how this camp affected their lives:

“Thank you very much for the nature inspiring camp. This camp told me things that I didn’t even know were possible.”

“The food is some of the best I’ve ever had. My favorite part were the classes. I learned so much in this week. I met so many different friends. The counselors are amazing, all the staff was polite and very nice ... I had an amazing time at camp.”

“Thank you all for a scholarship and a blessing the staff is great.”

“Thanks again I had a blast at camp with my new best friend.”

“This camp was the highlight of my year.”

“I will definitely want to volunteer here. I love ecology.”

“I had so much fun at camp. I learned a lot of things that made me have a better understanding of our world. I learned about ecosystems and how every organism plays its role. We need to conserve animals habitats so they can still play their role.”

CAMP: Camps Continue to Help Children Appreciate Nature (continued from pages 1 and 3)



Students in ornithology at the Ecology Camp look for birds on Clearfork Lake. | Photo: Tamzen Bryant

“I am having a blast at this camp. Everybody here is very nice and friendly, and the activities are super fun! The learning is really fun!”

“I don’t have a favorite subject because I love all of them.”

“I enjoyed everything here and learned a lot from all the classes.”

“I was a little nervous at first, but after a day I loved it.”

“I hope I touched your heart as much as this camp has touched mine.” (this followed a camper’s other statements about how she loved camp)

“The experience I have had was the most memorable thing I have done yet. The classes, teachers, activities, and programs taught me a lot about the earth around me.”

“I know it must have cost you a lot of money to do this for me, and I’m grateful for that, especially since you could’ve spent it on yourself. Without you, I wouldn’t

have been able to come here and learn everything I did.”

“I feel like I am closer to nature and I understand what is around me.”

“I got to be free from civilization for a whole week! It was really awesome.”

“Thank you SO much for letting me go to the Halberg ecology camp. I learned about many, many things. There are so many fun and nice teachers/camp counselors. We played fun games that we had fun in and learned at the same time.”

“From this camp I learned that I should reduce using resources.”

We show Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax* (original animated cartoon) at each camp, with a discussion of the message. A couple of campers made reference to the video:

“I learned about what I can do to help this planet like reuse a water bottle. I love camp where you learn about important things, and I enjoyed every single second I

was here. I had a splendiferous time and want to come back next year.” (note: the term “splendiferous” is a Dr. Seuss term from the video)

“I have never enjoyed a camp this much. I hope I can come again ... UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it’s not.” (this is the closing point of the video, is quoted a couple of times during the week, and appeared as the word unless carved into a stone displayed at camp).

The last event on Thursday evening of each session was a review of camp based on images taken by Publicity Director Tamzen Bryant and other camp staff. Set to music to help set a mood, the week in review also was presented to the parents on Friday morning to provide them a glimpse of the camp. The song “Pass It on Down” by Alabama exemplifies camp philosophy and is a musical backdrop for part of the slide show. The slide show, set to different music, will be available through a link on the Arkansas Audubon Society web page: http://www.arbirds.org/halberg_ecology_camp.html.

New this year, the publicity director posted images to Facebook (search Arkansas Audubon Society Ecology Camps) so parents would be able to see images of the camp activities, and sometimes their campers, while camp was in session. Parents and former campers rated the camp 5 stars out of 5. Some comments included:

“We were just about to give up on overnight camps, but luckily we found this one. My daughter was accepted

for first year and then invited back for second and third year. This was one of the best experiences of her life to date. The adult leaders are not only experts in their fields but they really care about the campers ... The counselors encouraged her to expand her limits without pushing too hard. They helped her when she needed help. Awesome experience and awesome camp!”

“It’s been six years since I attended this camp and I wish I could still go! It was so amazing. A wonderful experience.”

“[Camper name] has not stopped talking about her wonderful camp experience! Thank you for making her first trip to camp so wonderful and memorable!”

“This is the best camp ever! My daughter loved her week with you guys.”

“Send your kids! They will love you for it!”

“According to our grandson, this camp is the best ever! I wish I could attend as the “Grandma counselor.””

After seeing the camp slide program showing the week’s activities, a mother emailed the executive director with her own appreciation: “Could you forward a huge thank you from the [camper’s family] to all the camp staff? I got teary watching the slide shows at pick up from camp. You all reminded [camper’s name] how fun learning can be. You gave those kids the kind of education they deserve ALL THE TIME.”



Raptor rehabbers show Ecology Campers several birds of prey during an evening program. | Photo: Tamzen Bryant

Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds

The Winter Season: December 1, 2015 – February 29, 2016

By **KENNY NICHOLS**

Member, Bird Records Committee

A blue-morph **Ross's Goose** north of Pine Bluff, *Jefferson* 28 Dec (Kenny & LaDonna Nichols) was only about the fifth or sixth occurrence for the state. This extremely rare color morph is now almost annual at this location.

There were multiple **Tundra Swan** reports; most interesting was a lone bird near Atkins, *Pope* 9 Dec (Ron Duvall); a single near Pine Bluff, *Jefferson* 14 Dec (John Redman, Felix Smart Sr.); and three photographed at Magness Lake, *Cleburne* 22 Dec (Kenny Nations).

Rare in winter, especially so far north, a **Blue-winged Teal** was at Lake Norfolk, *Baxter* 23 Dec (John, Karla, & Travis Bouck).

Present since late fall, an adult male **Cinnamon Teal** continued at the Arkadelphia Oxidation Ponds, *Clark* 15 Jan (Charles Lyon, Glenn & Evelyn Good, Jeff Trahan, Rosemary Seidler).

An estimated 10,800 **Northern Shovelers** were counted at the Boyd Point Wastewater Plant, Pine Bluff, *Jefferson* 28 Dec (Dan Scheiman, Rob Doster).

Rare but annual, a **Long-tailed Duck** was discovered at the Arkadelphia Oxidation Ponds, *Clark* 15 Jan (CL, G&EG, JefT, RS).

There were three **Common Merganser** reports for the season: three birds at Charlie Craig State Fish Hatchery, *Benton* 30 Dec (Butch Tetzlaff); one female photographed at Magness Lake, *Cleburne* 17 Jan (Donna Haynes); and two adult male flyovers at Lake Maumelle, *Pulaski* 25 Jan (Edward Tiede).

Rare in winter, a single male **Red-breasted Merganser** was at Cabin Creek Rec Area, Lake Dardanelle, *Johnson* 1 Jan (Leif Anderson) while five were identified on Lake Maumelle, *Pulaski* 5 Feb (CL, JefT, Jean Trahan).

Lake Maumelle, *Pulaski* continues to be the state's winter hotspot for rare loons and grebes. Last winter was no exception, as a **Red-throated Loon** was spotted 24 Jan (Jim & Samantha Dixon), while a **Pacific Loon** and **Red-necked Grebe** were both discovered 26 Jan

(Don Simons, Jay Schneider, Shea Lewis).

A **Western Grebe** on Lake Dardanelle, *Yell* 30 Jan–16 Feb (Karen Holliday, DSc) and 3 **Aechmophorus Grebes**, unidentifiable to species, in Little Rock, *Pulaski* 5 Jan (Sarah Baxter) were the season's only report of this rare winter grebe.

Rare any season and perhaps the third for *Yell*, a flyover **Neotropic Cormorant** was at Lake Dardanelle 9 Jan (Terry Butler, David Finch, Bob Harden, K&LN). What was most likely the same bird was photographed below Dardanelle Lock & Dam 18 Jan (Michael Linz).

Very rare in winter, a female **Anhinga** was at Swan Lake, *Lafayette* 20 Jan (CL).

An **American Bittern** near Pine Bluff, 6 Dec (Devin Moon) was just the second winter record for *Jefferson*.

Rare in winter, especially so far north, three **Cattle Egrets** were south of Jonesboro, *Poinsett* 26 Jan (Doug Raybuck, Than Boves, Jennifer Wilcox, Alex Worm, Lee Bryant).

Two **Green Herons** were at Felsenthal NWR, *Union* 31 Dec (LA). This species is very rarely encountered in winter.

Very rare in winter, 38 **White Ibis** were counted in eastern *Miller* 22 Jan (CL, Clyde Massey).

Present since early fall, an adult female **Rough-legged Hawk** continued near Bradford, *White* 5 Feb (CL, JefT, JenT).

Rare but annual, a **Golden Eagle** was spotted hunting the edge of a prescribed burn area of the Ozark NF near Witt Springs, *Searcy* 6 Feb (LA).

Virginia Rails are rare and local in appropriate habitat throughout much of the state in winter. Two were south of Pine Bluff, *Jefferson* 6 Dec (Doc George, JR), four were east of Pine Bluff 28 Dec (RDo, DSc), and three were counted on the Bayou DeView CBC, *Monroe* 5 Jan (LA, Terry Singleterry).

Very rare in winter, 12 **Common Moorhen** were found at Bois d'Arc WMA, *Hempstead* 17 Feb (CL, JefT, JenT).

Once quite rare, **Sandhill Cranes** now appear to be wintering in the state in unprecedented numbers. Of the dozen reports, most interesting were 21 in Little Rock,

Pulaski 17 Jan (Dottie Boyles, Doris Boyles); an amazing 210 in rural *Miller* 22 Feb (Charles Mills), and nine near Lake Chicot, *Chicot* 25 Jan (DSi, JS, SL).

Representing just the second January occurrence, six **American Avocets** were counted on the Lonoke CBC, near Pettus, *Lonoke* 2 Jan (KNi, Dick Baxter).

Lake Dardanelle continues to be the winter hot spot for rare gulls; an adult **Thayer's Gull**, about the ninth for the state, was a one-day wonder 20 Dec (K&LN); long overdue, the state's first **Iceland Gull** was present 6 & 9 Jan (K&LN, TB, DF, BH); and two adult **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were present throughout the season (K&LN, m.ob.).

Rare in winter away from the southern tier of counties, 16 **Forster's Terns** were at Lake Fayetteville, *Washington* 15 Feb (Donald Ouellette, Joanie Patterson).

Just the seventh for the state, a **Royal Tern** was completely unexpected at Dardanelle Lock & Dam, *Pope* 8–9 Jan (Randy Robinson, Joe Neal, David Oakley, ML, Robert Herron, m.ob.).

Three **Inca Doves** at a backyard in Paris 25 Dec (June Gilbreath) was just the second occurrence for *Logan*.

Quite rare in any season, two **Common Ground-Doves** were found near Holla Bend NWR, *Yell* 16 Jan (K&LN); while a single was east of Little Rock, *Pulaski* 18 Jan (Cindy Franklin, DotB, DorB).

A **Greater Roadrunner** north of Helena, *Phillips* 17 Dec (LA) was very rare so far east.

Rare and elusive **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were documented with a game camera near Kingston, *Madison* 24 Dec & 7 Jan (Becky Christenson).

A **Common Nighthawk** in Little Rock, *Pulaski* 5 Dec (Chuck & Ruth Anderson) was well over a month late and represents one of just a handful of December sightings.

The only **Rufous Hummingbird** report was that of an adult male in Little Rock, *Pulaski* 19 Dec (KH, Roy Stout, Lenore Gifford, Eleanor Bragg, Ann Honeycutt).

Just the tenth for the state, a red-shafted **Northern Flicker** was near Beaver Lake, *Benton* 20 Dec (Miguel Trujillo).

A **Prairie Falcon** photographed near Atkins, *Pope* 17 Dec (ML) was the season's only report of this rare but regular winter visitor.

Rare in winter, a **Blue-headed Vireo** was near

Dardanelle, *Yell* 17 Jan (K&LN).

Up to three **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were present throughout the season at a residence near Dardanelle, *Yell* (K&LN). This was the only report of the season and, curiously, though they were seen and heard almost daily, none were seen visiting a feeder.

Rare and declining, a **Bewick's Wren** was north of Helena, *Phillips* 17 Dec (LA).

Seasonally very rare and possibly the first winter occurrence for *Benton*, a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was at Gentry 12 Dec (Robert Goddard); another was at Felsenthal NWR, *Union* 31 Dec (LA).

Less than annual during the winter season, a **Gray Catbird** was at Big Lake NWR, *Mississippi* 12 Jan (Ron Howard).

Stuttgart Airport, *Prairie* continues its long tradition as a reliable winter location for rare grassland specialties; a lone **Sprague's Pipit** (CL) and 21 **Smith's Longspurs** were present 12 Feb (CL, JefT, JenT).

Over a month early, a **Louisiana Waterthrush** was near Hector, *Pope* 19 Feb (LA); still very early, another was observed along the Buffalo River, *Newton* 29 Feb (Alan & Terri Gregory).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** at Hot Springs Village, *Saline* 15 Feb (Angela Taylor) was early by a month.

Rare anywhere in the U.S. in winter and only the third winter occurrence for the state, a **Cape May Warbler** was photographed coming to a feeder in Little Rock, *Pulaski* 15 Feb (Cheryl Johnson).

Nearly annual in winter, scattered **Palm Warblers** were noted at Lake Jack Lee, *Union* 31 Dec (LA); Maysville, *Benton* 1 Jan (Karen Garrett); near Lamar, *Johnson* 1 Jan (LA); Wapanocca NWR, *Crittenden* 11 Jan (RHo); and rural *Lee* 31 Jan (Jim Varner).

Only about the fourth winter occurrence, a **Wilson's Warbler** was photographed at a residence in North Little Rock, *Pulaski* 18 Jan (CF, DotB, DorB).

Very rare in winter, single **Lark Sparrows** were recorded at Lonoke, *Lonoke* 2 Jan (DSc, DM, Vic Prislipsky, Tom & Ellen Fennell, Tom McGowan), and Petit Jean WMA, *Yell* (LA), while an incredible 13 were counted at Harrison, *Boone* 4 Feb (AG, TG, Tim Barr, Stephanie Barr).

The season's only **Lincoln's Sparrow** report was that of three birds at Carden Bottoms, *Yell* 9 Feb (K&LN).

Buffalo National River IBA: A Corridor for Conservation



An awe-inspiring scene from the Buffalo National River Important Bird Area. | Photo: Don Nelms

By DAN SCHEIMAN, Ph.D.

Bird Conservation Director, Audubon Arkansas

Arkansas Audubon Society was the first statewide organization to oppose the damming of the Buffalo River. Thanks to our members and other advocates who came together to protect the river, it was designated as America's first national river in 1972, a move that continues to benefit birds and people today. In August 2016, another feather was added to the river's cap when it was recognized as Arkansas's 33rd Important Bird Area (IBA).

Site Description

The Buffalo National River (BNR), managed by the National Park Service, flows for 148 miles through the Ozark Mountains. There are three wilderness areas in the park: Upper Wilderness, Ponca Wilderness, and Lower Wilderness. The river flows through a diversity of geomorphological conditions, which in turn create a highly diverse landscape, from lofty dolomite-sandstone bluffs to broad stretches of gravel and sand bars. Habitat types include canebrakes, beech-hardwood forests, glades, and karst cave systems. The BNR connects lands owned by The Nature Conservancy,

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and USDA Forest Service.

Ornithological Summary

The Buffalo National River is important for a diversity of bird species, among them are Bald Eagle, Northern Bobwhite, Cerulean Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. In a region now experiencing rapid human population growth, the importance of the BNR as an extensive, connected block of habitat for maintaining Neotropical migrants and other birds can't be overstated. It is difficult to imagine any positive future for many birds in the Ozarks without public lands, including the long, connected corridor of the BNR.

Conservation Issues

The construction of a confined animal feeding operation in the watershed is a wakeup call that we can't be complacent just because the river is federally protected. Threats come from across the watershed as well as within park boundaries. Activities on adjacent private properties such as clearing trees, cattle grazing, and illegal dumping elevate the levels of pollutants like pesticides, *E. coli*, and sediments entering tributaries of the BNR. Feral hog activity is increasing throughout the park, to the detriment of ground-nesting birds. Non-native, invasive plants are crowding out the native flora. As the number of park visitors continues to increase, management of natural resources, including critical bird habitat, becomes more complicated. The river was protected for all generations to enjoy, but more people also means more impacts to water quality and wildlife. The balance between appeasing the crowds versus aiding wildlife is a fine line.

RARE WINTER BIRDS (continued from page 7)

Notable **Harris's Sparrows** were singles near Arkadelphia, *Hot Springs* 19 Dec (LA); New Hope Bottoms, *Pope* 11 Jan (K&LN, ML), and Carden Bottoms, *Yell* 7 Feb (CL, JefT, JenT, K&LN).

Uncommon and often overlooked, "**Oregon**" **Dark-eyed Juncos** were discovered in western *Pulaski* 16 Jan (DH) and Harrison, *Boone* 13 Feb (Sheree & Hank Rogers).

Incredibly, there were an unprecedented 11 **Summer Tanager** reports for the season—all involving single birds and all in northwest Arkansas. Very rare almost anywhere in the U.S., outside of extreme southern Florida, there were two reports from *Benton*: one at Cave Springs 19 Dec (Mike Mlodinow) and another at Bella Vista 31 Dec–3 Jan (James & Marsha Swim). Additionally, there were nine reports from *Washington*: one catching bees and feeding on suet at a residence in Fayetteville 19 Dec (Don & Jane Steinkraus); one near the UofA campus 20 Dec (Billy Bennett, Richard Stauffacher); one at Lake Fayetteville 22 Dec (MM); one observed at a suet feeder in Fayetteville 1 Jan until found dead 20 Jan (Rick Jones); another eating suet in Fayetteville 2 Jan–10 Feb (Kelly & Donna Mulhollan); one at a Fayetteville residence 11 Jan (Miriam Hudson); another in Fayetteville 14 Jan (Sara Caulk); one at a private residence in Fayetteville 15 Jan (Jennifer Mortensen); and one at a Fayetteville feeder 30 Jan–9 Feb (Jeremy Tenhaken, John Johnson, Judith Matthews, Nancy Varvil).

Western Meadowlark is a very uncommon and often overlooked winter resident. There were five reports for the season, with the most interesting being a good count of 28 found in eastern *Miller* 22 Jan (CL, CMa).

Very rare in winter and just the second winter occurrence for *Pulaski*, a **Baltimore Oriole** was at Maumelle 22 Jan (Larry & Martha Stobaugh).

A very surprising state first and perhaps the bird of the season, an adult male **Brambling** was seen and photographed by many at a feeder in west Little Rock, *Pulaski* 23–24 Jan (Carl Hunter, DSc, Guy Luneau, Lance Runion, m.ob.).

News of Members: Birders Enjoy Avifauna of Brazil and Southwestern and Northern U.S.

By **DOTTIE BOYLES**

News of Members Editor

Dan and Samantha Scheiman have upped their pursuit of butterflies this past season. In addition to participating in the annual Pulaski/Faulkner counties and Stone Road Glade Natural Area butterfly counts, they also counted bfies at Nacatoch Ravines and Saratoga Blackland Prairie natural areas to help measure the success of restoration efforts by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. To improve their knowledge they attended a butterfly and skipper ID workshop in Warsaw, MO, taught by lepidopterist and field guide author Jim Wiker. With Jim's help they picked up two lifers: Hobomok Skipper and Linda's Roadside-Skipper. This past season they chased other species to add to their life lists. As with birding, they experienced the same highs and lows of the game. They searched for but could not find Cobweb Skipper at Camp Robinson Special Use Area, Golden-banded Skipper at Pedestal Rock Scenic Area and Lorance Creek Natural Area, and Great Purple Hairstreak at Parkway Prairie, Russellville. Samantha and Dan did luck out by easily relocating a Mexican Yellow at Grandview Prairie WMA that was seen on that area's butterfly count the week before. Because it was too early to see Regal Fritillary at Prairie State Park, MO, on their way to the workshop, they returned three weeks later solely to see this royal and rare species, which has drastically declined with its prairie habitat.

They ended the season on a birdy note, when Samantha picked up her life Piping Plover at Boyd Point Wastewater Treatment Plant on July 30 with the help of John Redman.

Amy and Joe Hall enjoyed a week in mid-May among enthusiastic and knowledgeable birders along the shores of Lake Erie at Magee Marsh and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in Ohio. As the annual Warblerfest was winding down, the crowds dispersed, but the warblers remained, and a cold front settled in, keeping the birds feeding on the lower branches of the trees lining the boardwalk at Magee Marsh. We identified 14 different species of warblers as they

perched at eye level within a few feet of the boardwalk, and observed as many as five different species in a single tree! Among our favorites were male Blackburnian and male Magnolia Warblers. In addition to warblers, other notable species we observed included Whip-poor-will, Common Nighthawk, American Woodcock, and Swainson's Thrush.

We also enjoyed the bird-related arts and crafts, as well as the displays of the many optics dealers present on site at the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. On our chosen route home, we made other birding stops at Presque Isle, Pennsylvania and Land Between the Lakes, Kentucky and Tennessee, along with a short visit to observe a famous groundhog in a small town in Pennsylvania.

Mitchell Pruitt spent the summer as a conservation science intern at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. He was able to bird some of the prime northeastern venues like Cape May, New Jersey and the Delaware Bayshore. Life birds included Curlew Sandpiper and Saltmarsh Sparrow at Cape May. Before enjoying rural Pennsylvania and the east coast, he spent a week with his dad in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. Among the picturesque mountains, life birds included Bicknell's Thrush, Boreal Chickadee, Black-backed Woodpecker, among several other boreal specialties.

Lance Runion attended the 2016 Southeast Arizona Birding Festival in mid-August in Tucson. Twenty-five life birds were seen. Alas, the Plain-capped Starthroat Hummingbird was a no-show, but the best birds during the weekend were Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Five-striped Sparrow, and Lucifer Hummingbird. He also birded with Craig and Dale Provost, who now live in Salt Lake City, Utah and were attending the festival.

Chuck and Ruth Anderson birded the Phoenix, Arizona, area in late March. They identified more than 80 species, including a veritable lifetime of ducks and waterfowl in the middle of the desert! (Who knew?). They saw 25 life birds, including Costas Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Black Phoebe, Cactus Wren, Gila Woodpecker, and Lincoln's Sparrow. The West Fork of Oak Creek Canyon near Sedona produced a modest

29 species but included 9 life birds: Dark-eyed Junco (grey head, rufous back), Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Mountain Chickadee, and a pair of Peregrine Falcons. They also birded northeast, central, and west Texas in June, where they saw 70 species. Life birds included: Black-capped Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, Zone-tailed Hawk, and others. Highlights included a pair of Painted Buntings feeding three chicks in a field of wildflowers (now we understand all that color!) near Lake Buchanan, and an amazing colony of Prairie Dogs and Burrowing Owls in Odessa, Texas. Ruth added six life birds, and Chuck spotted five on this trip.

Allan Mueller, Michael Linz, Shane Woolbright, and Karen Holliday spent nine days in May chasing Atlantic rainforest endemics in Southeast Brazil. Itororo Eco Lodge was home base for the entire trip. The lodge is high in the mountains, three hours from Rio de Janeiro. Day trips were spent birding various habitats ranging in elevation from the low Regu wetlands, to mid-level rainforest and grasslands, to the highest elevation of 8,000 feet, which included the 620 “Stairs of Death” at the top of the Pico da Caledonia trail. The goal of that trail was to find the rare and highly elusive Itatiaia Spinetail/Thistletail and luckily it was spotted just halfway up the stairs.

The trails, hummingbird and fruit feeders at the lodge, and area hotspots provided a plethora of birds, many endemic to that part of Brazil. A tiny sample of birds seen were the Gray-winged Cotinga, Mantled Hawk, Blond-crested Woodpecker, Surucua Trogon, Three-toed Jacamars, Rufous-sided Crake, Firewood-Gathers and their huge nests, plus Blue Manakins lekking. Best hummingbirds were the Green-crowned Plovercrest, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, and Scale-throated Hermit.

The final day was spent touring Rio de Janeiro and birding the city’s Tijuca National Park. Seen were the Christ the Redeemer statue, the famous Copacabana beach, the Olympic stadium, the Carnival parade arena, and views of the infamous favelas. Guide Richardo, a native of Rio, knew his birds plus provided excellent insight into both the history and the current politics of Rio. Best birds on the drive from the lodge into the city were Aplomado Falcon, Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures, and Kelp Gulls. Best Rio birds were a gorgeous male Brazilian Tanager, Uniform Finch, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Black-cheeked Gnateater, and Scaled Antbird, plus the enormous island roost of “Gaviotas”

Magnificent Frigatebirds off Ipanema beach.

Rainer and Bettina Dungs, the lodge owners, were wonderful hosts and prepared delicious meals of native Brazilian cuisine. Guide Andy Foster, a United Kingdom native, did a superlative job. Even though breeding season was over and it was the start of winter, Andy found the group a impressive total of 263 species, including 85 Atlantic forest endemics. Interesting mammals seen were Orange-spined Hairy Dwarf Porcupine, Tufted-eared Marmosets, Three-toed Sloths, Coatimundis, Capybaras, and Brown-faced Capuchins.

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