

Arkansas Audubon Society

2023 - Fayetteville Convention Field Trips



Friday, October 13

F1 - Lake Fayetteville, Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind
Depart: 1:00 PM
(15 minutes) - Easy

Lake Fayetteville is a classic local hotspot for finding migrants. This popular regional park comprises 458 acres of water, woods, and prairie habitats in which 264 bird species have been documented on eBird. On the afternoon of Friday, October 13th, Lauren Eno of Wild Birds Unlimited will lead up to 15 participants from Botanical Garden of the Ozarks and meandering through woods and watery inlets to the Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind where migrant waterfowl can be comfortably observed. The walk to the blind and back will be approximately 1.5 miles on well established flat trails and boardwalks with the trip lasting no more than 2 hours. The variety of habitat and comfortable trails should give participants an easy opportunity to see a wide range of species that include migrant warblers and well as ducks. The proximity to our convention location (<15 minutes) makes this a convenient one-stop-shop for a great local birding experience. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center on Friday afternoon at 1:00 PM. Lauren Eno will lead the carpool to the lake (~15 minutes drive time). Participants will park at the Botanic Garden of the Ozarks and walk the trails from there to the waterfowl blind and back. Expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah by around 4:00 PM. Leader: Lauren Eno

F2 - Wilson Springs Preserve
Depart: 1:00 PM
(15 minutes) - Moderate

Wilson Springs Preserve is a 121-acre wet prairie remnant in north Fayetteville. Part of a historic 1600-acre prairie which is now mostly developed, the preserve is the largest permanently protected prairie remnant in Fayetteville and one of the largest wetland habitats in the region. On the afternoon of Friday, October 13th, NWAAS field trip leader Taylor Long and NWA Land Trust representative Evan Johnson will lead up to 15 participants on a hike through Wilson Springs in search of fall migrants and other wildlife the preserve offers, thanks to the ongoing management efforts of the Land Trust. Expect to walk ~1.5 on relatively flat, well-maintained trails for ~2 hours. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center on Friday afternoon at 1:00 PM. Taylor Long will lead the carpool to the preserve (~15 minutes drive time). Participants will park on the south side of the Sam's Club parking lot next to the trailhead for the preserve (GPS: 36.107439, -94.181817). Expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah no later than 4:00 PM. Leader: Taylor Long, Evan Johnson

F3 - Northsong Wild Bird Rehabilitation Tour
Depart: 1:00 PM
(25 minutes) - Easy

Northsong Wild Bird Rehabilitation is a Northwest Arkansas based 501c3 organization dedicated to providing medical care to injured avian wildlife while promoting environmental conservation through community involvement and education. Northsong is working this year to open a new facility near Fayetteville for treating injured birds. On the afternoon of Friday, October 13th, Northsong veterinarian Dr. Emily Warman and NWAAS president Robin Buff will lead up to 15 participants on a tour of the new facilities to learn how this organization approaches wild bird rehabilitation. Participants can ask questions about best practices for what to do when you find an injured bird, and may even get to meet some feathered patients! The tour involves some walking through fields to tour the aviary, so participants are encouraged to wear bug spray. Expect the full tour to last about an hour. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center at 1:00 PM. Robin will lead the carpool to Northsong (~25 minutes drive time). The address is 17887 Wheeler Rd, Fayetteville, AR 72704. Participants can expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah no later than 3:00 PM. Leader: Robin Buff and Dr. Emily Warman

F5 - Woolsey Wet Prairie Snake
Research Trip
Depart: 1:00 PM
(15 minutes) - Moderate

J.D. Willson runs the Willson Lab at the University of Arkansas, overseeing various research projects across NWA. On the afternoon of Friday, October 13th, J.D. will lead up to 10 participants through two ongoing research projects at Woolsey Wet Prairie: one monitoring the unique snake species that can be found in this unique and scarce habitat, the other monitoring the impact of solar arrays on wildlife communities. The trip involves extensive walking along mowed grass paths and frequent trips off trail through tall brush to flip boards for snakes. Expect up to 2 miles of walking taking roughly two hours. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center at 1:00 PM. J.D. will lead the carpool to Woolsey Wet Prairie (~15 minutes drive time). Participants can expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah by 4:00 PM. Leader: J.D. Willson

Saturday, October 14

<p>S1 - North Forest at Crystal Bridges (Beginner Trip) Depart: 7:00 AM (45 minutes) - Easy</p> <p>In addition to world-class art, Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville also offers a wonderful network of trails with native planting to support great birding. On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, Bentonville local Allison Raley and ASCA field trip leader Karen Holliday will co-host a beginner-focused bird walk through the North Forest at Crystal Bridges. The walk is designed to support birders of all experience levels with a special focus on the basics of identifying common birds as well as fall migrants. The walk will be no more than 2 miles on hard surfaces with moderate slopes and last no more than 2 hours. We'll conclude our walk by 10:00 AM with plenty of time for participants to optionally tour the museum before heading back to Fayetteville for the afternoon symposium. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center at 7:00 AM. Karen Holliday will lead the carpool to Crystal Bridges (~40 minutes drive time). Participants who wish to meet directly at Crystal Bridges can find the group outside the main entrance around 8:00 AM. Leader: Karen Holliday and Allison Raley</p>	<p>S2 - Chesney Prairie Preserve (Birds, Insects, and Plan Depart: 7:00 AM (45 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Chesney Prairie Natural Area is an 82-acre grassland preserve managed by the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. It represents a precious remnant of the much larger historic Lindsley Prairie that once comprised 20-25 square miles. On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, bird expert Joe Neal and plant experts Joan Reynolds and Samantha Heller will co-lead up to 15 participants on a casual walk through Chesney's native prairie with a focus not just on birds, but also on the insects and plants that this unique ecosystem supports. Participants can expect to walk about 1.5 miles around flat mowed grass trails for no more than two hours. There are no facilities at the preserve. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center at 7:00 AM. Joe Neal will lead the carpool to Chesney (~45 minutes drive time). Participants who wish to meet directly at Chesney can find the group at the trailhead (GPS: 36.218533, -94.4826207) around 8:00 AM. Expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah by 11:00 AM. Leader: Joe Neal, Joan Reynolds, and Samantha Heller</p>	<p>S3 - Lake Fayetteville, Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind Depart: 7:00 AM (15 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Lake Fayetteville is a classic local hotspot for finding migrants. This popular regional park comprises 458 acres of water, woods, and prairie habitats in which 264 bird species have been documented on eBird. On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, Mike Slay of The Nature Conservancy will lead up to 15 participants from Botanical Garden of the Ozarks and meander through woods and watery inlets to the Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind where migrant waterfowl can be comfortably observed. The walk to the blind and back will be approximately 1.5 miles on well-established flat trails and boardwalks with the trip lasting no more than 2 hours. After that, the group will carpool around to the north side of the lake to Callie's Prairie and the Environmental Center area, as time permits. Additional walking at these sites could add another 1-2 miles across a mix of paved and soft surface trails with only moderate slopes. The variety of habitat at Lake Fayetteville should give participants an easy opportunity to see a wide range of species that include migrant warblers and well as ducks. The proximity to our convention location (<15 minutes) makes this a convenient one-stop-shop for a great local birding experience. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center on Saturday morning at 7:00 AM. Mike Slay will lead the carpool to the lake (~15 minutes drive time). Participants will park at the Botanic Garden of the Ozarks for the first morning walk then drive to additional spots around the lake as time permits. Expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah no later than 12:00 PM. Leader: Mike Slay</p>
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<p>S4 - Woolsey Wet Prairie Depart: 7:00 AM (15 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Woolsey Wet Prairie Wildlife Sanctuary is a wetland mitigation site and former seasonal wetland associated with tallgrass prairie habitat. Woolsey has an esteemed reputation amongst local birders for delivering special wetland and grassland birds that are difficult to find elsewhere in Northwest Arkansas. In mid-October, this is THE spot to find plentiful LeConte's Sparrows and, with luck, maybe even Nelson's and Henslow's Sparrow. On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, local birders Mitchell Pruitt and Kenny Younger will co-lead up to 15 participants on an exploration of Woolsey targeting rare migrant fall sparrows, but also appreciating the wide variety of birds at this special time of year. Participants can expect to walk 2-3 miles across flat, well-maintained mowed grass trails for up to three hours. There are no facilities at this location. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center on Saturday morning at 7:00 AM. Kenny Younger will lead the carpool to Woolsey (~15 minutes drive time). Parking at the site consists of a small pull-off on the driveway to the treatment plant; limited space means carpooling is strongly encouraged. Expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah no later than 11:00 AM. Leader: Mitchell Pruitt and Kenny Younger</p>	<p>S5 - Hobbs State Park & Beaver Lake Depart: 7:00 AM (45 minutes) - Easy</p> <p>Hobbs is Arkansas's largest state park, spanning a 12,054-acre tract of Ozark landscape along the southern shore of Beaver Lake. Its dynamic topography and abundance of evergreens makes it a scenic and birdy spot to seek out fall migrants. On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, NWAAS field trip leader Taylor Long will lead up to 15 participants on a three-stop tour of Hobbs and Beaver Lake in search of migrant woodland passerines as well as waterfowl. The primary stop on this trip will be the Van Winkle Trail at Hobbs. Van Winkle Hollow has high species diversity because of numerous habitats including forested slopes, moist thickets, old fields, a spring-fed stream, and a highly variable Beaver Reservoir shoreline. Participants can expect to walk about 1 to 1.5 miles along a well-maintained accessible trail for about 1.5 hours. After that, we'll head to the nearby Hobbs Visitor Center (with clean restrooms) for a short exploration of the nearby pine habitat. Expect to walk less than a mile on paved trails with mild slopes for no more than 1 hour. Our third stop will take us west to the Highway 12 Boat Ramp that offers wide open views of Beaver Lake where we'll spend no more than a half hour scanning for waterfowl. By then it will be time to head back south to Fayetteville for lunch and the afternoon symposium. This is one of our longer field trips, so bringing ample water and snacks is strongly encouraged. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center on Saturday morning at 7:00 AM. Taylor Long will lead the carpool to Hobbs (~45 minutes drive time). Anyone who wishes to meet there can expect us at the Van Winkle trailhead around 8:00 AM. Participants along for the full trip can expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah no later than 1:00 PM, although anyone may choose to leave early. Leader: Taylor Long</p>	<p>S6 - Fayetteville, Bird Banding Research Field Trip Depart: 7:00 AM (45 minutes) - Easy</p> <p>Jen Mortensen is a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas, overseeing various bird research efforts across NWA. On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, Jen will lead up to 10 participants on a trip to an active bird banding site near Fayetteville. Participants will get up close and personal with local birds and migrants by observing the research team catch birds in mist nets to take measurements and place bands around their legs for identification in future recaptures. The trip involves minimal walking (< 0.5 miles) on uneven, unpaved surfaces around the banding station. The station does not have facilities, so please bring water, snacks, etc. as needed. You can expect to stay at the station for no more than 2 hours. Meet at the Mt. Sequoyah Retreat Center at 7:00 AM. Jen will lead the carpool to the banding site near Fayetteville (exact location TBD, less than 1 hr from Mt. Sequoyah). Participants can expect to return to Mt. Sequoyah by 10:30 AM. Leader: Jen Mortensen</p>
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Sunday, October 15