



Arkansas Audubon Society

2025 - Fayetteville Convention Field Trips

Friday, April 25		
<p>F1 - Beginner-friendly Birding at Mount Sequoyah Depart: 1:00 PM (near venue) - Easy</p> <p>In addition to being a great location for hosting a convention, Mount Sequoyah Retreat Center also has great birding on its grounds and nearby trails. Lauren Eno of Wild Birds Unlimited will lead a beginner-friendly trip around the grounds of the retreat center and into the trails at Mount Sequoyah Woods. This trip will take some extra time to share tips on using binoculars to locate birds and identification. After some practice around the retreat center, we'll walk to the nearby Mount Sequoyah Woods trailhead to explore some of the best habitat in the heart of Fayetteville. Leader: Lauren Eno</p>	<p>F2 - Mulhollan Blind Tour at Lake Fayetteville Depart: 1:00 PM (15 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Description: The Mulhollan Waterfowl Blind at Lake Fayetteville (36.134658, -94.118494) has been a beloved birding landmark for nearly a decade since it was constructed as a project of the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society. The blind was sadly burned to the ground last August, but our community came together to quickly raise the money we needed to rebuild the blind better than ever. On the afternoon of Friday, April 25th at 1:00 PM, Kelly Mulhollan will lead a trip focused on touring the new and improved blind construction. Participants will enjoy birding along the trails at Lake Fayetteville leading to the blind, survey for waterfowl from the blind, and discuss the design and process of rebuilding. 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. Leader: Kelly Mulhollan, Kenny Younger</p>	<p>F3 - Coler Preserve Depart: 1:00 PM (45 minutes) - Easy</p> <p>Coler Preserve (36.397123, -94.238628) is a major mountain biking destination in Bentonville, but it's also a great place to bird, with pleasant walking trails through great bird habitat and even a coffee shop inside. On the afternoon of Friday, April 25th, Taylor Long and Bentonville local Adam Schaffer will co-lead a casual tour of the preserve and how to bird it like a local. We'll start at the North parking lot and work our way south along an easy flat trail into the heart of the preserve where we can stop for coffee and refreshments, then make our way back. There will be up to 2 miles of walking over two hours. Leader: Taylor Long and Adam Schaffer</p>

<p>F4 - Woolsey Wet Prairie Depart: 1:00 PM (15 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>J.D. Willson runs the Willson Lab at the University of Arkansas, overseeing various research projects across NWA. J.D. will lead participants through two ongoing research projects at Woolsey Wet Prairie (36.0676044, -94.2333946): one monitoring the 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</p>	<p>F5 - Ozark Bird Conservancy Owl Research (Night) Depart: 7:00 PM (1 hr.) - Strenuous</p> <p>Join Dr. Mitchell Pruitt—UA Professor and Director of Ozark Bird Conservancy—on this field trip. Participants will have a chance to observe field work in action as Mitchell and colleagues attempt to capture and band Eastern Screech-Owls at a site in NWA (exact location TBD). The team will also be deploying GPS tags on breeding adults. This research is part of OBC's Urban Raptor Project, which seeks to understand how raptors, like screech-owls, persist in urban settings. Screech-owls have historically been considered urban tolerant, but there is evidence populations may be declining in some urban areas, including NWA. Participants should expect walking on rough terrain in the dark and staying up late. Leader: Mitchell Pruitt</p>	
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Saturday, April 26

<p>Sa1 - Beginner-friendly Birding at Mount Sequoyah Depart: 8:00 AM (near venue) - Easy</p> <p>In addition to being a great location for hosting a convention, Mount Sequoyah Retreat Center also has great birding on its grounds and nearby trails. Lauren Eno of Wild Birds Unlimited will lead a beginner-friendly trip around the groups of the retreat center and into the trails at Mount Sequoyah Woods. This trip will take some extra time to share tips on using binoculars to locate birds, and identification. After some practice around the retreat center, we'll walk to the nearby Mount Sequoyah Woods trailhead (GPS: 36.066007, -94.143200) to explore some of the best habitat in the heart of Fayetteville. Leader: Lauren Eno</p>	<p>Sa2 - Birding and Banding at Hobbs State Park Depart: 7:00 AM (45 minutes) - Easy</p> <p>Hobbs (36.297575, -93.958175) 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 make it a scenic and birdy spot to seek out spring migrants. Hobbs is hosting a birding festival on this Saturday, and this AAS field trip will join up with festival bird walks and get a behind-the-scenes look at the bird-banding station. NWAAS field trip leader Taylor Long will lead participants to Hobbs State Park in a three-part tour. At 8:00 AM we'll arrive at the Van Winkle Trail an hour-long walk of ~1 mile. At 9:00 AM we'll head over to the visitor center to spend some time at an active bird-banding station with U of A bird researcher Jen Mortensen. At 10:00 AM, we'll take another bird walk around the visitor center trail. By 11:00 AM we'll head back to Fayetteville to arrive at Mt Sequoyah no later than noon. This is one of our longer field trips, so bringing ample water and snacks is strongly encouraged. Leader: Taylor Long and Jen Mortensen</p>	<p>Sa3 - ONSC Environmental Center at Lake Fayetteville Depart: 7:00 AM (15 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Lake Fayetteville (36.140502, -94.126363) is one of NWA's top hotspots for experiencing spring migration. This popular regional park comprises 458 acres of water, woods, and prairie habitats in which 264 bird species have been documented on eBird. Kenny Younger and Jeremy Cohen will lead up to 15 participants around the north shore of the lake (North Shore Disc Golf Course and ONSC Environmental Center Trails). Expect 2-3 miles of walking over grass and dirt trails and uneven surfaces. Hiking shoes, bug spray, and water/snacks are recommended. The proximity to our convention location (<15 minutes) makes this a convenient one-stop-shop for a great local birding experience. Leader: Kenny Younger and Jeremy Cohen</p>
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<p>Sa4 - Birds, Bugs, and Botany at Chesney Prairie, Siloam Springs Depart: 8:00 AM (45 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Chesney Prairie Natural Area (36.218533, -94.4826207) 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. Joe Neal will 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. Joe Woolbright of Ozark Ecological Restoration Inc. who manages the preserve will also join this trip. 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. Leader: Joe Neal and Joe Woolbright</p>	<p>Sa5 - Spring Migration at Woolsey Wet Prairie Depart: 7:00 AM (15 minutes) - Moderate</p> <p>Woolsey Wet Prairie Wildlife Sanctuary (36.064462, -94.232405) 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. Local birders Tyler and Mollie Ficker will co-lead participants on an exploration of Woolsey, 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. Leader: Tyler and Mollie Ficker</p>	<p>Sa6 - Cerulean Warblers at Rob & Melani Walton Preserve, Garfield Depart: 7:00 AM (1 hr.) - Strenuous</p> <p>At 410 acres, the Rob and Melani Walton Nature Preserve (36.442745, -93.950241) is part of a large area of undeveloped, protected woodlands along the north side of Beaver Lake. The targets of this trip will be Cerulean Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler that have been reliable breeders along the north-facing slopes of this preserve, as well as other typical Ozark upland breeders. This trip will involve 2-3 hours of hiking over 3 miles of uneven and moderately steep terrain. Good hiking shoes, water, snacks, and insect repellent are a must. There are no restrooms at the trailhead; we recommend stopping at the nearby Short Stop General Store in Garfield for restrooms and provisions before and after the hike. The exact location of the preserve parking lot is GPS 36.442745, -93.950241. Leader: Adam Schaffer and Ragan Sutterfield</p>
<p>Sa7 - Shorebirds on Sharp Chapel Road Depart: 7:00 AM (1 hr.) - Moderate</p> <p>The new AGFC moist soil units on Sharp Chapel Rd (35.453698, -94.168057) have become one of the premier spots for waterfowl and shorebird watching within an hour's drive of Fayetteville. Matt & Josh Matlock will lead a trip to Alma and Mulberry focused on migrating shorebirds. This trip will consist mostly of carpool caravanning with some minimal walking/hiking at various stops throughout to scan for mud and standing water in agricultural plots, moist soil units, open grassland habitat, and ponds. Other expected bird species include hawks, eagles, falcons, terns, grassland birds, and other water birds. This loop has yielded notable bird sightings during prior Spring Migrations such as Godwits, Plovers, Swainson's Hawk, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Painted Bunting, Bobolink, etc. Please bring/wear sturdy shoes, bug repellent, sunscreen, water, and snacks/lunch. We plan to make a rest stop at a restaurant or gas station Leader: Josh Matlock, Matt Matlock</p>		

Sunday, April 27