



Arkansas Birds

Newsletter of the Arkansas Audubon Society

Fall 2025 | Volume 70 | No. 3

Full-color newsletter available at <https://arbirds.org/AAS/Newsletter.aspx>

Bird-Friendly Arkansas

By PAM and JACK STEWART

AAS Bird-Friendly Arkansas Committee

This message from Phillip Lea describes the rewards that come after the work that goes into creating wildlife habitat:

"We are happy to be a part of the Audubon program. Our favorite time during the day is sitting on our back deck with our morning tea listening to and watching the birds... This was our first year to have Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at our feeder! And this time of year, we have so many young birds around, it is delightful... Last month we witnessed four wren fledglings fly out of the nest on the same day. We have noticed wrens especially return to existing nests to use for building so we do not disturb the ones we see."



Carolina Wren | Photo by Michael Schmitt
Audubon Photography Awards

Ecologists call turf grass the water-wasting, biologically useless crop!



Yard Photos by Olivia Bundrick

That doesn't mean a property can't have some grass to be Bird-friendly certified. Olivia and Jacob Bundrick's Gold Certified yard has space for play.

Newly Certified Properties:

Yards

Olivia & Jacob Bundrick	Faulkner Co.
Karen Hicks	Faulkner Co.
Larry Holt	Washington Co.
Joyce Hutchinson	Faulkner Co.
Danyel Lucas	Baxter Co.
Monica Weisenfels	Craighead Co.

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

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. Please send newsletter submissions to emilyrdonahue@gmail.com.

Membership renewals are due January 1st of each calendar year.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

ANNUAL DUES

Student	\$5.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00
Life	\$250.00 (one-time payment)

Note: Memberships paid during October – December will include full membership for the following calendar year

Payment of Dues:

Members have two options for payment:

- 1) Online credit card or PayPal payment through account created on the AAS website: <https://arbirds.org>
- 2) Check made to Arkansas Audubon Society and sent to:
Arkansas Audubon Society, P. O. Box 241421, Little Rock, AR 72223



Atlantic Puffin | Photo by Michael Linz

Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds

By CHRIS KELLNER

AAS Bird Records Committee Curator

The Spring Season

1 March – 31 May, 2025

Abbreviations: BKNWR=Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge, WMA=Wildlife Management Area, NWR= National Wildlife Refuge, LM=Lake Maumelle

At the suggestion of the staff at the American Birding Association and because other state BRC's do, I have incorporated sightings from eBird into this report.

This was an exciting spring season in Arkansas. We had the state's first confirmed record of a Clark's Grebe, and the Yellow Grosbeak that showed up in February was observed throughout the early spring.

Fulvous Whistling Ducks are rare in Arkansas. Three were observed in Greenway Pond near Stuttgart on 25 Apr in Arkansas Co (Ryan Askren).

One blue-phase Ross's Goose was observed on County Road 66 on 2 Mar in Jackson Co (Kenny Nichols).

A Cinnamon Teal, also quite rare in Arkansas, was photographed at Galla Creek WMA on 18 Mar in Pope Co (Leah Murphy).

A Mottled Duck was photographed at BKNWR on 12 May in White Co (Michael Linz).

A Long-tailed Duck, one of several seen this winter and spring, was first photographed on Dec 8 and continued to reside at the Grubbs Water Treatment Plant until at least 3 Mar in Jackson Co (Michael Linz). Another individual was photographed at the Searcy Water Treatment Plant on 1 Apr in White Co (Daniel Denman).

The 22nd record of a Red-necked Grebe was observed on LM on 3 Mar in Pulaski Co (Steven Warmack).

Arkansas' first record of Clark's Grebe was photographed at Bufflehead Bay on LM on 3 Mar in Pulaski Co (Michael Linz).

A Black-billed Cuckoo, rare for Arkansas, was observed at Lake Sequoia on 24 Apr in Washington Co (Todd Ballinger).

Arkansas' seventh recorded Broad-billed Hummingbird was photographed at a feeder in Bonnerdale on 24 March in Hot Spring Co (Helen Martin).

A very early spring migrant Purple Gallinule was observed at Bois d'Arc WMA on 14 Apr in Hempsted Co (Anonymous eBirder).

Limpkins continue to expand within Arkansas. The first was recorded in 2021. Our sixty-third record was seen at Arkansas Post National Memorial on 13 May in Arkansas Co (Spencer Weitzel).

Five-hundred and thirty-two Sandhill Cranes, an extremely large number for Arkansas, were filmed near the intersection of Miller County Rd 27 and AR 296 on 3 Mar in Miller Co (Charles Mills).

Neotropical cormorants are rarely seen in Arkansas. Two were photographed on Grand Lake on 3 Mar in Chicot Co (Michael Linz).

A rare Glossy Ibis was photographed at BKNWR on 17 Mar in White Co (Roger Massey).

A Swallow-tailed Kite was photographed at Felsenthal NWR on 21 Apr in Union Co (Jeff Cromwell).

An American Avocet; the first Carroll Co Record, was photographed in Metalton on 25 Apr in Carroll Co (Nicole Ankele).

A rare Red-necked Phalarope was seen at Camp Nine (permission required) on 30 May in Desha Co (Dalton Robinson).

Buff-breasted Sandpipers are rarely seen during spring. Four were seen at BKNWR on 26 Apr in White Co (Daniel Denman).

Arkansas's 25th record of a Little Gull was observed on LM on 11 Mar in Pulaski Co (Andrew Markel).

A Common Tern was observed on Lake Dardanelle on 29 Apr in Yell Co (Kenny Nichols).

Four-hundred plus Black Terns, the largest number ever reported in Arkansas, were observed at the Arkadelphia Oxidation Ponds (restricted access) on 20 May in Clark Co. (Renn and Terry Tumilson).

A Yellow-crowned Night Heron, rare in Northwest Arkansas, was photographed on Hamstring Cr. at its intersection with Hemstring Rd. on 25 May in Washington Co (Michelle Parker).

Nine Roseate Spoonbills were photographed at the Overflow NWR on 21 May in Ashley Co. (Suzanne Hunter).

Olive-sided Flycatchers are rare migrants in Arkansas. One was photographed at Coler Preserve on 28 Apr in Benton Co (Kyler Carlsen).

We have seen an uptick in reports of Vermillion Flycatchers recently. One was photographed on Russell Road on 25 Mar in Benton Co (Jim Landrum).

A rare Golden-winged Warbler was observed in Maumelle on 20 Apr in Pulaski Co (Larry Stobaugh).

A very early Black-and-white Warbler was observed in Hector on 6 Mar in Pope Co (Leif Anderson).

A very late Magnolia Warbler was photographed in Jonesboro on 28 May in Craighead Co (Christina Stiles).

The second county record of a Clay-colored Sparrow was photographed at Lake Fort Smith on 19 Apr in Crawford Co (Taylor Long).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird was photographed along Goosepond Rd on 7 May in Saline Co. (Vic Prislipsky).

Arkansas' ninth record of a Scott's Oriole was photographed at a feeder in Batesville on 14 Mar in Independence Co (Cheryl Wadley).

Black-headed grosbeaks are unusual in Arkansas. One was photographed at a feeder near Beaver Lake on 8 May in Carroll Co. (Maria La Cavera).

An unusual Lazuli Bunting was observed at Weddington WMA on 25 Apr in Benton Co (Taylor Long).

AAS Member Spotlight: Donna Haynes

By LYNN FOSTER

AAS President

Donna Haynes loves birds. And Donna Haynes is an artist. You can find her creations on the Internet at www.birdythings.com. Her day job is at Lawson Elementary School in west Little Rock, where she works mostly as a recess monitor. Lawson's playground is bordered by forest on two sides, and Donna says "I love to help the children explore and discover. We watch birds, pick up and examine bugs, lizards, and frogs, check out cool rocks and anything else they find! Nature is vital for a child's development and magic happens when kids and nature get together!"

Given her passion for kids in nature, it is only natural that she's a big supporter of Halberg Ecology Camp, AAS's summer camp for rising 6th and 7th graders. This past spring she designed and sold this tee:



She decided to give part of the proceeds of each sale to the Halberg Ecology Camp. AAS members loved the shirts, and she was able to donate \$320 to Halberg.

Donna says "I don't go birding as often as I used to, but making HummerMUGZ Mini Hummingbird Feeders, Hummingbird Swings, other bird feeders and nature inspired accessories and shirts has given me a whole new way to enjoy birds. I especially love designing my Birds In Beads Bracelets."



This is Donna, in her latest tee shirt design!

Despite not leaving home to bird as often, Donna and her family feed birds in their yard, which is a Bird Friendly Arkansas certified yard. Is your yard [BFA-certified](#)?

Donna, AAS thanks you for your generous donation to our Ecology Camp, for your love of birds, and for your artistry on behalf of them. We hope you will design a tee shirt for our [merch store](#) soon!

Member News: Feathers off to Dottie!

By DOTTIE BOYLES

AAS News of Members Editor

In 2014, long time AAS News of Members Editor Loice Lacy decided to retire. Allan Mueller, who was president of AAS at the time, called to see if I would take over the position. It was hard to say no to Allan. Loice was a professional writer, and her columns were both intriguing and entertaining. Filling her shoes would not be easy, but I agreed to give it a try.

For the past 11 years I've had the privilege of working with several *Arkansas Birds* editors. Putting together a newsletter is not an easy task,

and these ladies have done an excellent job. I especially want to thank current editor, Emily Donahue, for her patience when I missed a deadline.

And a big thank you to the many AAS members who contributed their stories, travels, and adventures to make this column possible.

While it has been a pleasure to serve the Arkansas Audubon Society and *Arkansas Birds*, I feel the time has come to step aside. I'm excited to announce Cailin Swingle will be the new AAS News of Members Editor starting with the winter edition.

THANKS to DOTTIE BOYLES for her Member News column!

Dottie's first column was in our Fall 2014 issue and her last appears in this issue.

Seeking Kirkland's Warbler

Stephanie Sexton and Lance Runion traveled to northern Michigan in early June in hopes of seeing Kirkland's Warblers. The small town of Grayling was the base of operations. The male Kirkland's Warblers were pretty vocal and much easier to hear than see for most of the trip. Fortunately, they did get great close-up looks of a singing male on the first day. And more distant views on subsequent days in several areas in the jack pine stands, mainly east and northeast of town. This also included a guided morning field trip sponsored by Michigan Audubon for those out-of-towners hoping to see this de-listed, but still rarest warbler of North America. Additional highlights of the trip included birding Hartwick Pines State Park, where they had great views of a stunning male Evening Grosbeak near the visitor center, a life bird for Stephanie. Also, a half day trip north of the border to Whitefish Island in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada yielded a new country for both of their eBird lists.

Puffins and Bicknell's: A Total Treat

Michael Linz and Patty McLean traveled to the Northeast U.S. to look for Bicknell's Thrush and Atlantic Puffin. They found several Bicknell's (see photo below) in the high mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire and Atlantic Puffins (see photo on Page 2) off the coast of Maine.



Bicknell's Thrush

This completed their goal of recording birds in all the Lower 48 states, plus Alaska, bringing their ABA totals to 700 and above. They are now planning a birding trip to Hawaii to complete their goal of birding in all 50 states.



Patty McClean and Michael Linz

Third Time's a Charm

Michael Linz and Patty McLean traveled to Wisconsin hoping to see a Kelp Gull (see photo below) hanging out at the Port of Milwaukee. It took three visits to the hotspot before they found

the gull, resting atop its "regular" storage building. During their trip, they also picked up European Goldfinch, and joined some of Michael's German family for homemade rouladen, a first for Patty. The Kelp Gull is U.S. bird #700 for Michael, and #734 for Patty.



Kelp Gull

Trip 2025 Nature Tour Proceeds to Benefit AAS Trust in Memory of Doug James

Dr. R. Kannan, Chair of the AAS Trust, is contributing all proceeds from his overseas nature tours this year to the trust in memory of Prof. Douglas James. This year is Doug's 100th birth anniversary. For more on this great man (who founded the trust 50 years ago), click here <https://tinyurl.com/3h97ha54>.

So far this year, Kannan has raised \$860 for the trust, thanks to participants of Panama's Canopy Tower tour in June. His Costa Rica tour in December 2025 is already full and is expected to raise another \$1000 for the trust in memory of Doug. Future tours planned include Panama's Canopy Camp in March (now full) and Belize in May 2026. Contact Kannan for more information (Ragupathy.Kannan@uafs.edu).

Great Lakes Viking Cruise

In July, Karen Holliday, her husband Ray, and long-time friend Beverly, took a two-week expedition cruise with Viking Cruises to all five Great Lakes. They flew out of Little Rock, June 29, and boarded their ship, the Polaris in Duluth, MN, June 30. The first voyage was to Lake Superior,

the largest of the five Great Lakes. Their cabins each had floor to ceiling windows allowing for great views.

On the morning of July 3, while Ray and Karen were eating breakfast, and waiting for the ship to pass through the Soo Locks to get from Lake Superior to Lake Michigan, they observed an avian murder in progress. A larger Herring Gull was holding a smaller Ring-billed Gull's head under water. The smaller gull tried to fight back, but it got weaker and weaker and eventually drowned. They had no idea what the Ring-billed did to make the Herring so angry, but it was quite shocking to watch.

Gulls were the most prevalent species they saw. However, there were lots of ducklings, many were Mallard families. The little ones were adorable balls of fluff. One family, a Red-breasted Merganser pair, had ten ducklings.

On Lake Huron they took a zodiac tour of the Fathom Five National Marine Park to see the many sunken shipwrecks. The water was extremely clear, so it was easy to see the wrecks below.

They finished the trip in Toronto, Canada. The onboard naturalist Dr. Tim Greene kept a daily list of birds, animals, and insects seen. They saw a total of 47 bird species.

Swingles in Scotland

David and Cailin Swingle recently traveled to Ireland to visit friends, and Scotland, to see a new country. While on their travels, they had a few opportunities to bird watch in some very special places. While on more casual strolls, they saw many life birds and previously seen birds in new locations. In Ireland, they stayed with friends who live in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which has estuary, mudflat, and salt meadow habitats. Since their friends have lived in the area for years, they are connected to the local naturalists including one of the authors of The

Birds of County Cork, Patrick Smiddy. David and Cailin were excited to bring home a copy of the book signed by two of the authors as a reminder of this wonderful trip. The book also helped them identify more than 15 life birds such as Eurasian Curlew, Common Buzzard, European Stonechat, and Northern Gannet. On their last day in Ireland, minutes before they had to leave for their flight to Scotland, they met a local Irish birder who had been birding in the estuary that morning and showed them a "Grey Plover" in his scope, which had only recently arrived to the area.

Unfortunately, they couldn't find Grey Plover listed in eBird, however research indicated it may also be known as the Black-bellied Plover – if anyone can confirm, please let them know so they can add the sighting to their checklist.

Once in Scotland, they took a quick road trip with stops in Glasgow, Fort William, Loch Ness, Inverness, Cairngorm National Forest (Loch Garten), Pitlochry, and Edinburgh. They managed to get the rental car back in one piece and added 25 life birds to their list. A few standouts included hearing a Tawny Owl on the first night. The very cute and distinctive Coal, Eurasian Blue, Crested, and Great Tits made a lasting impression. It was fun to see the ever-present Canada Goose alongside a new bird, the Graylag Goose, on a wonderful walk in Alturlie.

Their best tip for anyone planning to see birds in Scotland: download the SOC app and read through the 'hotspot' details for insider information such as where hidden ponds can be found, and it is in fact normal to park on the non-existent shoulder of a 1.5 lane road where it is necessary to regularly pull into 'passbys' to let oncoming cars squeeze through. It was quite an adventure, and a return trip to both countries is hopefully in the not-too-distant future. They will be sure to schedule during the breeding season and hopefully meet up with local birders and experts to enrich the experience and expand their knowledge.

How Gambell Got My Best

By Allan J. Mueller

In a post pandemic fit of fernweh (look it up) I took a birding trip to northern Alaska, including the town of Gambell, in June 2021. Gambell is a gravel pit waiting to be excavated. At the west end of St. Lawrence Island this ocean-formed gravel bar hosts a native-Alaskan (Yupik) subsistence village of about 800 people in the Bering Sea – you can actually see Russia (Siberia, *see photo on Page 9*) from there. The Yupik residents are most closely related to the Yupiks living on that Siberian ground. Surprisingly, Bering Air provides daily commercial flights from Nome, but the only other source of heavy and bulk supplies is irregular summer barges that pull up on the rocky beach, because they lack a pier. This is a serious subsistence economy: this year they were happy to have harvested five bowhead whales, an unusually large number. Walrus, ducks, Alcids (the north's flying version of the south's flightless penguins), caribou, seals, fish, and other wildlife are also important to their diet.



Kathleen Mueller with
Ivory Carver

In addition to subsistence “income”, the Gambellese earn cash by selling ivory carvings. They are justifiably well known for their ivory carvings (*see photo above*) from walrus tusks and

teeth and were not bashful about coming into our rented house to peddle their wares, where they did make several sales.



Home on Gambell

Everything about Gambell is a little, or a lot, different; Gambell is a gamble. The new part of town had modern-looking houses lined up like mainland suburban subdivisions with central heat and running water, while in the old town the randomly scattered houses looked to be made of faded driftwood with makeshift everything. With no motels, our trip leader arranged to rent a house in the new town, but the day before we were to arrive, the new town house owner backed out of the deal, despite a \$1,000 advance payment, because of unexpected family visitors. Through special effort and experience with the Gambellese, our valiant trip leader was able to secure a different house (*see photo above*), in old town, without running water or an outhouse, meaning that a honey bucket became the target of relief for the five* days the six of us were there. We brought and cooked our own food in this three room house with dark curtains to keep out the midnight sun, and most of us had a sleeping bag on a cot at night.

To my knowledge there are only two pickup trucks and no cars in town with 4-wheelers/ATVs providing the bulk of transportation in the summer and a switch to snowmobiles (snow machines in Alaska talk) in the cold seasons (gas is about \$10/gallon). During our June trip temperatures ranged from the 20's to the 40's



with routine strong winds, necessitating a full layered clothing approach to make 4-wheeler travel bearable. The village supports one general store (soup \$4.45/can) and a washateria which has the expected washing machines and dryers as well as showers and bathrooms for men and women, but a total of only one working toilet. The washateria was open on an irregular, unpredictable schedule. I have found that generally the further you go from big cities and western civilization, the less important time and schedules are.

The original schedule for this trip included three days on Gambell and, at my request, an additional day was added because I knew that of all the places we were going on this trip, Gambell provided the best chance for us to find rare birds visiting from Asia that normally do not visit any part of the U.S.

Our daily birding started – well what time is it anyway? In June on Gambell the sun never completely sets, and, in any case, it is too cloudy to see the sun. When we got up it felt like early in the morning, and after a quick breakfast we dressed for a day of driving 4-wheelers and walking. The first of the layered clothing to go on was thin, silk long johns, but under them long socks to the knee, then insulated pants and over that, rain pants (is that 3 or 4 layers?). On the upper body: T-shirt, long sleeve T-shirt, flannel shirt, vest, electric coat, and raincoat. The rechargeable-battery-powered electric coat proved to be the centerpiece for warmth; it is dependable and less bulky than a more traditional heavy coat. While getting dressed inside - HOT! All these clothes! Get me outside now, but before making it outside we had a stop

at the mud room for insulated boots. (Every building in Gambell has a mud room.) Final touches outside - gloves with chemical hand warmers (open, shake, feel the heat), cover my head with a strapped chin ear muffed hat and the raincoat hood. Strap the scope and tripod to the front of the 4-wheeler and my wife and I climb on. Ready to go, after only 15-20 minutes of dressing.



Bone Yard

Some of our favorite birding destinations were the several “bone yards” (*see photo above*) around the village. The bone yards have been used for hundreds of years to process (cut up and distribute) whales and other animals, resulting in an accumulation of buried ancient debris such as cutting tools, ivory (teeth and tusks), and other refuse (artifacts). The Yupik are constantly digging through the bone yards to mine this wealth, creating a very broken, uneven surface that is difficult to walk through without breaking a leg. So, given that hazard, why would we walk through the bone yards? The many years of whale butchering have enriched the soil more than anywhere else on the gravel bar that is Gambell, which supports a diverse plant community, which attracts insects, which attracts birds, which attracts birders.

Another birding spot we visited almost daily were the bird-nesting cliffs, just outside town. Thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands, of seabirds including puffins, auklets, guillemots, Dovekies, and murre (see photo below) nested in the safety of these steep cliffs where it is difficult for predators to get near them. We would be enjoying spectacular morning flights of seabirds leaving their nests for a feeding visit to the ocean, while Gambellese would be nearby on the cliffs shooting the seabirds for lunch – these native Alaskans have special hunting rights because of their subsistence way of life.



On the same cliffs we also found coffins, sometimes intact and in other cases broken open. During the long winters it is not possible to bury the dead, so a cliff face is the final resting spot for many natives.

As you can surmise, birding on Gambell is difficult, uncomfortable, and tiring, especially for us spoiled lower 48'ers – long days in cold, windy weather; travel on 4-wheelers; difficult walking; long nights in a sleeping bag on a cot; uncomfortable bathroom facilities (a bucket); and, at best, infrequent showers. Oh, I forgot, native villages, like Gambell, are dry – no booze. But birders still go to Gambell because it is one the best places to find those rare birds from Asia.

Irrational Behavior: Then all this effort paid off when what I was hoping for happened, the rare Asian bird showed up, a Pallas's Bunting (*Emberiza pallasi*). I was in our house at the end of a long day when another birding group called

in the discovery over a shared walkie-talkie network. I only had to jump on the 4-wheeler and make a drive, then join the birder crowd in a bone yard to see this Asian accidental. BUT I was tired, very tired, too tired to get up and go. I knew this was the rare bird I had set up the entire trip to see but I was just too far gone to do it. I sat, knowing what I was doing – missing the bird of the trip, missing the reason I was on Gambell, but I did not care. I was not upset despite this irrational behavior: maybe life birds are no longer so important to me, maybe I was just too old to put out as much effort as I already had on Gambell, maybe ... I was surprised with what I was doing and how I felt about it at the time, but I was conscious of what I was doing and I was OK with it (and I'm still OK with it), all the while knowing that this was contrary to my past behavior chasing life birds and was a big change. I had asked for the extra day on the island, and I was getting what I wanted, but when the time was ripe I did not want it enough to put out the effort to cash in the chance I had for the payoff!

So, it's pretty much the same as always, live and learn; it's just that sometimes you don't like everything you learn.

**Three days originally planned, an additional day added at my request, and a fifth unscheduled day added when the runway was too foggy for the Bering Air plane to land. I am told that this is a typical Alaska travel schedule.*

President's Column

By LYNN FOSTER
AAS President

Greetings, AAS Members. In a month or so, we'll be meeting in Conway. An article elsewhere in this issue describes the convention in detail, and I hope you'll



attend. We're looking forward to some excellent speakers and field trips!

Our website has a new look and a few new features, like a "[volunteer](#)" page. Take a look, if you haven't already! Also, we recently sent out a member survey. As of this writing, we've had over 50 responses. If you haven't seen the survey in your email, contact us at arkansasaudubonsociety@gmail.com and we will send you the link.

Our last issue contained information about how to join our members-only AAS Facebook group. If you haven't done that yet, please do! And check out our Facebook page, which has over 5500 followers!

Our newsletter also contains two new features we hope you like: an AAS Member Spotlight and a Board Member Spotlight. Our thanks to **Sarah Morris** for featuring Michael Ferrara. Thanks also to **Cailin Swingle** for taking on the Member News column, starting with the next issue! Send your news her way, to cailin.swingle@gmail.com.

Speaking of volunteers, it's not too early to begin thinking about the spring 2026 officer elections. At this point in time, we know that the Nominating Committee will be looking for candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, and Secretary. If you're interested in any of these positions, please contact me at lfoster5211@gmail.com.

One of the recommendations of the Insight Committee is for AAS to change its name. You may not be aware of the following:

- Many if not most people think AAS is a part of the National Audubon Society (it's not)
- Some people think ASCA and NWAAS are part of AAS (they're not)
- Many people think the Little Rock Audubon Center is an AAS building (it's not)

This leads to constant confusion. Donors give gifts to organizations they did not intend to benefit. People pay for memberships in

organizations they did not intend to join. I can truthfully say that during my time as President, I have to explain to pretty much everyone I meet about what AAS is and is not. Even some of our own members are confused. After the fall convention, the AAS board will take up the question of whether AAS should change its name. Members will be a part of this decision process and will have a chance to weigh in, in writing and in person (probably a zoom meeting). We welcome your opinions.

Finally, please note that there is a campaign for the AAS Trust this fall. See the article elsewhere in this issue. We hope you can give. Thanks for your support! I hope to see you in Conway!

Donations to the General Fund

Mary Ryan
Mrs. R .R. Cohoon

The Fall Convention: Conway, October 24 – 26

By CHERYL JOHNSON AND LYNN FOSTER

Hilton Garden Inn in Conway will be the venue for our fall convention on October 24-26. The cutoff date for our block of rooms is September 26, but don't procrastinate! To reserve your room at our group rate of \$110, click [here](#) or call (501) 329-1444.

Register for the convention [here](#) by October 3 to qualify for Early Bird registration rates: \$25 for AAS members and \$30 for non-members. Student registration is \$15. Save money by registering early! Register by 10/17 to guarantee meals for the meeting.

On Friday night **Spencer Daniels**, Black Bear Program Coordinator for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, will speak about **Black Bears in Arkansas**. He will cover their history in Arkansas,

the biology of black bears, and black bear research and management in Arkansas. He will also touch on the topic of mountain lions in Arkansas.

Saturday afternoon's symposium will feature student research reports and a National Audubon guest speaker.

On Saturday evening, our featured speaker will be **Dr. Todd Green** of Arkansas State University, presenting on **The Curious Crowned Cassowaries: Living Dinosaurs with an Attitude**. He is employing advanced scientific methods combined with fieldwork with live specimens to establish an anatomical baseline for understanding the biological functions of the cassowary casque. His research has provided valuable insights into cassowary biology and clarified the possible roles of their cranial ornaments. Such findings are crucial for meaningful comparisons between the cassowaries' casques and the ornaments found in extinct, non-avian dinosaurs.

Field Trip Coordinator Patty McLean has done a fabulous job of planning 12 field trips from Friday through Sunday. These include a beginning birder trip, a tour of a native plant garden that is [BFA-certified](#), and several trips highlighting nearby hotspots.

As always, we will need volunteers to help with registration and the silent auction! Please contact Cheryl Johnson at cjbluebird@gmail.com if you can help, and thanks in advance!

Do YOU have items for the silent auction or freebie table at our fall convention in Conway? If yes, bring them! We welcome new/slightly used items for the silent auction, birding books, and used items for the "freebie" table. Questions? Contact Cailin Swingle, cailin.swingle@gmail.com.

AAS Board Member Spotlight

By Sarah Morris



Name: Michael Ferrara

Where do you live: Fayetteville

Occupation: Conservation Biologist/
Master's Student at the University of Arkansas

Board role: Publicity Coordinator

Do you have a "spark bird" (the bird that got you hooked)?

Ah, so this is a fun story, when I was in undergrad I took a class in the Adirondack mountains in New York. The purpose of the class was to learn field techniques for studying different taxa, and each day we studied a different group of organisms. On the day I was supposed to be learning about birds, we had a least flycatcher fly into the classroom. I remember him hanging out in the lights in the cabin. My professor was able to grab him to help him get out of the building. My professor took us all outside and let us look at the flycatcher while it relaxed and calmed down. I couldn't have been much more than 3 feet from the bird. After a few minutes, the flycatcher took off unharmed. It was a really cool experience, and I realized then that I wanted to work with birds.

Do you have a birding bucket list species?

Yes, I mean there are a few, but top of the list is a Bridled Tern. While living in Florida, I would go out around hurricanes and hope that I would get lucky enough to see them get pushed in. I'm working on planning a trip to the Dry Tortugas just to see them. Also near the top of my birding bucket list is Prairie Falcons; I helped with the CBC in the Tall Grass Prairie in Oklahoma last year hoping to catch one. I am pretty sure I've seen one while driving before, but I refuse to count it because I'd rather not get my lifer going 75 mph on the highway haha.

What's a fun fact about you that most people wouldn't guess?

So I'm from New York originally, but I grew up there and got my start in birding there. I've lived in 6 different states working with wildlife, but my fun fact is that when I went to school there I went to a small environmental science school called SUNY ESF. One of the cool things about that school was that I got to participate in clubs and take classes at Syracuse University. While there I was in the Syracuse Marching band and Sour Citrus Society (the basketball pep band), and I got to play at a few Buffalo Bills games, a Canadian football game, the 2016 final four, and the 2014 Super Bowl, which just so happens to be the only Super Bowl the Seahawks won so that was a really cool experience.

What's your favorite part about running the Arkansas Audubon Society's social media?

My favorite part about running AAS's social media is probably getting to share information about the birds we have in Arkansas. It's a fun job, and it gives me a cool opportunity to share my love of birds and my photography with the public. I really don't do much with my photos, so I love that it gives me a reason to bring my camera out with me.

How do you think social media helps connect birders across Arkansas?

I think social media gives birders an avenue to connect with each other. I know we are still working on it, but I like to picture our social media page as an avenue to reach out to the masses and really reach people that may or may not be birders. In the future I'm hoping to build our AAS facebook group and make that a virtual place for Arkansas birders to discuss their cool findings, post questions, and really bond as a community around something we all love. The toughest part about a state organization is that our members are all spread across the state, and I feel social media is one of the best avenues to close that gap.

What's one of your most memorable experiences, or what do you enjoy most in the Arkansas Audubon Society?

My favorite memory of AAS is probably the convention in Fayetteville last spring. As somebody that hasn't been a member of AAS long or even an Arkansas resident for long, it was really cool to not just attend a convention with the community, but even more rewarding to attend my second convention as part of AAS. While I have met many people in passing, or birded with many people in the birding community. It was a cool experience to spend time with everyone in one place and to build on the relationships and friendships from the previous meeting in Little Rock.

Join Our Board!

AAS is looking for candidates for President, Vice President, and Secretary to take office next spring. Interested?

Contact Lynn Foster,

lfoster5211@gmail.com.

New AAS Members

Paula White	Russellville AR
Cheryl Ford	Bentonville AR
Todd Green	Denver CO
Jacob Wyco	Jonesboro AR
Grace, Arthur, & Zachary Abbott	Little Rock AR
Jeremy, Benedict, Sebastian, Dianne, & Bernadette Rhodes	North Little Rock AR

New Life Members

P. Allen Smith	Little Rock AR
Rebecca Renfro	Bartlesville OK

AAS Trust Campaign

By RAGUPATHY KANNAN and LYNN FOSTER

This year, the AAS Trust became a concern for two reasons. First, we discovered that through no fault of the current Trustees or Trust Treasurer, the Trust had lost its tax exempt status. In August, we filed our application to reinstate the Trust's tax exempt status with the IRS. We asked for retroactive reinstatement, meaning that the Trust would owe no back taxes and all past donations would be tax deductible. We are pleased to report that the IRS has retroactively reinstated our Trust's tax-exempt status, and all past and present donations are tax deductible. We had to wait for that to reapply as a charitable organization with the state of Arkansas and are in the process of doing so.

Second, in recent years, your generosity and a favorable investment climate have caused the AAS Trust to grow more than \$350,000. We thank everyone who has donated to the Trust. It is now at a new stage in its existence. It can continue to be a "publicly supported organization" (like AAS)

or it can become a "private foundation." If the latter occurs, in future years the Trust will have to pay a tax on its investment income and will have to distribute at least 5% of its net assets each year. Failure to distribute the required percentage will result in an additional tax. Currently, as a publicly supported organization the Trust pays no tax and does not have distribution requirements.

In 2024, the Trust failed the test to be a publicly supported organization. If it fails again in 2025, it's more than likely that the IRS will classify it as a private foundation.

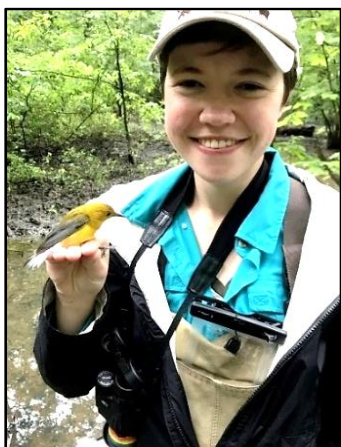
We believe that the AAS leaders who established the trust intended for it to be a publicly supported organization, and we want to keep it that way. Right now, the trust is "on the line." For it to keep its public charity status, we need to raise \$8000 for the Trust from the public by the end of the year. Thus, we're asking for donations from members and the public. These must be "small donations"—under \$4000—to comply with tax law. A larger donation will actually cause the amount we need to raise to rise—it will hurt more than help.

The AAS Trust has funded over 400 grants since its creation in 1973. Grants for research, conservation, and education have improved the environment and our scientific knowledge about nature, especially Arkansas birds, for more than 50 years. Most grants go to graduate students to enable them to conduct research necessary for their degree requirements. Over 60 research papers have been published by trust grant recipients. Many of you reading this have received a trust grant.

If everyone who ever received a trust grant could donate \$20 to the trust, we would exceed our goal. Can we count on you?

To donate to the Trust, go to <https://arbirds.org/AAS/Donate.aspx> and choose the AAS Trust as your designated fund. Instructions for donating by check can also be found on that page.

Questions? Email Ragupathy Kannan, ragupathy.kannan@gmail.com, or Lynn Foster, lfoster5211@gmail.com. If you wish to donate more than \$4000, please contact us to discuss giving over time.



The accompanying photos show Em Donahue, Arkansas State University PhD student, with a Prothonotary Warbler (above), and Kevin Krajcir, ANHC staff member, and Lynn Christie, AAS member, with a Brown Thrasher (below). The research being conducted in these photos was supported by AAS Trust grants. All banding and handling of birds was done pursuant to requisite permits and training.



AAS Trust Donations

Endowment-Memorial Fund

Charles Anderson
Danette Watkins

Halberg Ecology Camps: An Account of the 44th Year

By RENN TUMLISON and TAMZEN BRYANT

From June 7–20, 2025, we conducted the 64th and 65th sessions of the Halberg Ecology Camp. Camp Director for both sessions was Robin Buff aided by Assistant Director Matt Wilson. Tamzen Bryant, who also serves as Executive Director, was Publicity Director and posted images of the camp online as it was in session so parents could see activities and catch a glimpse of their own camper's involvement.

The temperature was reasonably comfortable most of the first week, sometimes cool at night, and we had rain only on Thursday. The second week was different. The warm humid conditions let thunderstorms develop, and rain fell at some point every day from Sunday through Thursday. So, we conducted our camp in the Ouachita National Rain Forest. Power was out for a few hours one day, but classes still went off well with no insurmountable problems. The camp progressed smoothly providing some good experiences for the campers as well as staff. We have always been able to adjust.

First year campers originated from 17 counties in Arkansas (up from 15 last year), and one each from California and Georgia (so this year we can say that our reach was coast-to-coast)! Including Senior Campers, we also had students from Kansas and Oklahoma. The first-year campers came from 34 towns in Arkansas (up from 29 last year). Conway, Fayetteville, Little Rock, and Yellville all produced five or more campers. This year, towns along or north of I-40 were represented about equally compared to towns in the southern half of the state. The camp committee is working toward getting better outreach to attract campers from the full range in the state, though the southern portion of the state is more rural and less populated.

We have accumulated a lot of camp alumni during the 44 years the camp has been conducted, and some of those now are adults who bring their kids to camp to have the experiences they enjoyed years ago. We never know for sure how many campers are children of previous campers, but we heard of some again this year. It is a meaningful complement that the experiences of kids only 11 or 12 years old remain strong and memorable into adulthood, enough that those former campers want their kids to have similar experiences. This year was a milestone for me (RT) because my son, who was a camper years ago, brought his daughter to camp this year. We appreciate knowing that the lifetime memories we have enabled in alumni campers, kin to us or not, result in planning for their own children to get the same experience!

Junior (first year) campers went to six classes twice through the week. Rowan Beattie and Adam Schaffer taught Aquatic Biology the first week, and Erica Benoit and AJ Windsor the second week. Jackie Scott and Jonathan Harris taught Botany both weeks. Adaire Krementz and Amelia McAllister taught Entomology both weeks. Renn Tumilson taught Mammalogy, and Kory Roberts taught Herpetology both weeks. Geology was taught by Jack Stewart and Arlo Juarez the first week, then Ikram Bahram replaced Jack for the second week. Ornithology was led by Kelly and Donna Mulhollan week 1, and Chris Kellner and Rowan Beattie for week 2. Ginger Carr was camp nurse the first week, and Michea Gartin the second week.

Some junior campers from last year got to come back for a second week called Senior Camp. They meet camp along with the first-year campers but do different, more involved, activities. Senior Camp was led by Janet McAllister, Jim Gann, and Emily Kelley week 1, and Janet and Emily for week 2. Those campers did research-style ecological activities in the field, such as measuring biological and physical differences between north and south facing

slopes. In addition, chemical and biological water quality was tested and compared from several sites around camp. One day during each session, they took a field trip guided by U.S. Forest Service personnel and got to see endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (adults and nestlings).



Campers learning to identify venomous snakes

Summer camp food has a stereotype of being bad. Not so with the Ecology Camp! Our food is tasty and nutritious, with options provided for people with dietary needs or preferences. This is assured by the Kitchen Director, Stacey Buff. Kitchen staff included John Goff (both weeks), Mina Wolfe (both weeks), Aster Droste (first week), Molly Chosich (both weeks), Whit Ward (second week), and Avery Windsor (second week). Will Henley served as custodian both weeks and cabin counselor first week.

Afternoons allow for snacks and recreation. Swimming, canoeing, volleyball, and other activities are available to campers, as they choose. The Recreation Director and town runner was Robin Campbell for both weeks, and lifeguards for both weeks were Robin Campbell and Amelia McAllister. Aaron and Berinda Eugene served as volunteers during week 1. Obviously, it takes a lot of coordination and effort to locate and schedule personnel to run the camp.

After a day of classes and recreation time, evening games and programs engaged the campers in fun learning activities. Laurie Scott, president of the Ozark Chapter of The Wild Ones,

made a presentation about pollinators the first week. Robin Buff presented information about bird-friendly yards during the second week. Jim Gann made a presentation about alligators and showed a live specimen during week 1, and Herpetology instructor Kory Roberts made that presentation during week 2. Kelly and Donna Mulhollan (outside of camp known as the folk group “Still on the Hill”) gave a very-well-received concert of bird-based songs during the first session. During both sessions, Karen Hicks gave a presentation about ultraviolet light and fluorescence. Kids made paintings with fluorescent colors and tested different liquids to see whether or not they fluoresced.



Fun with paints to learn about fluorescence under UV light

Other activities included get-acquainted games the first evening of camp, a showing of the classic (original) “The Lorax” video by Dr. Seuss, and afternoon learning games related to nature. For extra fun and learning experiences, counselors guided campers to investigate insects at an evening bug light, amphibians and reptiles along the pond during night-time herp walks, and birds during early morning bird walks.

The last event on Thursday evening of the first week was a review of camp based on images taken by Publicity Director Tamzen Bryant and other camp staff, organized with music to help

set a mood. Tamzen’s computer died during the second week of camp so the camp review wasn’t shown that Thursday night, but a slideshow for week two has been made and both slideshows are now available to view at

<https://youtu.be/aBVF2nY-dcY> (first session) and <https://youtu.be/8iDmc1EXkxg> (second session).

Daily updates using photos of camp activities were made available to parents via the GroupMe app. That allowed parents to see what was happening during the week and maybe catch a glimpse of their child being involved in various activities. One parent sent the Executive Director this comment about her son who had attended the junior camp last year and the senior camp this year: “This has been one of his absolute favorite things, and he has learned so much both years.”



Campers study insects attracted to the bug light

Updates on camp can be found on the Audubon Camp Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/AASEcologyCamp>). The Facebook page has 1,200 followers! An AI listing of keywords based on recent reviews included terms like Nature lovers, hand-on-learning, beautiful setting, amazing experience, and wonderful instructors.

We greatly appreciated the consideration and support of our donors! This camp has always provided a strong learning environment with fun classes and great recreational opportunities, but the cost can limit which kids can attend. The fee

for camp is far less than the actual cost. Still, remaining financial costs for some of the campers were reduced or outright covered by camp donors through scholarships. Some of the campers would not have been able to attend without that support.

At the end of each session, campers with scholarships write “thank-you notes” to people or organizations that had helped them by providing scholarships. Most students commented on their favorite class, but they weren’t all the same. Some campers said they most enjoyed digging for pyrite, holding harmless snakes, touching furs, looking at birds through binoculars, comparing leaf shapes, looking for tiny aquatic life under a microscope, or sweeping a net to see what insects they had caught. Some other comments included:

“Thanks to this opportunity I think I understand and appreciate our natural world much better.”

“It was an amazing experience.”

“You have provided the opportunity for me to attend this camp that taught me so much while still being fun.”

“I learned a lot this week and had a great time.”

“When I first came to camp I thought I would not like it and would be very board [sic] or would even not make friends but I come to see that I made multiples of friends and are nice. When it was my first time going to class I thought it would be just like school but no you go to class then do fun things like hiking.”

A select few of the Senior Campers get invited for a third-year experience, at the Art and Martha Johnson Advanced Camp. This included eight days of activities held from June 30 – July 7 north of Clinton in Stone County, at Mount Eagle Retreat Center above the Middle Fork of the Little Red River. Activities included tree transects, hiking, water testing, snorkeling, and canoeing at

the Buffalo River and nature explorations and nature awareness games. The group explored a historic site called Indian Rockhouse at Buffalo Point along the Buffalo River, where they studied general ecology as well as Karst geology (landscapes shaped by limestone bedrock being dissolved by water). Director for the Advanced Camp was Stacey Buff, and other teaching staff included Jonathan Harris and Adam Schaffer. Mina Wolfe served as the cook. As it turned out this year, all the staff had been campers themselves in the past!

The camp committee is looking for ways to increase awareness, interest, and diversity of activities in the camp. If you have suggestions for corporate sponsorships or possible guest speakers, or just want to find out more about the camp, please contact the executive director, Tamzen Bryant. Information about the camp, and contact information for the executive director, can be found at the camp website, aasecocamps.org. Also, visit the Arkansas Audubon Society website at <https://arbirds.org/EcologyCamp/> for more information.

Halberg Ecology Camps: Annual Fall Appeal

By MATT WILSON and BARRY HAAS

As the beauty of fall unfolds, the Arkansas Audubon Society celebrates the 44th annual Halberg Ecology Camp, a transformative program that inspires young Arkansans to connect with nature and explore the wonders of ecology. Matt has witnessed this program in action since 2008 and can say, without a doubt, this program changes lives!

Each year, this camp provides young people with hands-on learning experiences in conservation and wildlife stewardship, empowering them to become future

environmental leaders. Campers this past summer were just as eager to learn about the mysteries and complexities of nature under the tutelage of instructors as in the past. These campers will take their new knowledge of nature with them throughout their lives. Some may go on to careers in the natural sciences – at least we hope we are having that level of impact! For others it may mean simply an enriched understanding of nature that gives them pleasure.

We rely on the generosity of supporters like you to ensure that all children, regardless of financial background, can attend. Your donation will help provide scholarships, support camp facilities, and ensure that we continue offering high-quality educational programs. With the expense of all three camp sessions falling so early in the Fiscal Year, we always have a very large deficit come fall that we will be working to close and hopefully break even. We can't afford to leave the nature education of our youth to chance.

Please consider donating today. Your tax-deductible gift is an investment in the future of Arkansas's wildlife, ecosystems, and young people. Thank you for your support in making the 44th Halberg Ecology Camp our most impactful yet, we couldn't have the camp without generous support from people like you!

Donations of any size can be made online at <https://arbirds.org/EcologyCamp/> or by mailing a check made payable "AAS Halberg Ecology Camp" to P.O. Box 242088, Little Rock, AR 72223. To complete a donation online you must complete your method of payment with either PayPal or credit card. If you didn't have to choose a payment method and complete that information, your donation did not go through.

All donations are tax deductible, and are acknowledged by letter or e-mail. If you have any questions regarding donations, please email Barry, the camp treasurer, at:

bhaas@sbcglobal.net

Ecology Camp Donations

(May 28 – September 3, 2025)

Donations by Organizations

Fayetteville Natural Heritage Commission

Donations by Individuals

Donna Haynes

Lynn Foster

Joan Lipsmeyer

Danette Watkins

Holly Holiman

Scholarships & Tuition Assistance

Hot Springs Village Audubon Society

Memorials & Honoraria

Rebecca Hardin & Grady Hinton, *In Memory of*
Milanne Sundell

Claire Shaw, *In Memory of Henry and Edith*
Halberg

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