



Arkansas Birds

Newsletter of the Arkansas Bird Alliance (ARBA)

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

Bird-Friendly Arkansas: Under New Management

By LYNN FOSTER

ARBA Bird-Friendly Arkansas Committee

The Bird Friendly Yards program was founded in 2016. Pam and Jack Stewart had a vision of yards throughout Arkansas, free of hazards to birds and full of native plants, cover, cavities for nesting, and other good things creating high-quality habitat for birds. The program started out offering certification to homeowners, but responding to demand, it now allows certification by businesses and places of worship. The name was changed to “Bird Friendly Arkansas” to reflect this.

It is a self-certifying program. Those in possession of land can fill out a form available at <https://arbirds.org/BFA/Apply.aspx>. If you have questions, send them to birdfriendlyarkansas@gmail.com. Those who receive certification can order (at cost) a sturdy “Bird Friendly Arkansas” sign. Signs let others know your native space is intentional and introduce them to the issue—that birds need our help.

It’s an honor to take over this program from Jack and Pam, although I have some big shoes to fill! If you have any suggestions for improving the program, please send them to the above address.

Native Yard Spotlight

All Saints Episcopal Church in Russellville first applied for Bird Friendly status 6 years ago. This month, it has achieved it! As church member

Catherine Crews relates, “this has been a true community effort supported by our church’s younger adults and our neighbors who are not church members, as well as those who initiated this project.”

The size of this native habitat is more than three acres. It comprises native trees and shrubs, forbs, and groundcover. Almost all of the species are Arkansas natives. Three pollinator gardens surround the entrance to the church. An intermittent stream crosses the property, and gardeners clear it as needed, but otherwise leaves are left almost everywhere—only a small part of the property is mowed. Brush piles and snags dot the landscape.

Mary Ann King, the past long-term owner of Pine Ridge Gardens, is a member of the congregation, which gave them an edge when choosing plants. Some of the species she picked for All Saints are Arkansas Blue Star, Bluestem Goldenrod, Butterflyweed, Garden Phlox, Little Bluestem, and Wingpod Purslane.

Below are some photos of the property. We commend All Saints for its dedication to nature.



Butterflyweed, Asclepias tuberosa, in front and Purple Coneflower, Echinacea purpurea, in the rear

Newsletter and Membership Information

The Arkansas Birds 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



Lesser Goldfinch, Pope Co. | Photo by Michael Linz



*American Yellowwood,
Cladrastis kentukea*

Garden Note: So many plants have “wort” as part of their name—St. John’s Wort, Thoroughworts (Boneset), Bellworts, Liverwort, Spiderwort. I could go on, but you get the idea. (You can find an alphabetical list on Wikipedia at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wort_plant_s.) Why is this such a common suffix? The answer is found back in the time when plants were more a part of daily life. In Middle English, a wort was any plant with a beneficial use. Plants that were eaten or used medicinally or otherwise were called worts. Liverwort was thought to cure jaundice and other liver problems. Thoroughworts had many medicinal uses.

The opposite of a wort is a weed. According to the Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, a weod (today, weed) is a “useless or injurious plant.” The measure used to determine whether a plant was a weed or a wort was, of course, whether it was useful or useless to us human beings. Consider the milkweed plant. It’s not only beneficial to monarch butterflies, it’s an essential host plant for them. If your yard lacks milkweeds, you will never see a monarch caterpillar in it. Doug Tallamy has suggested that we rename the milkweed Monarch’s Delight. What a great idea, particularly during the Anthropocene Era!

Interested in Bird Friendly Arkansas certification?
Email birdfriendlyarkansas@gmail.com.

Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds

By CHRIS KELLNER

ARBA Bird Records Committee Curator

The Spring Season

1 March – 31 May, 2026

The Arkansas Bird Alliance Bird Records Committee consists of five volunteers: Patty McLean, Charles Mills, Joe Neal, Kenny Nichols, and I serve as chair. Each season we review records of unusual birds submitted to us and determine whether to accept them based on the information provided. Photographs are very helpful, but they do not always provide enough detail to confirm an identification. In those cases, we rely on the written description submitted with the record. If your photo is unclear—or if you do not have one—please include a careful description of the bird you observed. We also ask that you submit records directly to us (link: [Reporting Your Bird Sightings](#)); even if you have also submitted them to eBird.

We review “unusual” birds that are either rarely seen in Arkansas, or are out of season. Examples of each are included in this report.

Abbreviations: WMA=Wildlife Management Area

Arkansas’s thirty-eighth record of a Cinnamon Teal was photographed at Benson Lake on 25 March in Arkansas Co (the county’s first record; Ryan Askren).

Arkansas’s twenty-third record of a Red-necked Grebe was observed at Lake Dardanelle-Nichols Property (restricted access) on 28 March in Pope Co (Kenny Nichols).

The fourth county record of an Eastern Whip-poor-will was made on 21 April in Craighead Co (Rhett Raibley).

The second sighting of Black-necked Stilts for Garland Co was made by Vic Prislipsky who photographed 2 at Lake Balboa on 12 May (Vic Prislipsky).

In 2025, the Whimbrel was split into two species: Hudsonian and Eurasian Whimbrel. Arkansas's thirtieth Whimbrel (now Hudsonian Whimbrel) was photographed on 24 April at the Weddington Sod Farms in Washington Co (Kenny Younger).

Charles Mills has been searching for Long-billed Curlews in Arkansas for many years. He finally found one (Arkansas's fifteenth record) along the Red River east of Ogden on 7 May in Little River Co (Charles Mills).

Eleven Hudsonian Godwits were photographed at the Rick Evans Grandview Prairie WMA on 9 May (Paul Lowery).

Three Lesser Black-backed Gulls were observed in Arkansas this spring. One was photographed at the Lake Dardanelle Lock and Dam on 3 Mar, Pope Co (Nicole Bow). Two additional birds, representing a first county record, were photographed at Sharp Chapel Rd on 18 April, Craighead Co (Matthew Matlock).

Two separate observations of Neotropic Cormorants were reported: one was photographed west of Jonesboro on 19 April in Craighead Co (Rhett Raibley). The other was observed at Felsenthal NWR on Lake Jack Lee in Union Co on 12 May (Leif Anderson).

The second county record of a Tricolored Heron was photographed at Osage Park Wetlands in Benton Co on 30 April (Dorothy Mangold).

A Swallow-tailed Kite was photographed at the Hudgin Creek Bridge along Hwy 35 on 19 May in Drew Co (Monte Woody).

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was observed in the St. Francis National Forest along CR-239 on 13 May in Phillips Co (Leif Anderson).

Vermilion Flycatchers have recently become more commonly observed in Arkansas. This spring one was photographed in Pine Bluff along

Hwy 425 on 13 March in Jefferson Co (Katlynn Johnson).

The second county record of a Veery was photographed at the James W. Trimble Lock and Dam on 24 April in Sebastian Co (Matthew Matlock).

The 19th record of a Lesser Goldfinch was photographed at a feeder in Fayetteville on 2 May in Washington Co (Robert Peck).

A Clay-colored Sparrow was observed in the St. Francis National Forest at Stumpy Pt. on 14 May in Phillips Co (Leif Anderson).

An out-of-place Great-tailed Grackle was seen at McDonald's in Crossett on 12 May in Ashley Co (Leif Anderson).

A very early Louisiana Waterthrush (~1.5 weeks early) was observed along Snow Creek in the Ozark National Forest on 7 March in Pope Co (Leif Anderson).

Also early was a Black-and-white Warbler observed at the United States Forest Service district office in Hector on 3 March (Leif Anderson).

A very rare Black-throated Blue Warbler was observed at the Mississippi River State Park-River Confluence on 9 May in Phillips Co (Leif Anderson).

A beautiful male Western Tanager, Arkansas's 18th record, was photographed in Pine Bluff on 27 April in Jefferson Co (Katlynn Johnson).

A beautiful male Black-headed Grosbeak was photographed at a feeder in Russellville on 29 April in Pope Co (Valerie Morrison).



*Lazuli Bunting, Benton Co. | Photo by
Glenda Mays*

A male Lazuli Bunting, Arkansas's thirty-fifth record, was photographed in north Bella Vista on 28 April in Benton Co (Sarah McGee).

A possible hybrid male Lazuli x Indigo Bunting was photographed along Viney Grove Rd south of Hwy 16 on 4 May in Washington Co (Kenny Younger).

New ARBA Members

James Clifton	Maumelle AR
Patsy Hughes	Little Rock AR
Kennedy Langton	Bentonville AR
Eduardo Ortiz	Fort Smith AR
Ashton Eley	Conway AR
Nicholas Juncos	Little Rock AR
Phillip Foster	Little Rock AR
Abby Rodriguez	Greenbrier AR
Greg Bonds & Jolly Cross	Lepanto AR

New Life Members

Ellen Nelson	Rogers AR
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Member News: Big Day is Back!

By CAILIN SWINGLE

ARBA News of Members Columnist

Summer has arrived and I'm trying to appreciate this time of year when the heat, humidity, ticks, and mosquitoes can really put a damper on my outdoor enjoyment. What has been helping me stay positive, you ask? Well, the Purple Coneflowers and Texas Star Hibiscus blooms in my garden are lovely, the bunny rabbits who visit each afternoon to snack on my asters are quite cute, and the sunlight sticking around long enough for me to enjoy it all during an evening game of Kubb (a Swedish lawn-game with elements of bowling and horseshoes) with my

family has made it easier this year! Not sure how I'll keep up my appreciation come August, so let me know if you have any suggestions!

New Birds in New Mexico



Kimberly, Cheryl, and friends

Members Cheryl Johnson, Kimberly Harper, and friends were rewarded with over a dozen lifers on a recent birding trip to New Mexico. They explored the Rio Grande Nature Center, Embudito Canyon, Cibola National Forest, and the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Reserve.

~ Kimberly Harper



Curved-billed Thrasher at Embudito Canyon
Photo by Cheryl Johnson

Hermanos en Ecuador



Overlook of the Amazon from the Guacamayos Ridge.



Matt and Josh Matlock in the Antisana National Park

Member Matt Matlock and his brother Josh recently returned from an 8-day trip to Ecuador. They saw and/or heard nearly 330 species, including 48 species of hummingbirds and 31 species of tanagers. The trip was self-booked at primarily two ecolodges and with four local guides for at least 50% of the time birding. They found Ecuador to be a relatively easy international destination because the people are friendly, USD is the accepted currency, and the ecotourism infrastructure is well-established (but expect bumpy and curvy roads at times).

Speaking at least some Spanish (or use of a digital translator) and renting a four-wheel drive vehicle greatly helped along the way. Their travel luck



One of the best dinners - beef tenderloin with peppercorn sauce

was outstanding, with minimal rain disturbance, except for getting a flat tire on the rental truck during the last day. Their time was mostly spent in cloud forests and páramo (high elevation tundra) habitat, but they hope to visit lowland forest in the Amazon on a return trip. You can check out the trip report, including the species list and pictures, at ebird.org/tripreport/534786.

~ Matt Matlock

The Debut of the Arkansas Big Day

Big Days, which began with pioneering ornithologist Ludlow Griscom in the 1920s and 30s, are a way to enjoy the diversity of bird life with a bit of competitive fun. For several years running, central Arkansas had a regular Big Day competition called BirdAR, but when that fell to the wayside, some ARBA members decided to revive the competition under the name "Arkansas Big Day." Connected to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Global Big Day, teams of Arkansas birders went to the field on May 9 to see how many species they could find.

Ten teams officially registered for the Big Day, some taking a casual approach, and others beginning their day well before dawn and ending well after dusk. The team with the highest total was the Northwest Arkansas-based Team TREK whose members included Taylor Long, Evan Garner, Kenny Younger, and Robert Peck. Birding from Fayetteville to Fort Smith, this team found 145 bird species over the day. Together, Arkansas birders saw 219 species on May 9, a record for the state on a Global Big Day.

This was the first year for this new Arkansas Big Day and it is the hope that it can become a regular tradition for Arkansas birders. Organizer Ragan Sutterfield took a fairly low-key approach this year, but hopes to make it a larger event, with prizes for different categories next year. "We want birders to participate whether they want to spend the day in a local park, or drive all

around the state in pursuit of the largest list.” The plan is for Arkansas Big Day to coincide with the Global Big Day once again next year, so mark your calendars for May 8, 2027 and stay tuned for registration information early next year. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ragan at ragan.sutterfield@proton.me.

~ Ragan Sutterfield

Upcoming Local Events

North Little Rock - "For The Birds," a monthly lecture series offered by North Little Rock's Laman Library and Wild Birds Unlimited of Little Rock geared toward beginning birding. These presentations by John Sommer and Emily Flora are held on the third Saturday of each month, except December, at Laman Library's second floor Gallery from 10:00 to 11:00 AM. For more information, consult the NLR Library's website at <https://programs.nlrlibrary.org/events>.

Donations to the General Fund

Kelly & Alyssa Journey,
In honor of Dan & Samantha Scheiman
Pledgeling Foundation

History of the Parker Service Award

By LYNN FOSTER

The Parker Service Award was established in 2003 as the AAS Special Service Award. First presented in 2003 to Max and Helen Parker, it was thereafter named after them. From the AAS Board minutes of October 24, 2003 (thank you,

Barry Haas), we learn that this award was intended to be given to members who have gone above and beyond in their donation of time, talent, and “blood, sweat, and tears” to the Society. The Board further determined that:

1. Donations would not be a criterion to be considered;
2. The award would be given no more often than once a year, and not necessarily every year;
3. The physical award would be suited to the recipient and could take the form of a book, a gift, or a collection of letters of appreciation;
4. The President would appoint the Awards Committee; and
5. The recipient would be chosen from recommendations made by either the general membership or the Awards Committee, with the Committee making the final decision.

Past winners are:

- 2004 Max and Helen Parker
- 2005 Art and Martha Johnson
- 2007 Sterling and Loice Lacy
- 2008 Pat Moore
- 2009 Bill Beal
- 2010 Martha Milburn
- 2013 Barry Haas
- 2022 Terry Butler
- 2026 Jack and Pam Stewart

AAS Trust Donations

Research-Educational Fund

Elizabeth Adams,
In Memory of Dr. Doug James
Mary Ryan

Your Trust at Work: AAS Trust Report

By RAGUPATHY KANNAN

AAS Trust Chair

The Trust met virtually on 20 April 2026. For the Spring 2026 session, the Trustees granted ten awards totaling **\$6494.12**.

- Pallavi Bantha (M.S., ASU) was awarded \$300 to microbial communities and immunocompetence in turtles
- Robin Buff (AAS) won \$2394.12 to purchase walkies-talkies for the Audubon camps
- Alexa Dillon (M.S., ASU) was awarded \$300 to study genomics and parasites in Black River Madtoms
- Haley Greer (M.S., UCA) was given \$600 to investigate thermal refugia of Eastern Collared Lizards
- Calvin Leischner (M.S., UCA) received \$300 to quantify encounter rates in Eastern Collared Lizards in an Arkansas glade
- Dustin Kohler (M.S., ATU) won \$700 Cerulean Warbler habitat use. This is his 2nd award for the project. He was awarded \$1300 in the last session.
- Abby McIver (Ph.D., ASU) was given \$300 to study immune function in Red-eared Slider turtles
- Anne Puchalsky (MS, UAF) won \$500 to study King Rail genetics and nesting success in Desha Co., Arkansas
- Ethan Saffle (M.S., ASU) was given \$600 to study warblers' scat to assess diets in the Ozark National Forest
- Ben Stratton (Ph.D., UAF) won \$500 to investigate box turtle ecology among solar arrays managed for native prairie vegetation

I thank Dr. Than Boves, Lynn Foster, Dr. Maureen McClung, and Cherrie-Lee Phillip for reviewing the proposals, and Megan Foll, AAST Treasurer, for keeping the trust finances in order.

President's Column

By EVAN GARNER

ARBA President

In college, I studied chemistry and dreamed of a lifetime dedicated to science. I loved learning, discovering, and sharing knowledge with others, and I thought that I was pretty good at it.

One afternoon, I walked into a professor's office and noticed that potted plants covered every available surface. "You must love cactus," I said, noticing that all the thick, prickly plants were in sandy or rocky soil. "They're succulents," he quipped back coldly. "You aren't going to make a very good scientist."

His assessment cut me deeply. Although not because of his words, I did choose a different career path. I gave up the chemistry lab in favor of the pulpit, but a part of me still misses science.

As birders, we are amateur scientists. Although I did not become a birder because I wanted to prove my professor wrong, I am drawn to it because I love the idea of contributing to a body of knowledge that makes a difference in the lives of others and in the world we inhabit.

Earlier this summer, I participated in the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) by taking part in two routes through rural Arkansas. Started in 1966, this annual USGS survey helps scientists know what is happening to the overall avian population.

Unlike most birding I do, the BBS observation protocol is not designed for the birder to try to see every bird in a location. Instead, it uses strict time-specific observations, which make the data comparable from birder to birder and year to year.

Waking up early enough to get halfway across the state before sunrise was not fun, but knowing that my observations are useful to scientists gives me deep satisfaction. Even if I am not privy to all the data or how they are being used, I know that my little part matters, and that matters to me.

Every time you go birding and record your observations and either share them with others (e.g., through eBird) or study them yourself, you contribute to science. You do not need to be an excellent scientist to make a significant and useful contribution to the body of knowledge that helps us understand the world around us. That may not be your goal when you go birding, but researchers around the world are grateful for amateur scientists like you.

Halberg Ecology Camps: Celebrating the 45th Year!

By BARRY HAAS

Ecology Camp Treasurer

As this is being written, we have just completed both sessions of the Halberg Ecology Camp. This was the 45th year for the hands-on Halberg Ecology Camp to be held for first and second year campers. In July, we will hold the Johnson Advanced Camp for third year campers for the 14th year. Both camps were suspended for two years during Covid, and it took an additional two years to build back up to having third year campers.

Our goal with both camps is to expose girls and boys to the wonders of nature. I liken it to planting seeds in the minds of campers we hope will germinate and grow during their lifetimes, giving them an appreciation for the natural world we depend on for our survival as well as the richness of our existence.

The just completed Halberg sessions were a reflection of past sessions. We had instructors and others with experience ranging from 44 years down to one year and everything in between. The many years of previous experience at camp are one of the many reasons so much is learned in a short period of time. Some of those who taught or worked in other capacities this year are former campers themselves for one, two, or all three years. They have an opportunity to share their personal growth and expanded knowledge in subjects from ornithology to aquatic biology, geology to mammalogy, herpetology to botany, and entomology with campers some of whom are being taught those subjects for the first time in their lives.

Donations to support future ecology camp sessions are always welcome by mailing a check made payable "AAS Halberg Ecology Camp" to P.O. Box 242088, Little Rock, AR 72223, or via the Arkansas Audubon Society website:

<https://arbirds.org/EcologyCamp/>

All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law, and are acknowledged by e-mail or letter. If you have any questions regarding donations, please let me know: bhaas@sbcglobal.net

Ecology Camp Donations

(March 21 – June 21, 2026)

Donations by Organizations

Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas
Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association
Endowment

Donations by Individuals

Rachael Corley Stamps
Holly Childs
Eleanor Kennedy
Eric Sundell

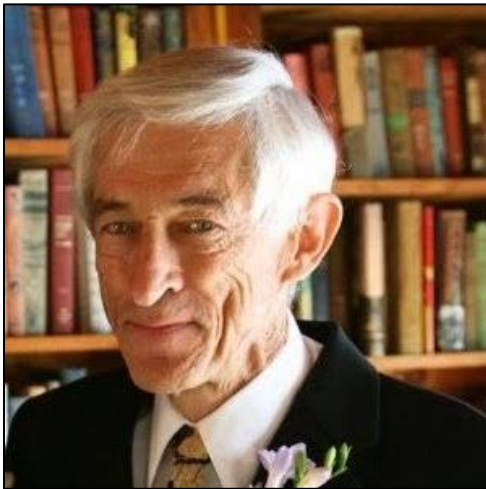
Scholarships & Tuition Assistance

Garland County Audubon Society
Hot Springs Village Audubon Society

Memorials & Honoraria

Ann Gordon,
In memory of Maury Baker

In Memoriam



Jack Stewart

(November 11, 1943 – July 17, 2026)

On the eve of publication of this issue of *Arkansas Birds*, we received word that Jack Stewart had passed away, suddenly and unexpectedly. Jack and Pam, his wife, have been strong pillars of the leadership of the Arkansas Audubon Society (now Arkansas Bird Alliance).

Jack served on the AAS Board beginning in 2005, for more than 20 years, as Vice President, President, Past President, and Co-Chair, and finally Chair of the Education Committee. Normally, an AAS presidential term is only two years, but during Jack's term, the Vice President moved away from Arkansas, so Jack served a double presidential term, from 2007 to 2011.

Jack initiated the Saturday symposium at AAS conventions, taking time to present educational, interactive programs that often gave AAS Trust grant recipients the opportunity to present their

research. Jack could always be relied upon to use his many contacts to find educational and entertaining speakers for our conventions.

Together, Pam and Jack conceived and started the [Bird Friendly Arkansas](#) program, which has been going strong for the past ten years. Administered mostly by Pam, today there are over 200 Bird-Friendly properties in 35 counties, as well as a few out-of-state yards. The program has expanded to include not only homes but also businesses and houses of worship. (See the BFA report elsewhere in this issue.) This program teaches landowners to look at whole ecosystems, including not just birds but also native plants, insects, and other wildlife.

AAS also benefited from Jack's connection to other groups. He served on the National Audubon Society Board of Directors, later also serving as a regional director, and cofounded the Buffalo River Watershed Alliance, as well as serving as its vice president. In this capacity, he worked successfully to ensure the shutdown of a huge hog farm in the watershed.

These are not the only contributions of Jack and Pam to AAS. For more than 20 years they spent their time and energy improving the Society. We are most grateful to them.



Jack and Pam Stewart, receiving the Parker Service Award

On April 25, AAS presented the Parker Service Award to Jack and Pam, in recognition of their outstanding service. The award was a solid black cherry bowl crafted by John Andre 30 years ago. Its plaque states "The Parker Service Award Presented to Jack & Pam Stewart for Years of Dedicated Service to the Arkansas Audubon Society April 2026."

Barry Haas, longtime AAS/ARBA member who has known Jack and Pam since they joined AAS, remarked "I've been awed over the past two decades at Jack's consistent efforts on behalf of birds, other wildlife, and we humans who enjoy nature. He was always good natured in his volunteer efforts with never a cross word. Most important, perhaps, is how Jack remained selfless in his many volunteer activities, never seeking

personal recognition for his efforts. The world could use more Jack Stewarts."

I'd like to add some thoughts of my own. I joined AAS in 2022, at the same time I became Vice President. Jack was a friend who could and would answer any question I had and despite his many years in AAS was open-minded and supportive of change. Jack stepped down from our board in April. In an email to me, he alluded to cancer recurring. He ended his email saying, "I'm thankful for music, memories, and Pam."

Jack, we are so thankful for you! You made AAS and the world a better place. And Pam, I speak for every AAS/ARBA member when I say we are so sorry for your loss. You have our deepest condolences.

~ By Lynn Foster

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Note: You may still receive a paper copy because there is a minimum number to be printed.