Arkansas Birds

Newsletter of the Arkansas Bird Alliance (ARBA)

Fall 2026 | Volume 71 | No. 3

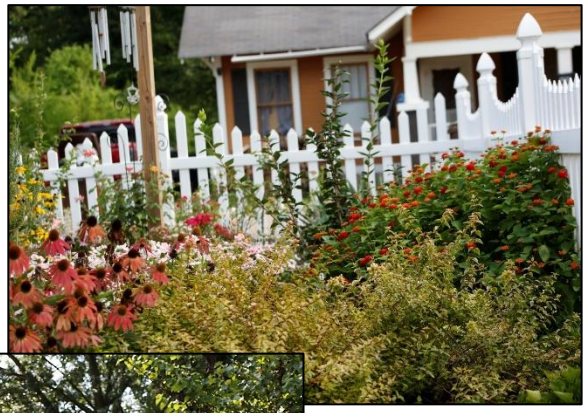
Full-color newsletter available at https://arbirds.org/AAS/Newsletter.aspx

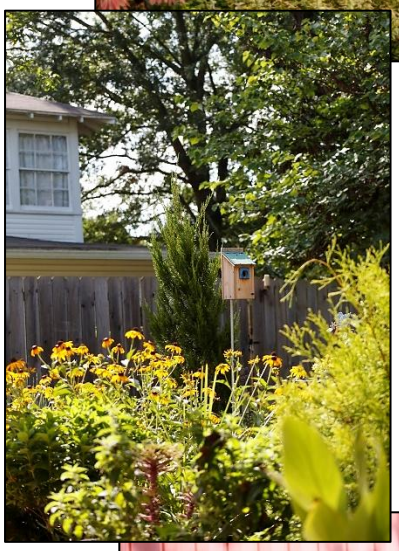
Bird-Friendly Arkansas

By LYNN FOSTER
ARBA Bird-Friendly Arkansas Committee

In September, Bird-Friendly Yard certification was granted to Jessi and Rob Reep, also ARBA members, who live in Warren. Their yard is a bit smaller than half an acre, but it contains deciduous and evergreen trees, as well as shrubs and herbaceous plants, thus offering multiple canopy layers that are so good for birds. Beautyberries and other shrubs offer winter food for birds. Their yard has bird feeders and two water features, snags, and brush piles. They plant for pollinators as well, cultivating a pollinator garden.

Jessi says: “My ultimate goal is to create, cultivate, grow, and encourage myself, my family, and community to care for what land we have, and to try to the best of my ability to gain knowledge to help conserve and protect nature and its inhabitants, especially birds. My yard is still young and growing, but if I don’t already have it planted, and it’s an Arkansas native and birds love it, you can be guaranteed it’s going to be in the ground soon! My biggest focus for the overall property is to have varieties of Arkansas native plant species in order to promote conservation efforts for birds, monarch butterflies, and hummingbird varieties.”





Worthy and important goals! Thank you, Jessi and Rob, for your efforts on behalf of nature. Here are some photos of their yard.

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

Solitary Sandpiper, Clark Co. | Photo by Renn Tumlison

Distribution and Abundance of Arkansas Birds

By CHRIS KELLNER
ARBA Bird Records Committee Curator

The Summer Season

1 June – 31 July, 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.

Perhaps the incredibly hot, dry summer reduced the number of rare birds that visited Arkansas, or perhaps the weather simply kept more birders indoors. In any case, I only have a few unusual sightings to report.

In Arkansas, sightings are scattered across the southern two-thirds of the state, with concentrations in the Arkansas River Valley and southeastern corner. Adding to sightings in the Arkansas River Valley was an Inca Dove beautifully photographed along Highway 1223 in Clarksville on 18 July in Johnson Co (Lindsey Turner).

Tricolored Heron | Photo by Renn Tumlison

A beautiful Tricolored Heron, Clark County's 4th record, was photographed at the Oxidation Ponds in Arkadelphia on 24 July in Clark Co (Renn and Terry Tumlison).

An adult male Black-chinned Hummingbird was photographed at a feeder at a residence in Russellville on 24 July in Pope Co (Jerry Terrell). This is only the 17th verified record in our database and just the third adult male. Black-chinned Hummingbirds are probably underreported in Arkansas because females are difficult to distinguish visually from Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

An out-of-season Solitary Sandpiper was photographed at the Oxidation Ponds in Arkadelphia on 24 July in Clark Co (Renn and Terry Tumlison; *see photo on page 2*).

An adult Swallow-tailed Kite was photographed at Long Bayou on 30 June in Miller Co (Charles Mills). Populations of Swallow-tailed Kites are on the rise in the southeastern United States, so hopefully we will be seeing more of them in the near future.

Swallow-tailed Kite | Photo by Charles Mills

Member News:

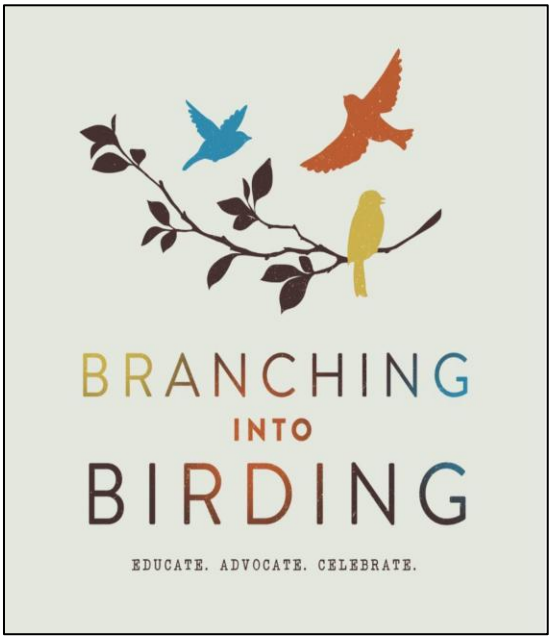
Birders Help Birds, Birds Help Birders!

By CAILIN SWINGLE
ARBA News of Members Columnist

I write this as David and I prepare for a long weekend in Mexico. While we plan to prioritize relaxation and fruity drinks, we do hope to see a few regional birds such as the Green Jay or possibly a Cinnamon Hummingbird… time will tell! Whatever is to come, we've been very happy to welcome what seem to be multiple migrating male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to our feeders alongside our First of Season Blue-winged Warbler near a creek by our house that we've dubbed 'Warblers Cove.' Keep reading for more member news, including organized efforts to restore native habitat in my very own neighborhood!

Author Among Us

New member Ashlyn McKayla Ohm's article "A Theology of Birding" was published recently by The Rabbit Room. In this personal and contemplative essay, Ashlyn discusses how birding can become a spiritual practice, training us in habits of attentiveness, rootedness, and delight—the same habits that help us not only be better birders but also live more meaningful lives.



This article publication coincides with the release of Ashlyn's new birding Substack, Branching into Birding, where her poetry, prose, and photography celebrate the wonder of birds while empowering readers to live more holistic and spiritually attuned lives.

~ Ashlyn Ohm

Members Making an Impact: Neighborhood-wide Conservation Policy Updated

Woodlands Edge, home to multiple ARBA members, is a neighborhood in western Little Rock that preserved approximately one-third of the land as native woodlands and green spaces. Developer Ron Tyne planned the community to conform to the land's natural hydrology, topography, and significant vegetation, with as much preservation as possible. In the original

tenets of the Home Owners Association, all disturbances of the green spaces were forbidden.

Over time it became apparent that while the approach had been taken in the right spirit, it had allowed the proliferation of a variety of invasive plants that had taken over some portions of the green spaces. To address the need for an updated approach, Tyne and ARBA member David Parham conceived of an oversight group that came to be known as the Ecosystems Protection Committee (EPC).

Tallgrass Meadow, 2011 | Photo by Ann Bleed

Since its formation, the EPC has tackled the proliferation of invasives, particularly Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), and has sponsored a series of lectures to raise the community's awareness about native flora, fauna, geology, and ecology. Their most recent project has been to restore a native meadow that was cultivated by Tyne, with the help of the Audubon Society, when Woodlands Edge was first developed. After some initial effort, the meadow was certified as an Arkansas Wild Space, but there are still trees and invasive plants that have started to overtake the meadow and need to be removed. Plant and bird surveys have been discussed to monitor the effort's impact over time.

~ David Parham

Everything's Bigger in Texas

Michael Linz and Patty McLean made a quick trip to Texas to see the breeding pair of Yellow-green Vireos at High Island. While there, they birded along the Bolivar Peninsula and spent time fighting deer flies at Nungaray NWR (formerly known as Anahuac).

~ Patty McLean

Yellow-green Vireo | Photo by Michael Linz

The Smallest Prairie in Northwest Arkansas

When Tim and I moved back to Fayetteville so I could begin my doctoral program, one of the things we missed about living in Harrison was having our own yard and garden. So when the opportunity came to move into a house with a fenced-in yard, we jumped at it. Like many people in Fayetteville, we found a place on the western edge of town (like Lake Woebegone, right at the edge of the prairie… we are literally only a minute from Woolsey by car!). And although we had sworn long ago that we would never, never live west of I-49, we were excited about getting some space to garden again and, a year later, we are still excited about it!

As many of you who live in Northwest Arkansas know, the land here is slowly being eaten by development. Each year, fields of hay and cows become herds of townhouses, apartments, and houses packed in so tightly you would be lucky to be able to cultivate a single bonsai… Our yard, by contrast, is fairly big but when we moved in at the end of last summer, we literally looked out onto nothing but grass and the back of our privacy fence. It was about as exciting as watching paint dry. And needless to say, even when we set up our feeding station, which is one of the first things we do whenever we move, we weren't getting many customers of the avian variety.

So this past winter, we decided to go native.

With the help of Prairie Moon magazine, which specializes (as the name suggests) in prairie plants, and the garden department at Home Depot, we began our native container garden. I picked out five species to start us out — purple coneflower, asters, Golden Alexander, butterfly weed, and little bluestem. We also got a rather splendid New Jersey Tea and two more species — whose names we frankly cannot remember — from the Shaw Nature Reserve near St. Louis. We added these to some native plants we already had from before: red honeysuckle and a beauty berry from Pam Stewart, a redbud we had dug up from God knows where. And all of them were bunged into containers and situated around the bird feeders and birdbath.

Needless to say, as the growing season went on, we started to get some regular customers: a pair of mockingbirds who would decimate our suet feeder, goldfinches in full breeding plumage, a family of robins who had nested in the maple tree in our front yard, the young one with a speckled breast and back, the most vigorous bathers imaginable. We may have the smallest prairie in Northwest Arkansas, but it is an active one. We are looking forward to expanding it even further in the coming year, taking back a little corner of this overdeveloped landscape and letting it go back, as far as we can get it, to nature.

~ Stephanie Barr

In memory of Dr. Norman Lavers

If you have been a part of the Arkansas birding community for a number of years, you may have crossed paths with Dr. Norman Lavers, who passed away on June 8th at the age of 91. He taught at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Arkansas had always appealed to him as a region of great biodiversity. He was a frequent contributor of essays to Bird Watcher's Digest.

After his retirement in 2000, he turned his attention to insects: first butterflies, then robber flies, then to insects in general. This resulted in a book, *100 Insects of Arkansas and the Mid-South*, which he hoped would bring the fascinating lives of these creatures, so vital to us all, to a wide audience.

In 2018 he and his wife Cheryl moved to Tucson, Arizona. Their yard yielded interesting sightings, including rattlesnakes, many bird species, bobcats, coyotes, javelinas, robber flies, gila monsters, and mule deer.

Norman's quick wit and the knowledge he was eager to share will be greatly missed by all.

One of the charitable entities for memorial donations in Norman's obituary is the ARBA Halberg Ecology Camp. Donations can be sent to P.O. Box 242088, Little Rock, AR 72223-0020.

~ Barry Haas

Donations to the General Fund

In memory of Jack Stewart,

Dan and Samantha Scheiman

Emily Jones

Member Spotlight:
Allan Mueller

By LYNN FOSTER

This month, we interviewed Allan Mueller *(pictured above)*, one of Arkansas's preeminent birders.

Not all of us have a spark bird, and Allan did not. While attending the St. Fidelis High School & Seminary in Herman, Pennsylvania (far from his home in Missouri), he joined the Cardinal Bird Club because it was a tradition. Club members captured birds in wire mesh traps baited with corn and banded them under the supervision of a priest who had a bird banding permit. Following the urge of teenage competition, he decided he would band more birds than anyone else, not because he was interested in birds, but just to win the informal race. This led to a lifelong interest in birds and, in his words, gave direction to the rest of his life.

At age 15, he started listing birds he had seen. This was in the wintertime and, come spring, he saw a brand new bird—an Eastern Kingbird—migrating in. As Allan puts it, "I'll never forget the excitement of unexpectedly finding the first one entirely on my own. After that I figured that a new bird was always just around the next bend." After high school, he served as a lieutenant in the US Army in Vietnam and West Germany.

He attended the University of Missouri and received a BS in wildlife biology. Unable to find work in his field, an experience most of us probably identify with, he went on to get an MS from the University of Massachusetts. Afterward he worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service for 32 years in Illinois, Texas, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Much of his time with USFWS was spent working with endangered species. Post retirement, The Nature Conservancy hired him for three years to search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (he firmly believes it's still out there but was unable to sufficiently document it). If you can find a streaming service for The Ghost Bird, a 2009 video about the hunt for IBWO in Arkansas, Allan is featured in it. (He's also featured in a 2020 YouTube video with Dan Scheiman, "Better Know a Birder," filmed during the COVID epidemic).

He and his wife Kathleen joined the then-Arkansas Audubon Society in 1998. He's one of the few AAS Presidents who served two terms—2003-2005 and 2013-14—and served as Vice President and Past President in addition. He has also been a long-time member of the Conservation and Education Committees during his decades of membership. And he also serves on the Bird Friendly Arkansas Committee.

In addition to frequently birding around Conway (Bell Slough is one of his favorite places), Allan and Kathleen have enjoyed many birding trips in foreign countries. Their favorite trip was to Antarctica, where they spotted only 13 species (with 62 in Chile) but had a great trip. His life list total these days is around 2,200 species. He has listed at least 100 species in each state, 300+ in Arkansas.

Allan noted the revolutionary changes in birding since he started. Most striking to him is how mainstream birding has become and how much it has grown. There's an incredible amount of citizen participation in birding "science" these days, thanks to eBird and other electronic

improvements. He also remarked on how in the "olden days" you might need a backpack to carry your field guides. Personal computers didn't exist, so birding records in Faulkner County (and many other places) were kept on 3-by-5-inch cards. Email didn't exist, so when a rare bird was spotted, phone chains were used to get the word out. But if one link was broken, the chain would stop. Different birding groups would have phone numbers to call for the latest rare bird sightings. Before a trip, Allan would research the phone numbers for the areas he'd be traveling through.

Allan is happy to see ARBA's renewed emphasis on conservation, with a bigger committee working on advocacy. He is supportive of ARBA's efforts to bring together potential Motus sponsors and increase the number of Motus stations in Arkansas (see the article beginning on page 12).

New ARBA Members

James Clifton	Maumelle AR
Patsy Hughes	Little Rock AR
Kennedy Langton	Bentonville AR
Jaye Archey	Cameron OK
Eduardo Ortiz	Fort Smith AR
Ashton Eley	Conway AR
Ashlyn Ohm	Lonsdale AR
Nicholas Juncos	Little Rock AR
Phillip Foster	Little Rock AR
Abby Rodriguez	Greenbrier AR
Vicky & Andrew Kessel	Heber Springs AR
Angela, Samuel & David Gilliam,	Benton AR
Greg Bonds & Jolly Cross	Lepanto AR

New Life Members

Ellen Nelson	Rogers AR

AAS Trust Donations

Research-Educational Fund

In memory of Jack Stewart,

Nancy and Peter Deisch
Allan and Kathleen Mueller
Barry Haas and Susan Hardin
Patty McLean

Summer Camp Report:

Junior Camp Records 45th Year of Outdoor Nature Learning

By RENN TUMLISON and TAMZEN BRYANT

We conducted the 65th and 66th sessions of the Halberg Ecology Camp from June 7–19, 2026. Personal or family illnesses shifted some staff positions just prior to the start of camp, but classes went off with no insurmountable problems and still provided many good experiences for the campers as well as staff. We have always been able to adjust.

Stacey Buff stepped up from her expected role as kitchen director and shared Camp Director duties with Tamzen Bryant and Matt Wilson for both sessions. Tamzen also serves as Executive Director and Publicity Director, and posted images of camp online while in session so parents could see activities and catch a glimpse of their own camper's involvement.

We began the first session with heavy rains which abated just in time for registration. The second week began the same way, just with lighter rains before registration. The temperature was hot most of the first week, and humidity made conditions a bit oppressive with little cooling at night, but the second week was milder.

First-year campers originated from 16 counties in Arkansas (down from 17 last year), and we had one camper from Kansas, one from Illinois, and two from Oklahoma. We also had a senior camper from California. The first-year campers came from 26 towns in Arkansas (down from 34 last year). Little Rock produced six campers and Yellville, Malvern, Hot Springs, and Fayetteville all produced three campers. Other towns had one or two representatives. The camp committee is working toward getting better outreach to attract campers from the full range of the state, though the southern portion of the state is more rural and less populated. Our best outreach seems to be word-of-mouth from families of campers, so please promote the camp with your friends!

Proving that the memories from camp are life-long and meaningful, we had campers again this year who are children of campers from years past. It is rewarding to know that lifetime memories entrenched in alumni create a desire for their own children to get this experience!

First-year campers are known as junior campers, and they attend six classes twice through the week. Molly Wozniak and Amelia McAllister taught Aquatic Biology the first week, and Aaron Hinterthuer and Emily Kelly taught it the second week. Jackie Scott and Jonathan Harris taught Botany both weeks. Adaire Krementz and Sim Barrow taught Entomology the first week, then Amelia McAllister and Teresa Leslie covered it the second week. Renn Tumlison taught Mammalogy, and Kory Roberts taught Herpetology both weeks. Geology was taught by Liz Hill and Erica Benoit the first week, then Jackson Stewart replaced Erica for the second week. Ornithology was led by AJ Windsor and Katie McClure week 1, and Chris Kellner and Jude Gordon for week 2. Ginger Carr was camp nurse the first week, and Michea Gartin the second week.

Entomology students catching insects to study
Photo by Tamzen Bryant

A few of the junior campers from last year get to come back for a second week called Senior Camp. Although they attend camp at the same time and place with the first-year campers, they do different, more involved, activities. Senior Camp was led by Janet McAllister and Adam Schaffer week 1, and Janet and Jim Gann for week 2. Senior campers did research-style ecological activities in the field, such as measuring biological and physical differences between north and south facing slopes. Chemical and biological water quality were also tested and compared from several sites around camp. At the end of the week, seniors get to go snorkeling to observe life close-up on the bottom of the creek. Also, one day during each session, seniors took a field trip guided by U.S. Forest Service personnel and got to see endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (adults and nestlings).

Our camp food has developed a reputation of being exceptionally good. The meals are tasty and nutritious, with options provided for people with dietary needs or preferences. We also prepare as needed if campers or staff have food allergies.

Ornithology class searching for birds | Photo by Tamzen Bryant

This is assured by the Kitchen Director, Mali Ilhiuicamina, the first week. Cooks were John Goff (both weeks), Caleb Herbert (both weeks), and Virginia Hinterthuer (week 2). Dishwashers were Aster Droste (both weeks), Molly Chosich (week 2), and Whit Ward (week 1, and he also served as custodian). Avery Windsor was custodian and a cabin counselor week 1, and Judah Raimondi served as custodian week 2. Town runner was Ella Caraway for week 1 and Karena Benoit for week 2. Town runners go into Hot Springs to get supplies and do other tasks as needs develop on a daily active basis.

Camp provides snacks and recreation in the afternoon after classes. Swimming, canoeing, volleyball, and other activities are available to campers, as they choose. Lifeguards for both weeks were Jack Britt and Amelia McAllister. Getting all the teaching, food, recreation, and other needs of camp to flow smoothly obviously takes a lot of coordination. It also takes a lot of effort and support by the camp committee and our generous donors.

After a day of classes and recreation time, evening games and programs engaged the campers in fun learning activities. Olivia Kline made a presentation about wasps and bees the first week. Jim Gann made a presentation about alligators and showed a live specimen both weeks. Sim Barrow gave a presentation about ultraviolet light and fluorescence the first week, and it was presented by Liz Hill during week 2. Afterwards, campers made paintings with fluorescent colors and participated in other activities to explore fluorescence.

We began the first afternoon of camp with ‘get-acquainted’ games. Each evening provided other activity games that taught something about nature, including a showing of the classic (original) *The Lorax* film by Dr. Seuss. After dark, counselors guided campers to investigate insects at an evening bug light, and amphibians

and reptiles along the pond during nighttime herp walks. Early mornings had opportunities for bird walks.

The last event on Thursday evening of each 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. Those slide shows will be made available to the public in late summer via the website.

Updates on camp can be found on the Audubon Camp Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/AASEcologyCamp). The Facebook page has 1,300 followers!

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, the 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 provided those scholarships, and we have started asking all campers to fill out surveys to understand how they see the camp experience they just had. Every class or every teacher is the favorite of different campers and some just say all teachers are equally good. Like last year, different 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 catching insects.

Some of the things campers wrote that they liked included:

"Swimming and making friends."

"Canoeing and hiking, in joying [enjoying] the nature."

"I love everything there thanks for the camp."

"My favorite thing about camp was everything."

"I loved it here, we had good food, fun activities…I really want to come back next year."

"Classes were all hands on and I felt like I learned a good amount because it kept my attention by doing things."

"Camp was awesome especially the food and classes."

"We conducted experiments."

"All classes were my favorites…because it was fascinating learning everything…I wouldn't change anything."

"It was interactive and let us think and problem solve which helped us learn and remember more."

"I really did learn a lot and found myself able to focus even during long segments."

"Thank you so much for this amazing experience!"

"Will never forget how fun and exciting Audubon was!"

When asked about the staff, campers commented:

"Explained everything very thoroughly."

"Was calm and explained … in a fun way."

"They didn't make it overcomplicated."

"They showed us the answers to my questions."

"All were good and I think I learned equally from each of them."

"They made learning more fun."

"They actually taught things in ways I can understand for once."

A select few of the senior campers get invited for a third-year experience, at the Art and Martha Johnson Advanced Camp. That camp started in 2007 but missed four years due to COVID-19, so this was their 16th year. This included eight days of activities held from July 12–19 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, nature explorations, and nature awareness games. The group explored the caverns at Blanchard Springs and studied karst topography (formation and life in caverns), and learned how to compost, recycle, and conserve water. They also made a herbarium collection of plant specimens collected during their transect work. The director for the Advanced Camp was Stacey Buff, and other teaching staff included Jonathan Harris, Adam Schaffer, and Ceara Brashier. Caleb Herbert was cook, aided by Carissa Look as a co-cook.

Senior campers heading on a field trip to study in the Ouachita National Forest | Photo by Renn Tumlison

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 on the camp web site, aasecocamps.org. Also, visit the Arkansas Audubon Society website at aasecocamps.org for more information.

Johnson Advanced Camps students studying Blanchard Springs Cave | Photo by Stacy Buff

Expanding Motus Capacity in Arkansas

By LYNN FOSTER and KEVIN KRAJCIR

Over recent years, technological advances have revolutionized how scientists and conservationists are able to study wildlife. The expansion of tracking technologies, like Motus, has increased our ability to understand movements, behavior, and much more about various species. Motus works by having an array of receiver stations deployed across the landscape that are essentially “listening” for unique, high-frequency radio signals that are transmitted from tags attached to wildlife such as birds, bats, and insects. As the animals pass near a receiver station, their unique radio signal pings the station and is recorded. This technology allows for powerful, but passive, collection of data, assuming that transmitters are deployed on wildlife and stations are available and functioning across the landscape.

In the fall of 2024, then-AAS held a joint fall convention with the Inland Bird Banding Association. Several mentions of Motus technology were made, and the news shared that Arkansas ranked close to the bottom of all states given that we had only one Motus station (at the Little Rock Audubon Center). Both of us and other partners started talking about convening a group of folks interested in installing more stations in Arkansas and increasing capacity for other Motus-related research.

Our first meeting of the "Arkansas Motus Network" ("AMN") took place a year later. Federal and state agencies, universities, and nonprofits were all represented, as information was shared and plans discussed. Who was planning to install a Motus station? How close were they? What all would be involved? The first meeting focused on potential Motus sites and whether we should develop a plan for where they would be installed first (as a fence? across flyways? or just wherever we had a site and funding?) and what installation entailed.

The AMN has met three times since that first meeting, in December, January, and June. Resource members of this group are those who have experience with multiple Motus installations: Garrett Rhyne (American Bird Conservancy, Georgia), Sarah Kendrick (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri), and Andrew George (Pittsburg State University, Kansas). Uta Meyer is also serving as a resource, as the only AR Motus Station manager.

For lack of space, we won't list all attendees, but folks who are further along in planning are Ruby Bashant, who will be installing two stations, one at Little Rock Air Force Base and another at Fort Chaffee; and Nick Goforth, pursuing funding for Motus stations at Grandview Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Choctaw West WMA. Maureen McClung at Hendrix College, Than Boves at Arkansas State University, and Doug Bannon at Arkansas Tech University all want stations on their campuses (or nearby sites) as well.

Kevin stepped into the leadership role after the June meeting. He envisions a two-pronged approach. First, the AMN will be a network for advancing members' collective goals of more Motus stations in Arkansas. Members who can work together to establish new stations and research projects will do so. Second, a core team (comprised of Kevin, Maureen McClung, Uta Meyer, Nick Goforth, and Garrett Rhyne) will develop an AR Motus Network Plan. This document will serve as a guide for future Motus work in the state by setting statewide goals/priorities for station locations, research questions, professional training, and potentially public outreach while also providing resources for collaborators within the network (e.g., links to supplies, funding opportunities, training resources, user guides, MOU drafts, etc.)

ARBA has assumed a leadership role in Motus planning in our state. We're hoping either ARBA or the Trust can help with funding one or more stations soon. Please know that your membership and support of ARBA is helping to advance wildlife research and conservation through Motus and various other projects.

President's Column

By EVAN GARNER
ARBA President

Like many who took up the hobby during the pandemic, I started out birding alone. First, while withdrawn in my bedroom, I looked out the window during phone calls for work and began to notice the birds in my yard. Then, because public gatherings were still discouraged, I started taking walks at Lake Sequoyah and Lake Fayetteville, recording what I heard and saw. Finally, even though most pandemic precautions had been lifted, I kept up the hobby, expanding my outings

to locations where uncommon birds had been reported on eBird.

Still, I did not begin birding with other people for a few years. Some birders speak of a "spark bird" that got them into the hobby, but I would more easily identify a spark bird that got me into the birding community. One afternoon, a friend in Little Rock called me to say that a birder in northwest Arkansas had seen a Vermilion Flycatcher and that I should go chase it. I dropped everything and did. When I arrived at the location, there were a dozen or so other birders searching, most of whom I had never met but several of whose names I recognized from eBird. One of them encouraged me to connect via social media and text messages. We did not refind the flycatcher, but I did find a community that allowed me to join in, and I have never looked back.

Birding with other people is a deep delight. The collective wisdom and experience of a group brings immeasurable value to the experience. The joy of finding a rare bird is sweeter when shared with others, and the disappointment of dipping on a long-sought nemesis is softer when friends help carry that blow. Lately, I have marveled at how effortlessly and effusively the community of birders celebrates when one of its own finds a new bird for their life list, no matter how long ago that same bird has been seen by others. Birders are (for the most part) generous, kind, compassionate, supportive, and selfless. My experience with human beings suggests that, in isolation, we birders are not all that magnanimous, but I think there is something about the birding community that draws out the best in us.

The spring and fall conventions for ARBA are a great time to build a deeper connection with the birding community. For me, the highlights are always the field trips—not only because I enjoy exploring new hotspots with birders who know them well but because I have the chance to go out into the field with people I do not yet know. Those connections carry over to the meals, presentations, casual interactions, and even the business sessions. If for no other reason, I enjoy going to the conventions to be with friends and to make new acquaintances.

This year, we have lost some giants in the birding community—first Jack Stewart and now Bob Caulk. I did not know either of them particularly well, but, because of the birding community, I knew them well enough to be deeply saddened by their loss. I will miss running into Bob every time a rare bird was seen in northwest Arkansas, and I will miss Jack every time we gather at convention. To me, the friendships we make with other birders are even more valuable than the birds we see and hear, even if they do not always get recorded through shared checklists on eBird.

Halberg Ecology Camps:

Kudos to Camp Contributers!

By BARRY HAAS
Ecology Camp Treasurer

We are in that quiet time of year after the summer's three youth ecology camp sessions are over for another year. Given the recent heat waves, we are fortunate to be able to hold our camp sessions in June and early July before we typically get to the hottest Arkansas summer days.

I don't often mention in Ecology Camp articles there is a Camp Committee that serves at the pleasure of the Arkansas Bird Alliance (ARBA) Board. The Camp Committee is responsible for planning the youth ecology camp sessions, recruiting campers and making sure there is sufficient funding to hold the camp sessions each year. Having had the privilege to be a member of this group of volunteers for a number of years, I can offer a testament to the incredible time and talents countless committee members have given

over many years. It takes volunteers willing to give of their time to ensure nonprofit organizations like ARBA not only survive but thrive.

That is also true of the many on the ground folks during camp weeks who serve as directors, instructors, kitchen staff, nurse, custodian, activity director and others who work together to make the camp sessions as enjoyable and educational as possible.

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

(June 22 – September 7, 2026)

Donations by Organizations

Ozark Chapter - Arkansas Native Plant Society

Memorials & Honoraria

In Memory of Norman Lavers,
Lavers Family
Carter Patteson
Barry Haas & Susan Hardin
Layne Friedrichs
Zita Ingham
Ross & Suzanne Marlay

In Memory of Jack Stewart,
Susan Hardin & Barry Haas
Terry & Judy Butler

To Opt-out of the Printed Newsletter:

Log in to your account at arbirds.org, click “My Web Account” from the drop-down menu, check the box next to “Save the cost and send me the ARBA newsletter by email,” and click update.

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