

Arkansas Audubon Society

2026 - Russellville Convention Field Trips



Friday, October 16

F1 - Atkins Bottoms Depart: 1:00 PM (30 minutes) - Easy This hotspot lies along the Arkansas River and offers open fields for farming, wintering waterfowl and backroad drives. Iconic birds to look for in October: Trumpeter Swan, Sora, American Golden-Plover, Northern Harrier, Swainson's Hawk, Marsh Wren, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Time: Caravan from the conference hotel at 1:00p or meet the group at the Point Remove Wetlands Office, 65 McLaren Loop, Atkins AR at 1:30p scopes useful Leader: Ragan Sutterfield and Sarah Morris	F2 - Dardanelle Dam Depart: 1:00 PM (30 minutes) - Easy The Arkansas River separates two parks where birders can scan for migrants and other iconic birds. This field trip will start at the Dam Site Public Use Area in Pope County. After exploring this side of the river, the group will move to Riverview Recreation Area and Dam Overlook in Yell County, time permitting. Iconic birds to look for in October at these locations: Greater White-fronted Goose; Laughing, Ring-billed and American Herring Gull; American White Pelican, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Red-headed Woodpecker. Time: Caravan from the hotel at 1:00p or meet the group at the Dardanelle Dam Site Public Use Area on Lock and Dam Road at 1:30p scopes useful Leader: Cody Massery	
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Saturday, October 17

SA1 - Holla Bend NWR Depart: 7:00 AM (30 minutes) - Moderate This is one of the top birding hotspots in Arkansas with over 280 species recorded here. Iconic birds expected in October include: a variety of geese and ducks, Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey, Greater Roadrunner, a few lingering shorebirds, White-faced Ibis, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Swainson's Hawk, owls, woodpeckers and other forest birds. Time: Caravan from hotel at 7:00a or meet the group at the Refuge Admin Building on Holla Bend Rd at 7:30a. scopes useful Leader: Jason Marin and Roger Massey	SA2 - Lake Dardanelle- Delaware Recreation Area Depart: 7:30 AM (30 minutes) - Easy This is one of the top hotspots on Lake Dardanelle, giving birders open views of several areas on the lake to look for these iconic birds: a wide variety of waterfowl and gulls including Lesser Black-backed Gull, Forster's and Common Tern, Common Loon, Bald Eagle, and various forest birds. Time: Caravan from hotel at 7:30a or meet the group at the Delaware Post Office, 53 State Highway 393, Delaware AR at 8:00a Scopes useful Leader: Kenny and LaDonna Nichols	SA3 - Lake Dardanelle State Park (Pope County) Depart: 7:45 AM (15 minutes) - Easy A morning exploration of this section of Lake Dardanelle can be a delight, especially when exploring the diversity of species on the lake this time of year. Iconic birds to anticipate in October include: Brown-headed Nuthatch, waterfowl including American Wigeon, gulls including Franklin's, American White Pelican, Osprey, Bald Eagle, woodpeckers, and forest birds. Time: Caravan from the hotel at 7:45a or meet the group at 8:00a at the State Park Visitor Center, 100 State Park Dr, Russellville Scopes useful Leader: Matt Matlock
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SA4 - Bona Dea Trails and Sanctuary Depart: 8:00 AM (near venue) - Easy This trip is designed for novice birders, families and folks who want a more leisurely stroll along maintained trails, some of which are paved. We'll look for these iconic species: waterfowl, lingering shorebirds, raptors, woodpeckers, nuthatches, warblers and other forest birds. Time permitting, we'll stop by the Bird Banding Demonstration to see what they're reporting. Time: Caravan from the hotel at 8a or meet the group at 8:00a at the parking area leading to the trails. Mostly paved trails Leader: Steve Warmack and Clay Hooten	SA5 - Special Bird Banding Demonstration Depart: 7:30 AM (near venue) - Easy Join Dr Chris Kellner and ATU students for a bird banding experience, highlighting many of the unique features of various netted species. A variety of sparrows and other grassland or forest birds are expected to be recorded and banded during this demonstration, contributing to a rich history of avian data collection. Leader: Dr. Chris Kellner	
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Sunday, October 18

SU1 - Holla Bend NWR (on your own) Depart: 7:30 AM (30 minutes) - Easy Please sign up here if you would like to explore Holla Bend on a group outing. Leader: TBD	SU2 - Atkins Bottoms Depart: 7:45 AM (25 minutes) - Easy Iconic birds we'll look for include Trumpeter Swan, Sora, American Golden-Plover, Northern Harrier, Swainson's Hawk, Marsh Wren, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Time: Caravan from the conference hotel at 7:45a or meet the group at 8:10a at the Blackwell Liquor Store (they'll be closed) at 10 Fishlake Rd, Atkins (Exit 101 South off I-40) NOTE: This is a different itinerary from Friday's trip and will keep the sun to our backs. Difficulty: Easy birding from the car with stationary stops. Scopes are useful. Leader: Jake Marquess	SU3 - Bird Chasing Around the Lake Depart: 8:00 AM (near venue) - Easy Join Michael and Patty as they look for unusual or interesting species seen during the conference, particularly those around the lake. Time: Caravan from the hotel at 8:00a and head to the nearest location first, then we'll work our way around to the west side of the lake. Bathrooms will be available at some stops. Difficulty: Easy to moderate. Scopes are useful. Leader: Michael Linz and Patty McLean
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