

What's Happening

Thank you all for your "unanimous" support of your slate of CBA officers for the next two years: Chazz Hesselein (that's me), President; Howard Horne, Field Trip Coordinator; and Sandra Kendall, Treasurer. I promise to do my best, or worst, as president to warrant impeachment before the end of my two-year term.

I thought I would take a few lines of the newsletter to introduce myself to you. I have spent the majority of my life, up to the last 14+ years in fact, as a born and bred resident of California. I was born in San Francisco and raised next door to my family's wholesale nursery in South San Francisco. I have a Bachelor's degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo, CA, and a Master's degree in Plant Protection and Pest Management from the University of California, Davis. I worked at my family's nursery until 1989 when it was obvious that making money selling valuable property was a better proposition than losing money owning a nursery. My parents retired and moved to Washington State and I went to graduate school and moved to Mobile, Alabama, where I was offered the job I still currently hold, Extension Horticulturist for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. If you had asked me ten years ago what I thought about birders and birding, I would have rolled my eyes. My parents were birders and I thought they were "a bit off" because of that. But about six years ago my wife bought me a book that drastically changed the way I look at birds and birders and in the process changed my attitude about living away from my beloved home state. Which leads me into the main subject of this President's message.

Summer is upon us and for even the hardest of birders spending time outside, sweat burning your eyes, bugs biting any unprotected flesh, sun doing what it can to ensure that we look our age, can be difficult. What's a birder to do when the weather is so daunting, the majority of migration has passed us by, and we have no breeding bird atlas work to focus our birding energies? How about a good summer birding read? The top of my list would be anything by Scott Weidensaul and, if I had to pick one book of his, it would be the book that inspired me to take my first CBA field trip in August of 2004, Living on the Wind (Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds). Every book that Scott writes blends his love of nature, excellent research, and wonderful ability to tell a captivating story. Descriptive sentences like the following found in Living on the Wind set Scott Weidensaul above any nature writer I've ever read: "Short-tailed albatrosses from Japan glide down the coast of Washington in summer on wings as fragile as a whisper; in those same waters the albatrosses pass shearwaters from New Zealand and storm-petrels from Antarctica and the Galapagos." Bird migration is a multi-faceted story. Our own Dauphin Island plays a bigger role in that story than its size would indicate and helps bring this story closer to home for those of us living on the Gulf Coast. Even my bird-watching-phobic sister-in-law enjoyed the book so much that she bought a copy for her birder father.

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CBA

Coastal Birding Association



Field Trips

Fall-Winter 2008

Aug. 16th Dauphin Island: Shell Mound Park and West End Mud Flats Meet at 8 AM at Shell Mound Park to look for possible Cerulean Warbler and other early fall migrants. We will then travel to the West End mud flats and public pier area for shorebirds. We should finish up around 11 AM before it gets too hot.

Aug. 30th Blakely Island Mud Lakes: Causeway birding and shorebirds Meet at 8 AM at the Alabama Game and Fish Commission Office parking lot adjacent to Five Rivers. We will bird the general Five Rivers area and then the State Docks' Blakely Island Mud Lake property for shorebirds. You must have completed and sent in your yearly hold harmless form to enter the State Docks' property (see back).

Sept. 13th Dauphin Island: Fall Migrants Meet at 8:00 AM at Shell Mounds Park.

Sept. 27th Fort Morgan: Fall Migrants and Western Vagrants Meet at 8 AM at the Fort's stable grounds near the entrance. Note: there is a \$5 entrance fee to the park.

Oct. 4th Dauphin Island: Fall Migrants Meet at 8:00 AM at Shell Mounds Park.

Oct. 10th – 12th Alabama Ornithological Society meeting on Dauphin Island. For more information, check your fall Yellowhammer issue or the AOS website <http://www.bham.net/aos/>.

Oct. 16th – 19th Five Rivers on the Mobile Causeway: Alabama Coastal Bird Festival For more information on trips and speakers, check out <http://www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com/>. Contact Roger Clay (251-626-5474) for volunteer opportunities.

Nov. 8th Fort Morgan: Western Vagrants Meet at 8 AM at the Fort's stable grounds to look for fall migrants and western vagrants such as Bronzed Cowbird; White-winged Dove; Swainson's Hawk; Clay-colored, Lincoln's and Lark Sparrows; Western Kingbird; and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Note: there is a \$5 entrance fee to the park.

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State Docks Visitation Rules

If you plan a field trip after January 1, 2008, to the Mobile causeway dikes that are managed by the Alabama State Port Authority, you **must** fill out the permit for visitation and return it by mail or fax to the Mobile office. This permit **must** be renewed for each calendar year.

Birders are able to visit the dikes at any time but they must first notify the State Docks, weekdays at (251) 441-7085 or weekend (251) 441-7777, of the details of the visit. Remember: do not leave the dike pathway for any reason and do not attempt to visit any site that is under active management. You cannot drive your car onto dikes and you must leave your car parked in a safe location off the main road without blocking any entrances. You are **required** to place a copy of the Mudlakes Visitors Pass on your windshield of your car while you are visiting the dikes.

Forms can be obtained from the AOS web site: <http://www.bham.net/aos/blakelev/> or call Chazz Hesselein 251/666-3118.

CBA Membership

Coastal Birding Association is a chapter of the Alabama Ornithological Society and all CBA members must also be AOS members. To join or continue membership in CBA, send dues to AOS yearly:

Linda Reynolds	2008 AOS dues *
3909 Morrow Street	+ 2008 CBA dues (\$5.00)
Guntersville, AL 35976	_____ Total

*AOS dues: Student: \$10; Individual: \$25; Family: \$40; Sustaining:\$50
Life (individual):\$350 Life (family): \$550

Address correspondence concerning membership to: Linda Reynolds

E-mail: rreynolds2970@charter.net

CBA members continue to maintain and fund two water features on Dauphin Island during spring and fall migration. Your dues are dedicated to production of this newsletter, support of the water drips, and small projects on Dauphin Island and in the southwest section of Alabama. Thanks so much for your assistance and support.

Coastal Birding Association

Betsy Eagar, Editor

4254 Taurus Drive

Mobile, AL 36693



CBA OFFICERS

President: **Chazz Hesselein**

chazz@hesselein.com

Field Trips: **Howard Horne**

hhorne@earthlink.net

Treasurer: **Sandra Kendall**

sfkendall@bellsouth.net

www.coastalbirdingassoc.org

FIELD TRIPS cont.

Nov. 22th Baldwin County Birding: Wolf Field (possible access)/Royal Troon Subdivision Meet at the strip mall parking lot adjacent to Hardees Restaurant in Foley on the West side of Hwy 59. We will carpool from there. Currently the plan is to visit Wolf field near Josephine to look for Sprague's Pipit, longspurs, and sparrows. We may also visit the Royal Troon Subdivision off County Road 8 where species such as Bronzed Cowbird, Western Meadowlark, Red-throated Loon, and Northern Wheatear have been seen in past years.

Dec. 6th Mississippi Sewage Lagoons More information will follow closer to the date. Don McKee with Mississippi Audubon is working on getting us access to the facilities.

For directions to locations, or if you have any questions, call Howard Horne at 251/605-9043 or Chazz Hesselein at 251/666-3118. Field trips may be canceled due to adverse weather or other reasons, so make sure and call Howard or Chazz if in doubt.

What's Happening, continued

My second recommendation is Wild America, Roger Tory Peterson's and James Fisher's 1953 account, as RTP describes it, of showing off his home country to his English friend and co-author, James Fisher. The two men travel 30,000 miles in 100 days, mostly in the United States, in search of America's wild areas. During their journey, they find both wilderness that is thriving and, sadly, wilderness lost. → → →

The narration of the trip switches back and forth between the two men, with Peterson setting the locations and Fisher providing the narrative. James Fisher's account of his first view of the Grand Canyon is especially memorable. During the trip, both men separately establish records for the most birds seen in North America at that time, although that is certainly not the main focus of the book or their trip. (Note: Scott Weidensaul has written a "sequel" to Wild America, titled Return to Wild America, which, as you might expect, paints a not-too-pretty picture of what has happened to those wild areas described by Peterson and Fisher during the following 50 years.) So if you aren't up to braving the hot/humid elements of our summer (or you're too smart to do so, according to my wife), you can always curl up with a good birding book in the comfort of your air-conditioned home.

I'll end my first column with a mention/plug of a project I am working on. I am making a bird list for the Mobile Botanical Gardens. My plan, for now, is to bird the gardens at least once a month for one hour during "non-migration" months and for one hour a week during fall and spring migration. It would be nice to add some more time or to have some company doing this survey so, if anyone is interested, I would appreciate the help. You can e-mail me at chazz@hesselein.com or my home phone is 251-666-3118.

Hope to see you all soon. Good birding or bird reading!
Chazz Hesselein, President, CBA