

What's Happening

It's been quite a year for birders in the Mobile area. Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Varied Thrush, Western Tanager, Glaucous Gulls, Snow Bunting, the year of the Pine Siskin, Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Fork-tailed Flycatcher. Did I miss any? (I'm sure I did.) Let's hope the coming year is full of as many or more great bird sightings for us here in Coastal Alabama.

This spring, after unsuccessful attempts the two previous springs, the weather conditions were favorable enough for many of you to be able to visit the gull, tern and pelican breeding colonies at Gaillard Island. Much of the credit for this successful and very popular field trip goes to the extraordinary efforts of CBA members and boat captains Terry Hartley and Roger Clay. CBA offered to reimburse Terry and Roger for their expenses, but they would have none of it. So, at the suggestion of Roger, in lieu of a reimbursement a donation was made to the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries in memory of the late Bev Winn. Roger and Terry, thank you so much for safely ferrying all field trip participants to and from Gaillard Island. The field trip proved to be a special opportunity for all who participated.

It's difficult to get out birding in South Alabama this time of year. When I last tried a couple of weeks ago, I suffered from heat illness and had to quit before I really wanted to leave the field. If you are going out birding in this weather, please be very cautious, carry some water, and get to a cool place if you start to feel ill. I try to escape to the coolness of the California coast around this time of year, but I was stuck working and taking care of our menagerie while my wife and daughter visited our California relatives this year. Last summer, I made some reading suggestions for times when common sense dictates that outdoor birding may not be the wisest thing to do. I hope I'm not out-of-line with a couple more, not necessarily bird-related, reading recommendations. I think the best book I've read the past year is Ecology of a Cracker Childhood by Janisse Ray. This autobiographical tale tells of the early life of a budding author/naturalist growing up with her family who reside in a junkyard in southern Georgia. Captivatingly written, this book is a memorable, hard-to-put-down read detailing Ms. Ray's unusual family, life situation, and love of nature. We all like to go on summer trips, but circumstances sometimes get in the way of traveling. If you've got a hankerin' for traveling but just can't get out or are traveling and need something to read, consider any of Bill Bryson's humorous "travel guides." For Christmas my brother and sister-in-law gave me In a Sunburned Country and A Walk in the Woods. Bill Bryson's travel logs will be sure to leave a smile on your face and may add a few chuckles to your reading time. Not the greatest literature but they sure are fun to read.

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CBA

Coastal Birding Association



Field Trips

Fall 2009

Aug. 29 Five Rivers, Mobile Causeway, Battleship Park, and Blakely Island Mud Lakes/Dikes for causeway birding and shorebirds. Meet at **8:00 AM** at the Alabama Game and Fish Commission Office parking lot adjacent to Five Rivers. You **must** have completed and sent in your yearly hold harmless form to enter the State Docks' property (see back for more information).

Sept. 12 Dauphin Island for fall migrants. Meet at **8:00 AM** at the Shell Mounds. We will bird this area for migrant warblers and then visit other areas of the island.

Oct. 3 Fort Pickens, FL, for fall migrants and Western vagrants. Meet at **8:00 AM** at the large parking lot located at the "end" of Fort Pickens Road (where the development stops and before the entrance to the National Seashore and the Fort). There is an \$8 entrance fee per car, so we can carpool into the Fort.

Oct. 9 - 11 Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS) Fall Meeting on Dauphin Island. For information on registration and schedule of events, visit the meeting page found on the [AOS website](#).

Oct. 15 -18 Alabama Coastal BirdFest at Five Rivers on the Mobile Causeway. For information on field trips throughout Mobile and Baldwin Counties as well as speakers, check out the BirdFest webpage at: <http://www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com/> . Contact Roger Clay (251-626-5474) for volunteer opportunities.

Nov. 7 Fort Morgan 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. This is a good time of year for Golden Eagle as well. For those who are interested, we can hike to Mobile Point to look for Franklin's Gull. Meet at **8:00 AM** at the Fort's stable grounds. Note that there is a \$5 fee to enter the park.

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State Docks Visitation Rules

If you plan a field trip after January 1, 2009, 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 the windshield of your car while you are visiting the dikes.

Forms can be obtained from the [AOS web site](#) or call Howard Horne (251) 605-9043.

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 the AOS treasurer yearly:

Mary Frances Stayton	2009 AOS dues *
952 Mockingbird Lane	+ 2009 CBA dues (\$5.00)
Leeds, AL 35094	_____ Total

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

Address correspondence concerning membership to: Mary Frances Stayton -- E-mail: lovingcats@windstream.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

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CBA OFFICERS

President: **Chazz Hesselein**

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Treasurer: **Sandra Kendall**

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FIELD TRIPS cont.

Nov. 21 South Baldwin County Birding to visit sod farm areas to look for Swainson's Hawk, Sprague's Pipit, Longspurs, and Sparrows. We may also visit 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. Our tentative trip leader will be Dr. B. Summerour.

Dec. 5 Seaman Road Wastewater Facility and Sewage Lagoons, Jackson County, MS. This will be a joint field trip with the Mississippi Coast Audubon group. We will meet the MS birders at **7:30 AM** at the Park and Ride located on the southwest corner of Exit 50 off of I-10 in Ocean Springs. We will carpool from there to the facility. Last year we had a beautiful male Cinnamon Teal at this location.

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 be sure to call Howard or Chazz if in doubt.

Directions to Fort Pickens: From I-10 in FL, take Exit 12 and merge onto I-110 south to Pensacola. Go about 7 miles and take Exit 1B, merging onto E. Chase Street (State Rd 30). Go about 0.5 miles to US 98 (Bayfront Pkwy), turn left onto US 98, cross over Pensacola Bay, continue through town of Gulf Breeze, and merge right onto Pensacola Beach Road. Continue south to toll booth (pay toll) and cross over to Santa Rosa Island. Turn right onto Fort Pickens Road and follow road to large parking lot where development stops.

What's Happening cont.

Howard Horne has worked hard to put together a field trip schedule that will be attractive to a cross-section of CBA members. He has been very successful, but we would really like to get every CBA member out on at least one field trip every year. If you have any suggestions for places you would like to visit in the coming year, please let Howard, Sandra, or me know so that we can do our best to accommodate your wishes.

Lastly I would like to mention two great events we all should be involved in this year: the Alabama Coastal BirdFest, October 15-18 (<http://www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com/>), and the Christmas Bird Counts, December 14 through January 5 (Alabama Christmas bird count information can be found at the [AOS website](#)). Both events are fun and are great ways to meet other birders, hone your birding skills and give something back to the birds.

Hope to see you before our next newsletter!

Chazz Hesselein
President, CBA