

What's Happening

2010, the beginning of a new decade: what great birding adventures will the new decade bring us? My family and I spent part of the Christmas/New Year holiday in Allentown, NJ, with my brother's family. While we were there, my sister-in-law mentioned that a friend of hers had attended the Burning Man Festival in Nevada with several friends. That made me think: what about a "Birding Man Festival"? (Of course not limited to men; that would be awfully boring and would exclude a majority of the birding population.) What would a Birding Man Festival look like? Apparently, at Burning Man, people bring "gifts" that they offer to other festival attendees. My sister-in-law's friends offered to "channel" other attendees' mothers; a group of engineers put together a bathing and latrine area (water and facilities are scarce commodities in the desert). What gifts would you bring to a Birding Man Festival? (Besides having a great time with family in NJ, I managed to get my last life-bird of the decade: a Barnacle Goose in Califon, NJ. My second try for that bird; the second time proved the charm.)

Many of us are concerned about our rapidly changing climate and the role that the burning of fossil fuels plays in this apparent crisis. Some clever birders in Canada promoted a fossil-free big year event, a Big Green Big Year (Bigby), in 2008. That year the Bigby record was set by a pair of birders in San Francisco who saw 298 species. (You can bet they were working hard for numbers 299 and 300.) I, on the other hand, saw 75 species in my backyard. There are several categories for Bigbys: Walking Bigby (walking transportation only), Big Green Day, Semi-green Big Green Day (starts somewhere other than home or work; the record, set in 1982, is 331 species by Ted Parker and Scott Robinson in Tambopata National Reserve, Peru), Big Sit, and Big Foot Hour (that record is 83 species by Keith Hansen and Peter Pyle in Bolinas, CA). For more information on "green birding," go to: www.sparrowworks.ca/CA/. My wife thinks we should host a "Big Sit" in our backyard to inaugurate Mobile's first "Birding Man Festival." Anyone interested?

This is my last CBA president's report. For the past two years it has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your Coastal Birding Association president. I hope I have left the association a little better as a result of my service. Some of the things I have worked on during my tenure have included revamping the CBA website so that it can easily be updated and added to, starting a blog for field trip reports, and establishing Coastalbirding Yahoo Group for posting birding events of local interest. I could have done a better job of following through on some of these ventures, but they are there, set up for the next CBA leadership team. Of course the main focus of the CBA is our field trips, and those of you who have

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CBA

Coastal Birding Association



Field Trips

Spring 2010

Feb. 13: Grand Bay National Estuarine Research

Reserve Mississippi Meet at **8:00 am** at the Hardee's on Highway 188 in Bayou la Batre. From there we will travel to the Grand Bay NERR facilities in adjacent Mississippi where we can try for Black and Yellow Rails. Be prepared for wet conditions. You will probably want to have **WATERPROOF BOOTS**. While there we may also get to tour the new **Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center Building**. Possible side trips afterwards include birding Bayou la Batre sites like Point aux Pines (possible Rusty Blackbirds) and Coden Belt and Shell Belt Loop Roads for waterbirds, gulls, and terns.

Feb. 27: Gulf Shores Area

Meet at **8:00 am** at Hardee's on Highway 59 in Foley. From there we will travel to Gulf Shores State Park to bird the Lake Shelby/Nature Center facility. Afterwards we will head east to Perdido Pass to look for loons and other seabirds. We will also visit the new Gulf Shores State Park Pier (Note: there is a \$2 entrance fee to walk onto the pier for birding).

Mar. 13: Claiborne Boat Landing and Haines Island

For our March outing we will try a much farther afield trip to visit some new areas to our north. Claiborne Landing in Monroe County is located on the Alabama River approximately 90 miles (or 2 hours driving) north of Mobile. The location contains numerous uncommon spring wildflowers that reach their southern limit of distribution in Alabama. If time allows we may also visit the Army Corps of Engineering Haines Island Park located a short distance to the north of Claiborne, whose rich bluff woods and ravines have the rare Red Hills Salamander. Since this is a long-distance trip we will meet at the early hour of **7:00 am** at the Kangaroo gas station (formerly Shell) on the east side of **Highway 225** directly north of Interstate 65 at **Exit 31** in Baldwin County. 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, 2010, 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: www.aosbirds.org 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	2010 AOS dues *
952 Mockingbird Lane	+ 2010 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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Field Trips: **Howard Horne**

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Treasurer: **Sandra Kendall**

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FIELD TRIPS cont.

April 3: Dauphin Island

Meet at **8:00 am** at Shell Mound Park for early spring neotropical migrants.

April 16-18: AOS Spring Meeting, Dauphin Island.

Check out the AOS website (www.aosbirds.org) for information on registration, field trips, and schedule of activities.

May 8: Tensaw River Delta and End-of-Year Meeting

Meet at **8:00 am** at the Kangaroo gas station (formerly Shell) on the east side of **Highway 225** directly north of Interstate 65 at **Exit 31** in Baldwin County. From there we will explore the numerous boat launch areas of the Tensaw River Delta looking for Kites (Mississippi and Swallow-tailed) and local breeding neotropical migrants like Acadian Flycatcher, Swainson's Warbler, and Red-eyed Vireos. After birding this area, we will adjourn to the Stagecoach Café on Highway 59 in Stockton for lunch and our end-of-year meeting at which we will elect new officers.

What's Happening cont.

attended any field trips know what a great job our field trip coordinator Howard Horne has done both in planning and in leading the CBA field trips these past two years. Thank you, Howard, for your hard work and birding/natural history expertise. I would also like to extend my great appreciation to Sandra Kendall (CBA treasurer) for her hard work keeping the association running on course; Betsy Eagar for putting together the newsletter; Mike Wilson and John Stowers for maintaining the Shell Mound and Goat Tree drippers and helping to keep those properties "in birding shape"; and the rest of you members and volunteers who make the CBA vital and worthwhile. Finally, we will need at least two of you to step up to the plate and take on the positions of president and field trip coordinator. If you have any interest in either of these positions please contact Howard, Betsy, Sandra, or me. Future officers can count on the support of current and past officers and the membership as they usher the CBA into a new decade of birding.

Chazz Hesselein
President. CBA