



The Pine Warbler

Pine Woods Audubon Society

March-April 2013

Volume 2012/2013

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Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month (September through May) in the Education Building at the Hattiesburg Zoo. Meetings begin at 7:00 pm and are open to the public.

Pine Woods Audubon Society is a chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc.

March/April Meetings—Joshua Hodge

March 7— Why and How Do Birds Sing?—Dr. Adam Rohnke

Bird vocalizations can vary from very simple calls like the honk of the Canada Goose to the complex song of the Wood Thrush. There are many biological and environmental reasons for these differences in song and call complexity among different bird species. Dr. Adam Rohnke, Extension Wildlife Associate, MSU Extension Service, will discuss these reasons including mechanics, the purpose of song, types of song and calls, dialects and much more.

April 4—Gulf Oil Spill Restoration—Audubon Mississippi Staff

It has been three years since the devastating oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The oil slicks have faded from the headlines, but there is still much to be done to restore the Gulf. Staff from Audubon Mississippi and the Pascagoula River Audubon Center will discuss the impacts of the spill, how Audubon responded to the disaster, and what the recent passage of the RESTORE Act means for habitat restoration in the Gulf.

March/April Field Trips—Diane Lafferty

March 7—Wildlife Day at Crosby Arboretum (Picayune). Leave at 7:15am, setup booth at Crosby at 8am, present program to students 9am—12noon. See the reminder about this on page 3.

March 9—Joint field trip with MS Coast Audubon Society. Currently in planning stage. More to come at March PWAS meeting.

April 20—Birdfest at Hattiesburg Zoo. Event runs from 1-3 pm. See Diane to volunteer as she still needs some workers for this event. See the reminder about this on page 3.

April 26-28—Spring Migrating Birds at Dauphin Island, AL. Make you own reservations for this trip (Gulf Breeze Motel 251-861-7344 or 800-286-0296). A spring Regatta will also take place on the island that weekend so don't wait to make reservations. For many members this is one of those "can't miss it" events. So, even if you can't get there for the whole event, consider a drive to DI for Saturday. You won't be disappointed.

May 11—Spring Birds at McSwain Property. Details to come later.

May 18—6th Painted Bunting Hunt & Photo Op. Details to come later. This event normally takes place at Hattiesburg Sewage Lagoons. Maintenance work on the lagoons and access to the area are always concerns for PWAS when planning activities there. Stay tuned.



Backyard Hawks—Larry Basden

Unfortunately the most common hawk species (*Accipiter*) visiting backyard feeders, Cooper's hawk and Sharp-shinned hawk, are probably the two most challenging identifications among raptors. The primary difficulty is there is no single field mark or telltale characteristic that enable a positive ID. There is great variation in plumage and size among the two species and, often, we get only a brief look as one of them swoops into our backyard. The table below summarizes information gathered from multiple sources that MAY help you arrive at an identification the next time one of these birds visits your backyard. It is an attempt to compare a set of characteristics between the 2 species.

Characteristic	<u>Sharp-shinned Hawk</u>	<u>Cooper's Hawk</u>
Size	Average of 10-14" (size of a jay or dove) Female is larger and can appear nearly as large as a male Cooper's Hawk	Average of 14-20" (size of a crow) Male is smaller and can appear nearly as small as a female Sharp-shinned Hawk
Body Proportion	Heavy-shouldered appearance with much narrower hips	More even distribution of girth seeming almost barrel shaped
Legs	Pencil thin legs appear long	Thicker legs appear short
Tail (when perched)	Shorter tail that looks square with sharp corners and a small central notch	Longer tail that is rounded and lacks central notch
Head	Appears small compared to body	Appears large compared to body
Eyes	Appear to be close to half way between front and back of head	Appear to be close to the front of the head
Nape of neck	Same color from back to top of head giving a "hooded" look	Paler nape of neck giving a "capped" look
Prey	Almost exclusively small birds such as sparrows and finches	Larger birds such as doves and small rodents and mammals
Behavior	Ambush prey by flying nearby or perch and wait. Seem to prefer to perch in trees or bushes.	Ambush prey by flying nearby or perch and wait. Seem to frequently perch on poles or fences.
Flight	Generally erratic wing beats. When soaring head may not extend past wings.	Slower, steadier wing beats. When soaring head is more prominent

With all this information you can now surely identify that hawk that just flew through your backyard sending your feeder birds to the four corners of the earth. Or, if you are like me and one swoops through your yard (not stopping for your observation) while you are doing a bird count, you add an entry to your eBird report for *Accipiter* sp.



Sharp-shinned Hawk

Tail shape and notch
 "Hooded vs. Capped"
 General body shape

←→



Cooper's Hawk

Welcome, New Members!—Joshua Hodge

Here are the new members who have joined since the last issue of The Pine Warbler. If you know any of these people, please take a few minutes to welcome them, to tell them about PWAS, and to invite them to join us at a meeting, field trip, or other activity.

Shirley Lee—Foxworth

John Barclay—Hattiesburg

Mr. & Mrs. D. Masters—Hattiesburg

Frank Rhodes—Hattiesburg

Martha Davis—Laurel

Michelle Walker—Petal

Bobbie Black—Hattiesburg

Barbara Brown—Hattiesburg

Alison Price—Seminary

Raleen Haynes—Ellisville

Herman Seefeld—Laurel

Mildred Ford—Purvis

Sid Gonsoulin—Hattiesburg

Virginia Whitten—Lumberton



Reminders



Crosby Wildlife Day and Birdfest

These 2 events are opportunities for PWAS to do some outreach and public education. Both events are directed toward young people and provide us with the chance to generate some enthusiasm and excitement with the next generation with regard to birds and protection of the environment. The Crosby event doesn't give us much time to interact with the children (school groups have very little time to spend at each of the booths set up for the day) but the sheer numbers make the time spent there really fly. The Birdfest, however, gives us the opportunity to reach both children and adults and spend more time trying to give them a look at the world (and lives) of birds and why they are important to us. A good turnout for this event is important for the Chapter as you can consider our participation as compensation to the Zoo for allowing us to use their facilities throughout our meeting year. Come join us. It can be a great time.

Spring Migration at Dauphin Island

For many of us this is a highlight event of the year. As with all natural events, some years are more of a highlight than others. My favorite memory of a DI spring migration is seeing a Prothonotary Warbler (great in itself as I don't see them all that often) with a red patch on its crown. This bird (no bigger than the width of my hand) had left the Yucatan the night before to arrive in DI that afternoon. The red was juice from a popular fruit eaten to "fuel up" for the flight. That just floored me to think about that small bird flying overnight across the Gulf and I got to see it before the stain had even worn away. And here it is:



We're on the Web!

www.pinewoodsaudubon.com

The Pine Warbler

Pine Woods Audubon Society
544 West 4th Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Address Service Requested

Bird Sightings & Field Trips



GBBC Window Watch

A great day at a great location. Lots of good food. Very accommodating hosts—a big THANK YOU to the Drydens. Most of the usual suspects but it was great to get views of both Red-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatches. The Hattiesburg Sewage lagoon walk following the Window Watch yielded 22 species—and a cold wind out there in the open.

President's Day Gull Run

It was a cold and windy day but 7 members braved the elements to search the coast for birds. The weather (and the prospects of seeing a rarity at Pascagoula) helped to speed us from West to East across the state. There were lots of highlights but a few stand out: Bald Eagles (3 or 4 sighted, adult and juvenile), Piping Plovers, and the Pascagoula rarity—a Glaucous Gull (a life bird for several of the group).

Sightings

During a 4 day span, Mike Lafferty saw the following in his backyard—a Northern Harrier, a Red-tailed Hawk, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and a Rufous Hummingbird. Fortunately each sighting was on a separate day.