



The Pine Warbler

Pine Woods Audubon Society

March/April 2014

Volume 2013/2014

2013-2014 Officers

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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. Refreshments at 6:30 pm. 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 6—The Ordinary Extraordinary Junco (Conclusion) - presented by Joshua Hodge

Following on the popularity of the abridged screening in February, we will view the remaining chapters of “The Ordinary Extraordinary Junco.” These chapters focus on the diversity of the Yellow-eyed Junco. If you missed last month or want a refresher, you can view the film at www.juncoproject.org. We previously watched Chapters 1-3 & 6.

April 3—Dauphin Island Preview—presented by Joshua Hodge

In preparation for our spring trip to Dauphin Island, Joshua will facilitate a preview of spring migration on the island with the help of photos and advice from other DIAL veterans. We will cover where to stay, where to bird and other essentials to make the most of your trip. Members are encouraged to submit photos and tips to me by March 22.

The first tip for preparing to travel to DI to observe migratory birds is to read (or re-read) “*Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*” by Scott Weidensaul. This book will give you a background on the migration process around the world. This tip is from Larry Basden.

March/April Field Trips—Diane Lafferty

Mar. 6 (Thursday)—Wildlife Day at Crosby Arboretum. We will leave from Midtown Market at 8am. Diane is still looking for some volunteers for this day of contact with school children at the Arboretum.

Mar. 8 (Saturday)—Tentative trip to Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in LaCombe, LA. Details will be available at the March meeting.

Mar. 22 (Saturday)—Field trip to Bayou Sauvage WR in LA, White Kitchen, LA., and Logtown, MS. We will leave from Midtown Market at 6:30am.

Apr. 5 (Saturday)—Monthly birdwalk at LaFleur’s Bluff State Park (led by Christopher King). LaFleur’s Bluff is in Jackson near the Ag. Museum. We will leave Midtown Market at 6:30am to meet with the Jackson Audubon Society at the park at 8am.

Apr. 11-13—Spring migration at Dauphin Island, AL. (Make your own reservations. Any questions about accommodations on the island, contact Diane)

Apr. 26 (Saturday)—Birdfest at the Hattiesburg Zoo. We will be working this event from 1-3pm. Contact Diane to volunteer and give her your size for a t-shirt for the event.

May 5 (Saturday)—Joint field trip with MS Coast group to Seaman’s Lagoons. We will leave from Midtown Market at 6am to meet the coast group in Ocean Springs at 7:30am.



President's Message—Ron Blackwell

Well, it was a hard winter, this one, and the robins have “returned” *so it must be spring!* Yes, I’m laughing as I write that, because we all know that the lovely robins have been around since they migrated south for the winter and they will soon be headed north again to their REAL home, taking the winter sparrow, goldfinch, and “snow bird” friends with them! But spring is coming, despite the gloomy, cold rain falling as I write. And with spring.....well, we all know what comes with Spring: **Migration!**

It’s getting towards the time to begin watching our yards and parks and favorite birding spaces for spring visitors, on their way north with the Robins to breeding territories. The first birds to come through are generally shorebirds, so carefully examine your pools, ponds, lakes, and damp lawns for those brownish-grayish birds with longer than usual bills. They may just be stopping by your area for a rest, quick snack of some tasty bugs or worms, or some fresh water before they move on.

By mid-March, we should be seeing the earliest of the *passerines*, the warblers, and woodland birds. Our yard last spring and summer was blessed by Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, Wood Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Rufous-sided Towhees in addition to the myriad Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Titmouses, and Chickadees. If you had hummers over-winter with you, those will probably be leaving and our Ruby-throated Hummers will be coming home (and NOT on the backs of migrating geese!), too.

So spring is migration time and time to get those feeders cleaned and ready for the next round! If you’ve been feeding Nyger seeds for the finches, you can soon clean and put those feeders away for next year. Did you go through cakes of suet this winter as Lin did at our house? Soon, the suet-loving birds will be finding more nutritious fare in the tender bugs and worms of our southern soil. If you fed hummers through the winter, clean those feeders and put them out again! And don’t forget to thoroughly wash and sanitize your sunflower seed feeders to keep our feathered friends from some of the terrible avian (birds only!) diseases that are spread through unclean feeding stations. And be sure to do the same with your bird baths, drip pans, or whatever you use to provide drinking and bathing for your yard-birds! Remember, water is even more crucial for birds than food, and it’s an important thing to add to your backyard habitat if you haven’t already done it. Lin just put down a terra cotta plant drip plate under a faucet in the back yard and coaxed our faucet to one slow drip at a time. Birds (and our dogs) love it!

And, if you’re thinking of doing any last-minute “winter” planting, think about native plants, plants that thrive in our area and provide food for our fine feathered friends. If you need some help with figuring out what “natives” would be good in your yard, ask Diane Lafferty or Joshua Hodge. They can give you lots of good tips. The guys at Heritage Nursery are good, too, and have lots of natives. There should even be a plant sale or two coming up soon: the USM Biological Sciences Department puts on a pretty good plant sale every spring and there are TONS of natives at that sale. Oh, and don’t forget our butterfly friends, too! Diane is a true expert on butterfly host plants. Lin just buys tons of Milkweed!

I guess that I could go on and on but I won’t. I do want to invite all of you to join us on one of our upcoming events. Come with us to Dauphin Island, AL in April (weekend of 11-13) for our version of a “pilgrimage”. This is when we watch the spring migrants as they return from their winter homes. We just might get to see one of those never-to-be-forgotten events—a “fall out”. At least we can hope! While we’re there I bet we can even point out a native plant or two. But whatever happens during this spring event, there will be loads of fun and camaraderie!

See you soon,

Ron

Great Backyard Bird Count and PWAS Window Watch

A special THANK YOU goes out to Jim and Sherry Dryden for hosting this year’s Window Watch during the Great Backyard Bird Count. I can only speak for myself to express my appreciation for the work that went into hosting the event (but I am sure others in attendance would echo this) . The food was great, the company congenial and the birds you brought on stage for us to observe were a nice break from what I have been seeing in my own backyard. It was great to see the number of Brown-headed Nuthatches, Pine Warblers and Woodpecker varieties. Seeing one of the Bluebirds that were banded at your house earlier in the month was a highlight. While not certain how you managed to pull it off, the Red-tailed Hawk fly-by and the Pied-billed Grebe swim-by were a great addition to the Watch.



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.

Staigg Ray—Hattiesburg

Sandy Guice—Ellisville

Nick Deniakos—Laurel

Patricia Rouse—Hattiesburg

Clara Smith—Laurel

Andrew Schiwetz—Petal

Lenoir Booth—Prentiss

Larry Montgomery—Hattiesburg



Notes from Audubon National Board Meeting

(shared by Jack Stewart, Mississippi Flyway—South Regional Director)

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

National Audubon Society has received \$1-million in funding to support training for ArcGIS for Chapter leaders and Audubon staff throughout the network. This gift is validation of the great work the Chapters are doing in the field and recognition of the potential to increase that impact with new tools and technology for all of you. More details on the training will be coming soon.

Lead Ammunition

In October the nation's first state-wide ban on lead ammunition was passed in California. Audubon California was a leading sponsor of the legislation. Audubon ran a year-long campaign to educate the public about the impacts of lead ammunition on Golden Eagle, California Condor and Bald Eagle, as well as the proven risks to human health. This is worth mentioning not only because there is hope other states will follow California's example, but also because, "It was a One Audubon effort that included strong work from the state program, chapters, centers, and the national organization."

International Program Expansion

Audubon is committed to protecting birds and habitat throughout the hemisphere. No other approach makes sense. John Myers, Senior Program Manager, Latin America, described the bird based ecotourism project being developed in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank with a \$2.6 million grant and programs in Belize, Guatemala, Paraguay and the Bahamas. The goal of the project is to tie economic development and biodiversity together so that when local communities feel an economic benefit from bird based tourism they will value birds and have an incentive to protect habitat. If you have travelled much in Latin America you may have seen many failed ecotourism projects. Audubon's approach is more comprehensive than any of these and even takes into account the Audubon network by providing the means for Chapters and members to visit the sites.

Prairie Restoration

How do you restore a prairie if you lack prairie grass seed? One answer to that question comes from Arkansas where for the last three years Audubon Arkansas has been working with African American farmers in the NATIVE Project. Audubon recruited 11 farmers who devoted land to grass seed production for prairie restoration projects. This fall they harvested 1,500 pounds of Switchgrass.

Challenge Grant Opportunity

Two donors have issued a challenge grant to the nine Regional Directors on the National Audubon Society Board of Directors. The grant will provide a dollar-for-dollar match for contributions to the National Audubon Society from new donors or increased giving from existing donors solicited in coordination with the Regional Director. If you are planning a fundraising effort, like a birdathon, a special event, or fundraising appeal before June 30, 2014 that will benefit a National Audubon Society program (including Centers, state offices, science, a national conservation program, etc.) there may be a way for contributions to your event to be matched. There may even be a way to quadruple the contributions. Let's talk. Contact me by email or phone. This is a time limited opportunity.

We're on the Web!

www.pinewoodsaudubon.com

The Pine Warbler

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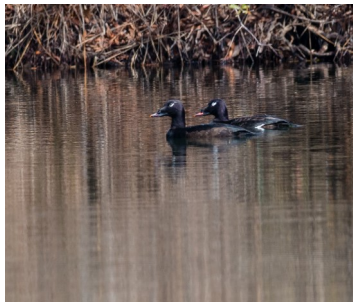
Bird Sightings & Field Trips



The annual **President's Day Gull Run** featured the best weather for several years. Seven participants (including Dr. Mark Woodrey) identified 56 species for the day. As usual we didn't quite make it to the Alabama border, but we did have a good day nonetheless.

Four of the Gull Run participants finished off their day by joining Dr. Mark Woodrey and other volunteers doing a nighttime Yellow Rail "roundup". It sounds like an interesting and enjoyable time was had by all.

A rare bird sighting in Hattiesburg happened during February. A pair of White-winged Scoters were found hanging out in Duncan Lake. The initial sighting was by Aaron Holbrook (USM) and followed up by Will Lewis. Several members also got the chance to add this bird to their life lists.



Both appear to be male. White marking by the eye really stands out. The wing exercise really gives a good look at the white sections of the wings. Hard to get close pictures as they tend to be very observant and retreat to the middle of the lake when approached.

