



September / October 2023

Volume 2023 / 2024

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
56 JC Bryant Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39401 Ph: 6015435698*

September Meeting 9/7/2023

Conservation CSI: how high-tech environmental DNA tools are supporting the conservation of imperiled 'Rhino Rays'

Presented by: Dr. Nicole Phillips from the School of Biological, Environmental, and Earth Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi

Environmental DNA (eDNA) is a powerful emerging tool to study aquatic species. All aquatic organisms shed DNA into their environments, which can be collected via water samples. High-tech genetic techniques allow us to screen these water samples for eDNA from species of interest, providing critical information on their distributions and ecology. The sensitivity of eDNA approaches makes them cost-effective when compared to traditional survey methodologies, especially for highly threatened species which are often difficult to directly observe. EDNA surveys are proving to be a valuable tool for assessing the distributions and statuses of the imperiled 'Rhino Rays': sawfishes, wedgefishes, giant guitarfishes, guitarfishes, and banjo rays. 'Rhino Rays' have experienced severe global range contractions and are facing a high risk of extinction. We are conducting global eDNA surveys for Rhino Rays to better understand where some of the rarest and most threatened of these species still persist. These data will help define contemporary distributions, ultimately guiding conservation strategies for species on the verge of extinction.

October Meeting 10/5/2023

Larry Morgan will share his pictures and talk about Migration at Dauphin Island

Birds will be moving from their nesting grounds to their wintering areas to find food for all winter. Dauphin Island is known as a "hotspot" due to its' location. It gives the birds a break and a fueling spot for their journey and gives us an opportunity to see a variety bird's that we do not usually see. Fall migration is unpredictable with so many variables. You never know what birds you might see. Larry will share his love of birds and some of his experiences he has had at Dauphin Island with us.



Field Trips & Activities September and October 2023

Monthly Lagoon Surveys:

Sept. 16 (Sat.) Monthly Lagoon Survey (meet at lagoon gate for 7:00am start) duration about 4 hours.

Oct. 14 (Sat.) Monthly Lagoon Survey (meet at lagoon gate for 7:00am start) duration about 4 hours.

Field Trips:

Sept. 23 (Sat.) We will travel to Escatawpa, MS to see the birds at Grayson's and Jane's River house. RSVP (call or text) Teresa at 601 543 5698. We are wanting a good estimate of the number of people who will be attending. We will meet behind Bob's Burgers and leave at 8am.

Oct 7 (Sat.) Our annual Big Sit for 2023. The event will be held at the entrance to the lagoons from sunrise to sunset. We will see how many birds we can count while staying in this area. Come join us for whatever time you have available during the day. Bring, of course, your binoculars, a portable chair, water and snacks.

Oct. 20 – 22 (Fri.-Sun.) Fall migration at Dauphin Island, AL. Spend the weekend or make a day trip during the weekend. Always interesting to see what migrants we find on their journey south for the winter. Since everyone makes their own arrangements if they are going to spend the weekend at Dauphin Island, here are some suggestions:

Gulf Breeze Motel (older, not fancy) - (251)-861-7344

Dauphin Island Harbor House B&B - (251)-861-2119

Dauphin Island Campground (not fancy, 137 sites, next to Audubon Sanctuary) - (251)-861-2742

Pelican Nest RV Park (small, 12 sites, close to Gulf Breeze) - (251)-861-2338

Even if you can't stay the weekend, DI is not a difficult drive for a day trip. Come join us for whatever time you have.

Other Activities:

Sept. 12 (Tue.) Keg & Barrel Hardy Street get together starting at 5:30pm for conversation, food and drinks.

Oct. 10 (Tue.) Keg & Barrel Hardy Street get together starting at 5:30pm for conversation, food and drinks.

FROM our President

Hello Everyone!

I hope that everyone has had a safe and fun summer, and that you got a chance to go somewhere a little cooler than our hot MS weather! We are officially in a drought here! I can attest to how this weather affects us but can only worry about how our birds are coping during these hot days! We live close to water thankfully, but it is not the case everywhere. Keeping birdbaths and pots filled with water is a constant job!

One of the "bird" highlights for us over the last few weeks has been watching a pair of MS Kites build a large nest in a higher limb of a sweet gum tree in our back woods! We watched for days as they worked on the nest. But for some reason, they abruptly abandoned the construction and disappeared! We were hoping to see some babies!!

What are you seeing in your yards and at your feeders?

Come join us as the temps moderate (hopefully) this fall. There are lots of birding Opportunities with our group!

You will be welcomed!

Dee

2020-2021 Officers

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