



2020-2021 Officers

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January Meeting 1/6/2022–

Details for this meeting are not yet available.

February Meeting 2/3/2022–Collin Stempien

Gulf Coast Gulls and Terns

If you're like most birders, when it comes to gulls and terns, the endless shades of gray and brown pose a daunting identification challenge. Join Collin for a presentation on our local Larids, and learn some helpful tips and tricks for identifying and aging these fascinating groups.



First cycle Franklin's Gull—Ocean Springs (Collin Stempien)



First cycle Laughing Gull—Ocean Springs (Collin Stempien)

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.



President's Corner

"We're taking baby steps on the road back toward "normal". My fingers are crossed that we don't encounter yet another variant of Covid-19 while we're making progress along the path." That's what I wrote in the last newsletter – how naïve it seems now. We are continuing to keep meetings and field trips on the schedule. My finger-crossing didn't seem to work very well last time but I'm doing it again. Maybe this time.

We have another bird count coming in February—The Great Backyard Bird Count. Our Chapter has used the Saturday morning during the count time as a social event. It's still early but, if conditions permit, it would be nice to have that event hosted by a Chapter member. If you would like to host this event, tell Joshua Hodge and Larry Morgan. Virus status may be the deciding factor for whether or not we continue our tradition.

Stay safe. We look forward to seeing more of you at a meeting or activity as we finally put "the Virus" on the back-burner and get back to our life again (fingers crossed).

Larry Basden

Field Trips & Activities January/February

Monthly Lagoon Surveys:

January 15 (Sat.)—Monthly Lagoon Survey (meet at lagoon gate for 7:30am start) duration about 4 hours.

February 12 (Sat.)—Monthly Lagoon Survey (meet at lagoon gate for 7:30am start) duration about 4 hours.

Field Trips:

January 12 (Sat.)—Urban birding at Hattiesburg sites. Meeting place and time to be announced at the meeting and on the listserv.

February 5 (Sat.)—Trip to Turcotte's Blind and the upper Ross Barnett Reservoir to find migrating waterfowl. Leave at 8am from behind Ed's Burger at Midtown Market.

Other Activities:

February 18 (Fri.) **through February 21** (Mon.)—Great Backyard Bird Count. For information about how to participate, go the GBBC website www.birdcount.org. If conditions permit, we will hold a Chapter social & count on Saturday, February 19. Stay tuned for further information.

Keep looking at the website, the Facebook page, and the Pine Woods Audubon listserv.

These, as well as other events, can also be seen (and downloaded) at the PWAS [website](#).

Whose Dependency—Bird Watcher's Digest (November/December '21)

Once again we have a report on feeder-birds and the unlikely chance that they will develop an unhealthy reliance on feeders.

Bird feeding, of course, is especially popular in the northern latitudes, particularly in autumn and winter, when cold or snowy weather, as well as minimal daylight, will limit the time that birds have for locating food. A recent study from Oregon State University researchers, led by Jim Rivers, an animal ecologist with the OSU College of Forestry, confirms that actual dependency on human-provided food is minimal. It appeared last spring in the *Journal of Avian Biology*.

One of the classic studies on this bird-feeding behavior was done 30 years ago on black-capped chickadees. “It found no reductions in apparent survival after removal of bird feeders that had provided supplemental food in winter for 25 years,” explained Rivers, “leading to the conclusion that bird feeding did not promote feeder dependency.”

Rivers and his colleagues also chose black-capped chickadee for the recent study because of its small size, its broad occurrence at bird feeders, its high daily energy, and its practice of taking one sunflower seed per visit, allowing for relatively easy feeder-visitation measurements. They followed 67 of these birds, using RFID (radio-frequency identification) and applying a set of flight-feather clipping treatments.

The researchers looked at number of visits to the sunflower feeders, the number of feeders used, and the timing of feeder visits. They found little difference between clipped and non-clipped (control) chickadees. Rivers explained, “Our study found that the experimentally handicapped chickadees, those experiencing elevated flight costs, did not increase their rates of visitation to the feeders.” They didn’t “need” to rely on supplemental feeding during a period “when they may have benefited from it the most.”

This is yet another study illustrating that birds will not inevitably become dependent human-provided feeding stations.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting impressive increase in backyard bird feeding, however, a new study may be required. We may need a study to measure how much increasingly backyard bird watching and home-bound Americans themselves have become near-dependent on watching birds at their feeders!



Offshore Energy and Birds in Europe—Bird Watcher's Digest (November/December '21)

Europe is moving faster than the U.S. on aspects of green energy, including offshore renewables. At the end of 2020, the European Union published a strategy on offshore renewable energy, with plans for a 25-fold increase in offshore wind capacity by 2050, together with significant efforts in wave, tidal, thermal, and other marine renewable energy.

In response, BirdLife Europe & Central Asia gave recommendations to EU policy makers to address protecting and restoring nature, including birds, of course. While welcoming the renewal transition-plans, BirdLife stressed that biodiversity loss and ecosystem health cannot be ignored. What’s needed is balancing the necessity for renewable energy and the preservation of marine environments.

BirdLife reminded the policy makers that “Renewable energy installations and electricity grid network infrastructures can be a threat to species populations, their habits, and migration routes and bottlenecks.”

In the case of many birds—sea ducks, geese, shorebirds, gulls and terns, shearwaters, petrels, and land birds in migration over the sea—these concerns are crucial. Feeding, breeding, molting, resting, and migration all need to be evaluated. And regional “sensitivity maps” should be regularly updated. Finally, in the case of energy networks that are troublesome yet “must” be installed, serious mitigation options are in order.

We're on the Web!

www.pinewoodsaudubon.com

The Pine Warbler

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Address Service Requested



January

- 6 (Thu.)— PWAS Meeting, 7pm at Zoo
- 11 (Tue.)— Keg & Barrel, 5:30pm at Keg & Barrel
- 15 (Sat.)— Monthly Lagoon Survey, 7:30am start at Lagoon Gate
- 22 (Sat.)— Urban birding in Hattiesburg, meeting time and place to be determined



February

- 3 (Thu.)— PWAS Meeting, 7pm at Zoo
- 5 (Sat.)— Field Trip to Ross Barnett Reservoir area, meet behind Ed's Burgers for 8am departure
- 8 (Tue.)— Keg & Barrel, 5:30pm at Keg & Barrel
- 12 (Sat.)— Monthly Lagoon Survey, 7:30am start at Lagoon Gate
- 18 (Fri.)— 21 (Mon.)— Great Backyard Bird Count