




PINE WOODS
Audubon Society

The Pine Warbler

March/April 2017

Volume 2016/2017

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March/April Meetings

March 2—Synchronous Fireflies—Paul and Libby Hartfield

Have you ever heard of fireflies forming a floating carpet of synchronized flashes? No? Well then plan to attend our March meeting to learn about this fascinating topic. Reports of this phenomenon had been recorded in Asia and documented with an article published in *Scientific American*. It was thought that it did not occur in the western hemisphere until Lynn Faust found them in the early 1990's in the Smokey Mountains. On Mother's Day, 2015, Paul and Libby Hartfield, at the insistence of two young girls visiting at their home, ventured into their backyard woodlot in Bolton, MS and were amazed to view a floating carpet of synchronized flashes (never before observed during their 38 years on the property). The fireflies responsible were identified as a different species than those found in the Smokies. The common name for the species is Snappy synchs. For the past two years, Libby and Paul have been spreading the news about this species and keeping track of reports and distribution of sightings.

April 6—An Oystercatcher Summer—Aaron Mitchell

Aaron will review a research study of breeding birds on a beach managed for conservation in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. The study was designed to gain insights into beach nesting birds. Oystercatchers, using a pair-based nest defense strategy, were nesting near Black Skimmers, Least Terns, and Common Terns, who use a colonial defense strategy with the group defending territories against predators such as gulls and raptors. The objective was to determine how the presence of colonial birds affected the response rate and reproductive success of the Oystercatchers throughout the breeding season. The research provided insights into the lives of birds that nest on our beaches and what they are exposed to as they attempt to survive and reproduce.

March/April Field Trips & Events—Diane Lafferty

March 9(Thursday)—Collins Lagoon. Meet at Starbucks at 7:30am.

March 30(Thursday)—Wildlife Day at Crosby Arboretum in Picayune. Meet at Starbucks at 7am.

April 8—Birdfest at Hattiesburg Zoo. Meet at zoo for setup at 11:30am.

April 21-23—Spring Migration at Dauphin Island, AL and DI Beach Count. Make your own reservations on DI for this event. More information found in article in this issue.

May 6—Bobolink and Dickcissel Hunt at the O'Neal farm.

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.

These, as well as other events, are included in the calendar pages included with the e-mail version of the newsletter. This can also be seen (and downloaded) at the PWAS [website](#).



A Big Warbler Year (*Bird Watcher's Digest*, May/June 2016) - Dawn Hewitt

In the spring of 2008, 10 birding companions (Cal and Caroline Pomarius and Carl and Judi Manning of Michigan; Dick and Sharon Stillwell of Iowa and Florida; Betsy Potter and Willie D'Anna of New York; and Ken and Jane Light of Pennsylvania) undertook a Big Warbler Year. Their goal was to see all 51 wood warblers that breed in the American Birding Association area. They started their adventure in mid-April on the Gulf shore of Alabama at Fort Morgan State Park, where trans-Gulf migrants sometimes fall out of the sky. Their first warbler was a palm. By the end of Day 1, they had tallied 14 warbler species, including yellow, yellow-rumped, ovenbird, American redstart, prairie, black-and-white, hooded, cerulean, prothonotary, Kentucky, northern parula, worm-eating, and Louisiana waterthrush. They dinged on one of their targets: Swainson's.

On Day 2, they drove 75 miles to Holly Landing and ticked a yellow-throated and a far off singing Swainson's. Throughout the adventure, not all team members got all species on the same day. Day 2 also added a pine. Their Alabama total was 17 warbler species.

After a quick trip home, they resumed the quest in El Paso, Texas. In the Hill country, they picked up a golden-cheeked, then a Canada. They headed to the Rio Grande Valley, hoping for a tropical parula—a bonus species—but struck out. Still, they added Nashville and common yellowthroat at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge plus a yellow-breasted chat at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park. At Moore Park in Del Rio, they picked up Wilson's. Then they headed to Big Bend National Park, the only known nesting spot for Colima warbler. As they hiked into the Chisos Mountains, they happened on two “bonus birds:” Townsend's and hermit warblers, species they did not expect to find at Big Bend. Then they found the Colima.

They headed west into New Mexico and at Caballo Lake State Park found orange-crowned, Lucy's, and Macgillivray's warblers. At nearby Percha Dam State Park, they picked up a Grace's warbler foraging in a large pine.

In Gila National Forest, they found painted redstart, red-faced, black-throated gray, Virginia's, and olive. That's a sweep of southwestern warblers! By the end of the second leg of their adventure, they were up to 35 warbler species, and it wasn't even May yet.

Early May required a trip to Magee Marsh Wildlife Area in northern Ohio. In just a few days, they had scored magnolia, black-throated blue, Cape May, northern waterthrush, black-throated green, Blackburnian, Tennessee, bay-breasted, chestnut-sided, blue-winged, and blackpoll. Just five boxes remained empty on the checklist.

Several members of the group picked up golden-winged and mourning separately, but Kirtland's didn't cooperate on its north-bound trip to Michigan, where, in early June, several members of the group took a Kirtland's warbler tour. Score! One eastern species remained elusive: Connecticut warbler.

Mid-June brought a trip to the Pacific Northwest. Those who hadn't spotted the Macgillivray's in Texas picked it up at Mount St. Helens.

From there, it was on to Alaska to pick up warbler No. 50: Arctic.

In late June, a trip to Sax-Zim Bog in Minnesota yielded no Connecticut.

July 23, McGregor, Minnesota, and a professional bird guide did it: No. 51 and a clean sweep.

Ultimately, the Pomariuses and Ken Light were the only ones to see all 51 species. Jane Light missed only one species, the Connecticut.

Editor's Note—Wouldn't this be a great adventure? There are quite a few of these 51 species that I have not yet ever seen let alone see all 51 in the course of one year. As in all “Big” events, it takes time, money, and planning to be successful. Even doing a Big Year (or Day) in Forrest County requires planning, time, and the ability to drop everything to travel to sightings of unusual (or rare) birds within the county. Perhaps not so much travel as a Big Year for Mississippi, but it would still require constant monitoring of eBird sightings and a network of birders to share unusual sightings as soon as possible. A possible Chapter activity some time in the future??

Did St. Francis preach to the birds?

Whatever for?

If he really liked birds he would have done better to preach to the cats.

Rebecca West

Welcome, New Members!—Kelly O’Neal

Here are the new members who have joined Audubon at the national level 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.

William Corban—Hattiesburg
Betty Russell—Hattiesburg
Michelle Whitacre—Hattiesburg
Karl Langenbach—Hattiesburg
Dianne O’Neal—Hattiesburg

Janie Green—Hattiesburg
Bette Green—Laurel
Jane Dalier—Laurel
Bernadette Cox—Petal
Heather Byall—Purvis



Spring Migration at Dauphin Island

It’s here again. Time for my favorite PWAS Field Trip. A weekend at Dauphin Island, AL to see what we might catch during spring migration. I’m always reminded of a favorite quote from Forrest Gump. “Mama always said: Life (*or a trip to DI in the spring*) was like a box of chocolates. You never know what (*species*) you’re gonna get.” There are just too many variables to be able to predict what the weekend will bring. There is one prediction that is always true—it will be a weekend of birding with friends (some you’ve never met before) and the possibility to see birds that only pass through during migration.

Since everyone makes their own arrangements if they are going to spend the weekend at DI, here are some suggestions:

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

Dauphin Island Harbor House B&B - (251)-861-3514

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 can spare. You’ll have a good time.



We're on the Web!

www.pinewoodsaudubon.com

The Pine Warbler

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Address Service Requested

Bird Sightings & Field Trips



A **BIG THANK YOU** to Jim and Dee Bishop for hosting the window watch for PWAS. I think that several attendees now understand where the birds that normally inhabit their yards have been spending the winter! I'm sure that if I counted ALL of the American Goldfinch I have seen this winter it still wouldn't total the number seen at the Bishop's during the window watch. One highlight of the watch was the sighting of a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

The lagoon count the afternoon of the window watch was surprising in two ways. First, it was depressing to see no sign of the Bald Eagles normally there—the nest tree is completely gone. This was not a good surprise. Second, the number and variety of waterfowl seen there was better than I expected. That was a pleasant surprise. The whole “look and feel” of the area has certainly changed. What a tornado can do in a few minutes will take years for recovery.

Looking forward to hearing the report on the President's Day Gull Run. I know that it was a VERY foggy start for the field trip.

Seeing very few American Goldfinch in my backyard. It's been several days since I have seen a White-throated Sparrow. The only highlight recently has been the “mass” of Purple Finches at my sunflower seeds. I think the largest group I have seen was 3 males and 7 females. I'm hoping that they are not gathering for a final feed before heading north soon. If so, it will soon be slim pickings around my feeders.

If you see any “out of the ordinary” sightings, send an email to newsletter@basdenfamily.com or use the contact form on our website www.pinewoodsaudubon.com to let us know so we can include them in this section of the newsletter.

March

2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	1	2 PWAS Meeting	3	4
5	6	7 Keg & Barrel	8	9 Collins Lagoon Field Trip	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Wildlife Day at Crosby Arboretum	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Notes:

- MCAS Field Trips – March 11, Oak Crest Mansion (Harrison County)
- March 18, McLeod State Park (Hancock County)
- March 25, Beauvoir, (Harrison County)



April

2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6 PWAS Meeting	7	8 BirdFest at Hattiesburg Zoo
9	10	11 Keg & Barrel	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Spring Migration at Dauphin Island	22 Spring Migration at Dauphin Island
23 Spring Migration at Dauphin Island	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6 O'Neal's Field Trip

Notes:

- MCAS Field Trips – April 1, Dauphin Island Alabama
- April 8, Ship Island (Harrison County)
- April 15, Ansley Preserve (Hancock County)
- April 22, Boneyard Bayou Rookery Kayak Trip (Jackson County)
- April 29, Desoto NF Red-cockaded Woodpecker Site (Harrison County)

