




PINE WOODS
Audubon Society

The Pine Warbler

March/April/May 2018

Volume 2017/2018

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March/April/May Meetings

March 1—Gopher Tortoises—Tony Crowe & James Lee

Camp Shelby is one of the largest National Guard and reserve training sites in the nation. Approximately 135,000 acres of land within the DeSoto National Forest south of Hattiesburg is used for their mission of training troops for domestic and foreign missions. Camp Shelby strives to manage the natural resources on those training lands as good stewards for future generations and to sustain the military's capability to respond to our local and national threats. To accomplish this, the military has partnered with The Nature Conservancy. Together they have developed a "headstart" program to assist in the recovery of one of the most endangered and iconic species in the longleaf pine ecosystems—the gopher tortoise. The gopher tortoise is considered to be a keystone species in that its burrows provide sanctuary for approximately 300 other species. We will give a summary of natural resource activities at Camp Shelby and the gopher tortoise "headstart" program. This will be followed by the March 3 field trip to see first-hand how this program operates at Camp Shelby.

April 5—Biology of Migrating Songbirds: Challenges, Consequences, and Whole Life Cycle Connections—Dr. Frank Moore

Grab your binoculars—birds are starting to make their annual trek north. Whether you are a seasoned bird watcher or simply enjoy being outdoors with nature, April in south Mississippi is a perfect time and place to appreciate the specular migratory journeys of much of North America's breeding bird life. Twice a year we receive a huge pulse of bird diversity as literally millions upon millions of songbirds make their way between temperate breeding grounds in North America and tropical wintering grounds in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Over the past 30 years plus, Dr. Frank Moore and his students have studied how migratory songbirds contend with the challenges that arise during their long distance travels, the consequences of meeting those challenges, and the conservation status of stopover habitat so critical to a successful migration. We have done so at places across North America as well as in Italy, Sweden, and Honduras, but most notably along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico. So, this spring when you encounter a Red-eyed Vireo or Gray Catbird searching for insect prey in vegetation along Black Creek or in your backyard, reflect on the challenges they are encountering over the course of their journey. At our April meeting, we will talk about those challenges, the importance of making judicious decisions during migration, and issues that arise in the conservation of migratory birds.

May 3—Bird Stories—Jen Hajj

Jen Hajj is a touring singer/songwriter and coordinator of the San Diego Bird Festival. Prior to her work at the Festival, she worked in a zoo and performed live animal programs (with original music) in schools and community venues. Her love of birds and her skill as a performer have taken her around the world. She will present a unique program of original music and stories, each inspired by or featuring birds. She will also bring information about the San Diego Bird Festival which takes place every year in February.

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/May & Beyond Field Trips & Events—Diane Lafferty

March 3—Camp Shelby gopher tortoise project field trip.

March 10—*MCAS Field Trip*—Hancock County Beaches (see MCAS website for details)

March 17—*MCAS Field Trip*—Fontainebleau Trail Birds & Botany (see MCAS website for details)

March 24—*MCAS Field Trip*—Hiller Park and Biloxi Back Bay area (see MCAS website for details)

March 29—Wildlife Day at Crosby Arboretum, Picayune (9am–1pm). PWAS will again have an exhibit there for school children from the area about birds.

March 31—*MCAS Field Trip*—Spence’s Woods (see MCAS website for details)

April 7—*MCAS Field Trip*—Logtown - Possum Walk (see MCAS website for details)

April 14—Birdfest at the Hattiesburg Zoo (1pm–3pm). PWAS will again set up exhibits geared toward informing the children attending the event about birds.

April 21—*MCAS Field Trip*—Ship Island (see MCAS website for details)

April 27-29—Migrating birds at Dauphin Island, AL and the West End count for shorebirds. For this event, make your own lodging reservations if you plan to be there for the weekend. If you cannot spend the entire weekend with us, Dauphin Island can make a great day trip during spring migration season.

May 5—O’Neal’s Bobolink and Dickcissel Hunt

May 12—8th Painted Bunting Hunt and Photo Opportunity at the Hattiesburg Sewage Lagoons.

May 19—*MCAS Field Trip*—Tern Nesting Colonies (see MCAS website for details)

June 16—17th Hattiesburg Butterfly Count

July 21—15th Delta National Forest Butterfly Count

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

Reminder—May Is Officer Election Month

Our Chapter Officers serve 2 year terms. May 2018 is the time for a new slate of officers to be elected for the Chapter. Offices to be filled for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 meeting years include, President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Our Chapter By-Laws include a limit of 2 consecutive terms for President but not the other Officers. Committee Chairs are filled by volunteers/appointments by the 4 elected Officers serving as the Executive Board. While it all sounds like a lot of work, it really isn’t. Some precedents set by previous Officers assure that the work is distributed across the Board and Committees. We are looking for volunteers to agree to run for the 4 offices with the election/installation being held during our regular May meeting. Please contact one of the current officers to volunteer your services for the next 2-year term.

Crosby Wildlife Day and Birdfest

These two annual events are coming soon, as noted in the events listing above. Both are a good outreach activity to interact with young people and tell them about birds (hopefully so they develop a life-long interest in our hobby). The Crosby Arboretum event is on a Thursday (March 29) and the Hattiesburg Zoo event is on a Saturday (April 14). Our chapter has a history of providing exhibits and games about birds at both events. Diane Lafferty has coordinated both events for several years now and will be asking for volunteers to man the exhibits and help with the games so contact her to let her know that you would be willing to help. Mark your calendars. I’m sure you will find both events to be rewarding experiences.

Spring Migration at Dauphin Island—April 27-29

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)-861-2119

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 can spare. You'll have a good time.



We're on the Web!

www.pinewoodsaudubon.com

The Pine Warbler

Pine Woods Audubon Society
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Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Address Service Requested

Bird Sightings & Field Trips



Forrest County sightings are picking up. Some recent sightings include Purple Martin, Inca Dove, White-winged Dove, Brown Creeper, Black-and-white Warbler, Bullock's Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Meadowlark, Snow Goose, and Northern Harrier. These are some at least very infrequent sightings. So, the message is, there are birds around in our home county to be found. Who knows, we just might find one those Mississippi rarities in our own backyard so keep your eyes open and binoculars at the ready.

The annual Gull Run yielded a "not often seen" Long-tailed Duck in Pass Christian Harbor. This has been reported by several others after first being found on the Gull Run. The major disappointment of the Gull Run was not finding the Iceland Gull which has been reported multiple times including the Thursday prior to our coast trip.

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.