

**WELCOME
SUMMER!**

Francene Van Sambeek, Editor

Volume 8, Issue 4

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS: FIELD TRIPS

By David Pylant

What a contrast in weather between the February and March Field Trips!

On February 15 we went to the Guntersville waterfront area to take a look at the waterfowl, loons, grebes, and gulls; and to Guntersville State Park to see the bald eagles come off the roost. It was cold and rainy, but a dedicated group of birders made the trip.

The first stop was **Guntersville State Park**. We arrived about 6:30 AM, and only had to stand around in the rain for a few minutes until the **eagles** left their roosts and glided by at close range. Satisfied that the early rising time and braving the cold rain was worth it, we headed back to the city of Guntersville. We had not driven a half a mile when Jimmy Wells spotted an **adult bald eagle perched right** by the side of the road. We parked and walked back to the spot, only to find the eagle had left the perch. All of a sudden the eagle reappeared, swooped down, and caught a good sized bass no more than fifty feet from us. Spectacular!

From there we traveled to the boat ramp on the west side of the causeway where we met Dick and Linda Reynolds. Adjacent to the boat ramp is a small swamp where numerous **black-crowned night herons** were roosting. We scanned the water looking for unusual grebes or loons among the more common ones. Finding nothing particularly of interest, we headed across the causeway to the waterfront area where some oddities might be found (also some cover under some porches). We found a group of **long-tailed ducks** and a fantastic view of a couple of **pacific loons** (thanks to Dick and Linda). We searched for, but were unable to find, a red-necked grebe which had been around most of the winter.

Those participating in this trip were: David Pylant, Henry Beeler, Neal Culpepper, Mike Payne, Booty Richter, Jimmy Wells, Julia and Joe Bright, Andrea Parker, Brennan Parker, Dick and Linda Reynolds, and Doug Harris.

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BREEDING BIRDS PROTECTED

Audubon Newswire

Boreal Conservation Framework Lays Out Vision for Protecting Vital Breeding Grounds for Billions of North American Birds

Stretching from Alaska to the Atlantic Ocean, **Canada's boreal forest** is one of the world's largest forests. It accounts for 25 percent of the earth's remaining intact forests, covers 1.3 billion acres, and is lar-

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Coming attractions

- April 13: Meeting 7PM. Chief Billy Shaw.
- April 24/25: Field Trip.
- May 11: Meeting 7PM. Social/Elections
- May 16: Field Trip. Time TBA.



APRIL 13TH MEETING: NATIVE AMERICAN PRECEPTIONS

On Tuesday, April 13th, **Chief Billy Shaw**, Principle Chief of the Echota Indian Tribe will be the featured speaker for the Cullman Audubon Society. Mr. Shaw be speaking on **Native American culture and conservation ideals**.

The meeting begins at 7 PM and will be held in the old Science Building on the campus of St. Bernard Prep School.

FIELD TRIP-CANOE THE CAHABA BY DAVID PYLANT

On May 16, 2004, we will try again to do a canoe trip on the Cahaba River. As you may remember, last year's trip had to be cancelled due to flood conditions. Hopefully better conditions will prevail. Dr. Randy Haddock, Field Director for the **Cahaba River Society** (and our guide), predicts excellent weather, perfect water levels, and **lilies in magnificent bloom!**

The trip will be on **Sunday, May 16**, and will take most of the day. Canoes are furnished by the Cahaba River Society at a rate of \$25 per canoe. They have only eight (8) canoes, so we're limited to 16 people (unless you bring your own canoe). We will fill these 16 spaces on a first come, first served basis. We will start the reservation process at the April 13th meeting and close it (if we don't exceed the maximum) at the May 11th meeting. Randy does not have to have a firm number until a few days before the trip, so we'll have two meetings to take care of the details. **This is a most excellent experience.**



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National Audubon Website: www.audubon.org

(Field Trip Reports from page 1)

On March 13, Francene Van Sambeek, Sister Kathleen, Harry Roach, Booty Richter, and myself went to **Monte Sano State Park** in Huntsville, and joined up with our good friends from the North Alabama Bird Watchers Society. We were looking for early migrants in the area. The weather was fantastic! The highlight was a **Louisiana water thrush** who gave us great looks and enthusiastic vocals.

Thanks to NABS members John Ehinger, Tom Brindley, Dick Brauer, Harry Dean, Dick and Linda Reynolds, and others for making our trip most enjoyable.



MAY 11TH MEETING: SOCIAL TIME/ELECTIONS

For the May 11th meeting of the Cullman Audubon Society, we will be holding a social time. Bring your favorite finger foods and be prepared to talk about your birding experiences. Our chapter will also be holding elections for officers and board of directors at the meeting. If you wish to become more involved with YOUR Audubon chapter, contact Henry Beeler to be nominated. Nominations will also be taken at the meeting.

The meeting will start at 7PM at the Old Science Building on the campus of St. Bernard. All are invited to attend.



CRANE CAM ANYONE?? Audubon Newswire: March 23, 2004

Cranes and People Flock to Nebraska for the Annual Migration Concentration of Waterfowl; National Geographic Crane Cam Brings Spectacle to Everyone

Each spring, over a half million Sandhill Cranes congregate on Nebraska's Platte River in one of the world's greatest migration spectacles. Along with these majestic birds, tens-of-thousands of bird watchers flock to Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary to see and hear this astounding migration display.

This year, Audubon, National Geographic Magazine, the Nebraska Department of Travel and Tourism, and the Kearney Visitors Bureau invite nature enthusiasts, bird lovers, and photography buffs to witness one of the world's most spectacular wildlife migrations from a unique, cranes-eye view via the "Crane Cam".

From February 27 through April 15, a camera mounted on an island within Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River (www.rowsanctuary.org) will provide never-before-seen views of **Sandhill Cranes** roosting in the thousands in the shallow water. Images from the Crane Cam can be seen on the National Geographic Magazine's website - www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/cranecam - along with information about cranes, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, and the Iain Nicholson Audubon Center, located on the Sanctuary.

For more information on the Crane Cam, visit www.audubon.org. To register or obtain more information, call Rowe Sanctuary at 308-468-5282 or visit www.audubon.org/states/ne/rvswlf.htm.



"WINGBEAT" NEWSLETTER

This will be the final *WINGBEAT* until Fall 2004. Please, write down your birding experiences this summer. Then, submit them to me so others in our Audubon chapter know of good (or bad) birding sites. Newsletter deadlines will remain the same: 20th of the odd numbered months for publication in the next newsletter. Send to Francene Van Sambeek at the address or email listed to the left. Please include "Audubon" in the subject line.

APRIL FIELD TRIP: BIRD-A-THON By David Pylant

As I mentioned at the March meeting, the April outing will be a departure from the routine organized field trips. This month we will be doing an activity based on the "Big Day" concept, familiar to you serious birders. Not only will this be a lot of fun, but we'll be able to get a good idea of the species which frequent North Alabama during Spring migration.

It's real simple; try to **identify** as many species as possible in a **24 hour period**. Unlike the Christmas Bird Count, the number of each species doesn't matter, only the number of **species**. Once you mark a Cardinal down, don't worry with another!

We'll do this on a team basis, with no more than three (3) **people per team**. You can form your own team, or we'll form up teams at the April meeting. I would encourage an experienced birder to team up with less experienced birders. If you form your team prior to the April meeting, let me know.

Here are the Rules:

Dates: Either April 24th or 25th



Time: 0000 hours to 2400 hours (midnight to midnight)

Teams: Maximum of three persons per team.

Team members will travel together and may not separate, except when walking.

Area Boundary: State of Alabama, north of US 78.

Bird Documentation: Bird may be identified by sight or sound. You are on the honor system. Only mark a bird if you can make a positive identification of the species. If team members disagree or you're not sure, don't count it! If possible, use a printed checklist such as those available from Wheeler Wildlife Refuge or AOS. (I'll have AOS checklists available at the April meeting)

Results: Please submit results of your team as soon as possible after the day you do the count, preferably by May 1. Winning team will be recognized at the May meeting.

Questions: Contact David Pylant, 256-734-5716 home, 256-352-8242 work, email: David.Pylant@WallaceState.Edu



BIRD FRIENDLY BACKYARDS.. IS

YOURS?? Audubon Newswire: February 6, 2004



Make Your Backyard Bird Friendly as Part of Great Backyard Bird Count

You know where you live, but do you know your "ecological address?" **Audubon At Home**, a new program made possible in part by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is bringing conservation home through an exciting, **interactive website** designed to give visitors useful information on making their backyards more bird-friendly, and their homes healthier and safer for their families. It accomplishes this by helping users identify the natural characteristics of their property and its role in local ecology.

As the centerpiece of this year's Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) www.birdsource.org/gbbc/, Audubon is stressing the value of backyard habitat and asks participants to make their yards not only bird-friendly, but also bird-safe. **The new Audubon At Home website, http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html**, contains a treasure trove of information that gives users the tools they need to create backyards that will attract birds and safeguard them as well.

"Each yard, no matter the size, has the potential to help birds," said Sally Conyne, Director of the GBBC. "By **providing** just a few necessities, your home landscape will attract birds, beneficial insects, and other wildlife. You'll be rewarded with a **low-maintenance yard** bustling with the variety of colors and textures you would find in far wilder places."

EVERGLADES VS CLEAN WATER ACT

Audubon Newswire March 23, 2004

Supreme Court Upholds Clean Water Act. Everglades Decision Means Cleaner Water Nationwide

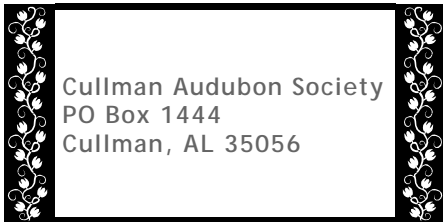


In a case involving pollution in the Everglades, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that pollutants cannot be pumped into U.S. waters without a **Clean Water Act discharge permit**, regardless of whether the pump originates the pollutants or merely conveys pollutants that originate elsewhere. Audubon, which had filed an amicus brief along with seven other environmental groups in support of the defendant, hailed today's ruling a major victory for clean water protections.

The case, South Florida Water Management District v. Miccosukee Tribe, addressed whether the protections of the Clean Water Act apply to the District's practice of pumping storm water uphill from a collection canal in a developed area into a natural wetland area in the Everglades. But the ruling's impacts go beyond South Florida. "If the court had failed to support the Clean Water Act, healthy drinking water and restoration projects everywhere-especially in the Everglades-could have been threatened," said Bob Perciasepe, Audubon's chief operating officer. "The Supreme Court recognized this, and refused to allow a harmful loophole in the Act's safeguards."

The ruling could have held broad implications for the jurisdiction or reach of the country's primary water pollution control law, potentially affecting wetlands, lakes, and rivers around the United States. Exempting conveyance of pollutants from permitting would have opened the door to serious degradation of cleaner water bodies by pollutants pumped or piped into United States waters. For more information: www.audubon.org.





(Breeding Birds, Continued from page 1)

ger than the Brazilian Amazon. With more fresh water than any place on earth, Canada's boreal forest supports some of the largest populations of wildlife such as grizzly bears and wolves, and provides vital breeding grounds for up to a third of North America's land birds and 40 percent of its waterfowl.



In December 2003, the Canadian Boreal Initiative (CBI) announced a landmark vision to protect this global treasure. The Boreal Conservation Framework proposes a new approach to balancing conservation and economic development: the establishment of a network of large interconnected protected areas covering about half of Canada's boreal region, and the use of cutting-edge sustainable development practices in remaining areas. The Framework reflects an extraordinary alliance of conservation organizations, First Nations, and timber and oil companies who have signed on to the Framework. (Information about the Framework can be found at CBI's web-site: www.borealcanada.ca)



While vast tracks of the boreal region remain unspoiled at this point, the release of the Framework comes at a time when development is rapidly escalating and land use decisions in every Canadian province and territory will determine the fate of much of the boreal region within the next three to five years. With over 90% of the boreal under public ownership, a critical next step will be to persuade Canadian governments to play a central role in making the Framework's vision a reality.

Much of the resource development in the boreal is being driven by U.S. consump-

tion. The U.S. is the leading importer of Canadian forest products and oil and gas. Eighty-one percent of Canada's forest products go to the United States, and most of the wood cut in Canada's boreal is used to make paper, including catalogs, junk mail, magazines, and newspapers. And the U.S. buys more of its oil and gas from Canada -- 60% of which is produced from the boreal -- than any other single source.



Of the 298 bird species that have some of their breeding grounds in the boreal forest, at least 40 species of land birds and several species of ducks are already experiencing population declines in part due to habitat loss from logging and oil and gas development.

While American consumption is largely responsible, it also means that American citizens and companies can influence the fate of this global treasure. The boreal is perhaps the greatest forest conservation opportunity left on earth.

An international campaign focused in the U.S. is emerging. The Boreal Songbird Network is a new network of conservation groups that include: the Boreal Songbird Initiative, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the American Bird Conservancy. These groups are working to build a broad base of international support for boreal conservation and the adoption of the Boreal Framework.

For more information on how you can help protect the boreal forest,

please go to the Boreal Songbird Initiative website at www.borealbirds.org.

The Boreal Songbird Initiative is a new project dedicated to educating bird conservationists and naturalists throughout the United States about the importance of North America's boreal forest to migratory birds.

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE NATURE LOVER'S SOUL

Audubon Newswire: March 3, 2004

National Audubon Society President John Flicker has penned the foreword for *Chicken Soup for the Nature Lover's Soul*, the latest in the popular series of books that have sold millions of copies worldwide. **Chicken Soup for the Nature Lover's Soul** is a collection of inspirational stories that explore our essential connection with nature, and invite readers to get outdoors and savor the natural world. Written and compiled by New York Times best-selling authors Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Steve Zikman, the book will be published this month.

Chicken Soup for the Nature Lover's Soul is available at local bookstores, but the publisher is offering **Audubon Chapters** and Audubon Center and Chapter Stores, a special 50% discount off the list price of \$12.95, plus shipping. HCI can also provide a free counter display with purchase of 6 or more books upon request. To order directly, call Stephanie Frohman at HCI Books, 800-851-9100, xt. 232 or e-mail her at sfrohman@hcibooks.com.