

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS AUDUBON SOCIETY

2015 FIELD TRIPS & BIRDING CALENDAR



All NWAAS field trips are free and open to the public. We always welcome new members, but membership in NWAAS is not a requirement for participation. We try to make our field trips accessible to everyone, all ages, abilities, interests. Beginning birders are always welcome. We have field trips on Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate different schedules. We try to arrange carpools where possible.

For maps and more information about these places, check the Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society web site <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/index.html> and the section "Places to bird in northwest Arkansas" (on the left side of the home page).

If you are interested in being added to the NWAAS email list for updates on field trips and other society events, please send a message to: joeneal@uark.edu. Some of the information on the trips below can change, so additional details & updates about trips are sent via the email prior to the announced date. Also, check our NWAAS facebook page for all the latest on the local birding scene.

SAFETY FIRST, ALWAYS! Our field trips are open to everyone. We try to warn about any special dangers that might be encountered, but neither NWAAS nor individual field trip leaders assume responsibility for personal safety. If you have special needs, or special concerns, please ask the field trip leader before the trip starts. We do not knowingly place anyone in danger on any field trip. We count on those who attend to keep trips safe for everyone.



JANUARY

Saturday January 17, 2015. Rocky Branch Park on Beaver Lake. **NOTE:** Before traveling to Rocky Branch, check the NWAAS facebook page. A notice will be posted there about whether the trip is GO or NO GO, by noon on Friday January 16. You may also call the trip leader (479-521-1858) on Friday evening for an update if you do not have facebook access. This trip will be cancelled if it is too windy for observing birds on the lake, bitter cold, or for unsafe driving conditions. Otherwise, and hopefully: Meet at 10 AM at the Rocky Branch marina parking area. Species typical of the lake in winter include Pied-billed and Horned Grebes, Bonaparte's and Ring-billed Gulls, Common Goldeneyes, Bald Eagle, possible Common Loon. We will also look for land birds in cedar glades and upland shortleaf pines (like Pine Warbler). The Army Corps of Engineers has waived the park day use fee (\$4) for this field trip. For more information, check out Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area and Rocky Branch Park here: <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/id17.html>

FEBRUARY

Saturday February 7, 2015. Eagle Watch Nature Trail on SWEPCO Lake just west of Gentry. Meet in the parking lot at 9 AM. Co-leader is Terry Stanfill, who manages EW. There is a short walk on the trail through open field habitat to a viewing platform with good potential to see Bald Eagles, various species of hawks and sparrows, ducks and other water birds. After this walk, we may travel a short distance to find more wintering eagles on the former Round Prairie. More information at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/1514017.pdf>

Friday-Monday February 13-16, 2015. Great Backyard Bird Count (**GBBC**). You can participate in this count anywhere. For details, check here: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html>.

Saturday February 14, 2015. Friends and members of NWAAS have been invited to join the **GBBC** at Devil's Den State Park. Meet Park Interpreters and Joe Neal in the parking area at the lower Devil's Den Trailhead, southside of Lee Creek bridge at 9 am. This generally lasts a couple of hours. Slow, easy walking with lots of listening. Everyone and all birding skills welcome.

Saturday EVENING February 21, 2015. American Woodcock field trip to Wedington Wildlife Management Area (Ozark National Forest west of Fayetteville). Woodcock expert Dr. David Krementz is the leader. As in the past, we will meet at the intersection of Kincheloe Road and Forest Service 1754 at 5:30 PM. If you arrive late, drive 1754 & find us – we will be less than a mile away on the road. More details will be provided prior to the event. More information at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/977213.pdf>

MARCH

Saturday March 28, 2015. Trip to mature shortleaf pine habitat in the **Shores Lake-Fern area of Ozark National Forest**, then down into the western Arkansas River valley, including visits to **Frog Bayou WMA** and Arkansas River. Leader is Bill Beall, veteran birder from Ft Smith. We will be seeking Brown-headed

Nuthatches and other birds typical of pine forests and later, birds of ponds, river, and agricultural fields in the valley. Meet at 9 AM at the Shores Lake picnic area entrance on the west side of the lake. You can show up earlier if you wish. It will be easy to tailor this day to your own time schedule. As always, you are welcome to leave or join whatever suits your schedule.
<http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/1439038.pdf>

APRIL

Saturday April 4, 2015. ALL welcome to a unique place, Wattle Hollow Retreat Center in the scenic Boston Mountains near Devil's Den State Park. Early spring migrants, wildflowers, and a fun, social potluck on the deck. Bring something to share. Meet up along highway 170, where you turn into Wattle, by 9 AM for the leisurely & birdy stroll on a graded road downhill to the retreat center. More information including directions will be provided prior to this event.

Saturday April 18, 2015. BIOBLITZ at Ozark Natural Science Center. We will participate in helping to find birds during this event. (More details to come on this event).

Sunday April 26, 2015. Ninestone Land Trust in Carroll County. Meet at Ninestone by 9 AM. Fun casual hike where we will identify birds and wildflowers, enjoy Piney Creek and soaring birds, picturesque bluffs, visit glade restoration areas, identify rare flowers, and stop for a relaxing potluck at noon overlooking the famous waterfall. This can be a peak time during spring bird migration. More information at <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/1287399.pdf>

MAY

May 1-3, 2015: Arkansas Audubon Society Spring meeting, held this spring at the Holiday Inn City Center in Fort Smith. This will be a joint meeting with Oklahoma Ornithological Society. This is also the same time as the annual **Birder's Weekend at Devil's Den State Park**. Devil's Den hosts birding, hikes, and other programs free and open to the public. On **Saturday May 2**, meet at Devil's Den in parking area on south end of Lee Creek bridge at 9 AM for this easy and often birdy walk in the middle of the northward spring migration. Here is some more general information about birding the Den: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/950081.pdf> . This will be a joint field trip with the AAS meeting. There are many other field trips associated with this exciting meeting. Check it out here: <http://www.arbirds.org/>

Saturday and Sunday May 9-10, 2015 (probable dates). **International Migratory Bird Day** in Benton and Washington counties, with additional counts in at least Carroll County. Coordinated by Mike Mlodinow for Washington and Benton counties. For more information or to participate, contact mamlod@hotmail.com.

JUNE

Sunday June 7, 2015. Cave Mountain and the upper Buffalo River in Newton County. Get ready for your annual tonic called "warbler neck." The focus is on nesting birds in Ozark forests, including warblers: Cerulean, Hooded, Black-and-white, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Parula, and many

others. We will inspect an amazing flora, too, like Pawpaws and Umbrella Magnolias. Meet at the Boxley Bridge at 9 AM. More information at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/950078.pdf>

JULY

Saturday July 11, 2015. Chesney Prairie Natural Area near Siloam Springs. See the mid to late summer flora of the Tallgrass Prairie, including blazing stars, other flowers, always fascinating pollinating insects that crowd the flowers of Rattlesnake Masters and various milkweeds, plus open country birds like American Kestrels, Dickcissels, and probably Loggerhead Shrikes. Meet at Chesney at 9 AM. Information about Chesney at: <http://media.tripod.lycos.com/2020453/957092.pdf>

NWAAS membership meeting (to be announced).

AUGUST

Saturday August 22, 2015. Craig State Fish Hatchery at Centerton. The hatchery has been designated an Important Bird Area by Audubon Arkansas. Numerous shorebird species are headed south at this time of year after nesting in the far north. Many species stop on mudflats provided by drained fish ponds. Meet in the parking lot at the hatchery at 9 AM. Most folks will be on foot, but those with mobility impairments are welcome to drive along with the group.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday September 13, 2015. Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area. Meet at 9 AM in the parking lot for Sinking Stream Trail and Historic Van Winkle Trail. Both share the parking area on highway 12. Spotted Jewelweed is dense along the spring runs, especially in Van Winkle. As this is peak for southward migration of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, they are expected to be quite numerous in the flowering jewelweed. Other interesting native flowers here, too, including Great Blue Lobelia. These are both relatively easy and often birdy walks (each about 0.5 miles) with numerous interesting native plants. Historic Van Winkle Trail is accessible.

OCTOBER

Sunday October 4, 2015. Ninestone Land Trust in Carroll County. No finer spot to see fall in the Ozarks plus birds typical of the region. Meet at Ninestone by 9 AM. Easy hike, bluffs, waterfalls, fun social pot lunch at noon in front of waterfalls. Info: <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/id17.html>

NOVEMBER

Saturday November 14, 2015. Lake Fayetteville for the fall waterfowl migration. Meet at 9 AM in parking lot on the north end of the dam (near ball fields and entrance to the boat dock). Dr David Chapman has produced an interesting, detailed book about the birds, history, and flora of the lake, plus an award-winning separate history of the land that is now a lake. More info about the lake at: <http://www.nwarkaudubon.org/id17.html>

DECEMBER

NWAAS annual membership meeting (details to be announced).

Fayetteville Christmas Bird Count (date to be announced, but probably Sunday, December 20, 2015).