



## AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out the following questionnaire to help your local Cullman Audubon Chapter better meet the needs and expectations of its membership.



1. Why did you join the Cullman Chapter of Audubon?
  - a. Came automatically with National membership
  - b. Interest in the local club
2. What interests you in the local chapter (circle all that apply)
  - a. Lectures and education
  - b. Field trips
  - c. Bird identification
  - d. Meeting with people with similar interests
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_



3. How often would you attend the Cullman meetings?
  - a. Monthly
  - b. Every other month
  - c. Monthly with a summer break from June through September
  - d. Quarterly
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. How often would you attend field trips?
  - a. Monthly
  - b. Every other month
  - c. Monthly with a summer break from June through September
  - d. Quarterly
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_



5. What expectations do you have from your local club?

Please respond by **May 1<sup>st</sup>** so that your input can be discussed in the May meeting. Responses can be mailed to Cullman Audubon Society, PO Box 1444, Cullman, AL 35056; faxed to 256-352-8038, or e-mailed to [julia.bright@wallacestate.edu](mailto:julia.bright@wallacestate.edu).

### APRIL 23, 2005 FIELD TRIP: DANCY BOTTOMS-WHEELER WILDLIFE REFUGE

On Saturday, **April 23<sup>rd</sup>**, we will be joining the North Alabama Bird Watchers Society for a trip to the **Dancy Bottoms** area of **Wheeler Wildlife Refuge**. The trip will be lead by Tom Brindley. The group will meet at the Hardee's on highway 67 at the Priceville exit on I65 at 7 AM. If you wish to carpool, meet at the Stuckey's parking lot (exit 318 off of I65) at **6:30 AM**. We will be concentrating on spring migrants. Remember all are welcome to these FREE birding field trips!



### 2004-2005 Officers/ Committee Chairs

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*Cullman Audubon Website:* [www.cullmanaudubon.com](http://www.cullmanaudubon.com)

*National Audubon Website:* [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

*Newsletter deadlines:* 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.

## AUDUBON NEWSWIRE HAPPENINGS

Volume 3, Number 2, February 7, 2005

### **"Lights Out" Program Reduces Bird Deaths in Cities-**

Audubon has developed a guide for cities across the country to form partnerships to save birds' lives. A new website provides tools to replicate Chicago's "Lights Out" Program - a cooperative venture between Audubon, the City of Chicago, and the Building Owners and Managers Association of Chicago, in which Chicago's tall buildings all turn off their decorative lights during spring and fall bird migration. The new national effort has the support of the International Building Owners and Managers Association, Audubon, and Partners in Flight, and funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The how-to website, [www.lightsout.audubon.org](http://www.lightsout.audubon.org), provides sample communications and recognition ideas, links to partner organizations, and research findings. "This program is a win-win for buildings, cities, and birds," explained Audubon President John Flicker. "Buildings can keep lights on in the evenings when the city is bustling, and then can save energy costs as well as birds' lives by turning out the lights after 11 p.m."

In some cities, thousands of birds perish because the lights on tall buildings confuse their navigation systems. These tiny creatures make exhausting all night journeys. Many of them fly hundreds of miles in one night on their way from Canada to South America. They find their way by a complex set of instincts and signals that can become confused by the lights. When this happens, they may circle the buildings until they weaken and become susceptible to predation or collision. To view pictures of the "Lights Out" program in other cities visit [www.lightsout.audubon.org](http://www.lightsout.audubon.org).



Volume 3, Number 3: February 18, 2005

### **New to Audubon Website: Birding Basics-**

Audubon has launched "Birding Basics", a new feature on Audubon.org. It provides useful tips for beginning birders. These include information on buying binoculars, how to select and use bird guides, where to look and how to listen for birds, and opportunities to get involved with birding and more through Audubon Chapters, Centers, and Citizen Science projects. Visit "Birding Basics" at [www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/bird\\_watching/index.shtml](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_watching/index.shtml).

**Shorebird Experts Meet to Discuss Shorebird Conservation-** Shorebirds are one of the most migratory groups of animals on the planet. Of 51 species that breed in northern North America, 78% winter in countries other than the U.S. or Canada. Many of these international globetrotters travel over 5,000 miles each year on their round-trip journey to and from the nesting grounds. During these twice-annual migrations, shorebirds can congregate in flocks that number in the millions. On February 22-25, shorebird experts nationwide will be migrating to Galveston, Texas, to share their knowledge and experience in implementing the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (Shorebird Plan).

**The Shorebird Plan** is a partnership effort that strives to maintain stable and self-sustaining shorebird populations by enhancing environmental stewardship on public, private, and tribal lands. It is a sci-



entific framework that identifies shorebird species populations, key habitats and sites, and communication strategies to enhance cooperative conservation through diverse partnerships. Given the variety of wetland, grassland, and beach habitats that shorebirds use, the Shorebird Plan brings everyone to the table.



Over the last five years, shorebird conservationists have been working with federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private landowners to improve the conservation status of shorebirds. Progress on habitat management, monitoring, outreach, and international partnership building will be presented at the meeting, and discussion groups will focus on developing future conservation strategies. All perspectives are welcomed in outlining a shorebird conservation agenda for the next five years.

A variety of information, including regional conservation plans, lists of priority species, monitoring strategies, and habitat management guidelines, can be accessed on the Shorebird Plan's website at <http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov>.

Volume 3, Number 5, Friday, March 18, 2005

### **The Battle For the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Continues:**

The U.S. Senate narrowly voted to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling by a vote of 51 to 49.



"This is just one more battle in the long effort to protect the Arctic Refuge that began when President Carter created it," stated John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society. "This is one of the last great wilderness areas left on the planet. We are disappointed but we won't stop working to protect the Arctic Refuge for future generations. We will win in the end." Flicker continued, "This was a vote against the environment and for global warming."

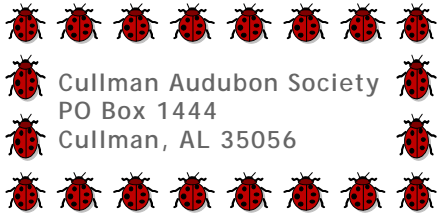
Arctic drilling provisions make an already controversial budget even more contentious. The budget process is long and complex, and the outcome is far from certain. The inclusion of Arctic drilling further distances the Senate budget resolution from the House version. House Budget Chairman Jim Nussle (R-IA) has signaled that the budget bills will be difficult to reconcile in conference committee. To read the entire release, visit [www.audubon.org/news/press\\_releases/Arctic\\_Defeat\\_3-16-05.html](http://www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/Arctic_Defeat_3-16-05.html).

### **Container-breeding Mosquitoes Pose the Highest West Nile Virus Risk For Humans-**

Different species of mosquitoes have different feeding preferences - some prefer to bite birds, some prefer to bite mammals, and others prefer animals of other kinds. West Nile virus is primarily an avian pathogen, and is transmitted among birds by ornithophilic (bird-biting) mosquitoes. Until now, it was presumed that humans are exposed to the virus upon being bitten by "bridge-vector" species of mosquitoes - those that take a large fraction of their blood meals from mammals, but occasionally bite birds.



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*Audubon Happenings (Continued from page 3)*

In a recent analysis of 10 northeastern species of mosquitoes<sup>1</sup>, researchers found that up to 80% of the risk of human WNV infection comes from two species of ornithophilic mosquitoes, both of which breed primarily in backyard and neighborhood sources of stagnant water, such as discarded tires, unused swimming pools, catch basins, gutters, and birdbaths. The surprisingly high risk comes from the two species' abundance, infection prevalence, and ability to replicate and transmit the virus, which compensate for the relatively small fraction of blood meals taken from mammals by these bird-biting mosquitoes.

This finding suggests that control efforts should be focused on reducing breeding habitat for these species - getting rid of sources of stagnant water in yards and communities - rather than the current emphasis on the use of insecticides and water flow management. For more information on West Nile virus, please visit Audubon's website: [www.audubon.org/bird/wnv](http://www.audubon.org/bird/wnv)

<sup>1</sup>Kilpatrick, AM, LD Kramer, SR Campell, et al. 2005. West Nile virus risk assessment and the bridge vector paradigm - [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol11no03/04-0364.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol11no03/04-0364.htm). *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 11:425-429.

Volume 3, Number 4, Tuesday, March 8, 2005

**Become a Citizen Scientist and Help House Finches!**

Coast to coast, House Finches have become afflicted with a debilitating form of conjunctivitis. Two projects through Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, Audubon's partner in the Great Backyard Bird Count, offer budding Citizen Scientists the opportunity to take part in tracking and understanding this disease. Neither requires any experience and both are offered free of charge.

Citizen Scientists participating in the "House Finch Disease Survey" help monitor the spread and prevalence of the disease. Participants observe their feeders and submit data on the presence or absence of healthy and/or diseased birds in their particular location. Data can be submitted either on paper or online. The only equipment you need to participate is a feeder and the ability to observe your feeder visitors. Sign up at <http://birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/>



signup.html and you'll receive a kit with instructions and information in the mail.

Citizen Scientists participating in the "House Finch Nest Survey" are helping to determine if differences in breeding biology are the cause of seasonal and geographic variation in disease prevalence. Participants locate and monitor House Finch nests around their homes and neighborhoods and keep detailed nest records (nest cards provided). Sign up at [www.birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/nestsignup.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/nestsignup.html) and we'll send you an information packet to teach you how to safely observe House Finch nests. Questions welcomed at [housefinch@cornell.edu](mailto:housefinch@cornell.edu) or visit the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology at <http://birds.cornell.edu/>.

**Steve Kress Co. Authors The North American Birdfeeder Guide-**

One of the greatest pleasures of having even the smallest of gardens is to watch the variety of birds that visit throughout the year. Audubon's own Steve Kress has co-authored a new book, **The North American Birdfeeder Guide**, to assist bird lovers in attracting, feeding, and identifying the birds they see in their yards and gardens.

This new book includes a foreword by Kenn Kaufman, and is an inspirational and practical guide, to working hand-in-hand with nature to create a bird-friendly environment, whatever the size, style or location of your garden. The basic elements of a good bird garden are examined systematically, from planning your layout and choosing the right plants, to selecting the best site for a birdfeeder, birdbath, or nest box. Hundreds of color photos and graphics help illustrate garden design concepts, bird physiology, equipment usage, and bird and plant identification.

Whether you have a garden, backyard, or a windowsill, the North American Birdfeeder Guide is the perfect companion for all enthusiastic home birdwatchers. The book is published by DK Publishing, and is a licensed product from National Audubon Society. It will be available in bookstores this month in hardcover for \$25.