



# NORTH ALABAMA BIRDWATCHERS SOCIETY

## SCHEDULE AND DESCRIPTION OF TRIPS, 2022-23



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Ken Ward, President

OUR 46<sup>th</sup> SEASON

Rufina Ward, Editor

Hi All ☺! For those of you new to us, the North Alabama Birdwatchers Society (NABS) is an informal group that focuses on birding in northern Alabama. We have been around since 1976 and are the only birding group in our area to offer a set of regularly scheduled trips each year. We visit a variety of areas across this part of the state, most of which are included on the North Alabama Birding Trail (NABT, <https://alabamabirdingtrails.com/>). We also have a Facebook group page, **North Alabama Birdwatchers Society (NABS)**, where folks can join NABS, post pics, discuss birds and related subjects, etc. NABS is open to everyone, including beginners, and especially young folks with an interest in birds; there are no membership dues.

**Protocol:** The protocol for NABS outings is pretty simple. We convene at the designated time at our meeting spot (GPS coordinates are provided for most meeting spots), from which we'll either drive (usually) or walk to our birding area. Typically, we hang around for 10-15 minutes after the meeting time before we depart, which gives us a bit of time to work out logistics, talk about where we'll be going, etc. So, it's best to be on time, for obvious reasons. Attendees are responsible for their own transportation, although there usually are opportunities to carpool and we'll usually have a van for trips to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). There will be some trips for which carpooling is required, depending on attendance, given limitations on numbers of vehicles that can be taken into some areas we visit (see more detail below).

**Guidelines:** Our ultimate goal for any NABS outing is to give everyone an opportunity to observe (and hopefully hear) every bird species we encounter. That seldom happens, but we often get pretty close. Cameras are welcome too, although the emphasis is on birding. Our rules of etiquette are few but the ones we do have are important:

1. Be reasonably restrained, as to making noise (no dogs or unruly children);
2. While cameras are most welcome, please don't let pic-taking disrupt the birding (see ultimate goal above);
3. Be considerate of others as to letting everyone get a chance to see and/or hear birds we encounter. It's fine to wander around a bit, just be aware of and careful about getting out in front of the group, especially if skittish birds (such as waterfowl) might be caused to flush.
4. Use of song/call recordings to attract birds is up to the discretion of the trip leader. The focus of using such is tied to our main goal of giving everyone a chance to see and/or hear the species we encounter, especially uncommon or difficult-to-observe birds (e.g., Winter Wren). Beyond a certain point, recordings can become a form of harassment for the birds, thus they should be used sparingly. **In particular, recordings should not be used around breeding birds, which can cause nest abandonment or even attract predators to a nest.**
5. Above all, follow the guidance of the trip leader.

**Advantages:** By birding with NABS, you'll have the opportunity to go out with experienced people who are familiar with the places we visit and who love to share their knowledge. NABS also provides greater access to certain areas where such is restricted, e.g., driving behind locked refuge gates at Wheeler NWR, or visiting the privately-owned Jones 'Hawk Farm'.

Although the focus is on birds, NABS outings also offer opportunities to become more generally familiar with many of the beautiful and diverse natural areas characteristic of northern Alabama. The places we'll visit provide excellent opportunities to observe, study, photograph and appreciate a variety of flora and fauna, including wildflowers, trees, insects, reptiles/amphibians, and mammals. Some NABS regulars have considerable knowledge of these other groups and would be glad to answer questions and provide information during trips.

**Trip Times and Durations, Equipment, Weather:** Almost all of our trips are on Saturdays. **Please note that we have different meeting times, depending on time of year: Aug-Oct and April-May meeting time is 7 am, while Nov-March trips will meet at 8 am.** In general birding is best, particularly for songbirds, early in the morning, especially during warmer times of the year. Trips to Wheeler and areas that involve more travel (Shoals, Marbut Bend, Guntersville,

etc.) typically last until around noon, others usually take 2-3 hours. Bring your binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras, field guides, refreshments, bug repellent and rain gear, as needed. We seldom officially cancel trips; if the weather is bad (heavy rain) or dangerous (icy roads, severe storms) enough to warrant cancellation, we will send out an email notice the day before the trip.

**Attendance Limits for Wheeler Trips:** NABS now requires members to be on its email list to attend trips. This is the only good way we have to regulate trip attendance, which is necessary for some of our outings. For example, most of our Wheeler NWR trips involve travel into restricted areas (behind locked gates) of the Refuge, where vehicles are normally not allowed. **When permission is granted for a group to go into restricted areas, the maximum number of vehicles allowed is 5, usually including a 15-person Refuge van. Minimum attendance required for a trip into restricted refuge areas is 8, with a limit of 20 attendees for NABS trips.** For Refuge trips, on the week of each trip I'll send out a reminder and you'll need to let me know if you plan on attending. Some other trips may require carpooling to keep caravans to a manageable size (e.g., the Shoals, Guntersville).

Another thing that needs mentioning for this season is that Refuge facilities, roads, etc. are currently undergoing major renovations that may stretch well into 2023 and could affect some of our trips. This could result in the need to alter plans on short notice. We'll keep you abreast of things as best we can.

\*Finally, a note on **COVID: We are required to follow CDC guidelines relative to covid when on Wheeler NWR.** Given guidelines may change over time, I'll be updating information in trip reminders, as needed. As of now masks won't be needed outside. However, attendees should bring one, just in case, especially on Wheeler trips, given how crowded the carpooling may be, and that the Refuge may require mask wearing inside their van, depending on CDC guidance. **Finally, those who are not vaccinated should not attend.**

Send your comments, questions and suggestions to Ken or Rufina Ward (256-679-8332 or 3570; [kenphin1990@gmail.com](mailto:kenphin1990@gmail.com), [rufina.ward@gmail.com](mailto:rufina.ward@gmail.com)).

Below are descriptions of the trips scheduled for this season, with directions to meeting spots, trip leaders and contact information. **Please note that we have added several non-NABS Christmas and Migration bird counts to the list. Some NABS members are heavily involved in these counts and we encourage you to consider participating in some of them, as they are always shorthanded.** Thanks for your support and we look forward to seeing you this season!

## 2022-23 NABS SCHEDULE AND DESCRIPTION OF TRIPS

### **1. Leighton Area Shorebird Trip, Wheeler Dam (NABT #2, 4, 5) – 27 August, 2022 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

We will explore the Leighton area and swing by Wheeler Dam on this trip. We'll be looking primarily for shorebird migrants, whose movement through our area should be peaking; our success will depend largely on water levels. We should pick up some neo-tropical songbird migrants as well. We'll meet at the Ingalls Boat Harbor Pavilion in Decatur. From the direction of Huntsville, cross the river bridge and take the first right onto Alt 72/20 (Wilson St.). Go about a mile and turn right on Neher St., follow to pavilion parking lot. – **Harry Dean, Leader (256-541-0842; [hdean@hiwaay.net](mailto:hdean@hiwaay.net))**

### **2. Indian Creek Greenway, Creekwood Park - 10 September, 2022 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

Indian Creek Greenway has been an interesting late spring migration spot for NABS the last few years. Our fall trip can also be productive, yielding a variety of songbird migrants, not to mention being a pretty place to bird and take pics. We'll access the greenway via Creekwood Park in SW Madison (360 Harvestwood Ct., **Madison, AL 35758**). From University Dr., take Slaughter Road south, turn left at Maple Valley Drive (there will be a sign to Creekwood before the turn) and follow signs through the subdivision to the parking lot. This is a walking trip, likely around 2-3 miles round trip; getting back to your car is easy, if you need to leave early. – **Jared Sapp, Leader (609-457-0850; [jared.sapp@gmail.com](mailto:jared.sapp@gmail.com))**

### **3. Monte Sano State Park (MSSP) (NABT #29) – 17 September, 2022 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

We will be looking again for fall migrants, especially warblers; Monte Sano is one of the better birding spots in the state during migration. As many or more birds actually pass through our area in the fall than in spring, but the migration period is longer, and a defined peak is hard to pinpoint. Even so, mid- to late- September seems to be a prime time for MSSP. Take Monte Sano Boulevard off Governors Drive at the top of the mountain and follow the signs to the park (please note that day-use fees may be collected at the park entrance: \$5 per person, discounts for children, military, etc.). Once there,

go in the direction of headquarters and park at the Camp Store, in the gravel, if possible. PLEASE NOTE THAT BIRDING IS SOMETIMES BETTER EARLIER; FEEL FREE TO COME UP AROUND SUNUP, IF YOU LIKE, AS SOME OF US WILL PROBABLY ALREADY BE AT THE OVERLOOK (34.745325 -86.511672). – Milton Harris, Leader (256-679-7501; [miltonh70@gmail.com](mailto:miltonh70@gmail.com))

**4. Wheeler NWR Fall Migration Count (NABT) – 24 September, 2022 (SATURDAY) 5-6 am (meeting time varies by count group)**

The format for this count is similar to that used for Audubon Christmas Counts – identify and count all birds seen or heard from dawn to late afternoon/dusk; different groups bird different parts of the refuge and nearby areas. This count is always scheduled during the peak fall migration period. **Birders of all skill levels are welcome; we need all the eyes and ears we can get and are usually short-handed on migration counts.** Cameras are also welcome, especially for documenting rarities, but the birding will be pretty intense, in order to cover areas sufficiently. Since we don't have a single gathering spot or time for folks to meet and join a group, new participants should contact Dwight Cooley by September 10 to get assigned to a party. **The Refuge Visitor Center is currently undergoing significant renovation scheduled to be completed by November 1, 2022. Consequently, we will not meet for compilation.** – Dwight Cooley, Leader/Compiler (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))

**5. Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (NABT #21) – 1 October, 2022 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

This trip targets neotropical songbird migrants and shorebirds (depending on water levels), either breeding residents heading south or transients passing through from the north, mostly on their way to Central and South America. We will meet at the southernmost parking lot of Calhoun Community College. From Huntsville, take I-565 W/Hwy 20 toward Decatur. Just before the river, take the Hwy 31 exit north, then turn right at the first traffic light past the Subway. - Ken Ward, Leader (256-679-8332; [kenphin1990@gmail.com](mailto:kenphin1990@gmail.com))

*Alabama Ornithological Society Fall Meeting, 14-16 October, 2022, Dauphin Island, AL*

**6. Wheeler NWR –Limestone Bay/White Springs Dike (NABT #23) – 5 November, 2022 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

We'll start from Mooresville and travel a short distance to Arrowhead Landing Road, as usual, and bird our way down by car, stopping at several places to look out over the bay, including the boat ramp area. We'll then go behind a refuge gate into the White Springs Dike area, birding along the dike to the gate on the southern end, near Decatur. We'll see some waterfowl (still a bit early for them), perhaps some Sandhill Cranes, hopefully a good number of White Pelicans, potentially several raptor species and a variety of songbirds, many of whom are returning winter residents. To get to the meeting place, take the Mooresville exit off I-565, go south towards Mooresville and meet at the parking area near where it intersects with old Highway 20 (34.627442 -86.880186). – Ken Ward, Leader (256-679-8332; [kenphin1990@gmail.com](mailto:kenphin1990@gmail.com))

**7. Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area (NABT #21) – 19 November, 2022 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

This trip will give us a chance to visit one of the most productive segments of the Wheeler NWR Christmas Count circle. There is active duck hunting at Swan Creek this time of year, which will drive away most of the waterfowl. However, the area has lots of other birds. One area of interest is the set of fields on the north edge of the management area (behind the old warehouse), where can be good for sparrows; White-Crowned Sparrow is a possibility here. Unless it rains heavily, we can expect to have some exposed mud flats where we could pick up some shorebirds, American Pipits and Lapland Longspurs. Over the past few years, LeConte's sparrow has been found a couple of times near the boat ramp within the management area compound (but uncertain as to whether we'll have access to this area). Other species we might encounter include Marsh Wren, Orange-Crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, all uncommon to rare species this time of year in our area. We will meet at the southernmost parking lot of Calhoun Community College. From Huntsville, take I-565 W/Hwy 20 toward Decatur. Just before the river, take the Hwy 31 exit north, then turn right at the first traffic light past the Subway.- Milton Harris, Leader (256-679-7501; [miltonh70@gmail.com](mailto:miltonh70@gmail.com))

**8. Wheeler NWR - Beaverdam Peninsula/Penny Bottoms/Rockhouse (NABT #26) – 3 December, 2022 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

Attendees will get to see another interesting part of the refuge on this trip. This area runs parallel to Limestone Bay and the Tennessee River and should yield a nice variety of songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, and other species. Take the Mooresville exit off I-565, go south on Mooresville Road and meet at the parking area near where it intersects with old Highway 20 (34.627442, 86.880186). – Dwight Cooley, Leader (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))

**9. Wheeler NWR – Limestone Bay/White Springs Dike (NABT #20, 23, 24) – 10 December, 2022 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

This traditional NABS route is one of the best we have for productive late fall/winter birding and among the best places in the state to get great looks at a variety of waterfowl, which should be present in numbers, especially the Tennessee River backwaters and marsh near the Decatur end of the dike. Birding with a group like NABS provides an opportunity to drive behind locked gates (provided we have at least eight people!), thus gaining access to the best areas to see lots of ducks and geese. We'll be birding by car to cover the necessary area, but there will be plenty of stops and opportunities to walk around and enjoy the refuge. In addition to waterfowl, we'll be looking for Sandhill Cranes, White Pelicans, late shorebird migrants, raptors and returning winter-resident songbirds. We'll be behind locked gates for 2-3 hours and should be done around lunchtime. Take the Mooresville exit off I-565, go south towards Mooresville and meet at the parking area near where it intersects with old Highway 20 (34.627442, -86.880186)- **Dwight Cooley, Leader (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))**

**10. Wheeler NWR Audubon Christmas Bird Count (NABT) - 17 December, 2022 (SATURDAY) 5:30 am**

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world. For over a hundred years, people have gathered during the winter holiday season to identify and count birds. In the process, they have created a vast pool of bird data that is a valuable source of information on the status and distribution of early winter bird populations. Parties of birders are assigned to different parts of a count circle, 15 miles in diameter, to identify and count all birds seen or heard from dawn to dusk. There are currently 14 active count circles in Alabama and over 2000 nationwide. Wheeler is one of the more productive inland count areas around, usually yielding 115-120 species, and always including some unusual birds. **Birders of all skill levels are welcome and needed; we go in all types of weather. If you can't do the whole day but would still like to participate, we should be able to connect you with a party leader to arrange that (contact Dwight by 1 December).** To join a party, meet at the Wheeler NWR Interpretive Nature (Visitor) Center, south off Hwy 67, east of Decatur. From I-65 take exit 334 and head toward Decatur; after crossing the water, the road to the Visitor Center will be on the left (watch for a sign on the right). We'll regroup there at sundown for the tally (compilation), which is a lot of fun. Bring binoculars, a spotting scope, if you have one, your camera, if you wish and lunch. (34.547406 -86.951136). – **Dwight Cooley, Leader/Compiler (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))**

**11. Cullman Audubon Christmas Bird Count – 18 December, 2022 (SUNDAY) 6:30 am**

Another Christmas Count that sometimes gets overlooked in northern Alabama is held in the Cullman area. Counters meet at Culpepper Real Estate (601 7th Ave SW, Cullman, AL 35055, close to the Post Office) to assign areas to be covered. **This count is frequently short-handed, so we hope some of you will consider helping out.** Those who want to help for part of the day (morning or afternoon) can also participate. - **Vince Meleski, Leader/Compiler (256-962-3688; [vmeleski@gmail.com](mailto:vmeleski@gmail.com))**

**12. Waterloo AL Audubon Christmas Bird Count – 19 December 2022 (MONDAY)**

**Coordination with compiler is required before the count.** This date is a change from historically first Saturday count, hoping to increase participation by folks involved in other first Saturday counts (Hint, Hint, Wheeler NWR Participants!) If anyone wants to join, I will gladly cut a "piece of the pie" for a separate party; this count already has a few pieces vacant. Additional participants are needed, please contact the compiler if you're interested. - **Damien Simbeck, Leader/Compiler (256-856-3079; [tnbarredowl@aol.com](mailto:tnbarredowl@aol.com)).**

**13. Guntersville Area Audubon Christmas Bird Count (NABT) - 26 December, 2022 (MONDAY) 5:00-6:00 am (meeting time varies by count group)**

This Count, in another well-known birding area in northern Alabama, yields a wide variety of songbird, raptor and waterfowl species. The format is the same as that of the Wheeler Count. As with all our counts, Guntersville could also use more participants – please consider helping out, even if for only part of the day. Unlike the Wheeler Christmas Count, there is no single gathering spot for folks to meet and join a group. For this reason, please contact Linda Reynolds if you are interested in joining one of the eight parties of counters; meeting times for different parties may vary. The meeting spot for compilation is the Guntersville Public Library. Look for the sign along Hwy 431 in Guntersville (past 227), to your right, if coming from the direction of Huntsville. – **Linda Reynolds, Leader/Compiler (256-298-1810; [rreynolds2970@charter.net](mailto:rreynolds2970@charter.net))**

**14. Wheeler Dam, AL Audubon Christmas Bird Count - 2 January, 2023 (MONDAY)**

**Coordination with compiler is required before the count.** If anyone wants to join, I will gladly cut a "piece of the pie" for a separate party; this count already has a few pieces vacant. Additional participants are needed, please contact the compiler if you are interested. - **Damien Simbeck, Leader/Compiler (256-856-3079, [tnbarredowl@aol.com](mailto:tnbarredowl@aol.com))**

**15. Wheeler NWR - Limestone Bay/White Springs Dike (NABT #20, 23, 24) – 7 January, 2023 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

Join us for another trip to one of our favorite birding areas, as we look for waterfowl, raptors, cranes, a variety of songbirds, etc. Expect to be behind locked refuge gates for 2-3 hours. Take the Mooresville exit off I-565, go south on Mooresville Road and meet at the parking area near where it intersects with old Highway 20 (34.627442 -86.880186). – **Tom Ress, Leader (256-233-3057; [resscat@aol.com](mailto:resscat@aol.com))**

*Wheeler NWR Festival of the Cranes, 14-15 January, 2023*

**16. Town Creek Embayment, Wheeler Dam, Joe Wheeler State Park (NABT #2, 3, 4) – 21 January, 2023 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

This trip primarily targets waterfowl and other water birds, but also includes some productive songbird areas, especially in the state park. We'll meet at the WalMart parking lot off Hwy 72 W in Athens (34.786933 -86.958486). - **Harry Dean, Leader (256-541-0842; [hdean@hiwaav.net](mailto:hdean@hiwaav.net))**

*Alabama Ornithological Society Winter Meeting, 27-29 January, 2023, Guntersville State Park, AL*

**17. Guntersville Waterfront/Peninsula, Guntersville Dam South (NABT #35, 36) – 4 February, 2023 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

This trip starts on Sunset Parkway along the west side of Guntersville. We should see a great variety of ducks, many loons and grebes, possibly some odd terns and gulls, eagles, etc. Meet in Guntersville at the Chamber of Commerce parking lot on the south end of the Hwy 431 bridge. From there, we'll go west on the Lake Loop Road and bird the waterfront. The tour will then go south and across the Hwy 69 Causeway to the south end of Guntersville Dam (34.363686 -86.29116). – **Linda Reynolds/Matt Morrow/Ken Ward, Co-Leaders (256-298-1810; [rreynolds2970@charter.net](mailto:rreynolds2970@charter.net))**

**18. Swan Creek WMA/Round Island Recreation Area (NABT #21, 22) – 11 February, 2023 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

We'll start along Dairy Road in Swan Creek WMA and work our way west, searching for water birds, sparrows and other winter residents or early migrants. Mid- to late-February is a transition period for waterfowl and other birds, and weather will play a key role in what we see. We will meet at the southernmost parking lot of Calhoun Community College. From Huntsville, take I-565 W/Hwy 20 toward Decatur. Just before the river, take the Hwy 31 exit north, then turn right at the first traffic light past the Subway. - **Dwight Cooley, Leader (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))**

**19. Wheeler NWR-Limestone Bay/White Springs Dike (NABT #20, 23, 24) - 4 March, 2023 (SATURDAY) 8:00 am (NOTE LATER MEETING TIME)**

Our final trip to White Springs Dike for the season is in its 7th year, as waterfowl start moving out of the area, and prior to spring migration. Duck numbers are still usually good, but with less variety, with migrating Blue-winged Teal moving through, good numbers of Green-winged Teal and Shovelers around, etc. A few years ago we got a big surprise, with the presence of a beautiful male Cinnamon Teal in the marshes near the Decatur end of the dike. Otherwise, a variety of songbirds and raptors will be around. Take the Mooresville exit off I-565, go south on Mooresville Road and meet at the parking area near where it intersects with old Highway 20 (34.627442 -86.880186). – **Ken Ward, Leader (256-679-8332; [kenphin1990@gmail.com](mailto:kenphin1990@gmail.com))**

**20. Monte Sano SP (NABT #29) – 8 April, 2023 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

On this trip, we hope to catch some early spring migrants, especially Louisiana Waterthrush. To get to our meeting spot, take Monte Sano Boulevard off Governors Drive at the top of the mountain and follow the signs to the park; once there, go in the direction of headquarters and park at the Camp Store, in the gravel if possible (34.745325 -86.511672). - **John Ehinger, Leader (256-536-2716; [johneingersr@gmail.com](mailto:johneingersr@gmail.com))**

### **21. Wheeler NWR - Blackwell Swamp (NABT #26) – 15 April, 2023 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

This area has been getting more attention lately as a prime birding spot. There is flooded woodland and marsh habitat here, which can be explored by car, on foot or by canoe. A variety of wetland species may be present, including Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron and, perhaps, some other less common species, such as Snowy Egret or Little Blue Heron. Common Gallinule is now a regular in this area, Anhinga a possibility, and you might get a glimpse at an alligator ☺. We may also encounter some waterfowl, including Wood Duck and Blue-winged Teal. There should be songbird migrants around by this time, including such returning breeders as Prothonotary Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. This is also good woodpecker habitat, especially for Pileated and Red-headed. To get to our meeting place, take County Line Rd south off I-565, head south 5.5 miles and turn left on Jolly B Rd; there is a 2-story house, with a white fence on the left just before the turn. From here it's about a mile to a gravel parking area on the right. We'll explore several areas, including a tree-lined refuge road near the parking area (we'll likely walk it), which is good for songbirds, other wooded spots and several viewing areas on both west and east sides of the swamp (time permitting). - **Tom Ress, Leader (256-233-3057; [resscat@aol.com](mailto:resscat@aol.com))**.

### ***Alabama Ornithological Society Spring Meeting, 21-23 April, 2023, Dauphin Island, AL***

### **22. Marbut Bend Trail – 22 April, 2023 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

Developed by TVA and Limestone County and opened in 2014, this area includes a 1.2-mile trail through wetlands, riparian habitat and open fields, along the Elk River. The gravel trail includes an elevated boardwalk across a beaver pond and two platforms overlooking the river and one of its embayments; the walk is easy and the scenery is beautiful. If you haven't been on this trip before, I highly recommend it; we'll see lots of birds. We'll meet at the trailhead northwest of Athens. From Huntsville, take U.S. 72 west to Athens and take the exit loop to U.S. 31 north. From there, go 2.4 miles and turn left on Alabama 99. Follow the signs along Alabama 99 for 12.4 miles to the trailhead entrance road on the left ([34.911200](tel:34.911200), [-87.104722](tel:-87.104722)) – **Dwight Cooley, Leader (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))**

### **23. Wheeler NWR Spring Migration Count (NABT) – 29 April, 2023 (SATURDAY) 5:00-6:00 am (meeting time varies by count group)**

The format for this count is similar to Christmas Counts – identify and count all birds seen or heard from dawn to late afternoon/dusk; different groups bird different parts of the refuge and nearby areas. **Birders of all skill levels are welcome and needed, as we are usually short-handed for migration counts.** Arrangements can also be made to spend part of the day counting for those who can't commit to the whole day (morning or afternoon). We'll regroup at the Wheeler NWR Interpretive Nature (Visitor) Center ([34.547406](tel:34.547406) -[-86.951136](tel:-86.951136)) around 6:00 pm for compilation (see Wheeler NWR Christmas Count Trip #10 for directions). Since we won't have a single gathering spot for folks to meet and join a group, new participants should contact Dwight Cooley by 20 April. – **Dwight Cooley, Leader/Compiler (256-565-6239; [sabrewing@earthlink.net](mailto:sabrewing@earthlink.net))**

### **24. Monte Sano SP (NABT #29) – 30 April, 2023 (SUNDAY) 7:00 am**

Join us near migration peak as we bird one of the best spots in the state for spring migration. The Park can be filled with birds this time of year, including an impressive variety of beautiful warblers in breeding plumage, orioles, grosbeaks, both species of tanagers, 4-5 species of vireos, all thrush species we can see in this area, etc. The birds are often relatively easy to see too; several hotspots near our meeting spot are easy to find, including the overlooks, camp store, Japanese Garden, planetarium, cyclists' and hikers' parking lots, etc., not to mention numerous accessible trails. You are also encouraged to visit the park at other times during late April-early May, especially after a weather front has passed through, which will often concentrate the migrants. There are almost always a few birders around the hotspots during this period (the earlier in the morning the better). To get to our meeting spot, take Monte Sano Boulevard off Governors Drive at the top of the mountain and follow the signs to the park; once there, go in the direction of headquarters and park at the Camp Store, in the gravel if possible (day-use fees may be collected at the park entrance: \$5 per person, discounts for children, military, etc.). PLEASE NOTE THAT THE BIRDING IS SOMETIMES BETTER EARLIER; FEEL FREE TO COME UP BETWEEN 6:00 AND 6:30 IF YOU LIKE, AS SOME OF US WILL PROBABLY ALREADY BE AT THE OVERLOOK ([34.745325](tel:34.745325) -[-86.511672](tel:-86.511672)). - **Harry Dean, Leader (256-541-0842; [hdean@hiwaay.net](mailto:hdean@hiwaay.net))**

### **25. Guntersville Area – 6 May, 2023 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

We'll visit several places we've birded before, as time permits, starting on the south side of Guntersville Dam (an excellent migration birding spot), then Guntersville City waterfront, before finishing at Guntersville SP. We should see a wide variety of warblers and other migrants, as well as Red-headed Woodpeckers at the dam, eagles and ospreys over the river, etc. We'll meet at the south side of Guntersville Dam. To get there from Huntsville, take Hwy 431 to Guntersville,

turning right at the Chamber of Commerce just over the bridge, then go west on the Lake Loop road and turn right on Hwy 69, crossing the causeway. Follow the road several miles and turn right on Union Grove Rd (will be a dam sign there); after a few miles you'll see another sign to the dam, turn right and follow down to the parking lot (34.4250, -86.3930). -Linda Reynolds/Matt Morrow/Ken Ward, co-Leaders (256-298-1810; [rreynolds2970@charter.net](mailto:rreynolds2970@charter.net))

**26. Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station (WTARS) (NABT #27) -13 May, 2022 (SATURDAY) 7:00 am**

WTARS is Alabama A&M University's research farm; it is a 970-acre property with lots of open grassland and pasture areas, plus small patches of forest and a sizable pond edged with black willow. It is one of the best places in the state to observe open country birds and always makes for a great trip (our most popular). Species we'll likely see or have a good chance of encountering include Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel, Lark Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Eastern Kingbird, several swallow species, Bobolink, Horned Lark, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Bobwhite, possibly Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (a pair WAS seen on the farm during our trip last year), perhaps some shorebirds (depending on overspill from the pond), Green Heron, etc. From Huntsville, take Hwy 431 north and just past Meridianville Middle School, turn right on Walker Lane (light), then take the first right onto the farm; park at the first building on the right (34.9025, -86.5596). – Ken Ward, Leader (256-679-8332; [kenphin1990@gmail.com](mailto:kenphin1990@gmail.com))