

Okatibbee Creek Audubon Society

October 2004

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Read OCAS' newsletter online at <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/ocas>

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Note from Rich Richardson: Meetings are held at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Meridian every second Monday of the month at 7:00. Trinity is located at 4223 Poplar Springs Drive. Please use the SOUTH driveway on the church property (the one nearer downtown Meridian) and proceed around through the parking lot to the back, where you may enter the building through the double doors. Next meeting: November 8, 7:00 p.m.

Sightings

Submitted by our members and others

By **Pat and Elaine Sanders**: 10/6/2004 A pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks for the past three days feeding on our sunflower feeder. Also the first Purple Finches have arrived. Meridian, MS.

Events& Interesting Stuff

Strawberry Plains Audubon Center, Holly Springs, MS, October 27, 28, and 29: We are having a kids' event called Enchanted Forest. This event will feature various people dressed as animals along the history trail. Kids ages 3-7 will be guided through the trail to each animal where the animal will give a brief lesson on its life, habitat, and

so on. This is a great program to expose smaller children to nature. Please contact SPAC at 662-252-1155 for more details.



Many thanks to Larry & Cecilia Gordon for the chili and fixins' and cookies in October!

REFRESHMENTS LIST

November—Ruth Ann Rosamond
January—Howard and Anne Malone
February—Lauren and Sheila Thead

Mississippi Forestry Commission Hosts the 82nd Annual N.A.S.F. Meeting September 25 - 30, 2004, in Jackson

By Ed Brown, Information & Education Coordinator

State Forester Jim Sledge and staff hosted the 82nd Annual National Association of State Foresters' meeting in Jackson. The highlight of the meeting was a field tour of the Ross Barnett Reservoir. The focus of the field tour was the Mississippi Forestry Commission's forest management assistance on the 20,000 acres of forest land owned by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District.

There were four field tour sites. The first site consisted of the first slash pine management site with wildlife management for white-tail deer on the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area. The second site was a loblolly pine area owned by the Rankin County Board of Education. It was sixteenth-section public trust land that featured a sawtimber production stand/prescribed burning program to benefit the school children of Rankin County. The third site was a hazard mitigation/prescribed burning area to reduce the threat of wildfires near a residential area. The fourth site was a hardwood management area which produced high-quality oak trees to be grown for sawtimber production.

The meeting was a gathering of all fifty State Foresters and their administrative staff to solve issues concerning forest management, wildfire suppression, and wildfire prevention. Also the other State Foresters showcased their success in urban forestry, water quality of the forest, wildfire prevention, and other forestry related issues.

It was a fun-filled week of learning about different State Forestry Agencies and how we solve the challenges of managing our renewable resource of trees.



Fish-eating Birds to be Targeted

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Posted on Fri, Oct. 08, 2004

CLEVELAND - The U.S. Department of Agriculture is taking the fight against migratory birds that attack Mississippi Delta catfish ponds to where they roost. The USDA says it is after several species that attack the farms, but the chief concern is the double-crested cormorant, said Valerie Burton, an USDA aquaculture biologist.

Burton said the USDA has asked permission to access properties in the region that are known roosting areas for the double-crested cormorant.

The USDA plans to use nonlethal techniques, including harassment with pyrotechnics and other noise making devices. It also will use lethal means of shooting with firearms, said Burton. Burton said the USDA may also put up lights or remove eggs and nests to get rid of the birds. Other fish-eating bird species such as great egrets, great blue herons and American white pelicans also attack fish farms across Mississippi, the USDA said.

All the birds are protected under the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act. However, the USDA obtained special permission to remove the excess number of birds for their insatiable eating habits on the profitable industry, said USDA State Director Kris Godwin.

Godwin said fish farmers have permission to remove the birds in order to protect their business.

Remember, articles, bird sightings and items of interest are requested for the newsletter!



American Eagle Foundation Presents Program (This item thanks to Lydia Burns.)

The American Eagle Foundation will put on their Wings over America program at 7:00p.m. on Friday, November 5, at Northeast Middle School on Highway 39 North in Meridian. They will have 8-9 birds of prey--including a bald eagle--in the program. The program promises to be educational and fun as the two ornithologists display the birds and interact with the audience. The AEF is headquartered in Pigeon Forge TN, and they perform all over America from Hawaii to New York. This will be their first visit to MS, according to the CEO, so we hope to give them a warm welcome.



Of Sturm und Drang

S *Sturm und Drang*...that means “Storm and Stress”—an old German expression referring to the intellectual awakening in that country during the late 18th century. Thought I’d just fling it out to show how I know some of these really highbrow things.

Actually, I do like the expression. There’s something kind of appropriate about the words “storm and stress” in connection to intellectual creativity. Here in the South we’ve had a rough late summer, having been assaulted by sloppy, sullen, or furious creatures going by such normally everyday names like Bonnie, Charley, Jeanne, Ivan... Well, OK, “Ivan” isn’t the first name we look up in the *Name Your Baby* books when we anticipate some new little bundle of joy. But it’s always kind of a shock getting hit by a Texas-sized pile of wind and rain that bears a name your first cousin’s youngest child wouldn’t be ashamed of. I mean, why don’t they call these storms and hurricanes things like “Brunhilde” or “Frankenstein” or “Igor” (not too far from “Ivan”, after all)? Then you could feel all right saying, “Man, that Brunhilde—she really was a nasty witch last September! Got in there, messed up the house, dropped a limb on the garage...” It sounds funny telling people, “Jeanne tore up all my outside sheds and took down several

trees, too!” Sounds like you might have had a really bad spat with the wife and she decided to get even by dynamiting your little tool shops or something.

Anyway, back to my first point: It would be soothing somehow to imagine that some intellectual benefit would be derived from all the “*sturm und drang*” this summer. Here in Macon I lost about half of one of the hundred-year-old pecans that soared about 80 feet up into the air, and a redbud—a big old redbud which was already dying, true, but still filled with tiny fuschia-colored blooms every spring, one of the first reminders that winter was about over. Kids from town gathered at my old house on this knob of a hill where the wind was felt powerfully enough to be a sort of thrill-ride-type attraction. I mean, you could drive past and see a number of tykes and younger teenagers (the older ones were too cool for this diversion) lined up on the porch, bracing their skinny little chests into the howling gusts, their T-shirts plastered against their bodies, their hair pulled backwards from their faces. In town, somehow—maybe because of the proximity of the houses to each other, and the fact that it’s a bit lower in altitude than we are—the wind just didn’t seem so strong. I could’ve charged admission.

But we had relatively few effects from the storms, and I was and am quite grateful for having been spared. However, some of you in Lauderdale County, I’ve learned, are still trying to clean up trees and repair things our erstwhile “friends” damaged before they lumbered on out of the area. I sit today (OCAS meeting day, second Monday of October) and watch a soft drizzle fall from some unnamed front that settled in on Friday and has hung around to give my sinuses a break from the autumn dust and pollen. (I think I will name this front “Jane”—she is plain, gentle and steady, surely as deserving of a name as her boisterous older siblings.) I look over my nicely-cleaned yard and the neat (if large) pile of tree parts already gathered and sawed up, and I remember the massive amount of work still to be done I saw last Saturday in the Meridian area. So I think it would be some small comfort if something good could come from the summer weather.

And that’s where that *sturm und drang* stuff comes in! (Ah, you knew there was a hook somewhere at the end of this line I’ve been reeling out.) We struggled this month to get the newsletter together. All of you had other things on your minds—restoring some electricity to your houses, moving limbs so you could get out the driveway, helping your neighbors; little things like that—and in the meantime, my printer gave up the ghost. It lived

a long and fruitful life, but its time had definitely come. As of this writing, I haven't moved my lazy self yet to buy another one, and I would like to whine that they're just so expensive, but, alas, that excuse won't fly any more, will it.

So here's my appeal to those of you who frequently write but couldn't because of your weather-related emergencies: Let the *sturm und drang* stir some of your usual intellectual creativity and send me and Lauren some interesting sightings and nature-related things for the November newsletter! In return, I will promise not to use German, French or Spanish words or twist your arms again.

For a while.

--*Sheila*

<p style="text-align:center"><i>OCAS OFFICERS</i> R.L. Richardson....President Howard Malone....Treasurer Ed Brown...Conservation Chairperson Nancy Donald....Field Trip Chairperson Ruth Ann Rosamond...Refreshments Coordinator Lauren & Sheila Thead....Newsletter</p>
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