



# THE DRUMMER

## OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE RUSSELL COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Editor-Dave Worley

MEETINGS ARE THE 4<sup>TH</sup> TUESDAY  
AT THE LEBANON COMMUNITY ROOM  
AT 7:30 PM

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**MEETING:** Our last meeting was at Laurel Bed Lake. Dave & Diana Worley, Bob & Jean Montgomery, Bob & Diana Riggs, James & Sandy Chafin, Wallace & Carolyn Coffey, Fred, Janice & Ricky Martin and Dean, Nina & Shawn Gates showed up for the picnic. Bob provided a canoe. Everyone bought food and we feasted on Hot Dogs and all the extras. The birding was good, but not as good as last year. No eagles, but we did get several trips over by an Osprey. Our secretary managed to get lots of good pictures, maybe they will put in an appearance someday, to embarrass the participants.

**HAPPENINGS:** On August 27<sup>th</sup>, Fred & Janice Martin, Wallace Coffey, Larry McDaniel and Dave & Diana Worley went to Rankin Bottom. There were people there from everywhere. The birding was fabulous. If you have never been, you should go.

Bob Riggs says there is a movement under way to save Mendota Fire Tower and turn it into a wild life viewing platform. They need help so call Bob if you are interested.

September 4<sup>th</sup> found Tom & Laverne Hunter at Rankin Bottom for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 5 days. In addition to all the sandpipers, they found a Black-bellied Plover.

Tom also recently found a Bald Eagle at Clifton, 2 Black-crowned Night Heron at Stuarts Pond, and heard two Great Horned Owls behind his house.

**RANKIN BOTTOM** by Jean Montgomery. After actively birding for three years, I finally made it to Rankin Bottom. My expectation of the shore bird haven were more than met. Tom, Laverne and I scoped all the "peep" sandpipers except the Bairds and had plenty of time to observe the subtle differences in appearances. I picked up some life birds including the Stilt, Buff-breasted and White rumped Sandpipers. However the highlight of the trip was a panoramic view of several dozen Black-crowned Night Herons, with a multitude of Great Blues and Great Egrets in the background. It was a day to remember and I will not wait another three years to go back.

**PRESIDENTS CORNER:** I hope everyone has had a chance to get into the field recently and do some bird watching. What little time I have had in the woods has really been fast and exciting. Not much singing but plenty of quick movement. You just get a quick glimpse as they dart around in the trees. I must warn you to be careful on your ID, the woods are full of those confusing fall warblers and there are still plenty of birds in molt. The challenges involved in IDing these birds really lends to a day of fun. A few days ago, I got caught without my field guide and was really having a hard time trying to ID a bird. Did this slip of the mind make a better observer of me? You bet! Nothing worse than a mystery bird that leaves a nagging doubt for the rest of the day. I started taking notes, and continued taking notes describing the birds plumage from the medium crown stripe to the slightly worn notch on the fifth rectrice. The field notes and behavior soon filled up five pages in the notebook before the bird flew away. Later that night, thanks to my notes I was able to ID the bird and therefore sleep peacefully. This experience reminded me of my early birding days, where I took notes on just about every bird I saw in the field. Then I would compare notes with the field guide. I quickly learned the field marks and could describe the topography down to a lesser covert feather. I think maybe I will leave the guide home more often and revert to observation and notes. Try it and see how fast your skills will develop. See you in the field.

Bob Riggs

P.S. Well, maybe I will leave the guide in the vehicle. I would like to brag on Tom Hunter for a minute. He identified a White-rumped Sandpiper at a thousand paces then confirmed the ID at 20 feet.

If anyone wants to go to Mendota for hawk watching, just give Bob Riggs a call.

**BANQUET:** We will have our annual birthday banquet on September 19<sup>th</sup>, at Bonanza Steakhouse. Be there by 7 p.m., buy your own dinner and join us in the meeting room. Please bring a small birding gift that you would enjoy receiving to exchange at the dinner.