

## Eagle Activity Observed, Photographed

Former President of FoNR and very good amateur photographer Lawrence Croft has been observing activity in the eagle nest located just past the Refuge Check Station. On February 15, Croft noted that an eagle was acting as if incubating eggs. The eagle stayed in the nest for more than an hour of Croft's observation and was still there when he left well after sundown.

On February 17, Dr. Croft again observed the nest. This time he was able to photograph the eagle just after she had flown back into the nest. In the first photo, the eagle lands with wings outstretched, then settles back down into the nest for the work at hand (second photo). Eagle nesting activity is always exciting news.

Then on March 12, Croft checked to see if any damage had been done to the nest by the wind and rain on March 10 and 11. He got a good look at the nest and the platform tree, and no apparent damage had been done by the weather. However he did not see or hear an eagle either on the nest or in the area.

Dr. Croft stated, "This seems unusual to me based on recent observations where the eagle on the nest has had its head above the edge of the nest much of the time, and in this long a period has stood up in the nest and sometimes even taken a flight or two. One might think that the eagle might be down low in the nest taking a nap or something. However, about 5 minutes after I arrived a few small birds flew into the nest tree and moved around on the limbs very near the nest as they appeared to be looking for insects, and one of the birds even landed on the edge of the nest. I'm not sure what they were but they appeared to be and acted like Nuthatches. This would appear to be an indication that indeed there was no mature eagle in the nest or even nearby. This sounds almost like the eagles have given up on nesting. I hope you will get reports from others that the eagles are still there."

Refuge employee, Andrea Dunstan, reports the nest is intact and the eagles are still hanging out in the area; however, there is no evidence of incubation. If you observe any activity nesting, please notify the Refuge staff.



Photos by L. Croft

## From The FONR President– James Taylor



It is spring again and time to institute a “No Child Left Inside Policy,” and the Refuge is an excellent place to start. There are many activities for children at the Refuge such as fishing, trail walking, bird watching, and alligator viewing. If your child or grandchild has never been to the Refuge, the Visitor Center is a great place to begin. Most children have a wonderful time there.

We are gearing up for this year’s activities. The Youth Fishing Derby will be held on April 27. A big change this year will be that there will no longer be an entry fee and we look forward to increased participation. One event coming up in the near future is a behind the scenes tour of the Refuge and luncheon for members only that will be held on May 18. If you are not a member, we would love to have you join us. Become a member today by contacting one of the board members or visit the website and download a membership form.

Also, a new and exciting public event is being planned for June and Canoe Days are being put on the calendar. More details for all of these events will be forthcoming soon through e-mail, the Friends website, and Facebook. So be on the lookout for more information.

We want to thank Wayne Wells for agreeing to fill the unexpired term for Ray Iglay who has helped us out tremendously in the short time he was able to be on the board. Ray is still going to help us on many projects but due to his many other commitments did not feel like he would be able to attend the board meetings and we look forward to his continued involvement in the Friends.

I am pleased to report to the members that the board has approved funds to support Ethan Follet’s Eagle Scout Project to build and install blue bird nesting boxes at various locations within the Refuge. Ethan is another in the long line of Boy Scouts who have contributed to the betterment of the Refuge for visitors and wildlife and we appreciate their commitment.

Again, I want to thank all of the volunteers who work to make The Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge a great place to visit and one of the premiere sanctuaries for wildlife in the nation.

## Refuge Manager Steve Reagan’s Reflections



It is nice to see the sun arriving earlier each morning! At this moment the cypress near the Cypress Cove Boardwalk, although still within their winter dormancy, look bright and warm in the morning light and two pair of

wood ducks and one pair of hooded mergansers are grouped up just outside my window on Bluff Lake. As the group of birds swims toward each other, I can hear the wood duck's call and I wonder, is this a warning to the mergansers? The group is slowly coming together and it almost seems like the mergansers are just a little concerned as they cut back and forth but continue moving forward. When the birds meet, that concern seems to be more in my head than theirs. The members of this new consolidated group are now intermingled as if they were never apart.

I see this same interaction beginning among the human users of the Refuge as well. Vehicle traffic is increasing with each nice day as turkey hunters and fisherman make their way to their chosen hunting or fishing locations. Walkers, bicyclists and other observers of wildlife are becoming more active along the Refuge's roadways. Often these groups too look concerned as they approach each other, but as long as each group follows the rules of the road, they too will soon be intermingling as if never apart.

As we each enjoy the start of spring, please take time to ensure each other’s safety and future enjoyment of the Refuge. Follow the posted speed limits, give a few extra feet of room when you pass by someone along the roadside, and try to park so you don't create a hazard.

The Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge is a great place to see the sunrise, wildlife and their habitats, and maybe even the sunset too. So, slow down and take the opportunity to breathe deeply, enjoy spring, and intermingle with the wildlife.

### Did you know...

- Students who spend more time outdoors in natural areas are more motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Their academic achievement is also higher across multiple subject areas.

<http://www.fws.gov/letsgooutside/educators.html>

**General Membership Meeting**  
April 18, 6:30 p.m.

**Tisdale Auditorium**  
**Noxubee Visitor Center**

**FoNR April 18 Program to Highlight RCWs**

Steven Lewis, wildlife biologist at Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, will present a talk on red-cockaded woodpeckers at the April general meeting of Friends of Noxubee Refuge. The program will begin at 6:30 in the Tisdale Auditorium of the Refuge Visitor Center.

The red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) is an endangered species that relies on the Refuge for its existence in east-central Mississippi. Therefore, Noxubee is extensively managed for RCWs. This program should give attendees a glimpse of those management practices as well as some basic information about the small black and white bird found on the Refuge.

Lewis is a graduate of Mississippi State University and recently returned to the area from Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama where he was deputy refuge manager. He also has previous experience as a biologist in Arizona and Georgia. Lewis and his wife, Lindsey, have a son.

The public is invited to join the Friends of Noxubee Refuge for this program and a social period with refreshments afterwards.

**"Cypress Ornaments"**  
**Susan Hamilton, Second Place**  
**2012 Photo Contest**



**Saturday at the Refuge**

April 27 - The Youth Fishing Derby (ages 4 through 15)  
No entry fee or reservation necessary.

A limited number of rods-and-reels will be available for purchase as supplies last. For further information, please contact the Refuge Office, 662-323-5548.



This is a nice stringer from last year's Youth Fishing Derby.

**Youth Wildlife Photo Workshop**  
**And Trail Walk**

June 1, 2013 – 10 a.m. until Noon  
Visitor Center Auditorium

Instructor, Katherine Lawrence, Photographer  
MSU Extension Service

Be prepared for the 2013 Amateur Photography Contest!

Contest rules and entry forms will be available at the workshop.

Tips will be given on use of your camera and outdoors photo shooting.

Trail Walk and Photo Shoot – Trail of Big Trees, Beaver Dam and Woodpecker Trails

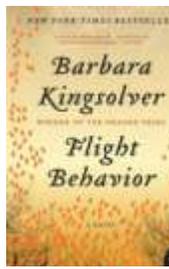
Awards will be given for the Largest Tree Photograph. Pictures of you and that Big Tree will be reviewed at the Visitor Center to select the winner.

For registration in the workshop, contact Andrea Dunstan ([Andrea.Dunstan@fws.gov](mailto:Andrea.Dunstan@fws.gov)) or Margaret McMullen ([mrmcmull@bellsouth.net](mailto:mrmcmull@bellsouth.net)).

Questions? Call Andrea at 662-323-5548 x 226.



## Butterflies Nonfiction/Fiction



A recent news report cited a 59% drop on the number of Monarch migrants this year, based on numbers reported from their Mexican wintering grounds. Two recent books, one nonfiction and one fiction, are interesting to read side by side.

The first one (nonfiction), *The Dangerous World of Butterflies* by Peter Laufer, covers the butterfly trade in general from butterfly-centered tourism, the cultivation of butterflies (for schools, wedding releases, etc.), butterfly collectors, and more. One chapter, titled *the flight and plight of the monarch*, blames the decline of Monarch populations on the poaching of firewood and commercial timber from their wintering grounds. Although the monarch is a local treasure and draws tourists to the area, the pressure for wood wins out. Conservationists replant but the poachers remove more than can be replaced. Laufer is a reporter so he withholds his opinions but writes a book with the slightly cynical viewpoint, probably a side effect of his trade. You don't really want to hang out with him.

On the fiction side, Barbara Kingsolver, a restless farm wife, blames climate change. Her first view of the golden "lake of fire" results from a "just got to get away from it all" escape up the mountain. Tired from the demands of motherhood, irritated by an unappreciative mother-in-law and a good but boring husband, dreading the drudgery of sheep shearing, she jumps into a study of the butterflies. Her family is fascinated but has plans to clear-cut the area. A chance visit from a scientist results in the mountaintop becoming a study site with the woman becoming a volunteer. Pretty soon, all the odd people show up, the ones who believe it is divine revelation, those who see the commercial opportunities, and just those who like butterflies because they are beautiful. Pretty soon, the "crafty" ones are crocheting Monarchs, and they and other eccentrics are camping on the mountain. The rest of what happens will be revealed only if you read the book, *Flight Behavior*. Kingsolver is often preachy (I put down her *Small Wonders* because of it) but her eye for family complexities and her Appalachian sensibilities usually make her an engaging read, as she is in this case. I *would* like to hang out with her.

Kingsolver's book is available just about everywhere. I bought Laufer's at FONR's Nature Store.

Sherrie Wiygul

**For up-to-date information, please visit these websites.**

**Friends Web Page:** <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/index.html>

**Friends Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/FriendsofNoxubeeRefuge/>



is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization,  
dedicated to conserving our natural resources  
through volunteer work and fund raising.

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### JOIN FONR TODAY!

**Individual yearly memberships  
start at only \$15.**  
**2970 BLUFF LAKE ROAD**  
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**For a membership form or information  
about the Refuge, call 662-323-5548 or visit**

<http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/>

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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### 2013 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP DATES

**April 18, June 20, September 19**

*Contributions to this newsletter were made by*

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