

https://www.midfloridanewspapers.com/highlands_news-sun/news/archbold-avian-ecology-staff-flock-north-for-ornithology-conference/article_5377e1e4-6a06-11ed-8d08-9f4610a98d2f.html

Archbold Avian Ecology staff flock north for Ornithology Conference

Special to the Highlands News-Sun Provided by Archbold Biological Station
Nov 25, 2022

1 of 2



Dr. Reed Bowman organized an 'Archbold Lunch' during the conference for past and present 'Archboldians' to share the From left: Dr. Angela Tringali, Dr. Jennifer Smith, Tori Bakley, Kelly Roberts, Samantha Apgar, Lyn Brown, Natasha Lehr, Heather, Dr. Reed Bowman, and Charlotte Wilson.

COURTESY/DR. REED BOWMAN

VENUS — Archbold's Avian Ecology Program staff made their way to Plymouth, Massachusetts this October to attend the annual meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists, marking the organization's centennial conference. The organization was founded in Massachusetts in 1922 as the New England Bird Banding Association, and has since expanded to include ornithological research from the entirety of the United States and Latin America.

Dr. Reed Bowman, director of Archbold's Avian Ecology Program, served as the president of the Association of Field Ornithologists from 2014-2016 and continues to serve on the council as co-editor-in-chief of their Journal of Field Ornithology. Bowman has been taking students and members of his lab to ornithological conferences for more than 30 years. Bowman said, "Nearly half of the attendees at this meeting were students or early career professionals. There is no better place to network and discuss your research than professional meetings. Since I am retiring this winter, this will be the last flock of lab mates I will get to mentor at such meetings. I will miss that more than anything but this was a great group to end on."

Dr. Angela Tringali, director of Archbold's Conservation Science of Military Landscapes Program, also attended the conference and serves on the Association of Field Ornithologists council, along with a dozen other dedicated researchers. Tringali commented, "The society recognizes that a better understanding of birds native to the Northern and Southern Hemispheres is critical for conservation, especially for migratory and broadly distributed species. AFO is committed to engaging ornithologists across the Western hemisphere and beyond, and it is an honor to serve on AFO's council and have the opportunity to help make those programs happen."

This was the first in-person meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists since 2019. Avian Ecology Lab Manager Meredith Heather said, "It was nice attending an in-person conference again after two years of virtual events. Being face-to-face allowed for better opportunities to network, meet new friends, and have conversations about current research in ornithology."

Heather is also a graduate student at Florida Gulf Coast University, and this fall she will defend her master's thesis on Florida scrub-jay habitat use and preference. Conferences are essential to students and early career professionals, as Heather explains, "I had the opportunity to share my current thesis research with professionals for the first time and receive helpful feedback on my work. I am coming away from the conference motivated and more confident in my presentation skills."

Heather received an honorable mention for her exemplary presentation on the use of drones for

data collection.

Archbold's Avian Ecology Program also sent two research assistants, Kelly Roberts and Tori Bakley, to the conference. For Roberts, "The opportunity to discuss our project with professionals was invaluable, as was the experience of learning more about graduate school opportunities."

This was the first avian-centered conference Bakley has attended. Bakley noted, "The opportunity to be exposed to more than ten research projects a day is as exciting as it is overwhelming. I appreciated that the conference was not limited to North America because I have a special interest in tropical species and I was able to learn from and connect with researchers working outside of the U.S."

Roberts and Bakley co-presented their study of extra-pair paternity in Archbold's Florida scrub-jays.

Conference attendees were able to balance out their hard work with some fun, which, unsurprisingly, involved birding. Roberts and Bakley, who attended daily birding field trips organized by the Association, spotted some 'lifers'. Lifers are birds that a birder is seeing for the first time, and for this duo they included a red-throated loon, many white-winged scoters, and even a Cory's shearwater. Between spotting birds, networking with attendees, meeting Archbold alumni, and taking in the beautiful fall weather of the Northeast, this conference was an invigorating event that encouraged our staff to flex their knowledge and feel more connected to others in the field of ornithology.

rwashington