**GOOD BIRDING DAY AT THE CLUB**

**March 18 was a raw, cold and cloudy day when my partner and I drove up to the main gate about mid-morning with the goal of catching a few fish. I immediately spotted 7 large white birds floating far away on Donavan Lake and did not know what they were until we drove closer. They were white pelicans, on their way back north from spending the winter near the coast. I had never seen them before at the Club. These are huge birds, much larger than the brown pelican that is so common on the Alabama coast. But, that was just the beginning of a special birding day. As we drove a little further, 16 blue-winged teal flew out of near-shore weeds. And 4 shoveler ducks followed shortly. Again, two duck species that I had not previously seen at the Club. A few cormorants and scaup also flew off the lake. Later that day, we were treated to 2 immature bald eagles, who settled in a tree fairly close to us, an osprey, and a northern harrier (or marsh hawk). Finally, we saw two purple martins checking out the nesting gourds on Sturdivant. These sentinels were the first martins of the season and a sure sign that spring was not far off.**

**Other special birds I have seen at the Club over the last 5 years have been wood storks in the late summer, as they fly from Florida after the nesting season to feed in the catfish ponds in west Alabama, great egrets, little blue herons and cattle egrets. Along the wires and fences you sometimes see loggerhead shrikes, that on first glance look very much like mockingbirds. And, if you look closely at some of the wetland areas, you can sometimes see common snipe. Yes, indeed, there can be some very good birding at the Club**

**Ken Marion**

**President, Birmingham Audubon Society**