


Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

October/November 2009

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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|-------------|---|
| October 3 | The Big Sweep – 9 am, Miller Park, Pam Wooten |
| October 6 | Board Meeting – 7:00 pm, Arbor Acres Clubhouse |
| October 10 | Second Saturday Birdwalk – 8 am, Reynolda Gardens, TBA |
| October 11 | The Big Sit – Reynolda Gardens, Susan Jones (see below) |
| October 17 | Day Trip – Mahogany Rock, John Haire (see below) |
| October 27 | Chapter Meeting – 7:30 pm, Historic Bethabara Park Visitor Center (social at 7:00 pm)
Ollie Treadway, “Carolina Nature Photographers: Photographing Birds In Flight” |
| November 3 | Board Meeting – 7:00 pm, Arbor Acres Clubhouse |
| November 14 | Second Saturday Birdwalk – 9 am, Muddy Creek, Phil Dickinson |
| November 24 | Chapter Meeting – 7:30 pm, Historic Bethabara Park Visitor Center (social at 7:00 pm)
Katherine Thorington: “Historic Bethabara Park: Results of the Breeding Bird Survey” |

ASFC GOING TO BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY HAWK WATCH ON OCTOBER 17

Join us for hawk watching on the Blue Ridge Parkway on Saturday, October 17. We'll go to Mahogany Rock overlook, a little over an hour from Winston-Salem. Dedicated members of the Blue Ridge Birders run a hawk watch there each fall, with ace spotters and educational displays. Broad-winged Hawks, which we see in September at Pilot Mountain, will have all passed through, but other species may be more likely in October. It should also be a good time to see early fall colors.

This will be a very leisurely trip with no walking required, so bring a lawn chair and a picnic lunch. Please contact John Haire if you have any questions (johnhaire@starpower.net).

Directions: From W-S, take US-421 N to I-77 N. Exit left onto US-21 N near Elkin and proceed on US-21 N through Roaring Gap to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take the BRP South 5 miles to Mahogany Rock overlook at mile marker 235.

Car pooling: we'll meet at Thruway Shopping Center behind Wachovia at 9:30 am, and plan to return there by 5:00 pm.

THE BIG SIT

On Sunday, October 11 we will be participating in the 15th Annual Big Sit at Reynolda Gardens. This is considered birding's equivalent to a tailgate party! We draw a 17' diameter circle near the boat house (lower level parking lot), put up our chairs, our scopes and bird, eat and drink (no adult beverages, folks!) our way through three hour shifts. It's fun, we contribute to the body of knowledge of birds in our area and we get to know each other better. And others get to know Audubon Society of Forsyth County better.

Sign up for one of the shifts: 8am – 11 am, 11 am – 2 pm or 2 pm – 5pm. Contact Susan Jones sljones@triad.rr.com or 768-9151



HANGING ROCK IBA DONATION

Audubon Society of Forsyth County recently donated books and weather equipment to Hanging Rock State Park to support their Peregrine Falcon monitoring activities. The items were purchased with collaborative funds received from National Audubon under the Important Bird Area (IBA) program. Hanging Rock is one of our Chapter's adopted IBAs.

A weather gauge will allow personnel to record temperature, wind and barometric pressure during monitoring activities. Several books about Peregrine Falcons and other raptors will assist in understanding the behaviors and habits of these impressive birds. The books include The Peregrine Falcon, by Derek Ratcliffe, two volumes of Handbook of North American Birds, and the Hawks in Flight guide by Dunne, Sibley and Sutton.

Although it was impossible to confirm how many chicks actually fledged, there was nesting activity at the park from 2004-2008. Unfortunately, only a male arrived this past spring and no nesting took place. There's a good chance birds will return, however.

FORSYTH AUDUBON WINTER TRIP GOING NORTH

The annual winter trip for Forsyth Audubon will be from January 15-18, 2010 at Chincoteague and Assateague National Wildlife Refuges on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Maryland. On the way we will bird the islands along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. There are several other birding spots to check out also, The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Reserve and the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWF, as well as many others. We will be gathering information on all of these places in the weeks ahead.

Birding the bridge tunnel involves special security procedures. We cannot bird the islands without a police escort. For every group of 14 birders we will need a police escort that charges \$50/hour. Costs for the security will be pro-rated among participating birders. Those who wish to bird along the bridge tunnel will have to complete registration forms and send to me no later than December 16, 2009. This is necessary in order to meet the deadline imposed by bridge security. **If you cannot meet this deadline, you cannot participate in this part of the trip, no exceptions.** Bridge security will not allow any late additions to the group.

You do not have to bird the bridge tunnel of course but can join the group at Chincoteague where we will be staying. Details on possible motels and birding spots and birds to watch for will be provided as we develop the trip guide. Whatever you choose to do this should be a great opportunity for winter birding. So, take a look at your calendars and make plans to join us in this outing. Contact Don Adamick at dad-amick@bellsouth.net if you are interested in participating. We hope you can make it.

CONSERVATION CORNER

This summer and last, restrictions on vehicular and pedestrian beach traffic have been imposed to protect nesting birds and turtles. The restrictions result from a consent decree issued by a federal district court in April 2008. A bill introduced jointly by our North Carolina Senators, Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, seeks to overturn that decree. "We're very disappointed in the introduction of legislation that would withdraw national park protections," says Chris Canfield, Executive Director of Audubon North Carolina.

The court order was agreed to by all parties, including Audubon, the National Park Service (NPS) and an ORV association. The rules are designed to keep vehicles away from nesting areas and are based on recommendations of scientists hired by NPS. Last fall, the deputy director of the National Park Service testified before Congress that "the consent decree will accomplish [the] objective" of allowing public use and access to the national seashore's beaches to the greatest extent possible while still protecting the park's wildlife."

The restrictions adopted by the National Park Service appear to have had some success. Nests of colonial waterbirds have more than doubled since 2007 – 535 this year compared to 212 two years ago. Similarly, Least Tern nests have increased from 194 to 464, and Black Skimmers are nesting at Cape Hatteras National Seashore for the first time in three years. Also, the number of turtle nests has increased by roughly 20 percent over 2007.

Even during peak nesting season, only 13.7 of the seashore's 67 miles are off limits to ORVs, notes Derb Carter of the Southern Environmental Law Center. It is true that birders' access to favorite spots like Cape Point also has been denied at time, but that is due in large part to violations and vandalism to nest sites.

Opponents to the restrictions say they seriously impact the local fishing and tourist industries. However, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau recently reported that visitors' spending increased by 1.9 percent in 2008 from 2007. In addition, 2009 park statistics show an increase in National Seashore visitation.

You can express your views on this issue to Senators Burr and Hagan through phone calls, letters or e-mail. To send an e-mail go to www.senate.gov and then link to their offices. Keep your correspondence short and to the point.

Phil Dickinson, Conservation Chair

Climate change poses an imminent danger to the survival of many species of birds and wildlife and the integrity of the ecosystems on which they depend. Recently over 100 of Audubon's state offices and local chapters endorsed a letter to the Senate requesting that they pass climate legislation that includes crucial funding to protect wildlife and natural resources from the ever-growing threat of climate change. Thanks to all for supporting this critical initiative.

While the letter is a great step in the right direction, it is essential that we continue to let our senators know that we strongly support climate legislation that provides for 5% of total revenues generated through the cap and trade program to go toward natural resources adaptation. A legislative approach to conquering climate change is not complete without provisions that help our wildlife survive a warming planet.

These funds would increase the coffers of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the Endangered Species Act and other successful conservation programs. They would provide much needed resources to National Wildlife Refuge managers as they battle invasive species and other refuge threats that will only be exacerbated by climate change. Research, monitoring and education need to increase as well. A 5% dedication of funds to address the impacts of global warming will allow us to protect and expand crucial habitats and more thoroughly understand the effects that a climate change has on wildlife.

This fall, the Senate will take up global warming legislation. Now is the time to voice your support for increased adaptation funding. A quick call or email to your senators will help us build public demand for strong climate legislation and increased funding – 5% -- for wildlife.

To reach your senator please call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121, or find your senator's contact information online at www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm. If you prefer to send an email, you can do that at your senator's web site or through Audubon's Action Center, www.audubonaction.org. Tell your senators that you want:

Strong climate legislation *this year* to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Legislation that protects birds, wildlife, natural resources and ecosystems by dedicating 5% of revenues for wildlife adaptation.

Audubon has always spoken for birds, wildlife and their habitats, no matter the threat. Now is the time to speak out for strong climate legislation and the resources we need to protect the birds and wildlife we love.

CHAT

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Swifts and hawks and bird walks, oh my! Maybe not off to see the Wizard (ersatz as he was) but we are off to a running start, if not down a yellow brick road, at least down a pathways and greenways for the new 2009–2010 year. We've changed our meeting place to Historic Bethabara Park and Ellen Kutcher, the director, and I are planning some special extra events in conjunction with our chapter meetings. We're adding extra Day Tripper birding walks to fill the gap between our Second Saturday walks and our two long weekend trips. We're continuing and initiating programs that address our mission statement of conservation (yes, you too can get into a kayak and get slimed by the *invasive* Sacred Lotus!). Our on-line (read less expensive and more environmental) monthly newsletter will help keep you informed. And the listserv will augment that with almost daily posts. We'll even help host the Carolina Bird Club's annual meeting here in May. We'll look at, count, help maintain, identify, misidentify, feed, study and celebrate the birds.

But even Glenda the Good Witch cannot do it with just a magic wand. A small investment of your time reaps big rewards with our chapter. Read over the newsletter and the listserv and see what niche you might fill. Or tell us what niches we're missing. Who knows, we all might find more knowledge, more heart and more courage as we travel together. And I'll take Archie Elledge Sewage Treatment Facility over Emerald City any day.

Susan Jones



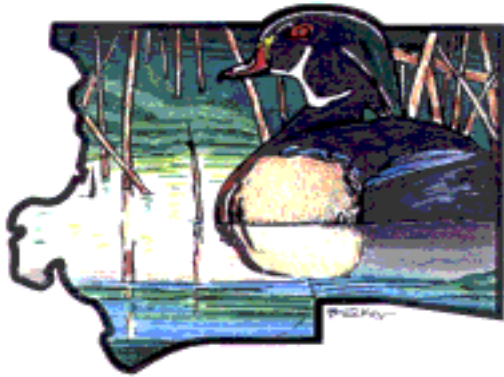
Doug Demerest sailing on a garbage barge, removing invasive lotus root at Historic Bethabara Park

Our Mission

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems—focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and North Carolina’s biological diversity

Audubon Society of
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The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

2009-2010 CHAPTER BOARD

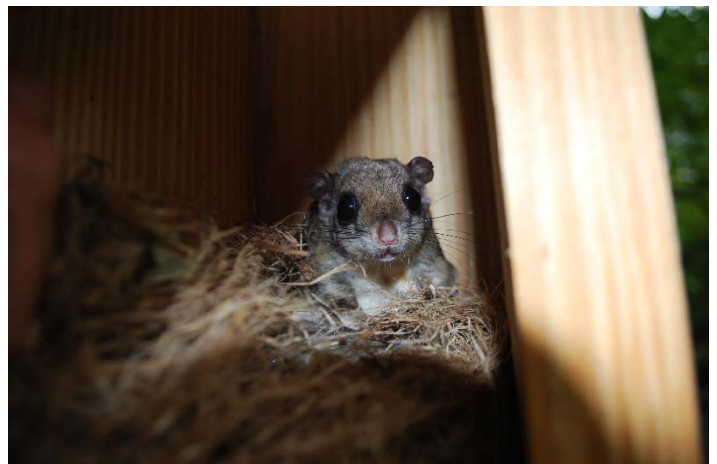
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For membership information, please contact Lois Schneider at 768-6645. If you don't wish to join the National Audubon Society, but would like to join the local chapter, send \$15.00 (make your check payable to ASFC) to: Audubon Society of Forsyth County, P.O. Box 15111, Winston-Salem, NC 27113. Please include your name, email, address and zip code.

The Peace of Wild Things

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

Wendell Berry



Phil Dickinson