


Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

Spring 2007

Printed on recycled paper 

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 6 Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
March 10 2nd Saturday Birdwalk, Bethabara Park 9:00 a.m.
March 27 Chapter Meeting, Sciworks Refreshments 7:00 p.m., talk at 7:30 p.m.
Jeffrey Gordon, The Ten Greatest Birds of the Last Thirty Years
April 3 Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
April 14 2nd Saturday Birdwalk, Civitan Park 9:00 a.m.
April 21 Miller Park cleanup 9:00 a.m.
April 24 Chapter Meeting, Sciworks Refreshments 7:00 p.m., talk at 7:30 p.m.
Parker Whitt, West Nile Virus in North Carolina
May 1 Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
May 5 **SPRING BIRD COUNT (see page six)**
May 12 2nd Saturday Birdwalk, Reynolda Gardens 9:00 a.m.
May 19 **NEW RIVER IBA COUNT (see below for details)**
May 22 Chapter Meeting, Sciworks Refreshments 7:00 p.m., talk at 7:30 p.m.
Linda Davis, Tarheels down Under
June 1-3 **SPRING BIRD TRIP, BLACK MOUNTAIN (see page two)**

CHAPTER MEETINGS

On **March 27**, our chapter meeting will feature Jeffrey A. Gordon, a writer, tour leader, and naturalist who lives in Lewes, Delaware. He currently serves as Field Editor for *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and is a frequent speaker at various birding and nature festivals. For more information on Jeff's activities, visit www.jeffreyagordon.com.

His talk, entitled "The 10 Greatest Birds of the Last Thirty Years," should be very special. For a description of this talk and the other chapter meetings scheduled for this spring, see page 5 of the newsletter. And don't forget to come early and join us for shade grown coffee and snacks!!

NEW RIVER IBA COUNT

Our next count will be held on Saturday, May 19 from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m. So that we don't have to leave Winston-Salem at 4:30 a.m., we plan to go to the general area of the site on Friday afternoon or evening of May 18 (perhaps with dinner in West Jefferson), and spend the night so that we can begin birding early on Saturday morning. In previous trips, we've stayed at the conveniently located Best Western Eldreth Inn, which offers AAA and AARP discounts. Contact the motel directly at 336-246-8845 or at 800-221-8802 for reservations. This is an opportunity to gather real data that helps support policy issues regarding threatened species and habitats in our own area. And we get to spend time birding and hanging out with like-minded folks at the same time! I personally don't think it gets any better than that. If you're interested in joining in, contact Susan Jones at 768-9151 or at sljones@triad.rr.com

SPRING TRIP

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County is going to try something different for the Spring 2007 birding trip; we've decided to go to the mountains of North Carolina, more specifically the Black Mountain area near Mount Mitchell. The group has not been to that area in some time. The tentative dates for the spring trip are June 1 to 3.

We do not have details yet on all the areas we will try to bird and where we'll be staying, but this information will be forthcoming. A feature of the trip will be that Marilyn Westphal of UNC Asheville has very graciously offered to be our guide on June 2 in the Black Mountain area. Marilyn is very active in the Carolina Bird Club and knows this area and its birds very well. She has already shared some of her expert knowledge of the area with us and we are fortunate that she join us for the spring trip.

Contact Don Adamick at dadamick@bellsouth.net if you wish to participate in this trip. In the meantime, watch our web site at <http://www.forsythaudubon.org/html/newsletter.html> for further details.

GOING WILD IN THE CITY!

The annual meeting of North Carolina Audubon will be held April 27-29 in Charlotte, and will focus on urban wildlife habitats. The annual meeting will provide an opportunity to explore some of the 23 miles of developed and 158 miles of undeveloped greenways in Mecklenburg county, along with several of its twelve nature preserves. Also, attendees can visit Wing Haven, the birthplace of Audubon in Mecklenburg, the Carolina Raptor Center and Reedy Creek Nature Center. A total of eight field trips are planned, leaving at 7:30 am and returning around 1:00 pm.

The meeting will be headquartered at the Drury Inn and Suites in the University area of Charlotte, easily accessible from I-85. A block of single and double rooms have been set aside at a special rate of \$59.00 per night plus tax. Reservations may be made by calling 1-800-325-0720 (please specify the Drury Inn and Suites Charlotte North, as well as the group name, Audubon North Carolina Annual Meeting), or be going online to www.druryhotels.com, click on Book it Fast and enter group number 216866. The deadline for registration and reservations is April 12. See www.ncaudubon.org for more information.

WHY I NEED THE BIRDS

When I hear them call
in the morning, before
I am quite awake,
my bed is already traveling
the daily rainbow,
the arc toward evening;
and the birds, leading
their own discreet lives
of hunger and watchfulness,
are with me all the way,
always a little ahead of me
in the long-practiced manner
of unobtrusive guides.

By the time I arrive at evening,
they have just settled down to rest;
already invisible, they are turning
into the dreamwork of trees;
and all of us together -
myself and the purple finches,
the rusty blackbirds,
the ruby cardinals,
and the white-throated sparrows
with their liquid voices—
ride the dark curve of the earth
toward daylight, which they announce
from their high lookouts
before dawn has quite broken for me.

Lisel Mueller (1924-)



Northern Cardinal

CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE AND OFF ROAD VEHICLES

Cape Hatteras National Seashore Announces Public Scoping Meeting Schedule for Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

On December 11, 2006, the National Park Service (NPS) published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to develop an ORV Management Plan/EIS (plan/EIS) for Cape Hatteras National Seashore in the Federal Register. The plan/EIS will guide the management of America's first national seashore for the next fifteen to twenty years. The NOI officially opened the public scoping period for the planning process and is the first step in involving the public in the environmental analysis process. Scoping includes holding meetings and providing opportunities for the public to comment so that their concerns are identified early and the analysis is focused on important issues. Because the plan/EIS will analyze many complex ecological and social issues, public participation is encouraged and needed.

Superintendent Mike Murray announced the following public scoping meeting schedule to solicit public input on the ORV management plan / EIS. Each meeting will consist of an open house session, followed by a brief presentation, and an opportunity to provide public comment for the record in a public hearing style.

Buxton, North Carolina
Monday, February 26, 2007 - 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Fessenden Center – Located on Route 12, on the right side as you enter

Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina
Tuesday, February 27, 2007 - 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Wright Brothers National Memorial First Flight Centennial Pavilion, 8 ½
Milepost Hwy. 158, Kill Devil Hills, NC.

Raleigh, North Carolina
Wednesday, February 28, 2007 - 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
McKimmon Center (North Carolina State Campus)
1101 Gorman Street, Raleigh, NC 27695

There are a number of ways for citizens to become involved:

Attend a public scoping meeting.

Submit your comments electronically to <http://parkplanningnps.gov/caha>

Submit written comments by mail to: Superintendent, RE: Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/EIS, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, 1401 National Park Drive, Manteo, NC 27954. Faxed comments will not be accepted. Please be sure to include your full name, e-mail address or mailing address with comments so we may add you to our mailing list for information on the planning process. In order for your comments to be the most useful in developing the draft plan/EIS, comments must be postmarked by **March 16, 2007**.

The NPS practice is to make comments, including names, home addresses, home phone numbers, and email addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their names and/or home addresses, etc., but if you wish this request to be considered, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. In addition, your must present a rationale for withholding this information. This rationale must demonstrate that disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy. Unsupported assertions will not meet this burden. In the absence of exceptional, documentable circumstances, this information will be released. The NPS will always make submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of, or officials of, organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

At the NC Audubon Chapter Day meeting last month, attendees received a copy of the Audubon magazine article "Beach Bums" that told the story of the struggle on the NC coast between conservationists (with Walker Golder in the lead) and ORVers who resent ANY restraint on their beach access. We were asked to write letters to show our concern.

And recently, on carolinabirds, Bob Maxwell of South Carolina posted this message that laid out the details in a straightforward fashion: "Beach Bums" in the January/February issue of Audubon Magazine regarding the carnage wreaked by off-road vehicles in the Nags Head area on nesting attempts, bird chicks & eggs, plus sea turtle nesting attempts & eggs was most disheartening. Terribly sad is the picture of a tire track over a dead Least Tern chick.

At the end of the article it says: WHAT YOU CAN DO:

To help birds threatened by ORV's, log on to www.ncaudubon.org, click on the "Birds & Science" menu bar, and click on "Protect Beach Nesting Birds."

Send Audubon copies for our website by mail (700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003) or e-mail (editor@audubon.org)

WINTER TRIP

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County traveled to Carteret County January 12-15 for its winter field trip, with 32 birders taking part in very unwinty conditions. What beautiful days at the beach!

Several of us stopped at Goldsboro on the way down on Friday. We found the Say's Phoebe at its usual spot. We had Wilson's Snipe and several species of duck, including Greater Scaup at the water treatment plant, and a Lesser Black-Backed Gull at the landfill. In Carteret County, we tracked down the Lark Sparrow at Bayview Cemetery (actually, we think there were two) and the Vermilion Flycatcher. Other highlight birds were a Clapper Rail and an Osprey flyover along Calico Creek; Northern Gannet, Red-Throated Loon and Purple Sandpiper at Ft. Macon (loons and gannets were also seen elsewhere); Marbled Godwit, Horned Grebe and perhaps two dozen American Oystercatchers at Howland Rock; LeConte's Sparrow, Virginia Rail and several Northern Harrier at North River Farm; a Western Kingbird near the bridge on to Harker's Island; 200+ Redheads and an American Black Duck at a pond off of Hwy. 24 near Xena's; a Green Heron at a pond near the Aquarium; a large flock of Black Scoter along Atlantic Beach; probably 100+ Semipalmated Plover at Rachel Carson; a Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle in the Merrimon Road area. About 130 species total were seen. The elusive bird of the trip was the Cedar Waxwing. Many thanks to Don Adamick for his outstanding organization efforts and to Marilyn Shuping and Ann Corby for their assistance. Also, many thanks to John Fussell for all of his help, and to the Inlet Inn in Beaufort for great accommodations.

Phil Dickinson



Fine dining for birders

CONSERVATION CORNER

I know everyone was cheered by the January 29th announcement that the State of North Carolina has agreed to purchase Chimney Rock and make it the centerpiece of the new Hickory Nut Gorge State Park. Kudos to the Easley administration for bringing this transaction to fruition.

There is also optimism that the "Land for Tomorrow" initiative will make headway this year. ASFC Past President **Jim Martin** filed the following report: Mary Allen and I attended the public meeting to review the \$1 Billion initiative for the Land and Water Commission at Guilford Tech on January 10th. We were coming back from the Monet exhibit in Raleigh and got there early so I signed up to speak and we went to dinner, then came back. By the time they started, the place was packed. with folks standing in the aisles and they had six pages of speakers signed up. I was called on as the first speaker.

Speakers were limited to 90 seconds--barely enough time to introduce yourself. I got "gaveled" after stating my support for the initiative and sat down. We stayed awhile longer to hear another 30 or so speakers.....most were in favor. After speaking with a number of environmental insiders, most seem to believe that there is widespread support to get something done this year--the big issue is where the money will come from. The most probable funding seems to be a combination of specific taxes (title transfer, etc) and general obligation bonds. Stay tuned! If you'd like to keep up to date on the Land for Tomorrow movement, please visit <http://www.landfortomorrow.org>.

On page three of this newsletter you'll find information about off-road vehicle traffic and its adverse effect upon nesting birds along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. As I pondered the issue, an old folk song came to mind:

"To everything
Tern Tern Tern
There is a season
Tern Tern Tern
And a time to every purpose
Under Heaven."

And of course, although the song was written by Pete Seeger, the most famous recording was by none other than - The Byrds! Let's hope that everyone can learn to give the birds their season (or "tern") in the sand.

Ann Robertson

Triad Chapter Carolina Butterfly Society

On January 30th, the organizational meeting of the new Triad chapter of the Carolina Butterfly Society was held.

Combining the current members of the Carolina Butterfly Society with those who have responded to our initial contacts, we have about thirty people on the list.

There was a consensus that we have enough people in the Triad for a chapter. We made it "official" by voting on it. It was agreed that Triad chapter members must be members of CBS. Several people joined at the meeting.

Upcoming meetings:

Tuesday, March 6th, at 7:00 will be our next meeting date. Jim Nottke has arranged for us to meet at Sci-Works in Winston-Salem. The plan is for us to rotate the meetings among the cities of the Triad. The April meeting will be on April 3rd. If you know of a good meeting place in your community that we can use for no charge, let me know.

Saturday, March 31st, 9:30: Butterfly walk: In the meeting we had agreed to have a spring walk, so Charlie Cameron, Jim Nottke, and I put our heads together to plan an activity on the Greenway in High Point at 9:30 am. We'll meet at Gibson Park on Wendover Avenue. The chapter will try to alternate between Saturdays and Sundays for future butterfly walks.

Saturday, April 14th: We will join many other nature and environmental organizations by having a table display at the Clay library in Price Park in Greensboro for Earth Day. If the weather is nice, we'll also take kids and their parents on butterfly walks. This is a good opportunity to recruit members and also do some public education. We need members to staff the table and help with the walks. Please let me know if you're available for an hour or so that day.

The Triad chapter is a work in progress. Let me know if you have any ideas for future activities.

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Looking back over one's own birding career, there are certain individual birds that stand out as having really made a difference. There's the "spark" bird--the one that turned you from a casual observer into an avowed bird-watcher, willing to endure long miles and early hours in search of new species. There are birds that thrilled you with their rarity, their beauty, their unexpected behaviors. Each of us carries a personal list of our own pivotal birds, even if we are not listers in the narrow sense.

But often a bird sighting is not just ours alone, it is shared with other birders, sometimes hundreds of others. So which are the birds that changed North American birders as a community, and really left their mark on birding as a sport and science? Looking back over the past three decades, author and tour leader Jeffrey Gordon will tell the stories of ten individual birds that made a difference to all of us, whether we personally saw them or not. From the Newburyport Ross's Gull to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Jeff will share his selection of ten birds that changed the world.

On **April 24**, Parker Whitt, Environmental Health Specialist, Public Health Pest Management Section, will discuss "West Nile Virus in North Carolina. Parker Whitt has worked for the N C Department of Natural Resources for twenty years, primarily with mosquitoes. As a hobby he has been breeding Venezuelean rattlesnakes for twenty-five years! He's also an avid birder.

On **May 22**, Linda Davis, ASFC board member and member of the NC Audubon Board, will present a talk entitled, "Tarheels Down Under." Last year Linda and Larry Davis visited former ASFC members Maggie McJannett and Charles Buer on Maggie's home turf in Canberra, Australia, travelling also to Perth, the Great Barrier Reef, Denmark (southern Australia) and points in between. Linda and Larry have been birding for over ten years and Linda has been very active with Audubon on a local and state level.

CAROLINABIRDS LISTSERV

Carolinabirds, the listserv created by Jeff Phippen and Will Cook, marked its tenth anniversary on December 13, 2006. In the last decade, the number of subscribers has grown from seventeen to nearly eight hundred, some 450 of whom call North Carolina home.

If you're interested in subscribing to carolinabirds, email carolinabirds-request@duke.edu and type "subscribe" in the text of your message. For further information about commands and guidelines for carolinabirds, see <http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/cbirds.html>

President Bush's proposed federal budget revives an idea that drew sharp criticism last year - the sale of federal forestland, including more than 5,600 acres in North Carolina.

Bush would like to sell more than 273,000 acres of forestland nationwide to help pay for rural schools.

This year's plan is different from the 2006 proposal, in that half of the money raised from the sales would remain in the individual states and go toward conservation efforts. Congress soundly rejected the plan last year and is expected to do so again this year.

U.S. Rep. Heath Shuler, D-11th, a member of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, said yesterday that he will fight the proposal. "I will be working closely with members of both parties to ensure this proposal is stopped and our forests are protected," Shuler said. Rep. David Price, D-4th, rejected the idea last year and continues to oppose the sale of forestland. He is the only member of the state's congressional delegation on the House Appropriations Committee, which has the final say on budgetary matters.

The land that the administration wants to sell is in the Croatan, Nantahala, Pisgah and Uwharrie national forests. The U.S. Forest Service said that the land is not used and does not provide critical habitats for animals. It is also not located in scenic areas, they say. Jennifer Plyler, a spokeswoman for the Forest Service, said that the revised plan excludes more than 4,000 acres of North Carolina forestland that had been included in last year's plan. For example, 600 acres in the Croatan National Forest were removed because they are the home of the red-cockaded woodpecker. Six acres in the Pisgah National Forest were taken off the list because they are close to scenic areas. More forestland was removed from North Carolina than from any other state, Plyler said.

Environmental groups, however, still panned the proposal and said that the government should not be paying for schools by taking away natural resources. "The overall plan is a bad idea, particularly in our region, when we have a shortage of public lands," said David Carr, the forest-program protection leader for the Southern Environmental Law Center.

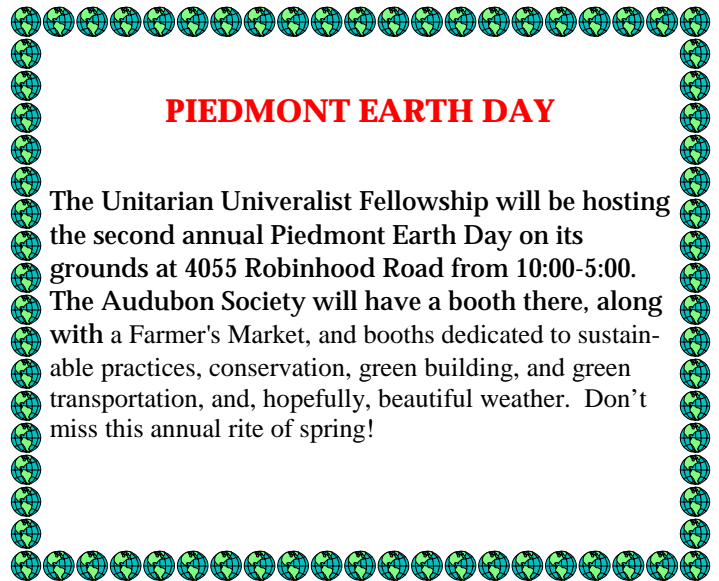
Plyler singled out Audubon North Carolina for its efforts to save the habitat of the red-cockaded woodpecker. Chris Canfield, the executive director of the organization, said he believes that the administration is trying to "placate" the group so that it does not complain about the other proposed sales. "It's hard for me to get too excited," Canfield said. He added that opponents of the sale must continue to speak out.

Mary M. Shaffrey
Winston-Salem Journal

NEW RIVER IBA CHRISTMAS COUNTS

A Golden Eagle was the highlight of a December 16 Christmas Bird Count at New River State Park's Allegheny Access. Phil Dickinson, Myrna Harris, Ron Morris and Jeremy Reiskind teamed up with Eric Harrold to cover this area as part of the New River CBC conducted by Blue Ridge Birders. Among the 40 species spotted were a Brown Creeper, Belted Kingfishers, Common Ravens, Field and Swamp Sparrows, and Song Sparrows everywhere. Two days earlier, Phil and Ron counted the south area of the park as part of the Mt. Jefferson CBC, finding among other species Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-Shouldered Hawks, Black Vultures, Golden-Crowned Kinglets and the only Ruby-Crowned Kinglet in the entire count area.

Phil Dickinson



PIEDMONT EARTH DAY

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will be hosting the second annual Piedmont Earth Day on its grounds at 4055 Robinhood Road from 10:00-5:00. The Audubon Society will have a booth there, along with a Farmer's Market, and booths dedicated to sustainable practices, conservation, green building, and green transportation, and, hopefully, beautiful weather. Don't miss this annual rite of spring!

CALLING ALL BIRDERS

Audubon Forsyth County's Spring Bird Count will be held on May 5, 2007. Spring migration will be in full swing! What a wonderful way to shake off the cold weather by counting the arriving migrants in their bright breeding plumages. Joining a count team is a wonderful way to make new friends and sharpen skills.

Linda G. Davis will be assembling the teams. Email her at davisl@mindspring.com or give her a call at (336) 924-1751, indicating your interest in participating and your preference, if any, for a particular location. Information will be posted on the ASFC website as the date nears.

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER DAY

Phil Dickinson reports the following from the NC Chapter Day, held on February 3 at the North Carolina Zoo.

A new High Country chapter is forming in the Boone area, and the Cape Fear chapter is still working to reorganize.

Dr. David Jones, the Executive Director of the zoo, gave a talk entitled, Making Connections. The connections included loss of habitat, climate change, energy, and food sources.

Curtis Smalling gave an IBA update, including a review of the selection criteria. He also spoke about the three stages of IBA volunteerism: inventory (e.g. point counts), conservation efforts with partners, and management. State parks are important allies in this effort; one initiative will be working with state parks on signage and educational materials. We also spoke about inviting members of other chapters to take part in our local IBA activities. State Audubon may provide an on-line bulletin board or listserv capability for collaboration among chapters.

An education panel discussion included our Own Liz Schmid, Andy Wood, Kate Finlayson and Ann Walter-Fromsen. Ann talked about their partnership with Price Park Library in Greensboro for educational signage, much like what the ASFC is planning to do at Bethabara Park. Ann and Kate also spoke about opportunities for NC environmental education. This was a very inspiring panel about the possibilities for educational outreach.

Hog Island is sponsored by Maine Audubon and offers one-week camping opportunities for teens and adults, including a chapter leaders' session in August. Seth Benz came down from Hog Island to talk about their programs. The scenery is magnificent, the networking and activities valuable, and the food gourmet. See www.maineaudubon.org for details.



Peregrine Falcon

BUT THEY'RE NOT BIRDS!

Davidson College Herpetology Laboratory and Information Technology Services have been working on a new atlas project called the Carolina Herp Atlas (www.carolinaherpatlas.org) (CHA). Funded by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and inspired by the success of e-bird, the CHA is an online database that uses observations by citizen scientists to track reptile and amphibian distributions in North and South Carolina. It also allows users a simple way to maintain a personal database of all their reptile and amphibian observations. County level distribution maps are continuously updated as records are submitted. Instructions are also provided online.

The CHA has been recently launched and is currently collecting data. After discussing with our NC Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NCPARC) committee members, we decided that a short article in local Audubon newsletters would help effectively get the word out to the public. Many of us at NCPARC are also birdwatchers and involved in bird conservation (Partners in Flight etc) and we know that birdwatchers take some of the best field notes around.

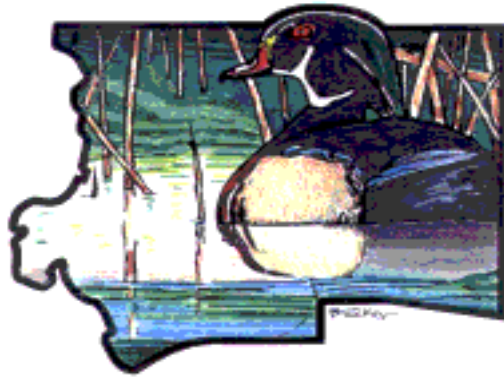
Steven J. Price
Research Coordinator
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The ASFC Christmas Bird Count was held on December 30, 2006. The day began cloudy and with temp's in the 50's but that didn't keep 67 counters from their duties. We were happy to welcome a number of newcomers to our counts and look forward to seeing them at other activities. At day's end, 85 species had been spotted and another two were added for count week. The Peregrine Falcon, first spotted by John Haire, remained downtown on count day and has made quite the media sensation, with TV and newspaper coverage. Our President, Phil Dickinson, made an appearance on TV discussing winter bird feeding. Susan and Warren Jones again hosted the post count dinner and a great time was had by all.

The Christmas Bird Count results can be found on the National Audubon website at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>. To view local results click on "current year results" in the left hand column, select North Carolina, click on "find count," highlight Winston-Salem, and click on "make a table."

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



Visit us on the web at www.forsythaudubon.org

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The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

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MEMBERSHIP

For membership information, please contact Jeremy Reiskind at 727-0734. If you don't wish to join the National Audubon Society, but would like to subscribe to our newsletter, send \$15.00 (make your check payable to ASFC) to: **Jeremy Reiskind, 385 Park Blvd., Winston Salem, NC 27127**

NOTEWORTHY SIGHTINGS

Cold weather brought a variety of waterfowl to Salem Lake, including Redheads, Canvasbacks, Hooded Mergansers, Ringnecks, Gadwalls and Common Goldeneyes. Barred owls were spotted on Biting Road, off Knollwood, while Brown Creepers were seen at CG Hill and Bethabara Park.

A pair of Baltimore Orioles was reported at a feeder in Lexington throughout December, but unfortunately were outside our count area! Another male Baltimore Oriole was reported in late January here in Winston-Salem. Keep your eyes to the skies (trees and shrubs) there is activity all year.

Please contact Linda Davis with any noteworthy sightings (at davisl@mindspring.com)