



Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

April-May 2011

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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|-------------------|--|
| April 5, 7:00 pm | Board Meeting – Arbor Acres Club House |
| April 9, 8:00 am | Second Saturday Bird Walk – Tanglewood (Leader: Ron Morris) |
| April 16 | <i>Piedmont Earth Day Fair</i>
Dixie Classic Fairgrounds (see www.peanc.org/earth-day-fair) |
| April 23, 9:00 | Historic Bethabara Park cleanup |
| April 26, 7:00 pm | Chapter Meeting — Bethabara Park Visitor Center
Mabry “Hop” Hopkins, “Wonderful World of New World Warblers” |
| April 29-31 | Spring Trip to Merchants Millpond and Great Dismal Swamp (see page 2) |
| May 3, 7:00 pm | Board Meeting — Arbor Acres Club House |
| May 4 | Hanging Rock State Park Spring Bird Count (Leader: Ron Morris) (see page 2) |
| May 7 | Forsyth County Spring Bird Count (see below) |
| May 14, 8:00 am | Second Saturday Bird Walk — Reynolda Gardens (Leader: Bill Gifford) |
| May 14 | New River State Park Point Count Survey (see page 3) |
| May 20-22 | <i>Audubon North Carolina State Meeting</i>
Blowing Rock (see page 4) |
| May 24, 7:00 pm | Chapter Meeting — Bethabara Park Visitor Center
John Connors, “Chimney Swifts and People: Past, Present and Future” |

SPRING BIRD COUNT

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, It's time for the Forsyth Audubon's annual Spring Bird Count. On Saturday, May 7, let's add up those avians! We'll divide into teams and spread out across the county to census our local bird life during the height of spring migration. Normally we find 120-130 species, which always includes a lot of warblers and other migrants and at least a few rarities. Everyone is invited: old or young, experts or beginners, 20/20 vision or not. Please contact Chuck Thompson (cosmo6190@yahoo.com or 336-766-7884) to sign up or if you have any questions.

"SHOW ME THE MONEY"

It's Birdathon time in Forsyth County! Our annual quest for mo' money goes hand in hand with the Spring Bird Count on May 7. We would encourage each participant to set a goal of raising \$100.00 from family, friends, neighbors, or themselves so that the conservation projects of the Audubon Society of Forsyth County can be successfully completed. Any questions may be directed to Chuck Thompson (cosmo6190@yahoo.com or 336-766-7884). Remember, these contributions are tax deductible.

HANGING ROCK SPRING COUNT

Looking for a nice spring walk in nearby mountain habitat? Help us out on May 4 by taking part in our annual spring bird count at Hanging Rock State Park. Our adopted Important Bird Area is beautiful this time of year, with its laurels, azaleas, wildflowers and singing spring migrants.

We will start from the park visitor's center at 8 a.m. and spread out around the park in teams. We will rendezvous for a bag lunch around noon and go over our findings. If the weather is nice, there is the option for more area birding in the afternoon. Ron Morris will be leading the count-day activities. To sign up, contact Ron at ronmorris@triad.rr.com, 336-725-1254.

Phil Dickinson



UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

Just in time for spring migration, Hop Hopkins returns to refresh our ability to identify all those little colorful birds flitting about the canopy. Hop's photo essays are always popular, so plan on attending.

In May, John Connors visits us from the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, where he is Coordinator of the Naturalist Center. In 1682 a swift was found nesting for the first time in a chimney at a colonist's cabin in Maine. This event forever changed the relationship between this species and people.

Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm at the Bethabara Historic Park Visitor Center, and the meetings starts at 7:30 pm.

FORSYTH AUDUBON SOCIETY SPRING TRIP MERCHANTS MILLPOND STATE PARK AND GREAT DISMAL SWAMP

Forsyth Audubon's Spring Trip for 2011 will be to the wilds of Northeast North Carolina and Southeast Virginia. Our primary North Carolina destination is Merchants Millpond State Park. Step out the back door of the Visitor's Center and you will think you are in the Bayous of Louisiana. Black water with hundreds of Bald Cypress presents a breathtaking view. Canoes or 2 person kayaks are available for rental on a first come, first served basis – so we plan to be there early on Saturday morning. For those that do not wish to bird by boat, there are plentiful hiking trails. According to Fussell, most birds that can be seen on the pond are also easily observed from the roadway that runs along the dam. The road shoulders are level and wide with easy access from the Visitor's Center. Over 200 bird species have been observed in the Park with Prothonotary and Yellow Throated Warblers key emissaries. Deer are plentiful and the occasional, Otter, Mink, Bobcat and resident Gators can also be observed.

Great Dismal Swamp's best birding areas are in the Virginia portion of the Refuge accessed from Suffolk. Jericho Lane will be our first destination with a large parking area where we can walk in by the "Ditches". The ditches are filled with black water but have soft surface roads running alongside as you walk among Cypress and old growth Pines. The roads and ditches are arrow straight extending to the vanishing point. Expect Prothonotary, Hooded, Yellow Throated and Swainson's Warblers. Fussell indicates this as one of the best places to study the song differences of Swainson's and Louisiana Waterthrush. Deer are plentiful here too and don't rule out Black Bear. We did not see any Bear but we did find Bear tracks near the North Carolina Visitor's Center.

There are several birding opportunities from the NC Birding Trail along the route to our destination as well as several destinations near our primary sites. Forsyth Audubon's inaugural trip to the area should be an excellent adventure and we hope to see you there.

Logistics – Dates are April 29 thru May 2 with Friday and Monday being travel days. Home Base will be in Suffolk Virginia. Those wishing to attend should contact Rob Rogers via email at rogers10@triad.rr.com or by cell phone – 336-971-0439. Please provide the names, email addresses and cell phones for all attendees.

WIND ENERGY AND BIRDS

The US Fish and Wildlife Service announced its draft guidelines for wind power development. They are the result of years of effort by the Audubon Society and others. The guidelines seek to minimize the impacts of land-based wind farms on wildlife and habitats area. They are currently open for public comment with the expectation that they will go in to effect later this year. Audubon staff members were among 22 experts selected by Interior Secretary Kempthorne nearly three years ago to serve on the Advisory Committee. The guidelines, which address all stages of wind development, from planning through construction, operation, and decommissioning, set forth a science-based framework for balancing energy development with wildlife protection. Included are important Audubon priorities such as a new framework for developers to analyze and address habitat fragmentation caused by wind development. Additional guidelines have been announced that specifically address Bald and Golden Eagles. Declining populations of Golden Eagles, coupled with their need for large ranges, makes these beautiful birds particularly vulnerable to wind farm impacts. National Audubon seeks strong protections for these birds to stave off further declines. Read the guidelines at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website: www.fws.gov/windenergy.

LITTLEFOOT, 19, [THIS IS THE BIRD HOUR]

19

This is the bird hour, peony blossoms falling bigger than wren hearts

On the cutting border's railroad ties,
Sparrows and other feathery things
Homing from one hedge to the next,
late May, gnat-floating evening.

Is love stronger than unlove?
Only the unloved know.
And the mockingbird, whose heart is cloned and colorless.

And who's this tiny chirper,
lost in the loose leaves of the weeping
cherry tree?
His song is not more than three feet off the ground, and singular,
And going nowhere.
Listen. It sounds a lot like you, hermane.
It sounds like me.

Charles Wright

BIRDING THE NEW RIVER

Join us for our annual bird surveys along North Carolina's New River on Saturday May 14th. We have been working with Curtis Smalling of Audubon NC on this for several years as part of our IBA adoption commitment. Do not hesitate because of lack of birding experience. We will have teams of two or three people with a range of expertise and we will prepare you on how the counts are conducted.

On past surveys, we have found such birds as Golden-Winged, Chestnut Sided, Northern Parula, Black-Throated Green and Yellow Warblers, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Black-Billed Cuckoo, Scarlet Tanagers, Yellow-Throated Vireos. Point counts begin at 7 a.m., so many of us go up Friday. We will finish by 11 a.m., have lunch, and then be free to bird on our own, tour or return home.

The best lodging option is the Eldreth Inn, a Best Western motel in Jefferson. They have mini fridges and coffee makers in the room (*good* for birding trips!), and coupons good for a free full breakfast. Their rates are in the \$70-85 range. The phone number is (336) 246-8845 or (800) 221-8802.

For more information or to sign up, contact Phil Dickinson at 659-2464 or pdickins@triad.rr.com, or Ron Morris at 725-1254, ronmorris@triad.rr.com.

Phil Dickinson



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

Audubon Society of
Forsyth County
P.O. Box 15111

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The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

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AUDUBON STATE MEETING

The 2011 Audubon North Carolina State Meeting will be based in Blowing Rock, May 20-22. This is a great opportunity to bird special areas in the mountains and to meet up with other birders from around North Carolina. High Country Audubon Society will host the meeting at the Blowing Rock Conference Center.

Some of the field trips over the weekend are to Elk Knob State Park, Wilson Creek IBA, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Nature Conservancy Property in Shade Valley, Tennessee. There also will be an owl prowl and an afternoon symposium on “Protecting Birds by Protecting Habitat.”

Registration for the meeting is \$60, including the Saturday night banquet. Lodging at the Conference Center ranges from \$103-\$177, depending upon room occupancy, with all other meals included. However, there also is a commuter option under which you pay only for the meals that you select. Go to <http://nc.audubon.org> for event details and registration.

If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join. Membership in ASFC includes membership in the National Audubon Society and is just \$20 for the first year. Send your check made out 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.

Phil Dickinson