

Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

April-May 2010

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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| April 6 | Board Meeting – 7:00 pm, Arbor Acres Clubhouse |
| April 10 | Second Saturday Birdwalk – 8 am, Tanglewood, Gardner Gidley |
| April 17 | Day Trip – Weymouth Woods/Sandhills Game Lands, John Haire and Royce Hough (see page 2)
Earth Day Fair, Wake Forest University |
| April 24 | Miller Park Clean up – 9 am, Pam Wooten |
| April 27 | Chapter Meeting – 7:30 pm, Bethabara Visitor Center (social hour at 7:00 pm) |
| May 1 | CBC Annual Meeting in W-S (see below) |
| May 4 | Board Meeting – 7:00 pm, Arbor Acres Clubhouse |
| May 8 | ASFC Spring Bird Count (see page 2) |
| May 15 | IBA New River (see page 2) |
| May 21-23 | Second Saturday Birdwalk – 8 am, Reynolda Gardens , Bill Gifford |
| May 25 | State Meeting, Highlands, NC (see page 2)
Chapter Picnic/Meeting – 6:00 pm potluck, 7:30 pm meeting, Bethabara Visitor Center |

CBC Meeting

The Carolina Bird Club is holding its spring meeting in Clemmons on Friday April 30 & Saturday May 1, 2010. This is a great opportunity to meet like-minded people from throughout the Carolinas and beyond.

Of course, the main focus of the meeting is BIRDING, with 32 field trips - half-day and all-day – to all of ASFC's favorite birding sites, e.g. Reynolda Gardens, Historic Bethabara, Tanglewood, etc, plus the Blue Ridge Parkway, New River and more. Field trips are limited to 15 participants, so be sure to sign up early.

There is a modest registration fee: \$20 for CBC members; \$25 for non-members if you register in advance. Registration at the meeting will be \$30. ASFC members will be leading most of the field trips, and registration is free for these leaders. ASFC will host a social event Saturday evening, with Marilyn Shuping providing light snacks and dessert. For more details, go to www.carolinabirdclub.org.

Ron Morris

ASFC Spring Trip – June 4-6, 2010

Attention all Forsyth birders who are interested in birding in the North Carolina mountains this spring. Our annual spring trip will be in the Asheville /Black Mountains area this year, a repeat of the great trip of 2007.

Thursday June 3 is a day of travel to Asheville. If you have time that day, consider stopping at Bakers Mountain Park in the Hickory area. The park is south from Exit 121 off I-40. Birding is considered good year round. An alternative is to stop at South Mountain State Park, south of the Morganton area, Exit 105 off I-40. Birding is best in the spring migration period. For detailed information on both parks consult the NC State Parks web site: <http://www.ils.unc.edu/parkproject/main/visit.html>.

We will begin birding early on Friday June 4 at Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary off Merrimon Avenue in Asheville. After some time there we will head south on the Blue Ridge Parkway, stopping along the way and will go as far as we can before dark.

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Birding the New River

Join us as we do bird surveys along North Carolina's New River on Saturday May 15th. We have been working with Curtis Smalling of Audubon NC on this for several years as part of our IBA adoption commitment. The mountains are beautiful in spring, and the birding is great fun. The only requirements are good eyes and ears. Do not hesitate because of lack of birding experience. We will have teams of 2 or 3 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. At 2 p.m., representatives from our chapter will present a program about area birds at the Visitor Center at the U.S. 221 Access to the park.

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. Another in Jefferson is the Highlander Motel. Their rooms are less expensive, and they have fridges and microwaves in the rooms. High end alternative is River View House. Low end alternative is camping in the park or at Raccoon Holler campground. For more information or to sign up, contact me at 659-2464 or pdickins@triad.rr.com.

Phil Dickinson

Forsyth Audubon is heading to the NC Sandhills for a day trip on April 17. We'll go to Weymouth Woods-Sandhills Nature Preserve and to the Sandhills Game Land in search of endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and elusive Bachmann's Sparrows. A local expert will join us for part of the day and help us gain a better understanding of some of the other wildlife and special flora of the region. We'll carpool from Winston-Salem at 7:30 am and return about 5:30 pm. To sign up, contact John Haire at johnhaire@starpower.net or 336-671-5577.

If our own Forsyth Spring Count is not enough action for you, join us for our count at Hanging Rock State Park on Wednesday, May 5. Last year, we restarted this count after several years as part of our adoption of the park as an Audubon Important Bird Area. We will begin at the park Visitor Center at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, and adequate clothing – it can be cooler up there. To sign up, contact Phil Dickinson at pdickins@triad.rr.com or 336-659-2464.

Audubon Meeting in the Mountains

This year, the Audubon North Carolina State Meeting heads for the mountains, and what a venue! The event is May 21-23 at The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center in Highlands. Hosted by the Highlands Audubon Chapter, there will be great birding during peak migration season, Saturday afternoon symposia and the traditional Saturday night banquet. In addition, Sheila Kay Adams will share stories on Friday evening.

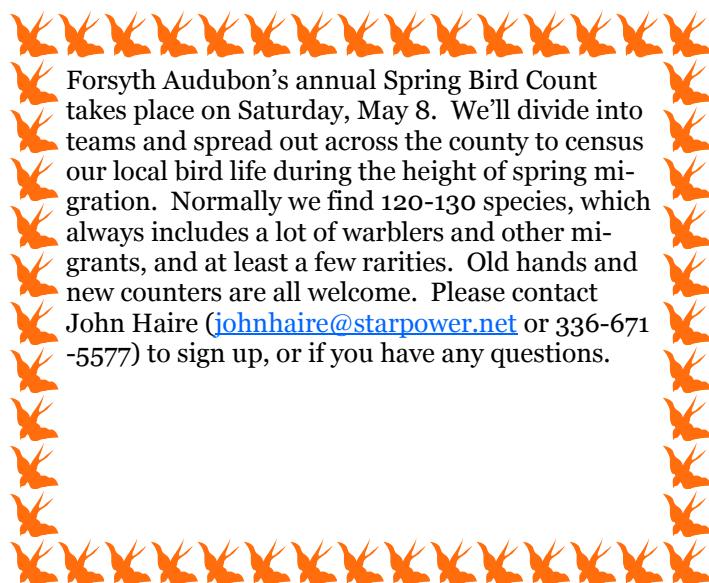
The Highlands Plateau is an Audubon Important Bird Area, and there are five local stops on the North Carolina Birding trail. The Mountain is a rustic retreat that offers spectacular views of the Blue Valley and surrounding mountains. Reduced rates are available for Thursday and Sunday nights for those who want to stay just a little bit longer. For details and registration information, go to <http://nc.audubon.org>. Act fast, the registration deadline is April 20th.

What's New on Our Web Site?

After you finish reading "The Whistler," check out some of the new things on our web site. Our "Conservation" page reports current initiatives of our local chapter and Audubon North Carolina. Also, especially take time to read "State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change." Learn how climate change affects bird populations and ecological systems.

We now have a "BIRDING Links" page with dozens of on-line resources to learn about birds, citizen science programs and conservation issues. In addition, find links to other state and local nature organizations. Don't forget our coverage of chapter field trips, and we now have a photo album, too. If you have pictures of birds or Audubon activities to share, send them to me, the webmaster.

Phil Dickinson



Book Review: *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding* by Scott Weidensaul

Of a Feather by Scott Weidensaul is a broad, mainly chronological look at the development of our knowledge of and fascination with American birds from the first glimpses by colonial travelers/naturalists to the present-day “listers” and “citizen-scientists” that we all can relate to. The book, divided into eight chapters, is gracefully written and introduces us to many well-known and not so well-known pioneers of birding. Those first pioneers (Lawson, Catesby*, Bartram) simply recognized and named the birds that were here. Later more scientific early ornithologists (especially Wilson and Audubon) expanded on their habits and life-cycles (with increasingly refined illustrations).

The nineteenth century was filled with professional collectors of bird skins (for close study) as well as avid collectors of birds’ nest and especially eggs (a popular but ultimately destructive enterprise). In addition, women’s fashions demanded more and more feathers for ladies’ hats – eventually endangering the survival of some species of birds. In response, a movement to protect birds and their habitats arose leading to the appreciation of birds for their intrinsic beauty. Thus the Audubon Society was founded.

Gradually the watching rather than the shooting of birds became popular. The author subtitles one chapter “How birding became almost cool” and chronicles how the hobby of observing birds developed. He discusses the development of bird guides – each successive guide having its plusses and minuses – from Peterson to Sibley. (Here, it would be a good idea to get them out and “illustrate” his commentary with your guides in front of you.)

Finally, the author discusses the latest trends in the hobby of “birding” -- from the “listers” (and the competition inherent in that enterprise) to the contributions many birders are making to the scientific understanding and conservation of birds and their habitats. He lauds the developing “citizen-science” movement and suggests that this is the way of the future. He chastises many birders for not being the conservationists they could be. (It is edifying to realize that our own birding community has taken those additional steps in regard to protecting habitats and doing “citizen-science” – from Christmas and Spring Bird Counts to breeding censuses, etc.)

Of a Feather is a good read, well-written and easily brings one up-to-date on the current status of birding in America.

* Incidentally, in the entrance hall exhibit at MESDA (the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts) there is at present a copy of Catesby’s *Natural History of Carolina, ...1743* showing the Painted Bunting. Worth a look see.

Jeremy Reiskind

On the Conservation Front

Environmental Achievements: Donnie R. Dann, an ABA member and friend of Susan Jones, brings to our attention some noteworthy accomplishments of the Obama administration. A summary follows:

1. EPA proposal for stricter controls on smog-causing pollutants
 2. More rigorous reviews by the Department of Interior of petroleum leases on public lands
 3. Limitations on mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia
 4. Creating a task force to develop a national strategy to protect ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems
 5. Working to complete a global treaty on cutting mercury pollution
- And on climate change:
6. Working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 17% below 2005 levels by 2020
 7. Initiating strategic partnerships with China, India and Latin America on clean energy goals
 8. Providing, with Congress, for \$50 billion for renewable energy investments and increased energy efficiency of homes, autos and workplaces.

How about that!

The State of the Birds – 2010: On March 11, 2010 a report on the state of birds in America was released. “The report, a collaboration of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and experts from the nation’s leading conservation organizations, shows that climate changes will have an increasingly disruptive effect on bird species in all habitats, with oceanic and Hawaiian birds in greatest peril.” The report is available on-line at <http://www.stateofthebirds.org/>. Phil Dickinson has posted the entire report on our ASFC website as well.

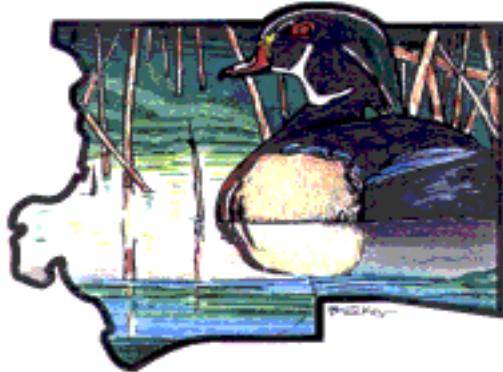
Jeremy Reiskind

Historic Bethabara Park

Kite Day	April 3 (1:30-4:30 pm)
Celidh	May 7 (7:00-9:00 pm)
Celtic Festival	May 8 (10:30 am-4:30 pm)
Independence Day	June 27 (1:30-4:30 pm)
Apple Fest 2010	Sept. 18 (10:30 am-4:30 pm)
Holiday Concert	November 18 (7:00-8:00 pm)
Four Christmases	December 4 (5:30-8:00 pm) admission charged; reservations required)

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

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

2009-2010 CHAPTER BOARD

President:	Susan Jones	768-9151
Vice President:	Ron Morris	725-1254
Secretary:	Kim Brand	896-0923
Treasurer:	Shelley Rutkin	922-4758
Membership:	Lois Schneider	768-6645
Communications:	Phil Dickinson	659-2464
Education:	Bill Gifford	721-0201
Conservation:	Jeremy Reiskind	727-0734
At-Large:	Jeremy Reiskind	727-0734
	John Haire	671-5577

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.

Audubon Society of
Forsyth County
P.O. Box 15111
Winston-Salem, NC 27113

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The highlight of the trip will be on Saturday when Marilyn Westphal of UNC-Asheville and Carolina Birds will escort us on a trip north on the Parkway to Mount Mitchell, as she did for the 2007 trip. Marilyn is a very good birder, she knows the area like the palm of her hand, and it should be a great day. We are very fortunate to have Marilyn as a guide again. We will finish at Mt. Mitchell State Park. We will start no later than 7:00 AM and possibly earlier. Sunday the 6th is the day to return to Winston-Salem.

This will be a good trip to catch up on your warbler count, as we should see Kentucky, Cerulean, Canada, Hooded warblers and many more. In 2007 we had an Alder Flycatcher, found exactly where Marilyn said it would be and at the end of the trip a flock of Red Crossbills showed up, as if on queue. We are hoping for the same sightings this year.

Details on accommodations and trip details will be forthcoming. Please contact Don Adamick at dadamick@bellsouth.net before May 15 if you want to participate.