

Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

Fall 2008

Printed on recycled paper 

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2	Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 pm
September 13	Second Saturday Bird Walk, Reynolda Gardens 8:00 am
September 13 –28	Hawk Watch, Pilot Mountain (see page 5)
September 20-21	Hawk Watch Migration Public Education Day, Pilot Mountain
September 23	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks 7:30 pm (social at 7:00 pm) Terri Maness (Biology PhD candidate at WFU), Mating System of Nazca Boobies in the Galapagos
September 25	Swift Watch
October 4	Big Sweep, Miller Park clean-up
October 7	Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 pm
October 11	Second Saturday Bird Walk, Tanglewood 8:00 am
October 12	The Big Sit
October 28	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks 7:30 pm (social at 7:00 pm) Jim Keighton, Hawks and Their Migration
November 4	Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 pm
November 8	Second Saturday Bird Walk, Muddy Creek 9:00 am
November 25	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks 7:30 pm (social at 7:00 pm) John Gerwin (Curator of Birds, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences), Flooding, Philandering, and Philopatry: Twelve years with a population of Swainson's warblers

CHAT

I love Yellow-breasted Chats, or as Pete Dunne calls them, raucous polyglots. And when I was choosing a name for a president's column somehow I thought that *Chat* would be a better choice than the often suggested *Bird Droppings!* I appreciate the opportunity to serve as president of the chapter and hope to continue in the model of our past presidents by addressing and expanding our mission of conserving and restoring natural ecosystems and focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of our biological diversity. Those words are not original but are part of Our Mission statement printed in this newsletter. To that end I would like to let you know some of the things that we have been doing as a chapter that all of you might not be aware of.

(continued on page 5)

HOT OFF THE PRESSES

The second installment of the North Carolina Birding Trail guides, for the Piedmont region, is now available for purchase! This 176 page guide covers 103 birding sites in the Tar Heel state between I-77 in the west and I-95 in the east. Details about this trail guide, along with that for the volume covering the coastal region, can be found at www.ncbirdingrail.org. The trail guide for the mountain region is due sometime in 2009.

The guides are being sold for just \$10 (significantly below the list price) through the NC Wildlife Resources Commission's Wild Store. Order your copy at www.ncwildlife.org/birds.html or call 1-866-945-3746.

ASFC CALENDAR FOR 2008-2009

Board meetings are held at 7:00 pm. Second Saturday birdwalks begin at 8:00 am between April and October and at 9:00 am between November and March. Chapter meetings have a social time at 7:00 pm, with business and the program beginning at 7:30 pm.

		November 27	Thanksgiving
		December 2	Board Meeting
		December 13	Second Saturday Bird Walk Civitan Park
		December 20	Christmas Bird Count, New River
September 2	Board Meeting	December 27	Christmas Bird Count
September 13	Second Saturday Bird Walk Reynolda Gardens	January 6	Board Meeting
September 13 –28	Hawk Watch, Pilot Mountain	January 10	Second Saturday Bird Walk Salem Lake
September 20-21	Hawk Watch Migration Public Education Day, Pilot Mountain	January 16-19	Winter Trip, Huntington Beach, South Carolina
September 23	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks Terri Maness (Biology PhD candi date at WFU), Mating System of Nazca Boobies in the Galapagos	January 24	Miller Park clean-up
September 25	Swift Watch	January 27	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks TBA
October 4	Big Sweep, Miller Park clean-up	February 3	Board Meeting
October 7	Board Meeting	February 14	Second Saturday Bird Walk Washington Park
October 11	Second Saturday Bird Walk Tanglewood	February 24	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks Dennis Burnette, Birding England, Switzerland and Denmark
October 12	The Big Sit		
October 28	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks Jim Keighton, Hawks and Their Migration	March 3	Board Meeting
November 4	Board Meeting	March 14	Second Saturday Bird Walk Miller Park
November 8	Second Saturday Bird Walk Muddy Creek	March 24	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks Andy Wood (Audubon North Carolina Director of Education), Topic TBA
November 25	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks John Gerwin (Curator of Birds – NC Museum of Natural Sciences) Flooding, Philandering, and Philopatry: Twelve years with a population of Swainson's warblers	April 7	Board Meeting
		April 11	Second Saturday Bird Walk Bethabara Park

(continued from page 2)

“OH-SWEET-CANADA”

April 12	Easter
April 18	Earth Day Fair, Wake Forest University Miller Park Clean Up
April 28	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks Mark Simpson, Birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains
May 2	Spring Bird Count
May 5	Board Meeting
May 9	Second Saturday Bird Walk Reynolda Gardens New River IBA Work Day
May 10	Mother's Day
May 25	Memorial Day
May 26	Chapter Meeting, SciWorks TBA
May 29 – June 1	Spring Bird Trip, Monterrey, VA
June 13	Second Saturday Bird Walk Tanglewood
July 11	Second Saturday Bird Walk Bethabara Wetlands
August 8	Second Saturday Bird Walk Archie Elledge

On July 14, the Canadian province of Ontario announced a wonderful gift for birds and birders. The province will set aside about 55,000,000 acres of northern boreal forest for permanent protection from development. Premier Dalton McGuinty's action is part of a larger Boreal Forest Protection Initiative that seeks to protect some 1.4 billion acres of forest.

How much is 55 million acres? As Canadians visualize it, it is roughly the size of England, Scotland and Wales put together. The entire boreal forest is huge, bigger than the Amazon area, and it is the breeding home of millions of birds: warblers and other songbirds, ducks, woodpeckers and owls. Scott Weidensaul describes it as "the great bird factory of North America" (ofafeather@blogspot.com). According to Weidensaul, the Northwest Territories also is working on a conservation initiative.

Jeff Wells of the Initiative, wrote in his own blog at www.borealbirds.org, "Imagine 4.5 million renditions of the "Oh-sweet-Canada-Canada-Canada" song of the White-throated Sparrow echoing across the Boreal." These winter visitors to Forsyth County now have all the more reason to sing that country's praises. According to the Toronto Star, July 15, 2008, resource industries would be barred from protected areas and would have to work with the government and First Nations to create sustainable development plans for the rest.

Although a speck in comparison, we should not forget some of our own initiatives to protect songbirds that nest here or migrate to and from those Canadian forests. These include Audubon North Carolina's Important Bird Area designations and the work of local organizations like Piedmont Land Conservancy, as well as legislative action in both North Carolina and South Carolina to provide money for land preservation trust funds and conservation grants. We must continue to support these local efforts.

Phil Dickinson



ASFC GOES PELAGIC BIRDING!

The weekend of May 23, seven ASFC members hit the road for Hatteras Island and a weekend of seabirding. Ferenc Domoki got the ball rolling and the rest joined in to spend two days on Brian Patteson's 61-foot Stormy Petrel II.

On the way to OBX, we stopped at Peartree-Pamlico Preserve, near Alligator River NWR where the highlights included Prothonotary, Yellow-throated and Prairie Warblers, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and White-breasted Nuthatches feeding chicks in their nest cavities, as well as Ospreys on a nest.

The next morning, we congregated over coffee and egg sandwiches at the Hatteras Marina before boarding the boat at 6:00 AM. The Stormy Petrel II accommodates around 35 people including the Captain and three highly skilled spotters. The boat was at capacity both days and there were a lot of high-quality bins being toted around the deck.

Six-foot seas made it dicey moving around the deck and a couple of passengers were a little green around the gills by mid-day. But soon after we reached the continental shelf around 8:00AM, we had a nice flock of 150 Wilson's Storm-petrels following the fish oil slick off the stern. A few Leach's and Band-rumped Storm-petrels were seen both days as well as lots of Black-capped Petrels and Audubon's, Sooty, Greater and Cory's Shearwaters. A couple of Northern Gannets and a Masked Booby were seen on Saturday, and the highlight on Sunday was a great look at a Herald Petrel.

Of course, land birding on the Outer Banks is always great and we saw lots more birds in the evenings and on our way home on Monday: waders, waterfowl and shorebirds, such as Black-necked Stilts and Black Skimmers. On evening outings, several of us got good looks at Chuck-will's-widows.

Friends from Randolph County who were with us on Sunday went out on the Stormy Petrel II again on Monday. The sea was very calm, and therefore not conducive to seeing seabirds, but there were a few new ones such as Red-necked Phalarope and a Pomarine Jaeger. There were lots of other interesting sights, too. They had extended views of a large pod of Pilot Whales, a Beaked Whale, and a pod of Spotted Dolphins along with two Loggerhead turtles.

This is a unique experience in advanced birding. It's a great way to see several life birds that you won't get any other way. Just note that it's just a little risky for those prone to motion sickness.

For information on boating trips to see pelagic seabirds, go to Brian Patteson's website at www.seabirding.com.

Ron Morris



WHERE ARE THE NIGHTJARS?

When was the last time you heard a Whip-poor-will or Chuck-will's-widow on a summer evening? These members of the nightjar family now seem few and far between in our area of the Piedmont, as development cuts into our remaining forests and farmlands.

In May and June, several chapter members took part in a nightjar survey for the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. To find a little open space, we crossed the Yadkin River and ran a route from Dinkins Bottom Rd. near U.S. 421 north through Yadkin County. We were asked to do our surveys near the full moon, because Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will's-widows are more active and vocal during that period. In fact, they seem to time their breeding cycle so they have more light when they forage to feed their young.

People reported a couple of Whip-poor-wills in the Reynolda area in May, but our survey pretty much confirmed that we have few nightjars in our area. Even in Yadkin County, traffic and barking dogs often made hearing difficult. On our May trip, we recorded only two Whip-Poor-Wills in ten stops. In June, we recorded three. Members of T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society in Guilford County did not find any nightjars during their surveys. Thanks to chapter members Linda Davis, Phil Dickinson, Ferenc Domoki, Bill Gifford, John Haire and Ron Morris for their citizen science efforts.

Phil Dickinson

PILOT MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH

September is here, and that means the hawks soon will be flying by Pilot Mountain on their way to Central and South America. Peak time for hawk watching at the Pinnacle is usually the third week of the month. That is when thousands of the Broad-winged Hawks will be kettling up and riding the thermals along the Appalachian Ridge. It also is a great chance to see about a dozen other species of raptor, including Osprey, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle.

At this time we still are formulating plans for our annual hawk watch, with planned dates of September 13-28. We collect migration data and submit it to the Hawk Migration Association of North America, which keeps track of raptor numbers from Canada to Veracruz, Mexico. If you can volunteer time to count hawks and help us collect data, please contact me at 659-2464, pdickins@triad.rr.com. You are welcome regardless of experience level. It is a great chance to learn about these birds and improve your ID skills. On September 20-21, the Chapter will hold Hawk Migration Public Education Day at the pinnacle.

- We upgraded all of our photographs for our video presentations (thanks to David Disher, Phil Dickinson, Hop Hopkins and others)
- We purchased a new DSL projector for our new power point presentation (still using Ramona Snavely's wonderful script, of course)
- We purchased eight pair of children's binoculars, six for Hanging Rock State Park and two for our Second Saturday bird walks and other programs
- We presented more than two dozen programs for the community including schools, summer camps and garden clubs
- We had a fully staffed booth at Earth Day
- We updated our bird check list and our ASFC brochure

And for the less sexy stuff...

- We give an honorarium to our out-of-town speakers at the chapter meetings
- We make a donation to Sciworks for their generous offering of meeting spaces
- We pay for liability insurance
- We pay for our bulk mail permit, printing and postage for our newsletter

Susan Jones

NEW RIVER IBA

On Saturday, May 17 seven citizen science birders participated in our annual New River Important Bird Area survey. Bill Gifford, Phil Dickinson, Mike and Marilyn Shuping, Ron Morris, Terri Maness and Susan Jones covered 19 sites along the North Fork of the New River and counted over 60 species during the specifically proscribed times. The Golden-winged Warbler is the species of special interest for the IBA designation and at least one nesting pair were found. Also nesting Cerulean Warblers were found along the Blue Ridge Parkway on a side trip on the way home. Our IBA date for 2009 is Saturday, May 9. We generally go up on Friday night, have a nice meal in West Jefferson and then do the survey on Saturday morning from 7 – 11 am. We go in groups so you don't have to know every flycatcher song!

SUMMER SIGHTINGS

ASFC members reported some super summer sightings for our area. Gene Schepker and Lois Schneider found a very unusual Sora at Tanglewood Park on June 4, probably a late spring migrant. Unusual breeding birds included two pairs of Warbling Vireos at Civitan Park, for the first confirmed county record. Willow Flycatchers, last recorded breeding in the county in 1983, also spent the summer at Civitan, and at least one male was just across the river in Yadkin County. Peregrine Falcons fledged at least one young at Hanging Rock State Park, one of a few successful nesting sites in North Carolina.

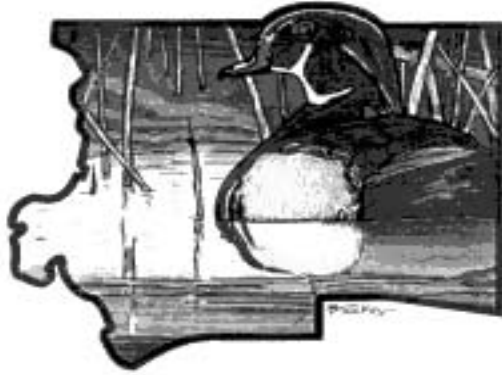
Post-breeding wanderers included Wood Storks, Little Blue Herons and White Ibis on the Yadkin River in Davidson County (Gene Schepker, Lois Schneider, Jeremy Reiskind, et al.); a Worm-eating Warbler at Salem Creek Greenway on July 8 (Phil Dickinson); Black-throated Green and Black-throated Blue Warblers at Hanging Rock (Phil Dickinson, Ron Morris); Warbling Vireos at Tanglewood (Kim Brand); more Wood Storks near King in Stokes County; a White Ibis at Archie Elledge WTP, and a Snowy Egret at Salem Lake.

Fall migration has already begun with a few reports of early warblers and shorebirds. The best is yet to come, so keep birding and let us know what you find!

John Haire

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
Winston-Salem, NC 27113

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The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

2008-2009 CHAPTER BOARD

WE WANT YOU!

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Please note that the deadline for the winter 2008 newsletter is **November 1**. We welcome suggestions and contributions from our members. Please send items for inclusion or ideas for future newsletter features to Sue Rupp at rupp@wfu.edu.

MEMBERSHIP

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 subscribe to our newsletter, 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, address and zip code.

