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, ScWorks 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, ScWorks 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, ScWorks 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.ncbirdingtrail.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.
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.

September 2  Board Meeting
September 13  Second Saturday Bird Walk, Reynolda Gardens
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November 27  Thanksgiving
December 2  Board Meeting
December 13  Second Saturday Bird Walk, Civitan Park
December 20  Christmas Bird Count, New River
December 27  Christmas Bird Count
January 6  Board Meeting
January 10  Second Saturday Bird Walk, Salem Lake
January 16–19  Winter Trip, Huntington Beach, South Carolina
January 24  Miller Park clean-up
January 27  Chapter Meeting, SciWorks
TBA
February 3  Board Meeting
February 14  Second Saturday Bird Walk, Washington Park
February 24  Chapter Meeting, SciWorks
Dennis Burnette, Birding England, Switzerland and Denmark
March 3  Board Meeting
March 14  Second Saturday Bird Walk, Miller Park
March 24  Chapter Meeting, SciWorks
Andy Wood (Audubon North Carolina Director of Education), Topic TBA
April 7  Board Meeting
April 11  Second Saturday Bird Walk, Bethabara Park
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 Domokı 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 8:00 AM, 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 Reynolds 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-Will 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 Domokı, 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.

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 Ibises 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

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County
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WE WANT YOU!

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.