

Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

Spring 2008

Printed on recycled paper 

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 4 Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
March 8 Second Saturday Birdwalk, Bethabara Park 9:00 a.m.
March 25 Chapter Meeting, Sciworks. Becky B. Desjardins, NC Museum of Natural Sciences,
Birds of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences 7:30 p.m. (social hour begins at 7:00 p.m.)
April 1 Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
April 12 Second Saturday Birdwalk, Miller Park 8:00 a.m.
April 19 Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful, Miller Park cleanup 9:00 a.m.
April 22 Chapter Meeting, Sciworks. Ferenc Domoki, *Birds of Southeastern Hungary* 7:30 p.m.
(social hour begins at 7:00 p.m.)
April 25-27 **Spring Field Trip, ACE Basin South Carolina (see below)**
May 3 **Spring Bird Count**
May 6 Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
May 10 Second Saturday Birdwalk, Reynolda Gardens 8:00 a.m.
May 16-17 New River IBA survey
May 27 Chapter Meeting, Sciworks. Ron Morris, Retired Curator of the NC Zoo, *Birds of the Bering Sea*
7:30 p.m. (social hour begins at 7:00 p.m.)
May 30-June 1 **Audubon NC Meeting, Haw River State Park (see page 4)**

ASFC SPRING TRIP HEADS SOUTH

The annual spring trip for Forsyth Audubon will be April 25 -27 at ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina. The Refuge is part of the ACE Basin Project, a joint venture in which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited are working with private landowners to protect and enhance the natural resources of a 350,000- acre area. It is located about 25 miles south of Charleston, SC and is along the Atlantic Flyway. It houses many migratory birds in the fall to early spring and is home to many neotropical songbirds.

The ACE Basin is not the only great birding spot in the region, however, and we should have a chance to visit

SPRING BIRD COUNT 2008

Once again, it's time to sign up for Spring Bird Count which will be held May 3, 2008. This is always an exciting time of year because we can expect to see between 120 and 130 species of migrating and resident birds, decked out in breeding plumage. It's also a great time to refresh skills and make new friends.

Email Linda Davis at davisl@mindspring.com or call (336) 924-1751, to participate (a signup form is also available on page 2 of this newsletter). We welcome all birders, especially young birders. It's incumbent on those who love the outdoors, to pass on that appreciation of the natural world. Email or call to sign up or get more information.

(continued on page 2)

BIRDATHON

On Saturday May 3, Audubon Society of Forsyth County will conduct its annual Spring Count and Birdathon. Each year, our Spring and Christmas counts help determine the overall health of the bird species that we all love and enjoy watching. As you know, bird populations also are good indicators of our community's environmental health.

Birdathon raises money for local and state Audubon programs. It is our **only** fundraising event of the year. Half the money goes to preserve North Carolina's coastal sanctuaries that many of you enjoy when you travel to the beach. As you know, many of these sites are under stress from climate change, economic development, and other factors. The other half supports local Audubon activities, including our monthly speaker program and presentations for libraries, schools, scouts and community groups. Audubon Society of Forsyth County asks you to make a financial pledge to support these objectives. You may contribute a specific amount (\$10, \$20, \$50, or whatever you decide). Alternatively, you may pledge a specific amount per bird species identified. **WARNING: WE USUALLY TALLY ABOUT 125 SPECIES!**

Below find a handy pledge form, which you may mail to the address provided. Thanks so much for your consideration.

Audubon Society of Forsyth County's Birdathon! 2008 Pledge Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

_____ I (we) would like to pledge \$_____ per species spotted during Birdathon! 2008

_____ I (we) would like to contribute a fixed amount of \$_____ to Birdathon! 2008

Please make checks payable to:

Audubon Society of Forsyth County

P.O. Box 15111

Winston-Salem, NC 27113

Your contribution is tax deductible.

Please check with your employer about matching gifts or corporate sponsorships!



Carolina Wren (David Disher)

(continued from page 1)

either while near the Basin or on the way down and back many other fine national wildlife refuges. These include the Savannah Coastal Refuge, Santee NWR, and Carolina Sandhills, NWR in South Carolina and Pee Dee NWR in North Carolina. Details on accommodations and the like will be forthcoming as we get closer to the event.

So, take a look at your calendars and make plans to join us for this outing. Contact Don Adamick at dadamick@bellsouth.net if you are interested in participating. We would like to have a final list of attendees by April 15.

A TREE GROWS IN MILLER PARK

This Conservation Corner column is about a love story. It began about 75 years ago when a seven year old Winston-Salem girl named Ramona realized that she loved birds. Thus began a life-long affair of the mind and heart that led her to become an expert birder, a citizen scientist in the truest sense of the phrase, and the local authority on all bird-related matters. Moreover, she had a winning personality that drew people to her and won converts for her cause. She was indeed a great ambassador for her beloved feathered friends.

So it was fitting that the ASFC Board decided to honor Ramona's legacy by purchasing a Memory Tree (aka a bird home) through the City of Winston-Salem; designating that it be planted in Miller Park, which was the centerpiece of Ramona's traditional Count area as well as ASFC's Adopt-A-Park. Husband Harry was consulted and told us that Kwanzan Cherry was Ramona's favorite tree species. Fortunately, it was on the list and in December a city crew did a fine job of planting the 6 foot+ tree, straight and well-mulched, near Shelter No. 1. It is most easily accessed by parking at the lot that parallels Bellview Street, which is off Rosewood, off Knollwood.

As you likely know, each Memory Tree has a tag that bears an inscription plus the name of the tree and the year it was planted. Ramona's tag reads:

"Her love of the natural world, especially birds, inspired all who knew her."

Three dozen or so ASFC members, family and friends of Ramona dedicated the little cherry tree on Saturday, January 26th, immediately after our very well-attended quarterly park clean-up. Harry sprinkled a high quality bird seed mix 'round the base to encourage avian visitors. Someone joked that the tree would have to grow large enough to support a Yellow-crowned Night Heron nest. Linda Davis provided a poem that Ramona loved and had shared with her. I will transcribe it here. The author is unknown.

The man whispered, "God, speak to me"
And a meadowlark sang.
But the man did not hear.

So the man yelled "God, speak to me!"
And the thunder rolled across the sky.
But the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said "God let me see you."
And a star shined brightly.
But the man did not notice.

And the man shouted "God show me a miracle!"
And a life was born.
But the man did not know.

So the man cried out in despair "Touch me, God
And let me know you are here!"
Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man,
But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

Don't miss out on a blessing
Because it isn't packaged the way that you expect.

So our departed friend continues to speak to us, to challenge us, to inspire us. I would encourage each reader to consider participating in the Memory Tree program. Each tree is a package of blessings for birds, providing nesting sites, food, and cover. The program coordinator is Ms. Kim Young, and she is exceedingly helpful. Her number is 659-4305 and her office is at the South Fork Community Center on Country Club Road. She will be happy to mail the appropriate information to anyone who contacts her.

The City plants trees in the fall and spring. The spring planting request deadline has passed (on January 31st), so any orders taken now will be planted in the fall. The fall order deadline is in August.

You are not limited to requesting trees as memorials. People also purchase them to honor friends, commemorate occasions, etc. The prices range from about \$60.00 to about \$100.00, depending upon the species selected. It is a small price to pay for the service and quality of trees provided, not to mention the nice commemorative plaque.

It is a great way to conserve, and a wonderful way for love stories to continue

Ann Robertson



OUTER BANKS TRIP

Forsyth Audubon had another great trip to the Outer Banks (OBX) of North Carolina over the long weekend of 18-21 January. In addition to twenty-three local members we were joined by two Audubon members from Greensboro, one from Camden, South Carolina, two from Raleigh, and a contingent of six from Asheville. It made for a wonderful group of experienced and relatively new birders who complemented each other very well.

On Friday the 18th most traveled to our motel, the Comfort Inn North in Kill Devil Hills, via Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge or Mattamuskeet NWR. Birding along the way, the group had counted several species before we began our activities on the OBX. That evening all gathered in a motel suite for a get-acquainted social and the beginning of our master bird list. A local Audubon member suggested that evening that we begin early on Saturday because the weather would turn foul later in the day.

Gathering together at 7:30 on Saturday morning we set out for Pea Island NWR, the premier birding spot on the OBX. We were met there by Neal Moore, the above mentioned Audubon member, who guided us around the refuge and offered tips on what to see. The refuge was a harbor for a great number of different ducks to include an untold number of Redheads. There were numerous Tundra Swans and a careful look by our President, Phil Dickinson, led to two Mute Swans in the mix. Black-crowned Night Herons and American White Pelicans posed for pictures like professional models.

The weather reports were unfortunately right about the rain and by late morning it was time to move on to other locales. American Avocets were found near Pea Island and as the group traveled back towards the motel we stopped at Oregon Inlet on both the north and south ends of the Bonner Bridge, Bodie Light, and wherever we found birds. The heavy rain limited birding for the rest of the day but did not dampen the spirits of any of the birders. That evening we gathered at local restaurants like Kelly's and Tortugua's Lie to sample local fare.

Sunday dawned bright and cold with a Northwest wind that forced us to bundle up good. We once again carpooled and headed south to Cape Point, a good decision because it snowed later in the morning at Pea Island and Kill Devil Hills. We were met at the Cape by Neal and Pat Moore who offered to guide us out to the tip of the point. Those who could not fit in our group's 4X4 vehicles piled into their two and off we went. Neal and Pat do this all the time for anybody who is interested and they were wonderful guides to the area and local birds. Horned Larks, shorebirds, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were life listers for several people. The trip out to the Cape was a real highpoint for all and Forsyth Audubon made

some new friends in Neal and Pat, a very gracious couple. The rest of the day was spent revisiting Oregon Inlet, Bodie Light, and other places of interest. Along the way some of our birders spotted the Common Eider at Oregon Inlet, a really good find.

Sunday night we gathered at The Outer Banks Brewing Station for a farewell dinner and bird count. It was a good way to end the OBX part of the trip. The next day all traveled home, visiting Alligator River, Mattamuskeet, and Pungo Lake along the way where we added several new species to the count. The final count for the trip was 124, not bad considering the weather. In the end what mattered most though was that all enjoyed the fellowship and the opportunity to see so many birds in beautiful settings.

Don Adamick

AUDUBON NC ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of Audubon North Carolina (Nature at the Summit: Hard to Top) will be held from May 30 to June 1 at the Haw River State Park in Browns Summit. The T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society of Guilford County is sponsoring the annual meeting, which will convene at the Summit Environmental Education Center, with its renovated meeting facilities, motel-style lodging and dining rooms. This newly established three hundred acre park just ten miles north of Greensboro offers great birding opportunities.

A variety of programs and activities will be offered at the annual meeting, including a Friday evening dinner and campfire, as well as programs about eagles, conservation projects in the northwest Piedmont, plant communities at the park, and bird digiscoping. A half dozen excursions will be held on Saturday morning, both at the Haw River State Park and at nearby locations like Price Park, Caswell Game Land, and the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park.

The motel-style rooms feature one double and one single bed along with a private bath. There are no televisions or telephones in the rooms. Registration options include the Weekend Overnight for \$140 and the Friday or Saturday Overnight (which include lodging, meals, activities and programs) at \$70. The Weekend Commuter, also at \$70, includes the cost of all meals, activities and programs. Registration for the annual meeting is an additional \$50.

Full information and a registration form can be found at the state Audubon web site (www.ncaudubon.org). If you have questions about the annual meeting, contact Mary Woodrow of T.G. Pearson Audubon 336-316-1339 or mandrwoodrow@aol.com or Karen Fernandez at the state office 919-929-3899 or kfernandez@audubon.org. The registration deadline is **April 15**.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

The science section of the New York Times on February 5, 2008 reported the following story:

When a male Anna's hummingbird swoops down over a female in an acrobatic mating display, it emits a loud and quick chirp, closely corresponding in tone to the highest C on a piano. For years, the source of the sound has been the subject of debate. Is it a vocal sound, or something else?

Christopher James Clark and Teresa J. Feo of the University of California at Berkeley have settled the question. The sound, they report in *The Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, is produced by air rushing over the bird's tail feathers.

Mr. Clark, a doctoral student with the university's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, used high speed video to show that the chirp occurs as the mouse-size bird spreads its tail feathers at the bottom of a dive, when it is traveling about fifty miles an hour (a video and sound file may be found at nytimes.com/science).

The researchers experimented by removing the outermost tail feathers of a bird; it no longer produced the sound. They also tested the outermost feathers in a wind tunnel and discovered that it is the trailing vane of the feather — the edge facing away from the onrushing air — that produces the sound. As the air slips over it the vane rapidly flutters or vibrates like a reed.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2007

The Christmas Bird Count, held on December 29, 2007, was quite different from the shirt sleeve weather we've enjoyed on recent counts. The day began with heavy fog and temperatures in the 40's. However, that didn't deter the 65 counters who participated. We were glad to have the next generation of birders present with Sophie Rupp, Sam Barnes and Ben Hopkins. Count teams tallied 87 species on count day and an additional three during the count week. A total of 11,340 birds were counted by participants. Highlights were the Lesser Scaup during count week, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Red Headed Woodpecker and twenty-three Eastern Meadowlarks, to name just a few. The count results will be posted on the National Audubon Society website (www.audubon.org), where you can see trends based on our past count reporting. Thanks to Ann & Chester Robertson who hosted the after count dinner and to all who supported Citizen Science by participating in the Christmas Bird Count.

Linda G. Davis

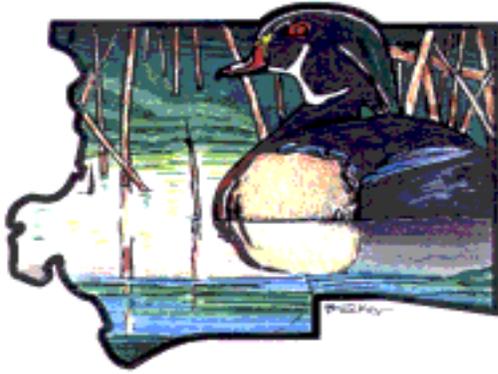
CHAPTER DAY

Global warming was the hot topic at Audubon North Carolina's Chapter Day, held on February 2 at the N.C. Zoological Park in Asheboro. Julia Levin and Connie Mahan introduced attendees to a National Audubon presentation about the reality and impact of global warming. Then in the afternoon, Audubon NC's Andy Wood and Curtis Smalling and John Gerwin, Curator of Birds at the N.C. Museum of Science, discussed what global warming could mean to North Carolina birds. Yes, global warming is both a bird issue and a people issue. Already, there is evidence that species are altering their migration timetables and egg-laying practices in response to warmer temperatures. Although some species may adapt to weather changes, others may not. They may not find the food they need at the right time. They may suffer from weather extremes; they may lose habitat as sea levels rise. Moreover, adverse impacts on bird species may affect humans, since we rely on birds for such things as disease prevention, pest control and seed dispersal. National Audubon advocates a four-prong approach to the problem: (1) federal legislation to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent; (2) other laws that promote energy efficiency and development of renewable fuels such as wind, solar and bio-fuels; (3) protection of wildlife; and (4) education and encouragement of grassroots action. Audubon takes the position that proper sighting and monitoring can minimize bird kills from windmills. Loss of habitat due to increased acreage for bio-fuels may be an even bigger issue that calls for adequate study and planning. If you want to read more about global warming and North Carolina, link to such sites as www.ncclimatchange.us and www.environmentaldefense.org.

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
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Winston-Salem, NC 27113

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The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

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The Costa Rican Bird Route is opening to the public in 2008. This is a project being implemented by the Rainforest Biodiversity Group with funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Act. The goal of the CRBR is the conservation of bird habitat and biological diversity through the development of bird tourism on privately owned lands in the Sarapiquí – San Carlos region of northeastern Costa Rica. The habitat in this area supports over 500 species of birds, including sixty neotropical migratory species and eleven endangered species (including the Great Green Macaw, which is in imminent danger of becoming locally extinct). For more information, see www.CostaRicanBirdRoute.com. The CRBR includes six birding lodges with six newly created private reserves.

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.