

Whistler

The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

Summer 2007

Printed on recycled paper 

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 9	2nd Saturday Birdwalk, Tanglewood 8:00 a.m.
July 14	2nd Saturday Birdwalk and cleanup, Miller Park 8:00 a.m.
August 7	Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.
August 11	2nd Saturday Birdwalk, Archie Elledge 8:00 a.m.
September 4	Board Meeting, Arbor Acres 7:00 p.m.

YEAR IN REVIEW

As summer draws near, I have been thinking about all that we did this year and are looking forward to next year. Last September we traveled to Bluff Mountain Nature Conservancy, reinstated our Pilot Mountain Hawk watch, and kicked off a great schedule of Chapter programs ably assembled by Susan Jones. Stella's dad, Andrew Pruette, was lead Big-Sitter at Tanglewood in October. We ended 2006 with a successful Christmas Bird Count of eighty-five species, including our wintering Peregrine.

In January, over thirty people braved seventy-five degree temperatures and much sun to bird Carteret County on our "winter" trip. Much thanks to Don Adamick and the Shupings for a great experience, and don't forget our upcoming trip to the mountains. Winter did arrive in February and March, and it brought a varied collection of waterfowl to Salem Lake and Archie Elledge, among them a rare Red-necked Grebe.

To continue enjoying birds and birding, we must proactively do our part to promote conservation and habitat preservation. Our Spring Count helps assess the health of our bird population and raises money for coastal sanctuaries and our own educational activities.

SPRING BIRD COUNT

Some four dozen birders of all levels participated in this year's Spring Bird Count on May 5th. Highlights of the count period this year included a Forester's Tern at Archie Elledge, a Horned Lark at the landfill, and a Black-billed Cuckoo and a Cerulean Warbler at Reynolda Gardens. A preliminary list compiled at the post-count dinner indicated that 119 species were identified. Locations birded included Miller Park, Tanglewood, Washington Park, Bethabara Park, Reynolda Gardens, the Children's Home, Lewisville, the Brookberry neighborhood, and Salem Lake. A wonderful time was had by all!

BIRDING 101

Rob Rogers is teaching a birdwatching course for Forsyth Tech this summer. The course (number is 12248) begins on June 2 at 9:00 am, and will be held at Forsyth Tech West Campus. The first class will be held in the classroom, while the rest will be at local birding "hotspots". The only requirement is to bring a pair of binoculars. For more information contact Rob Rogers at rogers10@triad.rr.com.

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Adoption of the New River and Hanging Rock IBAs also is part of this effort. On May 19, we will do more counts at New River, and this summer we will present programs at Hanging Rock.

Locally and statewide, Audubon leads the fight to educate the public about the problems of placing the proposed OLF next to Pocosin Lakes. Conservation Chair Ann Robertson and others have attended hearings, written letters and sent e-mails expressing concern. Our chapter successfully added seven local parks to the N.C. Birding Trail and is working with Historic Bethabara Park to develop educational signage at the "ugly swamp." We also took part in the recent Earth Day Fair and continue our commitment to clean up the herons' home at Miller Park.

In 2006, AFCS lost three great friends and long-time members: Ramona Snavely, Bob Witherington and Hartsell Cash. We miss them a lot, but they leave us a legacy to carry forward. We look ahead to another great year in 2007-2008. This fall, we will have a revised Forsyth County checklist for your bird walks and begin another great program schedule. We plan more great trips, too. This is your chapter, though, and we welcome your ideas about 2007-2008 plans. Have a great summer, wherever you bird.

Phil Dickinson



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

The Great Backyard Bird Count this year broke records for the number of birds and checklists reported, with 11,082,048 birds of 616 species reported for the February 16-19, 2007 period. A total of 81,193 checklists were submitted online. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, remarked, "literally, there has never been a more detailed snapshot of a continental bird-distribution profile in history." For the first time, the most numerous bird reported was the American Robin. See www.birdcount.org for further information, including dynamic maps showing changes in bird distribution and abundance over the ten years of the Great Backyard Bird Count.

USE EBIRD TO RECORD FORSYTH SIGHTINGS

Did you know that there is an online checklist program to keep track of what birds you see and to share that information with other birders? It is called ebird, and it was launched jointly by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

This program lets you do several things in one place. You can submit your sightings by location for others to see. You also can keep and manage your own life, state or even backyard lists. You also can check what other people have seen in specific locations and when. When you travel, check ebird before you go.

Also, the more data local birders submit, the better records we have for you, new birders to the area and for keeping our Forsyth Audubon checklist up to date. The program has a tool that lets you graph occurrences of each species by the month. One word of caution: the program purports to cover the period from 1900 to the present, but current data spans only the past few years.

There is no fee. All you need is a username and password. I started using the system a couple of months ago, and it works great. I keep track of what I see in Forsyth County at different locations, for example, Miller Park or Reynolda Gardens. I can review this data, and so can other local birders or visitors from other areas.

Go to <http://ebird.org> and create your account now!

Phil Dickinson

CONSERVATION CORNER

April was an exceedingly busy month on the conservation front. As many of you know, the North Carolinians Opposed to the Outlying Landing Field (NO OLF) movement reached a peak, with the Navy holding two public hearings in April to receive public comment on its proposal to construct a field for Super Hornet F-18 jets to practice over 31,000 take offs and landings per year in Washington and Beaufort Counties. This area, which the Navy has dubbed Site C, is less than five miles from the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, home to 100,000 overwintering waterfowl, including tens of thousands of Tundra Swans and Snow Geese. The construction of the OLF at Site C would also necessitate the condemnation of over 30,000 acres of productive farmland, and would put the small minority town of Roper in peril from the jet crashes that would surely occur. NC Audubon Director Chris Canfield spoke against the OLF at both gatherings. Locally, we organized an April 10th viewing of the NO OLF video at Krankie's Coffee Bar in downtown Winston-Salem. This turned into a great opportunity to network with Sierra Club members, and several folks carpoled to the hearing in Charlotte on April 17th. Susan and Warren Jones also printed up letters and envelopes protesting the OLF for the ASFC booth at the Piedmont Earth Day Fair on April 21st. Dozens of people signed the letters, and the Jones stamped and mailed them to the Navy. They deserve our deepest thanks for going many extra miles. In fact, I would not have made those miles to Charlotte without Susan's gracious willingness to wait until I got off work.

If you are not aware of the potentially devastating environmental and cultural impact of this proposed outlying landing field, or want to learn more, please visit www.noolf.com for details. There is even a link on the website to a 10 minute video clip on youtube. You may also contact me by e-mail at Ann@triad.rr.com, or phone (336) 723-0727. The public comment period on the Navy's Second Environmental Impact Statement ended on May 9th, but the need to show support to the people of eastern North Carolina who are fighting for their homes, their farms, and their way of life, and to the public officials who have come out against the plan, will continue for the foreseeable future.

On the home front, we've created a Conservation Committee. Our first project is to plant something(s) in Miller Park. We have made a walk through the park, and already realize that many of our selections are best planted in the fall. If anyone has ideas they

Would like to share, especially regarding something that would be good to plant in Miller Park now, please contact us. It is an "open membership" committee as well, so please let me know if you'd like to join.

On Saturday morning, April 21st, we had a good turn out for the trash pick up in Miller Park. We scoured our Adopt-A-Park area for litter, and were pleasantly surprised to find much less than last time. However, this could be due to the fact that Gene Schepker visits the park almost daily and has been a good citizen, picking up stray litter as he watches for birds. Kudos to everyone for all their efforts to maintain this lovely city park that gives birders so much pleasure. In addition to being an urban migrant trap, it is now a veritable avian incubator, with spectacular nesting Yellow-crowned Night Herons and Barred Owls, along with the more inconspicuous but no less interesting species such as Nuthatches and Titmice. So, it behooves us to care for it.

As a kind of tangent to conservation, I wanted to let everyone know about the Farmer's Market that is now being held each Saturday morning at Krankie's Coffee Bar at 211 West Third Street. The vendors are local farmers, bakers, and craftspeople. Some of us stopped by after the Miller Park clean up and very much enjoyed such treats as a vegetarian club on home made bread, a tofu/veggie stir fry, very huge and tasty cookies, and of course, Krankie's wonderful coffee. Their blends are roasted on site with the machine that was in Maria's. Yes, it's alive and well; and if you happen by Krankie's at the right time, you can watch the roasting process. The staff at Krankie's has been incredibly kind and hospitable to us each visit. I highly recommend that you give this unique and delightful venue a try.

Ann Robertson

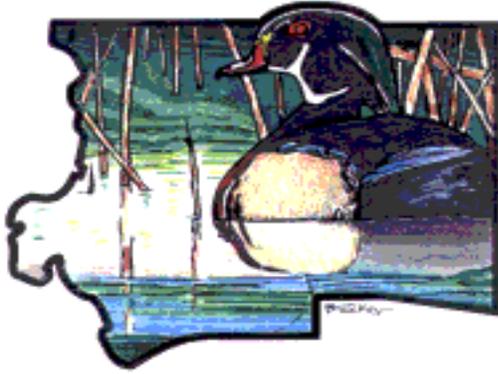


Our Mission

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

Audubon Society of
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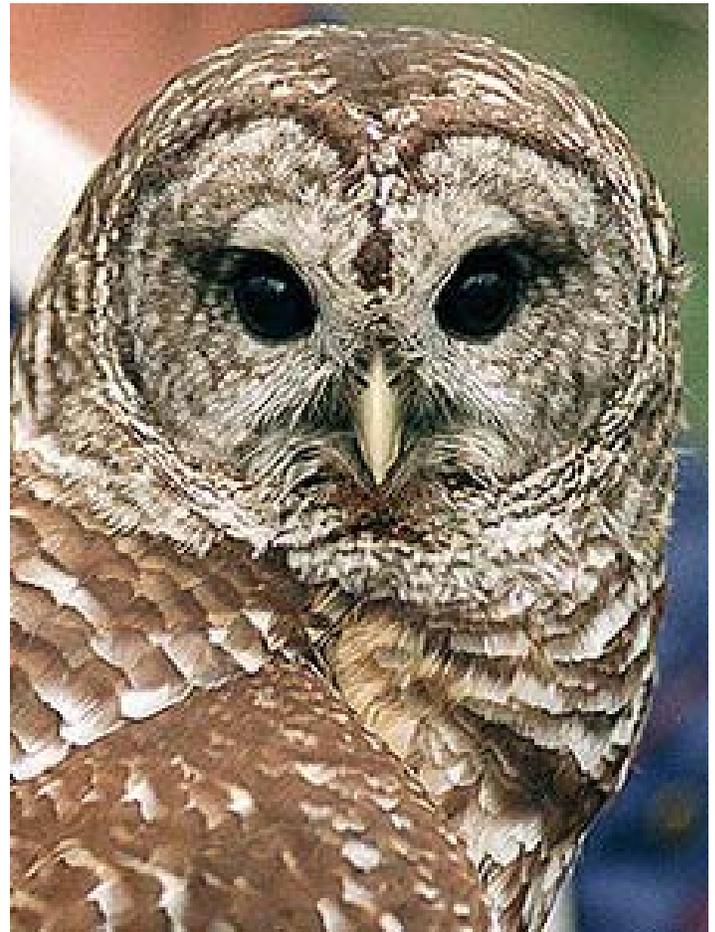
The Audubon Society of Forsyth County

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MEMBERSHIP

For membership information, please contact Jeremy Reiskind at 727-0734. 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: **Jeremy Reiskind, 385 Park Blvd., Winston Salem, NC 27127**



Barred Owl