

***“Bobby sat down on a log,
put his face in his hands and
began to sob, saying,
‘I saw an ivory-bill.
I saw an ivory-bill.’ ”***

*as reported by Tim Ghallager in the Big Woods
Conservation Partnership news release, April 28, 2005.*

In February 2004, Bobby Harrison became one of only three people to officially sight the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, thus rediscovering this Holy Grail of birding once believed to be extinct.

Now you have the opportunity to hear Bobby's story first hand.

Wake Audubon members, reserve your advanced tickets now before they go on sale to the public!

Bobby Harrison on Rediscovering the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

7 p.m., February 4, 2006

Museum of Natural Sciences Auditorium tickets \$10 for Wake Audubon members

Only 250 seats available for what is sure to be the year's most talked-about bird event. This is the only venue Bobby is visiting in North Carolina.

Visit www.naturalsciences.org/friends/friends.html to reserve your tickets, or call 733-7450 x307.

Wake Audubon Officers 2005

President: Chrissy Pearson (567-9811)
Vice-president: Jeff Beane (781-5130)
Treasurer: Diane Hardy (954-9050)
Secretary: Linda Rudd (851-5539)

Mission Statement: *“To foster knowledge, appreciation, and enjoyment of nature; to encourage responsible environmental stewardship; to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.”*

Wake Audubon Membership

(includes membership to National Audubon)

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- conservation

Would you like to receive emails about volunteer opportunities? yes no, thanks

Chapter Code R-55 7XCH; Wake Audubon, Raleigh, NC Please allow 4-6 weeks for arrival of first issue of *Audubon* magazine.



December 2005

Wingbeats

Printed on 70% recycled paper using soy inks. Please recycle.

Christmas Bird Count Produces Results

Do you know how many great horned owls were sighted on Dec. 18, 2004, by birders in Wake County?

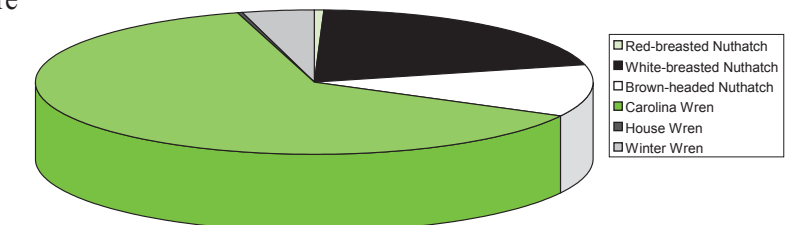
Thanks to the Christmas Bird Count, Wake Audubon knows! And so do ornithologists with National Audubon studying the trends of birds everywhere.

The largest bird count of the year, and arguably the most successful citizen science project in birding today, the Christmas Bird Count collects data on the numbers of birds spotted in communities across the nation. For more than 100 years, volunteers have come together in December on an organized count of species seen

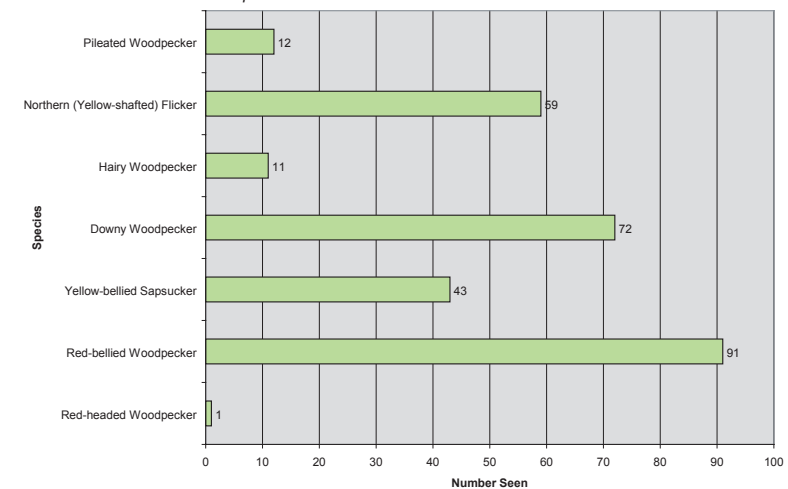
and heard in their communities, from backyards to parks to waterways. Wake Audubon is proud to be a committed participant in this annual event; last year 67 people, mostly Wake Audubon members, saw a combined 94 species during the Raleigh count.

The chart below reflects some of the data collected last year. What will we see this year? Be a part of the fun — and the science — this year and join us! See the calendar of events inside for details on how to participate.

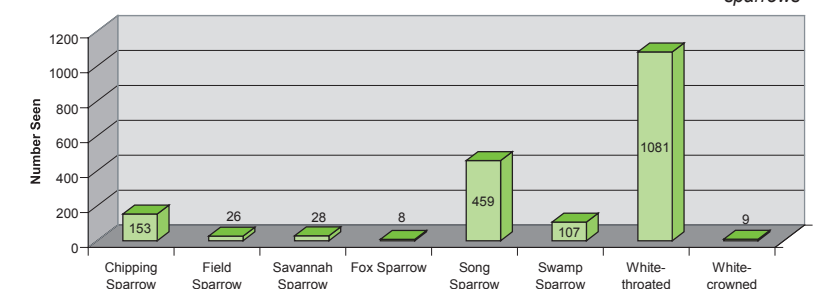
CBC 2004 Sightings
nuthatches and wrens



CBC 2004 Sightings
woodpeckers



CBC 2004 Sightings
sparrows



Wake Audubon
P.O. Box 12452
Raleigh, NC 27605

www.wakeaudubon.org

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Inside:

Hear a first hand account of the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker! See back page.

Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Leader's Choice Bird Walk Saturday, Dec. 10

Join Clyde Smith for a trip to a local Wake County birding spot. Depending on weather conditions, time and location to be determined. Email Clyde for details at Smith82534@aol.com.

Monthly Meeting — Dec. 13

Why do we Count Birds? —

Dr. Ted Simons, professor of zoology and forestry at North Carolina State University, will discuss his research on the effectiveness of bird counts, breeding bird surveys, and other monitoring programs.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the A-level conference room of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and is open to the public.

105th Christmas Bird Count Saturday, Dec. 17

— Be a part of the largest (pseudo) scientific bird count (and social event) in the world! Our Raleigh Count has surveyed the same tracts of land since 1937, so we have accumulated some impressive data. Sign up to help this year!

John Gerwin (733-7450 x726) and John Connors (733-7450 x602) at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences will continue as compilers for our count, so call them or email john.connors@ncmail.net to sign up. Cost is \$5, which defrays cost of publication of the results.

Normally we have 15+ groups assigned across the southern part of Wake County, with a total of 50 to 75 participants. Each group captain sets the destination and time. Even backyard watchers can report observations, provided you are within the Count Circle. We place the registrants with group captains after they sign up, so everyone will get to participate.

We welcome all ages and skill levels, so don't worry if you are a novice; you'll team with groups to ensure you get some good looks at some great birds. We may count upwards of 100 species of birds during the day. We will have a noontime countdown (site TBD, ask your site captain and bring your lunch), and may share an evening supper. Hope to see you there!

Feathered Facts



Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) — This oriole, formerly known as the Northern Oriole, which was formerly known as the Baltimore Oriole, has little to do with that fair city. The name comes from the Baltimores, colonial proprietors of Maryland whose clothes were the same colors.

Earlier studies documented hybridization between Baltimores (the birds, not the proprietors!) and western Bullock's orioles in the Great Plains. This led to both being called "Northern." Later, genetic studies showed that they are NOT each other's closest relative, so both are "full" species again. Wake County is about the northern limit of this species' winter range. Orioles are highly "nectivorous," and each winter we see more at hummingbird feeders and oriole feeders. Many spend the winters in shade coffee plantations in the tropics.

photo courtesy of David Small

President's Message Measuring the World with Birds

One of the benefits of travel, I believe, is the personal connection it gives you to a place you may never think much about otherwise. Whenever that place shows up on the news, you pay a little extra attention, thinking to yourself, "I've been there."

That's how I felt a few weeks ago when I heard that avian influenza had been discovered in the Danube Delta of Romania. One of Europe's best birding hot spots, but one not talked about much around here that I can tell, my husband and I visited the Delta a couple of years ago. Knowing that the avian flu was showing up in the migratory waterfowl that frequent the Delta this time of year was particularly disturbing to me. Not that the spread of the H5N1 virus isn't disturbing wherever it strikes, but, you know, I *know* that place.

National Audubon recently uploaded information on the avian flu to its Web site, where it talks about the "remote chance" that the disease will find its way to American soil. How likely is it that migrating birds will somehow spread the disease to our backyard, we can't help but wonder? Isn't it a relatively short jump from Asia to Alaska? And then just a matter of time before it wings its way into Canada, south to the U.S., and beyond?

How small the world seems when you measure it with migratory birds.

As Audubon members, we share a common interest, a common passion, in birds. It brings us together at meetings and on walks, giving us the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life. It takes us places we'd never think of going, such as Romania. And it heightens our awareness of issues we might never consider otherwise, such as avian influenza.

As 2005 ends and you start to consider your future in 2006, I hope you will resolve to take full advantage of your membership in Wake Audubon. We have many exciting projects and events coming up in the next 12 months, all of which help us make the world a little smaller and our horizons a bit broader. When you're measuring with birds, nothing is too far away or too obtuse to tackle. So if you're already an active member, thank you! We hope you'll continue to be. But if you haven't been coming to our meetings or joining us on walks, please do! We hope to see you at a Wake Audubon event soon.

Thanks, happy birding, and happy holidays!

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News of Interest

First in Flight; First in Wildlife Conservation! North Carolina achieved a first in August of this year when we became the first state in the nation to have a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The strategy, known as the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan and developed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, was required by Congress in order to receive non-game funding through the State Wildlife Grants program.

The North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan identifies priority species and habitats in need of conservation attention, and provides a detailed description of the research, survey, monitoring, and conservation action priorities for each of the habitats and river basins in the state. The document also addresses statewide issues such as urbanization, private lands management, land conservation strategies, and wildlife education. North Carolina's plan has been lauded by the USFWS, Defenders of Wildlife, and others for its thoroughness and comprehensive approach to strategic planning.

The Wildlife Action Plan was developed with the input of a wide variety of stakeholders from many organizations, and it is hoped that the plan will provide a coordinating and rallying point for conservation efforts across the state. The Wildlife Action Plan can be viewed at www.ncwildlife.org/fs_index_07_conservation.htm; click on "Wildlife Action Plan" and look for Downloads.

11th East Carolina Wildlife Arts Festival — The East Carolina Waterfowl Guild (www.eastcarolinawildfowlguild.com) presents the 11th annual East Carolina Wildlife Arts Festival and North Carolina Decoy Carving Championships, in Washington, N.C., Feb. 10-12, 2006. This fabulous event doesn't get a lot of attention in Raleigh-area birding circles, but it's a great opportunity to experience the art and sportsmanship of decoy carving in North Carolina. Contact: David or Sandra Gossett, P.O. Box 1713, Washington, NC, 27889; email sgossett@cox.net; (252) 946-2897 or (252) 946-9326.

Act Locally

After Holiday Treasures, Recycle Holiday Trash

The holidays always bring lots of treasures — and, unfortunately, lots of trash. Do your part to minimize waste by recycling the leftovers from your holiday celebrations. Wake County offers an annual "Holiday Wrap-Up Recycling" program in December and early January, designed to give you convenient locations across the county to recycle your holiday trash. As of printing time for this newsletter, the specific locations were not yet announced, but they typically include the county's waste management

convenience centers around the area. The following holiday trash items are targeted:

- wrapping paper
- trees
- gift boxes
- corrugated cardboard
- chip board
- glossy magazines and catalogs
- greeting cards

Find out where you can recycle your items by visiting www.wakegov.com/recycling/default.htm.