Wake Audubon Officers 2006
President: Chrissy Pearson
Vice-president: Jeff Beane
Treasurer: Dave Heeter
Secretary: Linda Rudd

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)
Send this coupon and a check for $20 annual dues to: Wake Audubon Membership, P.O. Box 12452, Raleigh, NC 27605.

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☐ fundraising ☐ education/outreach
☐ membership ☐ Anderson Point
☐ newsletter/PR ☐ 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.

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Pipers are Calling in North Carolina

Pip-pipe-pipe-pipe-pipe—so goes the high-pitched, territorial and courtship call of the delightful, diminutive Piping Plover (PIPL). I’ve always been a sucker for large, dark eyes on a cute round face, and the small plovers display that look more than almost any other bird (save for a few owl species — and I’ll stick to just birds here). Eight plover species regularly breed in North America, with the smaller ones, Snowy, Wilson’s and Piping, in some trouble. For better and worse, Pipers have garnered much attention over the years. PIPL’s breed along the east coast from North Carolina to Nova Scotia, and along shorelines of the Great Lakes and Northern Great Plains waterways. Most winter along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

In North Carolina, PIPL can be found breeding along the coast, from Sunset Beach (the southernmost known breeding site for the species) to the Virginia line. These birds depart in late summer, with other birds arriving in the fall to spend the winter. The non-breeding birds occur from Cape Hatteras south. Thus, in North Carolina, we see PIPL regularly all year round, and this is unique across the country. For some it is a blessing, others, a curse.

The species is listed as Endangered in Canada, and in the U.S. for the Great Lakes population. Elsewhere it is listed as Threatened. Populations were decimated during the heyday of the feather trade, and have made only a modest comeback since protection began, around 1920.

Herping in the Sandhills Cold but Productive
The “Halloween Herps in the Sandhills” field trip, held on Sunday, Oct. 15, was a success even though unseasonably cold weather put a damper on some reptile activity. The trip was led by Jeff Beane; also attending were Nathan Block, Ellen and Hank Lyle, David and Michael McClay, and Carmen White. The trip lasted most of the day; covered portions of Hoke, Moore, Richmond, and Scotland Counties; and turned up nine amphibian species and eight reptile species. Some examples were a Dwarf Madpuppy, Broken-striped Newts, Southern Hognose snake and Eastern Coachwhip. In addition, at least 27 bird species, a few mammals and fishes, and plenty of interesting invertebrates were seen. We ended with dinner at Los 2 Potrillos Mexican restaurant in Aberdeen. A good time was had by all.

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Give the Gift of Wake Audubon this Holiday Season

Need a present for that hard-to-buy-for person in your life? Give a double gift by purchasing a Wake Audubon gift membership, giving a donation in someone’s name, or buying a set of notecards or the ever-popular guidebook, *A Birder’s Guide to the Triangle*. Any of these will not only make a great gift for the holidays, but will also contribute to Wake Audubon’s treasury. Visit our Web site, www.wakeaudubon.org for information, or call Lena at 571-0388 to make a purchase or for additional details.

I’d like to help Wake Audubon continue its work in my community! Please accept my donation in the amount of $________ from

☐ in memory of ____________________________
☐ in honor of ________________________________
☐ I wish my donation to remain anonymous ____________________________

Your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Wake Audubon is a 501(c)(3) organization. Make checks out to Wake Audubon and mail to: Wake Audubon, P.O. Box 12452, Raleigh, NC 27605.

Reducing and Reusing Your Holiday Waste

Do you find yourself wondering what to do now with all the excess stuff you have accumulated during the holiday season? Here are some pre- and post-holiday ideas for reducing and recycling.

Gift giving ideas: Wrap gifts in recycled wrapping paper, colorful pages from the Sunday funnies, reusable gift bags, baskets, or tins. Give no-wrap gifts such as gift-certificates, tickets, or make a donation in someone’s honor to your favorite non-profit organization.

After the holidays, don’t forget to recycle! Many local city/county recycling drop-off sites accept the following: holiday cards and envelopes (with “mixed paper”), corrugated cardboard, flat cardboard, pressboard (such as gift boxes and cereal boxes). Cans, glass, bottles, and newspapers are typically accepted in curbside recycling programs, or can be brought to your local recycling center as well. Wake County accepts wrapping paper and trees for recycling at select drop off sites for two weeks after Christmas (www.WakeGov.com or 919-856-6186 for more info).

What about all those Styrofoam packing peanuts? Clean packing peanuts are often cheerfully accepted and re-used by local packing and shipping stores.

What else can you do with your Christmas tree besides sending it away to be recycled? Buy a live tree and plant it after the holidays. If you have the space in your back yard, use your tree to create a wildlife habitat. Brush pile your back yard to attract a variety of birds and other small animals, or break down your tree to use as compost or mulch.

Remember to act locally during the holidays just as you do throughout the year. Happy Holidays!

Wake Audubon
December 2006

Wake Audubon Calendar
Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Leader’s Choice Bird Walk
Saturday, Dec. 9, TBA
Need info for this

Monthly Meeting — Dec. 12
Cetacean Stranding Along the North Carolina Coast
Dr. Greg Lewbart, Professor of Aquatic Animal Medicine at the NCSU School of Veterinary Medicine, will discuss whale and dolphin strandings along our coast, including some of the causes of strandings and what we can learn from them.

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.

Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, Dec. 16
Join us for the 106th Annual Christmas Bird Count and be a part of the largest scientific social event in the world. John Gerwin (919-733-7450 x 726) and John Connors (919-733-7450 x 602) at the Museum of Natural Sciences will continue as compilers for our count, so give them a call or e-mail John Connors at john.conners@museum.ncsu.edu if you would like to participate. Participation is free, but if you wish to be officially “counted” as a participant, your $5 fee will defray the cost of publishing the count results.

Once you sign up, you will be placed with one of 15 or more group captains, who set the destinations and arrival times. Our Raleigh Count captains have been surveying the same tracts of land since 1937, so we have accumulated some impressive data. You can be a part of that — join us this year! Even though watching backyard feeders can report observations, provided they are within the Count Circle — a 15 mile diameter circle with its center at the Farmer’s Market on Lake Wheeler Road.

We welcome all age and skill levels, so don’t worry if you are a novice, we will team you with groups who will ensure you get some good looks at some great birds. We will have a noontime Countdown (site to be determined, ask your site captain and bring your lunch), and may share an evening supper. Hope to see you there.

President’s Message
Forging Better Connections with our Members

Throughout my two years as president of Wake Audubon, I’ve come to know so many members who truly make this organization the special group that it is. And in case I didn’t realize it before, I leave office this month with two years of understanding just how important you, our members, are to Wake Audubon’s success. You are truly our most important resource — one to cherish, to embrace, and to cultivate.

National Audubon knows this as well, and recently announced a new way for you to stay connected with our leaders in the national office — the Audubon Action Center Web site is a hub of information about issues and projects at the top of Audubon’s to-do list. It allows you to send messages to legislators, find out how you can participate in current conservation campaigns, update your personal information on file, and more. Visit http://audubacloning.org/audubon/home.html to take advantage of this improved resource.

Here at home, Wake Audubon too is making strides toward better communication with our more than 1,200 members in the Triangle area. The new year will bring with it new goals and projects for our group, plus the continuation of other issues we’ve begun, such as the Important Bird Area adoption. This winter we launch a new way for you to stay up to date with all these goings on — a Wake Audubon email listserver.

The listserver will be a database of email addresses of our members who wish to receive messages about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, action alerts, etc. The email addresses already submitted to Wake Audubon will automatically be added to the listserver; but at any time if you wish to subscribe (or, for that matter, unsubscribe), all you have to do is send me a note to cpcerston17@nc.rr.com.

Rest assured that this listserver will only be used to keep you better informed, in real time, about what your Audubon chapter is doing in your community. We will never share your address with anyone else and promise not to spam you. You can unsubscribe anytime you wish. Cultivating a membership that is knowledgeable, engaged and passionate about the organization’s goals — this is the ideal we all hope for, whether at the national, state, or local level. I sincerely hope these new developments will offer you opportunities to become more involved with your Audubon Society. We look forward to working with you soon!

And, before I sign off for the last time, let me take this chance to say thank you to everyone who made my tenure as president so fulfilling and enjoyable. I’ve been out of pocket with my new parental duties this year, but throughout it all, I’ve kept Wake Audubon close. Thank you all for your continued support.

Happy Holidays,

John Gerwin

Wilson’s (Common) Snipe (Gallinago delicata) — The Wilson’s Snipe was recently recognized as a different species from the Common Snipe of Eurasia. The two look very similar, but differ in the shape, patterning, and usually the number of tail feathers. The long bill is flexible. The tips can be opened and closed with no motion at the base. Sensory pits at the tip allow the bird to feel its prey deep in mud. Males perform a “wattling” display during courtship, flying high in circles above a waiting female who is hidden in vegetation below, and then taking shallow dives to produce an eerie, wailing sound. This results from air rushing through the attenuated outer tail feathers. Females almost always lay four eggs. The male leaves the nest with the first two chicks that hatch. The female takes the last two and cares for them. This species is fairly common in North Carolina in winter.
—John Gerwin

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