

Birding Weekend in the North Carolina Mountains

Wear your hiking boots and bring your binoculars for a weekend of birding in the northern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina with Wake Audubon Board member and Museum of Natural Sciences Curator of Birds John Gerwin. We will visit Moses Cone and Julian Price National Parks, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Snake and Rich Mountain area north of Boone, and other areas as time permits. For birders of all levels, brush up on your birding skills as we explore some beautiful mountain habitats.

- When:** Friday, May 19 (1 p.m.) to Sunday, May 21 (6 p.m.)
- Fee:** \$20 for Audubon members (\$30 for non-members)
Fee covers travel and instruction. Lodging information will be available at registration.
- Leaders:** John Gerwin, Museum ornithologist
Curtis Smalling, NC Audubon Society
- Where:** Meet at Museum of Natural Sciences, travel by Museum bus to field sites
- Minimum age:** 12 (minors must be accompanied by a registered adult)
- Activity Levels:** easy to moderate
- Register:** email john.gerwin@ncmail.net

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)

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Are you interested in serving on one of our committees?

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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.



March 2006

Wingbeats

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N.C. Birding Trail — Making Progress!

Linking nature-based tourists and birdwatchers to local resources and some of the best birding sites in the state — that's what the North Carolina Birding Trail (NCBT) is all about. In an effort to mimic the success of some 40 to 50 similar trails across the country, the NCBT will be a driving trail that builds partnerships among great birding sites, businesses, and other local historical and community attractions across the state. Other states' trails bring in millions of nature-based tourism dollars and give economic value to natural resources which, in turn, provide incentive to further protect these resources. The NCBT will help accomplish this in North Carolina.

Led by a steering committee comprised of various agencies, the mission of the NCBT is "to conserve and enhance North Carolina's bird habitat by promoting sustainable bird watching activities, economic opportunities, and conservation education." Steering committee members include representatives from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Audubon N.C., N.C. Sea Grant, N.C. Cooperative Extension, N.C. State Parks, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Plans are to complete the trail in three distinct components: the coastal plain, the piedmont, and the mountains. Focusing on the coastal plain first, this section should be finished in 2006 before moving westward to the piedmont in 2007 and then the mountains in 2008. Since the spring of 2005, site nominations from across the coastal plain have come in, and the site nomination sub-committee regularly reviews them

and makes recommendations to the steering committee. As of Jan. 1, 73 sites across the coastal plain have submitted nomination forms; 45 sites have already been approved, and nominations closed on Feb. 1.

The NCBT was recently awarded grants totaling more than \$100,000 that will greatly enhance the ability of the initiative to progress forward as planned. These grants will fund brochures, promotional materials, travel costs and other costs associated with developing and marketing the trail.

Of course no birding or wildlife trail is complete without a trail guide and map to direct visitors to the sites, so steering committee members have reviewed publications from other state trails to develop the best options for the NCBT. The NCBT guides will be developed as three stand-alone publications for the coastal plain, piedmont, and mountains. With the assistance of the grant monies, the hope is to publish the coastal component guide in 2006 as funds allow. In addition, a promotional brochure about the NCBT is in the works to be ready for distribution by spring 2006. For the latest on the NCBT, visit www.ncbirdingtrail.org.

~Salinda Daley

In October 2005, Salinda Daley was hired to serve as the full-time NCBT coordinator, a position housed within the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Salinda took over many of the duties that Wake Audubon's own Lena Gallitano performed as the interim coordinator. Salinda and Lena continue to work together on many aspects of the project.



Got a submission for the newsletter? Send it to linda_rudd@ncsu.edu by the first of the month to be considered for future issues. Submissions may be edited for space or content.

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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Monthly Meeting — March 14 Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat

— Wake Audubon members Harry and Hallie Wilson will present methods of creating wildlife habitat in your backyard, with emphasis on native plants.

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.

Leader's Choice Bird Walk Saturday, March 11, 8:30 a.m.

Join us for a morning walk along the Buckeye Trail. Meet at the parking area of the Buckeye Trail on Crabtree Blvd. between Raleigh Blvd. and Capital Blvd. Contact Lena Gallitano at lena_gallitano@ncsu.edu or 571-0388 for more details.

Field Trip: Canoeing the Lumber River

Saturday, March 25 — Join Curtis Smalling of Audubon North Carolina as he leads us on a tour of our newly

adopted Important Bird Area (IBA) site, the Lumber River Bottomlands in Columbus and Robeson Counties near the South Carolina state line. A beautiful blackwater river, the Lumber River area hosts many species of migrating songbirds and waterfowl. This will be the first of several trips to the area as Wake Audubon begins its first year of monitoring this IBA.

John Little is handling the logistics; contact him at jlittle17@nc.rr.com or 781-0829.

Mark your calendars for Wake Audubon's 7th annual **Birdathon/Wildathon** fundraiser.

Choose the best date for you between

April 16 and May 14.

Contact Karen Bearden at 844-9050

or chickadeebirders@earthlink.net for more information.

Feathered Facts



Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*), Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) —

Approximately 62 species of "chickadees" exist worldwide, notably across Eurasia. Two are found in North Carolina, the Black-capped and the Carolina, and for all their similarities, recent genetic studies have shown that they are not each other's nearest relative. The Black-capped has always been a bird

of high elevations in North Carolina, almost always at or above 5,000 feet. The familiar Carolina is found across the state; when sighted in the mountains, it is typically below 4,500 feet, though recently we have found them as high as 5,300 feet. These two species are known to hybridize at times. It appears that habitat changes have led to a shift in chickadee distribution, and perhaps numbers. Black-caps on Grandfather Mountain are much rarer today. For us flatlanders, now is the time to have nest boxes out, which chickadees will readily use. Moss is often used in nests, and dryer lint is readily accepted too.

~ John Gerwin

President's Message

Conservation for our Future, our Children

I will never forget that day last April, when I learned two pieces of news that would change the way I look at the world: The Ivory-billed Woodpecker had been rediscovered and was no longer considered extinct, and I was pregnant.

After six decades of believed extinction and seven years of marriage, what else was possible?

Today I look at my first-born, just weeks old, and think back to that day when I first began wondering who he would be and what life would hold for him. To know that his future holds the possibility of actually seeing the Lord God Bird, maybe even seeing the species rebound and flourish, is a future I wouldn't dare to have dreamed. I look forward to introducing my little man to all nature has to offer, and I hope that he will grow to be a steward of the natural world around him as his father and I try to be.

Wake Audubon members and others were introduced to one of nature's stewards last month when Bobby Harrison paid a visit to Raleigh. Harrison was one of the first three people to officially rediscover the Ivory-bill, and he shared his amazing story with those of us lucky enough to get tickets to his February program.

Harrison described in detail how, some two years earlier, he and two other men paddled through an Arkansas swamp in search of that elusive bird. He talked to us about the efforts in place to protect that swamp once the creature had been positively identified. In a wonderful

synchronization of goals by both governmental agencies and private conservation organizations, the land encompassing the swamp where the bird was rediscovered was rapidly purchased and protected. Now, not only do the Ivory-billed Woodpeckers enjoy a safeguarded habitat, but the myriad of other plants and animals in the habitat are also protected. Even if our hopes aren't realized, the species doesn't rebound, and my son is never able to see this magnificent bird, what a wonderful legacy has been realized in protecting that piece of wilderness.

Wake Audubon now finds ourselves a part of a similar conservation effort as we sign on to participate in the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) project. Though not as urgent nor as rapidly moving, the IBA project is nevertheless one of the most significant conservation research projects in which Audubon has participated. An international effort to identify those habitats in need of conservation by monitoring the bird species within them will allow Audubon and other like-minded organizations to focus in on specific areas in the most need.

Wake Audubon selected the Lumber River bottomlands as our adopted IBA. You can help us make this adoption successful. Learn how you can help by contacting our Conservation Committee chair, John Connors, at john.connors@ncmail.net.

Thanks for your help!

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News of Interest

Art Museum Park Festival scheduled for April 22 at the Museum of Art —

Featuring activities related to environmental art and nature. Two new works of outdoor art, both related to recycling, will be celebrated. Activities will include tours of the Park and the new Prairie Trail, environmental art workshops for children, and a performance by the giant Paperhand Puppets. The activities are from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and there is no charge. Joseph Covington will lead a bird walk over the trails at 9 a.m., departing from outside the main entrance of the Museum.

Helping Raleigh Grow a Little

Greener is the mission of Trees Across Raleigh, Inc., and with trees this organization is developing not only better habitat for people but also for the birds we all love to see in our parks

and communities. To date, more than 5,200 trees at 23 sites have been planted by more than 2,500 volunteers with a value in time and materials of \$670,000. Be a part of the growth by attending a planting this year.

• April 1, 9 a.m. to 12 noon

• Nov. 4, 9 a.m. to 12 noon

More at www.treesacrossraleigh.org.

The **2006 spring North Carolina Partners in Flight** meeting will be held on March 28 at Blue Jay Point County Park from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is no registration fee, and snacks are provided. Presentations will be varied and will feature speakers from NC State University and the Southeast GAP Analysis Project. For more information, contact Mark Johns at johnsme@mindspring.com.

Act Locally

Worm Your Way into the Benefits of Vermiculture

Vermiculture is composting with worms. Yes, you, too, can have your very own worm bin! Let worms eat fruit and veggie kitchen scraps and you will be rewarded with a nutrient-rich organic compost that you can use for gardening or houseplants.

Vermiculture is simple, requiring only a worm bin, worms, worm food, and some worm bedding (such as shredded newspaper). In a nutshell, the best worms for vermiculture are called "red wigglers" and are commonly found for sale commercially for vermiculture. These worms can eat a lot, reproduce quickly, and do well in small spaces.

A worm bin can be as simple as an 8 to 16" deep tub with drainage holes drilled in the bottom, or fancier bins are available commercially. The most readily-available worm bedding is shredded black-and-white newspaper.

Worms will eat most vegetable matter, kitchen scraps — such as the trimmings and peelings of fruits and vegetables — crushed eggshells, and even tea bags. Do not feed meats, bones, or fatty/greasy foods to your worms. Place your worm bin somewhere with moderate temperatures, out of direct sunlight or freezing temperatures, such as a basement or garage. After three to six months of regular feeding, a portion of your worms and rich black compost may be harvested. For more thorough discussions on worm composting, check out the book "Worms Eat My Garbage: How to Set Up & Maintain a Worm Composting System" by Mary Appelhof. On the Web, there is a wealth of vermiculture information available from www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/vermicomposting/vermiculture.

~Liessa Bowen