

...continued from front page.

In the past we haven't tackled this mind set, but now we must insist! There must be a few resource-rich parks in our system that provide for an escape, that provide for renewal, that provide a place where people can enjoy nature. We are here to protect Durant Nature Park, and Horse Shoe Farm, so that we will have these sites with their wild places for Raleigh residents to explore. And we need your help. Now!!

We need you to flood the mayor and city council offices with e-mails and/or letters objecting to consideration of Durant for a gym. Write them at Raleigh City Council, P.O. Box 590, Raleigh, NC 27602.

Durant Nature Park was once the headquarters for the Occaneechee Council of the Boy Scouts and many of Raleigh's men have camped on its grounds and paddled its waters. In 1979 the City of Raleigh purchased the park, with financial help from the federal government, Wake County and the Boy Scouts, and developed a Master Plan which called for use of the site for camps and environmental education programming. Each summer day since, hun-

dreds of Raleigh youth participate in Ranoca Day Camp (ages 6-12), Camp Friendly for children with special needs, Raleigh Adventure Camp for teens, and the Survival Camp. Here they learn to swim and canoe on a lake, chase lizards up a tree, and sing songs around a campfire.

During the school year, thousands of elementary students catch critters in the pond and explore the woods. Half a dozen NCSU students have earned graduate degrees studying the natural resources, or camper experiences, based at Durant. There are public nature programs, public campfire sing-a-longs, public picnic facilities, a large banquet hall, public fishing, and miles of hiking trails. Does it sound like this place needs a gym to fulfill its mission?

Our mission — your mission — is to protect what is rightfully ours. Don't let these people steal this site, this experience, from our community. It is going to take a little while to educate these people to value the diverse recreational needs we have, but honestly we don't have that kind of time to save this place. So please act quickly.

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."

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Field Trip to Mahogany Rock Yields 25 Species of Birds, Including Raptors

Five Wake Audubon members spent the weekend of Sept. 23 in the North Carolina mountains, enjoying a field trip to watch the annual hawk migration. The five members participants, who either camped along the Blue Ridge Parkway or stayed in nearby Sparta, traveled to Mahogany Rock in hopes of observing the annual hawk migration. That September weekend has proven in years past to be the best time for high numbers of migrating hawks to pass by.

On Saturday morning, we birders met biologist Jim Keighton and his assistant, Bill Dunson, at Mahogany Rock overlook at mile 235 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Dr. Dunson, who holds a Ph.D. in zoology, and his wife took us up to Bullhead Mountain. The morning's fog prevented us from seeing the hawks, but no one complained. Our hosts improvised and we were instead treated to an expert dissertation on mountain plants and the forest ecosystem.

Later that day the weather cleared and we met members of the Chapel Hill Bird Club who were also there for the peak weekend. With the sun came about 25 species of birds, including Broad-winged and Red-tail Hawks. We also saw a number of fall warblers and wild turkeys. By chance the numbers of hawks were lower than expected, but everyone had a good time along the parkway.

Travelers wishing to observe the hawk migration should have good luck if they visit around Sept. 23, the most likely time for hawks to migrate past the Mahogany Rock overlook at mile 235 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. If you are flexible in your travel dates, log onto the Internet and check the current year's migration progress before you go. This will give you a more precise time to visit and a greater likelihood that you will be there at the right time.

Happy birding! ~Dennis Ose

Wake Audubon members have read in previous Wingbeats about the ongoing struggle to protect Horseshoe Farm from active recreation development. While the Raleigh City Council has seemingly heard our cries for protection, their response has been to target another natural park, Durant, for development instead. Below is the point of view from John Connors, long time Wake Audubon member, Board member, and strong advocate for conserving Wake County's natural areas.

Payback...Time to Protect Durant

There is a clash of recreational philosophies taking place in this town and we're in the middle of it. The Park's director, members of the Parks Board, and some on the City Council believe that our parks are underused if they are not filled with people pursuing every conceivable recreational activity. It doesn't matter if they step on each

other's toes, as long as lots of people use the park. Natural resource conservation is fine, but it is not a primary goal in their park system. This group feels its grasp on Horse Shoe Farm slipping, and so they have turned their focus to impose a Community Center with Gymnasium on Durant Nature Park. *continued on back page...*



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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Bird Walk on the Buckeye Saturday, Nov. 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 Bob Winstead for more information at birderbob1@aol.com or 845-5006.

Monthly Meeting — Nov. 14 Wildlife Rehabilitation, Education, and Research at Piedmont Wildlife Center —

Dr. Bobby Schopler, Executive Director of Piedmont Wildlife Center, will introduce us to this nonprofit corporation's mission of supporting native wildlife and its habitat through rehabilitation, education, and research.

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.

Field Trip: Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte

Saturday, November 18

Join us for a fun and eco-friendly trip to the Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte, a nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental education and the conservation of birds of prey through public education, the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned raptors, and research. We will travel together to Charlotte on Amtrak's Carolina Piedmont train. The train leaves downtown Raleigh at 7:05 a.m. and arrives in Charlotte at 10:15 a.m.

Alan Barnhardt at the Center has graciously offered to arrange our transportation from the train station. We will return on the 5:30 p.m. train and will arrive back in Raleigh at 8:40 p.m. Feel free to bring any refreshments to enjoy along the way. The round trip fare is \$46, but if we can get at least 20 reservations, we will get a group discount, so make your plans soon! If you are interested in a spot, please contact Beth Hawkins at beth_hawkins@gmail.com.

Feathered Facts



Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius*

phoeniceus) — Many blackbird species “flock up” in the fall/winter — often mixed together are Red-winged Blackbirds, grackles, cowbirds, and even Rusty Blackbirds. Like the Blue Jay of last month, many of these birds have come from parts north. Though you may dismiss another Red-winged, check out the “fall” plumage of adult males. The new black feathers sport a broad rusty edge, giving a scalloped look. Feather edges take the abuse, and as these feathers age, the rust color wears off, and by spring, males “return” to the all-black plumage we perhaps know best. Some other species, like longspurs and the Rusty Blackbird, show the same cycle. Red-winged males in high quality territories attract multiple mates — often three to six females — in a harem. The genus name, *Agelaius*, is Greek for “flocking”. ~John Gerwin

President's Message

New Board Members, Officers for 2007

It seems just yesterday I was sitting down at the computer to pen my first president's message for this newsletter. Writing a column every month that was interesting, pertinent and, most importantly, informative or inspiring to our members was, at the time, a daunting task. I should have known that this organization and this pursuit of birdwatching that we Wake Audubon members share would provide me with plenty to talk about each month. I hope my words have sufficiently represented the leadership of our group.

I write today to tell you that this leadership is changing. The nominating committee has a new slate of officers and board members for your approval and vote at the December members meeting.

Serving on the Wake Audubon Board requires time and commitment, and so often the Board members find themselves the “go-to” people whenever a trip needs a leader, an event needs a coordinator, or the booth needs to be manned at a festival. It still surprises me that the Board has enjoyed the continued leadership of several individuals who have stuck with us for many years. They have proven to be a stabilizing force of institutional knowledge, and the Board is lucky to have them.

Not all of us on the Board are able to stick around; yet still these people enliven our organization with new ideas, offer fresh perspectives, and pump new

blood into the group. Sometimes other commitments get in the way and prevent these members from continuing. We say goodbye to three such members this year: Liessa Bowen, Paul McAdams, and Bob Winstead. Thank you for your service.

We also say thank you to Dave Heeter for serving as treasurer. He will remain on the Board but will turn over his duties to someone new. I, too, will pass the torch as motherhood continues to play tug-of-war with my commitments.

The new slate of officers and board members for 2007 (the president serves a two year term) are:

New officers — president, Gerry Luginbuhl; treasurer, Dennis Ose

New Board members — Kari Wouk, Ed Corey, Rob Dunn, Becky Browning

Returning officers — vice-president, Jeff Beane; secretary, Linda Rudd

Returning Board Members — John Connors, Dave Heeter, John Gerwin, Beth Hawkins, Paulette Van de Zande, Melody Scott, John Little, Dave Small, Randy Senzig, Lena Gallitano, Kendrick Weeks and myself.

Wake Audubon wouldn't be the fine organization it is without the exemplary leadership of these people. The next time you see them, thank them for their work. And perhaps next year you may be interested in serving. We can certainly put you to work!

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News of Interest

Wake Audubon Finalizes Lumber River IBA Plans — *Wake Audubon members will recall that our chapter this year adopted the Lumber River IBA, and committed to conducting regular studies of this beautiful black-water area. Learn more about the IBA at www.ncaudubon.org.*

This summer, Wake Audubon Board members John Little, Kendrick Weeks, and John Gerwin continued efforts to setup a monitoring program for our adopted IBA. Kendrick identified and plotted on good digital road maps about 60 locations as potential stopping points. These were spread throughout the area, and chosen for what we hoped would be easy roadside access. One of our main goals was to visit each point to make sure all were safely accessible for anyone who may wish to help with this effort. We made two trips to do this. In the end, we accepted around 45 points, took GPS data and photos, and other notes that will help anyone find the stopping points.

Again, the goal of this IBA effort is to have some fun while surveying the birds within the prescribed area. We plan to have multiple ways that members can assist, whether it be a short visit to do some general birding, or one to follow our protocol for doing “point counts.” We also plan to generate easy-to-use data forms, nice maps, and good directions (both to the sites, and for what to do once there). Ultimately, we hope that enough people will join in that we can have small teams who work (and play!) together, to gather info about the birds of this area.

We plan to do some training in the coming months. In the meantime, all that remains for us, and anyone who would like to join us, is to take another river trip to record GPS data for points we want to survey while floating the Lumber or its tributaries. Check the Web site for details if you are interested in joining, or let one of us know.

~ John Gerwin

Act Locally

Giving Green Gifts This Holiday Season

The holidays are just around the corner; have you started your gift shopping yet? Consider these 10 simple earth-friendly gift ideas as you shop this season. Enjoy that “it's better to give than to receive” feeling while minimize the accumulation of “stuff.” Give a gift for your loved ones and for the planet!

1. Give consumable goods (food).
2. Buy recycled, recyclable, rechargeable, or organic goods with minimal packaging.
3. Give cash, a gift certificate, or a savings bond.
4. Make your own consumable goods (cookies, bread, pie, or an entire meal!)

5. Give a donation to your favorite non-profit conservation (or other) organization in your friend's name.
6. Give a museum pass or membership.
7. Offer your services and talents (be it help around the house or a weekend birdwatching trip).
8. Offer to do a chore, such as babysit or weed your friend's garden.
9. Put together a photo album.
10. Write a nice letter, make a personal phone call, or best yet, visit in person!