

Ribbit! State Amphibian Bill Croaks, but Debate Goes On



Earlier this year the General Assembly introduced a bill to name the bullfrog North Carolina's state amphibian. For several reasons, many in the scientific and herpetological communities disagree with this choice. As quoted on the North Carolina Herpetological Society's Web site, the American Bullfrog is not unique to North

Carolina and is already considered the state amphibian for three other states. More importantly, they are considered an aggressive invasive species in some areas of the country and have put other species at risk. The Herp Society believes the selection of a state amphibian gives us an opportunity to educate the public about the overall decline in amphibian species, and the bullfrog is not a good representation of this pressing environmental problem.

The Herp Society is taking a poll to help select North Carolina's state amphibian. Visit their Web site, www.ncherps.org, to vote for one frog and one salamander. The results will be compiled and presented to lawmakers next spring, when the state amphibian selection is expected to reemerge (the earlier proposed legislation was dropped due in part to loud opposition by concerned wildlife groups). Choices for a new state amphibian include such delightful species as the Carolina Gopher Frog, the Pine Barrens Treefrog, and the Neuse River Waterdog.

When the legislative session resumes in the spring, state lawmakers will be more aware of the unique diversity of amphibians found in North Carolina and will hopefully be in a better position to select an appropriate representative of our state's unique and diverse amphibian population. Help shape their decision by casting your vote now.

frog drawing by Lynne Mattocks Lucas

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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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Wingbeats

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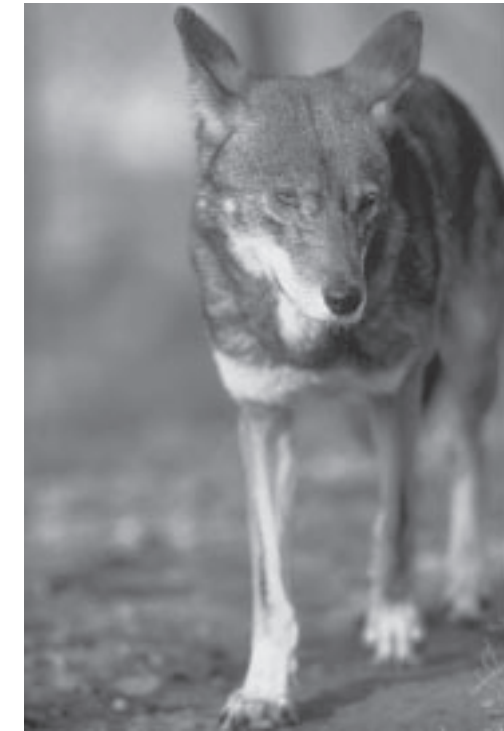
Wake Audubon is once again traveling to Lake Mattamuskeet for a fall birding trip. See page 3 for details.

"Wolves and Wildlands" Exhibit Comes to Pocosin NWR Headquarters

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the red wolf reintroduction in North Carolina, the Red Wolf Coalition brings wolf education to life in Columbia with "Wolves and Wildlands in the 21st Century," a stunning exhibit that illustrates the important role humans will play in determining the future of the wolf in North America.

The exhibit presents wolves in a continental perspective that will deepen viewers' understanding of the challenges facing wolf/human coexistence. Living with wolves and other big predators will become increasingly more difficult as wildlands disappear and habitat for wildlife becomes more fragmented. We want to use this opportunity to motivate the public to work together to ensure that these rare and exquisite animals are never again on the edge of extinction.

Developed by the International Wolf Center and the Science Museum of



According to the Red Wolf Coalition, the endangered Red Wolf (Canis rufus) currently ranges in an area of northeastern North Carolina of about one million acres. This is the only mainland reintroduction site in the United States.

Minnesota, the exhibit consists of six beautifully crafted mounted canids — five wolves and a coyote — prepared by world-class taxidermists.

Featured are the Mexican gray wolf, the Great Plains wolf, the Arctic wolf, the Rocky Mountain wolf and the red wolf. The six dynamic mounted canids are accompanied by nine interpretive panels that give an overview of each animal's natural history and the challenges to its long-term survival.

The exhibit is located at the Walter B. Jones, Sr. Center on the Pocosin National Wildlife Refuge

Headquarters in Columbia, North Carolina. The exhibit is free to the public and will be open Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Oct. 31.

Printed with permission from www.redwolves.com.

Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Monthly Meeting

Adventures of a Museum Veterinarian

Oct. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Ever taken a spider to the vet? Dr. Dan Dombrowski, veterinarian and Coordinator of Living Collections at the Museum of Natural Sciences, will discuss medical cases involving some less familiar, bizarre, and unusual "patients," including a unique look at "invertebrate medicine."

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.

Anderson Point Bird Walk

Birding Anderson Point

Oct. 13 at 8:30 a.m.

Join us for a leisurely bird walk around Anderson Point Park. Meet in the parking lot just outside the gate. For more information or directions to Anderson Point, please contact Kari Wouk at 919-395-5630 or krwouk@yahoo.com.

Field Trip

Halloween Herps in the Sandhills

Oct. 14, all day

This trip is full, but if you are one of the lucky people signed up to attend, get more details by contacting Jeff Beane at jeff.beane@ncmail.net.

The North Carolina

Herpetological Society will hold its annual Fall Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 3, at the NC Wildlife Resources Commission headquarters on NCSU Centennial Campus (1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh). The theme will be "Herps and Public Lands." Anyone interested in reptiles and/or amphibians is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Jeff Beane at 733-7450, ext. 754; jeff.beane@ncmail.net; or Ron Sutherland at 919-768-6174; rws10@duke.edu.

Feathered Facts



Gray-cheeked Thrush (Catharus minimus) — *This species made a hit around 1993 when a former subspecies was elevated to species rank: Bicknell's Thrush. Gray-cheeks breed further north, in remote taiga and tundra habitat, and nest mostly in willow/alder shrubs. These nocturnal migrants go to South America, east of the Andes, but their true distribution there is*

poorly known. In spring, Gray-cheeks migrate later than the other Catharus thrushes, except Bicknell's. Mid-May and early October are good times to look for them in our area. In a spring migration radio-tracking study, 5/8 individuals departed before 11 p.m. They were detected flying at altitudes of 900m to 1500m (3,000 ft. to 5,000 ft.), and at a speed of around 36 km/hr (about 20 mi/hr.). When found, these birds can be rather shy and reclusive, and difficult to tell from other thrushes, especially Bicknell's.

~John Gerwin

photo courtesy Mike Dunn

President's Message Time to Vote — Know the Issues

Election season is here. As Audubon members, we value local leadership who are forward-thinking and sensitive to environmental issues. While we are often vocal about our concern for such issues, we shouldn't be caught preaching environmental stewardship to others if we personally are not practicing it. This fall, educate yourself about the issues facing our candidates and please vote accordingly.

An important issue on the Raleigh ballot this October is the Parks Bond referendum. The Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department is seeking \$88.6 million to buy more park land, to extend the greenway system, and to improve existing parks. Considering that I see many positive aspects to the bond project, I am concerned about the nebulous wording in the section on building a community center and gymnasium somewhere in northeastern Raleigh. Just where will these buildings emerge? There is no guarantee that Horseshoe or another natural gem, Durant Nature Park, won't be targeted directly or indirectly by this proposal. So, if you choose to vote for the Parks Bond project, it is even more important that you consider carefully the choices for Raleigh City Council, since this is the group with the ultimate authority to decide what happens in the parks.

The natural beauty of Horseshoe Farm Park has been temporarily protected, but that protection assured. There is no

environmental stewardship plan for the park and no long-range plan for how the park will be developed. In north Raleigh, Durant Nature Park has been the site of many nature-oriented summer programs and environmental education programs for children. Special habitats have been preserved for rare salamanders. Wood ducks nest in the wetlands and many citizens enjoy the trails and lakes in the park. Construction on this site will very likely endanger the important habitats that have been until now preserved at Durant. We need a city council that will do more than pay lip service to environmental concerns. We need council members who will vote to protect the land, plants and animals in special places within the city, and will create parks that provide places for walking, enjoying nature and environmental education.

The major races in this election are for two at-large seats. Those running are Paul Anderson, Mary-Ann Baldwin, Will Best, Russ Stephenson, Helen Tart, and David Williams. There are also several candidates running in District B. The incumbent, Jessie Taliaferro, is being challenged by Rodger Koopman. Talk to your neighbors and friends who have been working to preserve our parks, and find out where the candidates stand on park development and environmental stewardship.

Oh, and happy birding!

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Birding Lake Mattamuskeet Friday - Sunday, Nov. 30 - Dec. 2

Join Becky Desjardins, Bird Collection Manager at the Museum of Natural Sciences and Wake Audubon Board member, on a trip to **North Carolina's hotspot for waterfowl!** We are going down during the prime time to see all sorts of wintering ducks, geese, and swans. In addition we should see raptors, Snipe, and wintering sparrows.

We will carpool down **leaving from Raleigh at 3 p.m. Friday afternoon**, bird all day Saturday and a half day on Sunday. Anyone who wants to come down later on Friday can catch up with us at the hotel or make arrangements to meet us the next day. Participants are encouraged to bring picnic lunches to eat in the field.

Double rooms have been reserved at **The Hotel Engelhard**. The rate is \$66/room and the hotel will provide breakfast. Participants should call the hotel and book one of the reserved rooms, which are being held under Wake Audubon. The phone number is 800-290-5311.

Be sure to not only reserve your room but also call Becky to reserve your space. For more information and to reserve a space on the trip call Becky Desjardins at (919) 606-5352.

Act Locally

Conservation in the Workplace — Do Your Part

Conservation is an important habit to be in at home, but needlessly wasted resources occur everywhere. You can have more impact than you might think by employing conservation techniques not only at home, but also at the office.

What can YOU do to be conservation minded at your workplace? Here are just a few ideas to get you started.

Recycle. Bring your own coffee/tea/water mug rather than use disposable cups. Turn off lights, printers,

radios, computers, and computer monitors when not in use. Conserve water. Walk, take the bus, or carpool if you can. Set your thermostat a little warmer in the summer and cooler in the winter. Reuse paper for notes, scratch paper, or draft copies in the printer or copier.

Remember, just because someone else may be paying the bills, wasted resources are still wasted resources. Encourage your co-workers to be conservation minded and do these things too!