

Wake Audubon's 7th Annual Birdathon/Wildathon

April 16 - May 14

It's spring, which means time to get outside and start counting for our annual Birdathon/Wildathon! How many birds, butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, and/or mammals can you identify within a 24-hour period? Last year \$4,000 was raised for local and North Carolina Audubon projects. Can we beat that total this year?

Join a team or count on your own anytime between April 16 and May 14. Help bring in donations by making a donation yourself, soliciting donations, or by asking one of your favorite businesses for support. Sign up at our monthly meetings or by completing the form below and mailing it to Karen Bearden, 1809 Lakepark Dr., Raleigh, NC 27612. Contact Karen at 844-9050 or by email at chickadeebirders@earthlink.net for more information.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I pledge \$_____ per species identified by another group.

I pledge a lump sum of \$_____.

A matching gift of \$_____ is enclosed from my company.

Sign me up as a birder, naturalist, and/or pledge-getter.

Team name _____

Members _____

I pledge \$_____ per species I observe alone or with my team.

Donations are tax deductible. Make checks out to Wake Audubon.

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.

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.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

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Are you interested in serving on one of our committees?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> education/outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Anderson Point |
| <input type="checkbox"/> newsletter/PR | <input type="checkbox"/> 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.



April 2006

Wingbeats

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

Wake Audubon Supports Outreach to Raleigh Community Center Students

In January and February, Wake Audubon helped "recruit" new birdwatchers from an unlikely

place — after school programs in Raleigh community centers. More than 200 Raleigh youth engaged in bird watching using feeders funded by Wake Audubon through a \$200 grant to Raleigh Parks and Recreation. Working as a Nature Specialist with the Parks and Recreation Nature Department, Wake Audubon member Sean Higgins installed the feeders at 15 different community centers in Raleigh. These feeders have been maintained and monitored by students in the after school program at each community center, including Chavis Community Center, Roberts Community Center, and Millbrook Exchange.



Wake Audubon was pleased to be able to contribute to this program's success, ensuring that each community center

was well equipped with feeders, seed and hardware. In-kind donations and/or discounts for the project were also received from Wild Birds Unlimited, the Outdoor Bird Company, and Atlantic Avenue Orchid and Garden Center.

"In addition to participating in the bird count at the after school program, I

hope the youth will go home and teach their families how to participate," said Higgins. "I am certain that many students gained a real appreciation for wild birds and went home hooting like Great Horned Owls and singing like American Robins!"



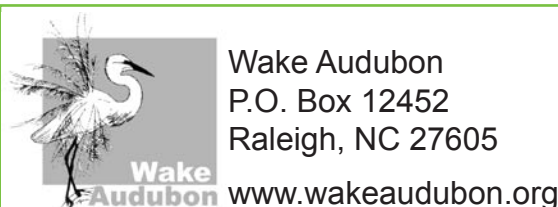
Sean Higgins and his wife Karen moved to Raleigh this past fall. Sean currently serves as a nature specialist with the city of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department. He previously served as a youth worker and environmental educator for a variety of organizations including Audubon Mississippi and the San Francisco Conservation Corps. He has a M.S. in Zoology from Miami University and a B.S. in Biology from Virginia Tech.

Sean says that he is inspired by the fantastic network of environmental educators in North Carolina and hopes to do his part to encourage young leaders for the environment.

Higgins used curricula from Raleigh Parks and Recreation and the Museum of Natural Sciences to help the youngsters learn how to identify common winter birds of Raleigh. This knowledge was then put to use as kids participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Inside:

Sign up to support our annual Birdathon/Wildathon fundraiser — see back page for details.



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

www.wakeaudubon.org

Wild Birds Unlimited®



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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Anderson Point Bird Walk
Saturday, April 8, 8:30 a.m. Join us for a Saturday morning walk at Wake Audubon's adopted park. Meet in the parking lot at Anderson Point Park. Take Business Highway 64E from the Beltline two miles. Turn right on Rogers Lane (before the grocery store) and right at the stop sign; the parking lot is at the end of Rogers Lane. Contact Melody for more information at 881-2601.

Monthly Meeting — April 11
Ancient Impacts on Island
Environments — Dr. Scott Fitzpatrick, Professor of Archaeology at North Carolina State University, will discuss some of the known historical impacts on island wildlife and ecosystems by early humans. 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: Bird Banding at
Prairie Ridge
Saturday, April 15, 7:30 -
11 a.m. Observe ornithologist and Wake Audubon Board member John Gerwin as he nets and bands birds on the Museum of Natural Sciences' Prairie Ridge site. John and fellow naturalist and Board member Kendrick Weeks will demonstrate mist netting, extracting birds from the net, conducting scientific measurements on specimens and banding them. Contact Kendrick for more information and directions at 606-6305 or kendrickweeks@earthlink.net.

The North Carolina Herpetological Society will hold its annual Spring Meeting on the weekend of April 29 and 30, 2006, at the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro. Anyone interested in reptiles and amphibians is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Ron Sutherland by phone at (919) 942-1780 or by email at rws10@duke.edu

Feathered Facts



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) — *This comical sounding moniker is perhaps the source of more humor than any other bird name. But contrary to the name, these birds do not "suck" sap. Rather, they lick sap with a well-adapted tongue — the "brushy" tip greatly increases surface area, allowing a bird to imbibe more sap per lick. And although insects are attracted (and some consumed), carbs are the main food group here. Nuthatches, parids, woodpeckers, hummers, and squirrels also take part. The YBSA is a highly migratory species, with most birds nesting way up north; but in North Carolina's mountains, some 200 pairs breed, isolated from others of its kind. There, they begin nest excavation in late April, and most young fledge in late June. Adults feed nestlings both insects and many Serviceberry fruits. After three years or study, we found most birds restricted to northern hardwoods between 3800 to 4800 feet elevation.* ~John Gerwin

photo courtesy Walker Golder

President's Message

Up Close Feeders Reveal New Detail

This time last year, I didn't look out my windows very much. At least, my windows at home. The office window looking out over the state government complex in downtown Raleigh got used, but only because that's where I found myself, working, most of the daylight hours.

This year is different. I'm at home on maternity leave, and in between feedings and diaper changes, I found time to make a big batch of suet for my birds. And then I did something I've never done before — I put it in a suet feeder hanging right outside my dining room window, just inches away from the glass.

This may seem ridiculous to some of you, who may have been enjoying such up-close birding for ages. But our bird feeders have always been placed further out in the yard, within view of the house but not this close. The only birds that we saw in such close proximity each year were the hummingbirds, who enjoyed a place of honor on the deck.

Now, with no winter hummers gracing me with their presence, I had an empty hook on the deck. So there went the suet cage.

I can't believe I haven't done this sooner!

I never realized how chesnuddy are the feathers of the Brown Thrasher, nor how stunning the contrast of the Carolina Chickadee's plumage. Carolina Wrens



No zoom lens necessary — window feeders mean more detail and better photos, too.

never had so much personality, and I always loved Brown-headed Nuthatches, but never realized how distinct that white patch is on the backs of their heads.

After years of birding through binoculars, I'm discovering a whole new reason to love this hobby.

If you haven't tried moving a feeder up close to a window, try it. The birds won't seem to notice you sitting quietly behind the glass, and I dare say the show you'll see is rivaled by none other. I now have two feeders, a suet cage and a tube feeder, on my deck outside the window and I've seen at least a dozen species in new detail, including two species of woodpeckers. It really is a beautiful new perspective for me, and I feel like I'm getting a sneak peek into the secret lives of our feathered friends, when they think no one is watching.

Happy birding!

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News of Interest

"A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle" Over Five Years Old — More than five years have passed since Wake Audubon released "A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle," the book to own for anyone looking for birding hotspots in this area. To date 1,253 books have been sold, raising \$10,740.82.

You can buy the book at our monthly meetings, in several local stores, or by having them mailed to you. The

Need a gift for someone special?
Wake Audubon can help you with your gift giving at any time of the year. At \$10 a pack, our egret notecards with original artwork by Lynne Lucas make a charming gift. The notecards are sold at chapter meetings; you may also contact Lena Gallitano at 571-0388.

cost is \$11, plus \$3 for postage. For more information, contact Karen Bearden at 844-9050 or chickadeebirders@earthlink.net, or by mailing a \$14 check payable to Wake Audubon to: Karen Bearden, 1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh, NC 27612.

Wake Audubon Thanks Generous Donors — A big thank you to several Wake Audubon members for their recent donations. A.R. Krol made a donation in memory of his sister, Elizabeth. Dennis Ose and Bill Flournoy both made contributions to the Audubon Adventures program.

Thanks to these folks and to all other members who continue to give to our chapter via donations or memberships. To download a donation form, visit www.wakeaudubon.org.

Act Locally

Grow Your Own Rain Garden and Help Conserve Water

Have you ever watched rain water run off the roof of your house, down the gutter, and create a standing quagmire in your yard? Or maybe it streams down your driveway, into the street, and right down the storm sewer? With fears of water restrictions very real here in the Triangle, this water could be put to better use — in a rain garden.

While it may seem a long way off, those hot, dry summer days will soon be upon us, and creating a rain garden is one way to help conserve water. Rain gardens capture rain water and snowmelt and allow it to seep slowly back into the ground, which helps purify and replenish our groundwater supply. Because rain gardens capture more water naturally, they need less, if any, watering from you.

When considering a location for a rain garden, watch where runoff occurs during the next rain. Watch for

water coming off your roof, from the gutters, from sidewalks and streets, and through your yard. Are there areas where the water collects, or ways you might easily direct water into a specific place in your yard (via flexible piping connected to the base of a gutter downspout, for example)? You can even create your own low area, or swale, in your yard by digging a shallow trench to help capture water runoff.

Hardy native species are generally best for rain gardens, as they will require little maintenance and should thrive under local conditions without use of chemicals or fertilizers. Consider not only flowering plants, but native shrubs, grasses, and ferns. Basically, any water that seeps back into the ground instead of running down the storm sewer will help improve water quality and water conservation. ~Liessa Bowen