

... continued from front page.
1983 through 1988. The first wild Bald Eagle nest was documented in 1984. In 1998 there were 17 nests; in 2000, there were 34 nests; and in 2004, there were at least 60 active nesting territories with at least 80 eagles fledged. The status of the Bald Eagle under the federal list of threatened and endangered species has moved from endangered to threatened and it will probably be delisted in the near future.

In contrast, the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) is in significant population decline throughout much of its range due to habitat loss and fragmentation. In North Carolina it is listed as a Species of Special Concern. Interestingly, the Loggerhead Shrike prefers large stands (a minimum of 10 acres) of short grasses interspersed with small trees and shrubs, a perfect description of Lake Benson Park.
~Clyde Smith

Join Wake Audubon and Bug Out at BugFest

It's a day dedicated to "all things buggy," as the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences prepares to celebrate the 10th annual BugFest, Saturday, Sept. 16 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

More than 120 displays, exhibits and presentations will fill all four floors of the Museum, as well as Bicentennial Plaza and the Capitol Grounds outside (including a booth with Wake

Audubon). This is the largest bug festival in the nation!

Annual attractions that keep people coming back for more include: Bee Bearding, a person adorned with a living beard of bees; The Roachingham 500, a race featuring Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches (Roachard Petty, reigning champ); and the Café Insecta for all the free bug food you can eat.

Wake Audubon Officers 2006

President: Chrissy Pearson
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Treasurer: Dave Heeter
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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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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.



September 2006

Wingbeats

Inside:
Horseshoe Farm is still stirring up controversy. Read the President's Message for more.

Lake Benson Home to Two Wake County Rarities: Shrikes and Eagles

The Lake Benson bird count team of Lena Gallitano, Anne Hicks and Clyde Smith, reinforced by Harriet Sato, had a special mission on May 13, 2006, in addition to the usual Migratory Bird Day count activities. In response to a request from Jeff Marcus of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Lena and Clyde had volunteered to monitor a Bald Eagle nest which we had located in 2005. The Wildlife Commission sent an NCSU grad student to pinpoint the location early in 2006, and she had confirmed incubation and the hatching of two chicks. Since she would be unable to return to confirm fledging, Wake Audubon's help was enlisted. We planned to make MBD the first of our monitoring visits. With permission from a Lakemoor Home Owners Association member, we made our way to a vantage point on their property from which we could view the nest. Our team was thrilled by the sight of two well developed, active eaglets and their proud parents. Migratory Bird Day couldn't get any better than this! But it did.

"Loggerhead Shrike!" Anne made the call as we were nearing the end of the loop trail around the perimeter of Lake Benson Park. It was a sighting we counted on in the Park on both the Christmas Bird Count and Migratory Bird Day so nothing unusual here. But then Anne started counting—five Loggerhead Shrikes. Although we had suspected nesting in the area, now we had the proof before us. We were delighted with the antics of two fledglings who perched on farm equipment parked beneath the nest tree just off park property. They fluttered their wings and welcomed the food brought by attentive parents. A third young bird seemed more independent

and all were oblivious to us and the joggers who passed nearby. We finally tore ourselves away from the entertaining family to finish coverage of our assigned territory. As it turned out, migratory birds weren't the highlight of Migratory Bird Day for at least one count team.

In the weeks which followed, Lena and Clyde visited the eagle nest a total of eight times. Fledging of the two young eagles was confirmed on June 8 when both were seen outside the nest. Actual flight was noted on June 15 and on our final visit, June 28, the fledglings and one adult were seen on the ground and in a tree some 75-100 yards away from the nest tree. Each time we visited the eagle nest we also checked on the progress of the shrike family. We continued to see all five birds in the area of the nest tree until late June. There was some indication of an attempt at a second brood, but we were never able to confirm it.

The Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is a success story in North Carolina. In 1982 when the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission began the North Carolina Bald Eagle Project there were no nests in the state. Young eagles raised in captivity were released from artificial nests near Lake Mattamuskeet from
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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Monthly Meeting — Sept. 12
Philopatry, Philandering, Flooding: A Look at One of North American’s Dullest, Most Secretive Warblers — Join John Gerwin, Curator of Birds at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences and Wake Audubon board member, for highlights of a long-term study on the Swainson’s Warbler in the South Carolina Coastal Plain.

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.



Turkeys regularly dot the landscape in the fields at Raleigh’s Horseshoe Farm. The Farm is a natural heritage site.

Weekly Nature Walks at Horseshoe Farm
Saturday mornings at 8:30
Come learn more about this beautiful property that has caused so much controversy in recent months, and show your support for preserving this natural heritage site as an environmental education park. Learn more at www.horseshoefarm.org.

Feathered Facts



Golden Winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) — September brings migrant songbirds through the area, with many thrushes, vireos and warblers. Many fall warblers are quite confusing to identify, but not all. Some, like this one, do not change color or pattern. Some do, however, change behavior — Golden

Winged Warblers become “dead leaf” specialists while in their non-breeding grounds. These birds target dead leaves suspended in other vegetation, where many insects hide. Many Golden Winged Warblers migrate to Columbia, and during winter and spring migration, many inhabit shade-coffee farms. These warblers nests in about a dozen North Carolina mountain counties, in early successional habitat. Over its entire range, biologists see steep population declines, and it is now a species of high conservation concern. An international group of biologists has formed to coordinate studies throughout this bird’s range. ~John Gerwin

President’s Message

Horseshoe Farm: a Choice, a Vision

If you found out that the city of Raleigh owned 146 of secluded, peaceful grass- and woodlands surrounded on three sides by the Neuse River and identified as a significant natural heritage site, how you like it to be used? Would you like two gymnasiums, outdoor basketball courts and all the accompanying parking lots and lights? Or, would a nature and art/community center with programs, walking trails, canoe access and open space to maintain the country setting be more to your liking?

The city of Raleigh finds itself in the midst of making this choice about Horseshoe Farm, the parkland northeast of the city that we featured in the June newsletter (read it at www.wakeaudubon.org). A city council-convened Master Planning Committee presented a unanimously approved and publicly supported plan with environmental stewardship recommendations, after 14 months of discussion and public input, to the Raleigh Parks and Greenway Advisory Board. The plan was an acceptable compromise to include volleyball courts, rustic camping and a canoe access along with a community center. The vision is a green, state-of-the-art center offering art and nature-based programs focusing on the Neuse River and Horseshoe’s abundant native wildlife.

To Wake Audubon and numerous other community and conservation organizations with which we have partnered on this issue, this is a good plan for this

special property. This vision of Horseshoe maintains its peaceful serenity yet provides recreational opportunities of many types. Indeed, it preserves the very spirit of Horseshoe Farm which makes it so attractive. After all, how many places in Wake County can you stand and know you’re surrounded on three sides by the Neuse River?

To our great dismay, and to the disappointment of many citizens, the Raleigh Parks Board soundly dismissed the Planning Committee’s input, and with it the public comments of hundreds. Instead they chose to recommend to the City Council that “real”, but unidentified, people want the gym and outdoor basketball rather than the vision of a badly needed park that focuses on the arts and nature.

If I sound cynical, forgive me. I have watched this fight from the sidelines, at home with a young child, but have supported the efforts of my fellow Wake Audubon members via email and in spirit. The circumvention of the public’s wishes in this situation is inexcusable. We currently await the Raleigh City Council’s final decision on the matter; they notably sent the issue to committee for further study.

In the meantime, let them know how you feel about preserving Horseshoe Farm as an environmental education park. Learn more and sign a petition at www.horseshoefarm.org.

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News of Interest

Update on Lumber River Important Bird Area (IBA) — Wake Audubon members will recall that our chapter this year adopted the Lumber River IBA, and committed to conducting regular studies of this beautiful blackwater area. John Little, one of three coordinating the project, gives us an update.

On Friday, July 28, John Gerwin, Kendrick Weeks, and I made our second “ground truthing” trek to the Lumber River IBA. We completed the process of identifying those locations, or points, from where to make our bird counts.

Learn more about the Important Bird Areas in North Carolina at Audubon North Carolina’s web site, www.ncaudubon.org, or find out about the entire program at the National Audubon site, www.audubon.org.

The next step in the process will be to integrate the points on to easily accessible maps. Kendrick, with his high tech skills, is taking care of this. At the same time, we will soon begin to hold training sessions for those who want to participate in the IBA project. The training will include learning to identify birds by sound as well as sight. There will be more information coming soon, so anyone interested in participating should stay tuned.

Act Locally

Beat the Bite at the Gas Pump: Tips for Conservation

Do you have a car? Chances are you answered “yes.” With gas prices hovering around \$3 a gallon and all of us thinking more about conservation, here are some ideas, both realistic and idealistic, to help you conserve gasoline.

1. Don’t drive. Okay, that’s idealistic. But there are a few ways to cut back on your driving. Take public transportation. Walk. Bike. Carpool.
2. Drive less. Run all your errands in one big trip rather than making several smaller trips. Move closer to where you work or work closer to your home.
3. Maximize your fuel efficiency. This one is more realistic. Drive during non-peak times to limit your stop-and-go driving (which wastes a lot of gas). Accelerate and decelerate slowly and steadily, which helps conserve

gas. Don’t drive too fast — many cars have a maximum highway fuel efficiency speed of between 55 and 60 mph. Use cruise control on the highway.

4. Drive the most fuel efficient car you can. (Think smaller size, smaller engine, 2-wheel drive, and hybrid cars.)
5. Small steps can add up to savings. Remove extra weight from your car. Remove roof racks when not in use. Reduce use of your air conditioner at slower speeds and open the windows instead. Park in the shade with windows down to reduce use of A/C. Keep tires properly inflated. Keep engine service up to date. Check your gas mileage occasionally. Declining gas mileage may indicate a problem that can be easily fixed.