

## Blue Jay Point Songbird Celebration

The Blue Jay Point Songbird Celebration on April 26, held in recognition of International Migratory Bird Day 2008, was a great success. This event focused on teaching kids about migratory birds in a fun way. There were many scout troops there as well as families. Wake Audubon was there, with a display about our organization and fun activities for kids.

Thanks to our expert TP roll binocular crew, we had plenty of pretend binoculars for kids to decorate, and boy, were they popular. We also had lots of takers for the bird-bug matching game. Kids and their parents learned about the insects that different birds eat. We also led three bird walks, with more than 20 participants at each. The highlight of the first walk, which was at noon, was a Red-shouldered Hawk that swooped into a dead tree right over the road. After everyone had gotten a good look at the hawk, it flew off, giving its characteristic cry. It continued to circle and cry; we were all enthralled.

The second walk featured the Great-crested Flycatcher — in the same tree that the hawk had been in. We were able to watch the flycatcher fly out and back to the tree branch many times. We later saw another Great-crested Flycatcher further along the trail. Cardinals, Chipping Sparrows, and Red-eyed Vireos were in abundance.

The third walk was a bluebird walk, so we finally got around to looking in the bluebird houses. I have no idea why we didn't think to do this sooner, it was a great treat. The very first house we looked in had a very neat nest and four baby bluebirds. Parents, kids, and walk leader were all enchanted. Many pictures were taken. We looked at some other nests and found a blue egg in one of them. The kids were great at spotting birds; we may have some new members in a few more years.

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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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(includes membership to National Audubon)

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June/July 2008

Wingbeats

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## Inside:

The latest trip to our Lumber River IBA yielded quite a number of Prothonotary Warblers! See p.3.

## Piedmont Guide for NC Birding Trail Now Available

The North Carolina Birding Trail continues to march across North Carolina, and as it does, it opens new windows of opportunity for birders to explore some of the outstanding smaller and lesser-known birding sites in our state. With the Trail's latest section up and running and its publication — The NC Birding Trail Piedmont Trail Guide — complete, focus has now turned to the mountains with a proposed date of Spring 2009 to complete this trilogy of trail guides.

But now it's time to make use of the Piedmont Guide to visit sites and see what treasures can be found in this region. A few Wake Audubon members had an opportunity to do just that at several sites in the southern Piedmont earlier this year, and we were not disappointed.

• **Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge** is our only Piedmont refuge, and with 8,400 acres of agricultural fields, pine, hardwood and bottomland forests, it provides great habitat for both resident and migratory birds. Located along the flood plain of the Pee Dee River, the Refuge provides both a stop over and a destination for neo-tropical migrants and is winter home to waterfowl as well. The Pee Dee is a great place to explore and with a wide variety of lodging choices in Wadesboro, it should be on everyone's list to visit.

• **Pee Dee River Game Lands – Blewett Falls** is a hidden treasure for birders. From the nesting Bald Eagle across the lake from the parking area to the wintering waterfowl below the dam, it can hold many surprises. Even the Wild



Turkey footprints in the sand hold the promise of opportunity for future visits.

• **Henson Lake** on an early morning visit will offer a treasure trove of species in the wetland pond just below the dam and on the trails around the lake. From the beaver working on its lodge to the beautiful plumage of Wood Duck and the woodpeckers checking out the dead snags, the pond can provide a feast of wildlife activity. The trails around the lake cover various habitats from loblolly to longleaf pine and are worth investigating as well.

We're fortunate here in North Carolina to have beautiful places to bird from the coast through the piedmont to the mountains; the NC Birding Trail provides a fantastic resource to find those hidden treasures that can provide a quiet walk in the woods or a vista over meadows, lakes and rivers. To find out more about the Trail, its sites and how to purchase your own copy of the Trail Guides, go to the Web site at [www.ncbirdingtrail.org](http://www.ncbirdingtrail.org). You might be surprised at what you find to explore in our beautiful North Carolina!

~Lena Gallitano

## Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

### Monthly Meetings

#### Team Turtle to the Rescue Tuesday, June 10, 7:30 p.m.

How can you help an injured turtle? Shane Christian, Research Technician with NCSU's College of Veterinary Medicine, will summarize the efforts of the Turtle Rescue Team — a nonprofit organization run by veterinary students and dedicated to rehabilitating injured wild turtles.

#### Cranes of the World Tuesday, July 8, 7:30 p.m.

Aviculturist and former Museum of Natural Sciences Assistant Director Walt Sturgeon is a member of the Whooping Crane Recovery Team and Operation Migration. Join him for an update on whooping cranes and a look into the lives of other crane species from around the world.

These meetings will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the A-level conference room of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, and are open to the public.

### Leader's Choice Walks

#### Looking for Prothonotary Warblers

Saturday, June 14

Join Erik Thomas as he leads us down the Cape Fear River on a canoe trip from Lillington. Contact him for more details at 880-7809.

#### Yates Millpond

Saturday, July 19 at 8:30 a.m.

Meet in the Yates Mill parking lot; contact Gerry Luginbuhl for more information at 816-9967.

### Field Trips

#### Bird Monitoring on the Lumber River

Weekend of June 7-8

Contact John Little at 781-0829 for details on how to join our bird counting group at our adopted IBA.

### Anderson Point Bird Walk

#### Birding Anderson Point Saturday, July 12

Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot for a fun-filled morning of bird watching! Contact Kari Wouk at 395-5630 or krwouk@yahoo.com.

## Feathered Facts

**Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)** — *By now, the first broods have fledged. Oddly, some young may be cowbirds, as this species is able to parasitize 10 percent to 25 percent of PROW nests (it is unusual for this to happen to cavity nests). When the young depart the nest, their tails are 25 percent the length of adults. Their first flight is short, to nearby branches or down onto logs, low vines, or into the water. If they land in water, young PROW can "swim" easily 10-15m to safety, whereas cowbirds apparently cannot so well. Upon fledging, adults split the brood, each one caring for different young — unless the female re-nests, in which case the male cares for all young fledged. Parents feed young for up to 35 days afterwards. By late June young from differing broods often form flocks, often with the adult females a part.*



~ John Gerwin

## President's Message

### Remember Water Usage During the Drought

Spring has returned! Yeah! The lakes are filling up and we can wash our cars again. But, will we remember to conserve water, to use water sparingly and wisely, or will we forget about the drought until the next time? Will our community then once again be surprisingly unprepared to deal with it?

It is so easy to forget our resolutions once a crisis has past and the news fades. How we as community respond to the realization that water and energy are finite resources affects all living creatures. We need to be part of the conversation on how to conserve and plan for the future use of these resources. That is why Wake Audubon was a sponsor of the WakeUP Wake County Water Forum this winter. One thing that we learned from the presenters is that we should expect more extremes in our weather. We may experience some years that will be much wetter than normal, and then again, years of extreme drought.

We need to work as a community to prepare for this new reality. We need to plan for new water resources as our community grows and we need to promote conservation. We can encourage our community leaders to enact regulations that will prevent development in current and future watersheds. We need to protect our existing lakes

from sedimentation, which damages the environment for fish and water vegetation, and fills up space that could otherwise hold drinking water.

As individuals, I know that Wake Audubon members are doing all we can at home and at work. Using native and drought-tolerant plants in the landscape, and using rain barrels and other water capturing methods are things that individual homeowners can do.

The drought is just the latest attention-grabber. We need to resolve to be more mindful of our impact on our community and on the global ecosystem. All of our natural resources are precious. Conserving water, fuel and other energy sources should be a habit.

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## News of Interest

On April 12 and 13, Wake Audubon members John Connors, Joan Little, John Little, Gerry Luginbuhl, Jim Luginbuhl, and Erik Thomas took census counts at 36 points — nine “C” canoe/river points and 27 “D” drive/road points — in the Lumber River Important Bird Area.

On Saturday, John Connors and the Luginbuhls did their work on the river from a canoe while Erik and the Littles spent both days driving to points on roads in the IBA. The Luginbuhls joined the “D” counters on Sunday.



Altogether, 715 individual birds from 60 species were identified.

Wake Audubon's “Bird of the Year,” the Prothonotary Warbler, was the second most frequently identified bird with 72 individuals counted. The Common Grackle came in first place at 91.

All Wake Audubon members are encouraged to participate in this important and fun activity. The next point counts will be conducted on June 7-8. Contact John Little at 781-0829 or jlittle17@nc.rr.com if you would like to participate.

## Act Locally

### Close the Door on Invasive Species

What do these species have in common: Autumn Olive, Japanese Honeysuckle, Zebra Mussel, English Ivy, Asian Tiger Mosquito, Chinese Wisteria, European Starling, German Cockroach, Kudzu, and Tree of Heaven? They're all non-native invasive species. An invasive species is identified as a plant, animal, or microbe that is not native to a particular ecosystem and, when introduced, causes economic or environmental harm. Invasive species impact nearly half of the species currently listed as Threatened or Endangered under the U.S. Federal Endangered Species Act.

What can you do about this problem? Do not purchase or use invasive exotic species in your landscape; use plants that are native

to your local region as much as possible or those that are not known to be invasive. Avoid disturbance to natural areas, including clearing of native vegetation. Control exotic invasive species by removing them entirely or by managing them to prevent their spread outside your property. Keep cats inside; it is estimated that free-roaming cats kill hundreds of millions of birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians each year. Firewood can harbor invasive insect pests — use local sources of firewood rather than transport firewood from other areas.

For more information about non-native invasive species in North Carolina, please visit the NC Botanical Garden Web site at <http://ncbg.unc.edu/conservation/>.