

**Field Trip Announcement:
Sign Up Now!**

**To Charlotte by Train and the
Carolina Raptor Center**

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.

For more information about the Carolina Raptor Center or the Amtrak train, visit www.carolinaraptorcenter.org and www.amtrak.com.

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
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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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Are you interested in serving on one of our committees?

- | | |
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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.



October 2006

Wingbeats

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

**Field Trip Report: Wake Co. Couple's
Backyard Birding Paradise**

Twelve members of the Wake Audubon Society enjoyed a wonderful trip to Hallie and Harry Wilson's property in Zebulon on Saturday, Aug. 12. We met at 8 a.m. in the parking lot by the Museum of Natural Sciences. The morning was cool for August and recently misted by a very light rain.

We arrived at their home around 8:25, where we were greeted warmly and, after introductions, given two sheets. One sheet listed 76 birds seen and four birds heard by the Wilson's in their backyard habitat. The other sheet listed the necessary information on how to get certified as a National Wildlife Federation "Backyard Wildlife Habitat". Then, off we walked, with Hallie as our leader, to a most leisurely, interesting experience.

The Wilson's were the perfect hosts in pointing out plants, shrubs, and trees, and were very generous in sharing their experiences and knowledge in the making of their lovely wildlife habitat.



photo by Harry Wilson

The Wilson's backyard emphasizes native plantings, like this bee balm being visited by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, which attract wildlife.

We were greeted by hummingbirds, serenaded by a very vocal wren and by a pair of Cardinals who stayed nearby.

Birds seen were recorded and some photographs were taken. We departed their home around 10:30, after partaking of delicious refreshments in their beautiful screened in back porch, while the sun was shining on all. Many thanks to the Wilson's for sharing their beautiful home and backyard habitat.

~ Angie and Bill DeLozier


**Birds Going Extinct Globally Faster than
Previously Thought, Researcher Finds**

It comes as no surprise to birders that avian numbers are declining worldwide; what may surprise you is that a group of researchers, led by Stuart Pimm from Duke University, found that extinctions of bird species are occurring at a much higher rate than previously thought. Pimm and his colleagues also believe that human effects on bird populations have been substantially underestimated. The

work was reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences this summer.


Extinction of bird species such as the Carolina Parakeet and the Passenger Pigeon in North America are nothing new. All over the world and throughout history numerous bird species have gone extinct. The

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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Monthly Meeting — Sept. 12

Bat Basics — Join N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences Program Specialist Scott Robertson for a Halloween look at the biology and natural history of the world's only flying mammals.

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.

Bird Walk at Anderson Point Saturday, October 14, 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 and right at the stop sign; the parking lot is at the end of Rogers Lane. Contact Melody for more information at 881-2601.

Field Trip: Halloween Herps in the Sandhills

Sunday, October 15

Join Wake Audubon vice-president and Museum of Natural Sciences

curator Jeff Beane for a not-so-scary look at Halloween Herps in the Sandhills. The trip will be an essentially all-day (probably 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., including transit time and after-trip dinner) search for reptiles and amphibians in the biologically diverse Sandhills region of North Carolina. Also a good opportunity to see many wildflowers, insects, and birds found in the region. Limited to 6-7 participants. For details, contact Jeff Beane at 733-7450, ext. 754 or jeff.beane@ncmail.net.

The N.C. Herpetological Society will hold its Fall Meeting on Nov. 4, at the NC Wildlife Resources Commission building on NCSU Centennial Campus. Anyone interested in reptiles or amphibians is welcome to attend. The theme will be "Urban Herpetology." For information, contact Ron Sutherland at 768-6174, rws10@duke.edu; or Jeff Beane at 733-7450, ext. 754, jeff.beane@ncmail.net.

Feathered Facts



Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) —

Migration continues through October, but we don't usually think of "residents" like Blue Jays as migrants. But, indeed, migrants they are. Many Blue Jays move into our area from the North. Watch closely, and you may catch "flocks", or loose groups, streaming over an

open area. I have seen many such events in April at Moses Cone of birds heading North. We suspect most of these migrants are young birds. While some folks are not fond of Blue Jay behaviors, one is likely very important. Blue Jays cache a lot of acorns, but because they don't remember where they hide every one, they are surely instrumental in propagating oak forests. They also bury even larger tree seeds such as pecans, beechnuts, and hickory nuts. Squirrels usually bury acorns near the parent tree, whereas Blue Jays extend the range of an oak by taking its nuts further away, sometimes MUCH further.

~John Gerwin

photo courtesy of Joan Heschel

President's Message Attracting Winter Hummingbirds

With October comes the end of any of any doubt that summer has truly passed and Fall is officially upon us. The blustery days and cooler temperatures may have you turning your thoughts to suet blocks, snowbirds and winterizing your bird bath. Chances are you've also taken down your hummingbird feeders for the year. But wait — maybe you shouldn't be quite so fast to do away with that sugar water.

Did you know that some 13 species of hummingbirds have been sighted in North Carolina? And that most of these were seen during the months of October through March? It's true. Since 1999, the Museum of Natural Sciences (which graciously hosts our Wake Audubon meetings and from which several board members hail) began investigating reports of hummingbird sightings during these cooler months. By mid-November, almost all of our summer resident Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have flown south, but a surprising number of unexpected species hang around during the winter. Some of the species sighted in North Carolina include the Rufous, Anna's, Broad-billed, and Black-chinned.

Ornithologists now suggest leaving hummingbird feeders up all winter long. But won't this keep the Ruby-throats from flying south, you may ask? No more than a well-stocked buffet keeps you from returning to work after your lunch hour. The birds that regularly fly

south know better than to stick around; those that do stay over the winter will appreciate the extra food.

If you would like to try keeping your feeder out this winter, continue to mix the solution at a 4:1 water to sugar concentration. Keep the feeder clean and free from ants or pests as you do during the summer. When temperatures drop to freezing, take steps to keep the solution from icing over. Either bring the feeder in, train a lamp on it overnight, or wrap the feeder reservoir with insulated pipe tape. Watch to see if the solution is disappearing; if it is, keep watch for an hour or so at a time to see if you can catch sight whatever is draining it. Hummingbirds like to feed at first light, so you may need to be up before dawn to catch a glimpse.

Many Triangle residents have had the good fortune to find winter hummers in their yards for several months. I, for one, plan to leave my feeder out and see what happens this year. It can't hurt, and I can't think of anything I'd enjoy more this winter than a new hummingbird species to tick off on my yard list.

For more information about winter hummingbirds, visit www.naturalsciences.org/nchummers/.

Happy (humming) birding!

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News of Interest

...Extinctions, continued from page 1.

plight of the Dodo is another famous example. More recently, the European Skylark and the Indian Vulture are teetering on the brink of extinction.

The implications of this new research are disturbing in part because of the connection that the researchers make between human impacts on our planet and bird declines. As summarized in a news release that accompanied the report's announcement, human activities have caused some 500 bird species worldwide to go extinct over the past 500 years, and 21st-century extinction rates likely will accelerate to approximately 10 additional species per year unless societies take action to reverse the trend.

Researchers say three major influences on bird mortality are hunting, predator introduction into unique communities, and habitat loss.

Of the 9,775 known species of birds, "an estimated additional 25 would have gone extinct during the past 30 years

if it were not for human intervention," said Peter Raven, president of the Missouri Botanical Garden, who is co-principal author of the report and a longtime collaborator with Pimm.

Despite conservation efforts, "some 1,200 more species are likely to disappear during the 21st century," he warned. "An equal number are so rare that they will need special protection or likely will go extinct, too."

A ray of hope for those of us who love birds — human intervention can slow the rate of extinction, say Pimm, Raven and their colleagues. In fact, they believe conservation efforts to be key in preserving some species in recent decades. "The good news in this report is that conservation efforts are reducing extinction rates to about one bird species every three or four years," he said, but he added that even this improved rate "is still unacceptable."

Act Locally

Treasure, Not Trash — Turn Yard Waste Into Compost

What do you do with all those fall leaves you rake, mow, or blow off of your yard? Don't put them in plastic bags and send them off to the landfill — 20 percent of solid waste disposed of in landfills is from yard and garden wastes. Help slow the filling up of our landfills and recycle those leaves. Turn them into compost instead of trash!

If you've ever wanted to start composting, fall is a great time to begin. A compost pile or bin can help you turn your fallen leaves and household organic vegetable waste into wonderful, nutrient-rich

compost for use in your yard (in your garden, around trees, etc.). If you have a lawn mower with a mulching attachment, you can even bag your cut up mulched leaves and use them directly around trees or on pathways for landscaping purposes.

There are too many composting details to include here, but a detailed on-line resource for composting information can be found through North Carolina State University's horticulture extension at www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/ag-467.pdf.