

... *Matthew Daw, continued from front page.*

were much easier for him to use. The yellow notebooks contain the simple lists that are recorded in Matt's small, neat script, with the occasional line drawing. The sketchpads progress to brightly colored depictions of the birds with descriptions of the habitat, their songs, the time of day, weather conditions, and even short expositions on why he was there or whom he was with.

Matt said he recorded his sightings every day over the course of the contest. Other participants, including the boy who won second place, may not have even completed 50 entries in the same length of time. No wonder Matt was the clear winner of the grand prize, which includes a new pair of Leica binoculars and a trip to a field ornithology camp.

If his field notebooks are a testament to Matt's growth as a birder, then it is his modules that show the cosmopolitan nature of his birding experiences. His notebook entries, illustrations, essays, and photographs included such birds as the American Goldfinch, the Carolina Chickadee, the Baltimore Oriole, the Acadian Flycatcher, Blue Herons, and Flamingos. These birds primarily represent North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, and Pennsylvania, the prominent locations Matt visited as he traveled through 10 states during the period of the contest. Yet, when I asked him where he did the majority of his birding, Matt responded with, "Well, we have park day once a week and that's the one day a week I see a bird somewhere. Other than that, I see them out in the yard or when we are driving somewhere."

All in all, Matt hopes to continue his birdwatching and recording into the future, and looks forward to attending his trip this summer to the ornithology camp. Samples of the modules he turned in for the contest can be found on the ABA Web site, www.americanbirding.org/yb/yby/win.html.

~by *Hannah Renwick*

Hannah is a recent graduate of UNC-Wilmington and a new Wake Audubon member. You can read about Matt Daw's sighting of a rufous hummingbird in the February issue of Wingbeats at www.wakeaudubon.org.

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April 2007

Wingbeats

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Wake Audubon Member Matthew Daw Named Young Birder of the Year

It was quickly approaching lunchtime when I paid a visit to Matthew Daw, a 13-year-old Audubon member who won national recognition as Young Birder of the Year, at his home in the quiet suburbs of North Raleigh. The two-story house was already alight with the typical lunch activity of a suburban family when I arrived, and Lisa Hunt, Matt's mother, introduced me to Matt's younger siblings and then to the talented birder himself.

Conversation didn't spark immediately. Although polite, intelligent, and well spoken, Matt is teenager with a shy disposition. In those moments of introduction he preferred to hang back and watch, unconsciously displaying a keen sense of observation, which, no doubt, has been sharpened by the rigorous birding he did for the contest.

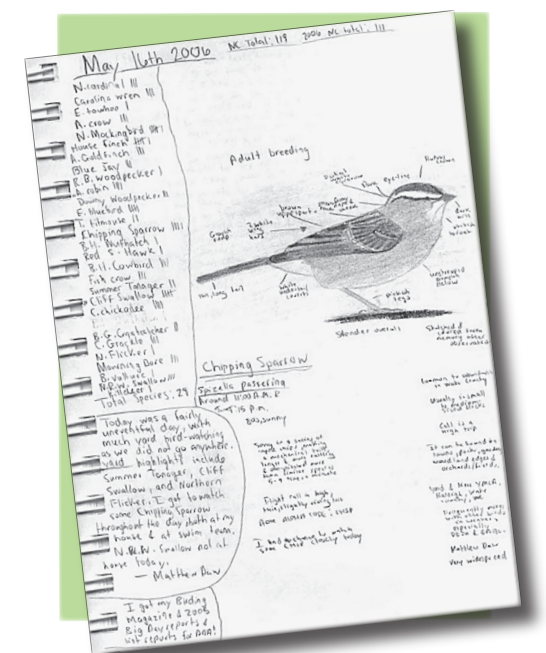
He started talking once I asked him to describe how he came to be the 2006 American Birding Association/Leica Younger Birder of the Year, an honor announced in January after six months of work for the 10- to 13-year-old age group. During April to September 2006, Matt submitted materials for the four contest modules: the field notebook, illustration, writing, and photography. This was his first time participating in the national contest.


When I asked to see some of the illustrations and pictures he used for the contest, Matt produced five field notebooks and four presentation books with clear plastic covers. The four presentation books contain the modules themselves, and Matt dusted

them off carefully before handing them to me. As I browsed through the carefully crafted notebooks, Matt explained that his notes were not initially so detailed. "When I first started taking notes I just did a list of birds I saw — not numbers, just a list of species," he pointed out. "But when I did the contest, my notes became more extensive."

It's clear Matt understands how central lists and numbers are to the whole practice of birding. They not only help you understand where to birdwatch and when, but also help you identify what is rare and what is common. In fact, it's interesting to see how acutely his field notebooks capture his growth into the conscientious birder he is today. His first two notebooks are small with bright yellow covers that bear the ABA's logo, while the other three are heavy sketching pads that, Matt explained,


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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Monthly Meeting

From the Black Oystercatcher to Black Gold: Challenges and Opportunities in Alaska April 10 at 7:30 p.m.

National Audubon's Alaska Field Coordinator Taldi Walter will treat us to a special presentation on Audubon's efforts to protect Alaskan wilderness areas.

Please note this month's meeting will be in a different location within the Museum of Natural Sciences! We expect a crowd, so we will meet in the auditorium on the first floor. As always, this meeting is open to the public, and we hope to see you there.

Leader's Choice Bird Walk

Anderson Point Park April 14 at 8:30 a.m.

Join Board member Kari Wouk for a walk around Wake Audubon's adopted park. Meet in the parking lot at 8:30 and be sure to bring your binoculars! 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.

Field Trip

Bird Banding at Prairie Ridge

April 15, 7:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Board member and ornithologist John Gerwin will demonstrate the art and science of banding birds. Meet at the Museum of Natural Sciences' Prairie Ridge station, off Reedy Creek Rd. (map at www.naturalsciences.org/prairieridge/index.htm). Contact John at john.gerwin@ncmail.net or 854-7791.

Neuse River Festival

April 21 at Anderson Point Park, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Exciting activities include guided bird walks and a nature scavenger hunt for kids of all ages. Wake Audubon will have a booth, so stop by and say hello!

Audubon North Carolina

Annual State Meeting Charlotte, April 27-29

Visit www.ncaudubon.org for info.

Feathered Facts



Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*)

The Cerulean Warbler breeds mostly in oak-hickory forests (mature and second growth) of the midwest and Alleghany Plateau, into southern Canada. North Carolina is the eastern edge of its range. The species occurs only rarely on the eastern escarpment of our mountains, and in a few places along the Roanoke River. It appears to be a "gap" species, benefiting from small

disturbances within its habitat. In 2000, many groups petitioned that this species be listed as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species list due to serious population declines since 1966 (3 percent/yr.). A ruling against this was unfortunately issued in 2006. Cerulean Warblers migrate to a narrow range of hardwood forests in the East Andean slopes (some birds travel 2,500+ miles), where much habitat has also been altered. In the tropics, it is also found utilizing shade coffee plantations.

~John Gerwin

President's Message

Statewide Issues Call for You to Write Now!

Part of the mission of Wake Audubon is to "encourage responsible environmental stewardship for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity." We have been actively pursuing this mission, but now comes a time where more work is required of us.

The time for public comment on the management plan for Cape Hatteras National Seashore has passed, and many members attended the public comment meeting or sent in letters expressing concern about off-road vehicles being allowed in the nesting areas of shorebirds. Thanks to all of you for your action on behalf of the birds, turtles and our present and future generations who want to enjoy this beautiful part of North Carolina.

But the management plan is not the only issue threatening the health of the national seashore; the other concern is the replacement of the Bonner Bridge, the bridge from Bodie to Pea Islands. All agree that this bridge needs to be replaced for the safety of residents and tourists. In 2003, federal and state agencies agreed that the best solution would be to build a long bridge routed via Pamlico Sound near the current bridge on Bodie Island to the northern tip of Hatteras Island, completely bypassing Pea Island. Unfortunately, this has not won final approval. Instead, the Department of the Interior endorsed the "short bridge" alternative. The short bridge would parallel the existing

bridge and necessitate rerouting much of the road on Pea Island, NC12, to the west, encroaching even more on the wildlife habitat, and requiring continuing expensive road maintenance as this road will still be over-washed with every strong storm. So, we will alert you when we hear of opportunities for public comment on this issue, but while we are writing letters, let's write some more supporting the "long bridge" option. Our state and national representatives need to hear from us on this.

The Navy's OLF scheme just won't go away! Audubon is taking a public stand against the Navy's proposal to build its outlying landing field next to the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. We are urging congressional representatives to support Governor Easley's request to withhold funds for the OLF until a reasonable alternative site can be found. The public comment period on the Navy's proposal closes on April 24th. You will be hearing from us soon about specific ways to make your voice heard, but in the meantime, I urge you to write to your congressional representatives and to thank the governor for his stand in support of the wildlife refuge. Although most of us would rather spend our time out in nature enjoying the birds and other wildlife, we have to take care that future generations will have the same opportunities.

Please write now,

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News of Interest

The **North Carolina Herpetological Society** will hold its annual Spring Meeting on May 12 and 13 at Grandfather Mountain. The agenda will include a variety of interesting speakers, a photo contest, an auction and a raffle, group meals, a social, and field trips. Anyone interested in reptiles and amphibians is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Ron Sutherland, rws10@duke.edu or 919-942-1780.

Highlights of the 2007

Woodcock Walk — It was a soggy night on Sunday, Feb. 25, after a day of heavy rain. But the rain stopped around 5:30 p.m. and the air was quiet, calm and laden with moisture. That makes for perfect Woodcock conditions. Seven brave birders showed up at Schenck Forest for the 30th Annual Woodcock

walk and we were rewarded. We watched three courtship flights and were delighted to see the bird land on the path in front of us and commence to "peenting." It's so nice to have Woodcock back at Schenck... likely a consequence of forest management practices, and the removal of unleashed dogs-which were tough on ground-nesting birds.

~ John Connors

Songbird Celebration — April 28 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Blue Jay Point. Contact Randy Senzig for more information at isenzig@nc.rr.com or 779-4079.

8th Annual Birdathon/Wildathon

April 14-May 13

Mark your calendars for the 2007 Wake Audubon Birdathon/Wildathon! Everyone is encouraged to count as many birds or other species of wildlife as you or your team can in a 24-hour period between April 14 and May 13. Make a donation or solicit donations for your team or your favorite team. Half of the donations will go to Audubon NC Coastal Islands Sanctuaries. Sign up at our monthly meetings or fill out the form below and send it to Kendrick Weeks at 5308 April Wind Dr., Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526. Contact Kendrick Weeks by calling 606-6305 or by email at kendrickweeks@earthlink.net for more information.

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