

... *Lumber River IBA*
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points on the 8.4 mile stretch of the river between US 74 Bridge and the Lumber River State Park Headquarters at Princess Ann.

Altogether, we — Kendrick, John Gerwin, Lena, and I — have located 65 census point sites important for our chapter's adoption of this site: 40 accessible by motor vehicle and 25 reachable by canoe or kayak. Kendrick will compile all of this material into maps for future use and post them on the Wake Audubon Web site.

Having now gone on four outings with Kendrick and one with John, it is clear to me that vocal identification skills are important to this activity. So, beginning on March 24 and 31, Kendrick, John, and other Audubon members who are

able to identify birds by ear will begin training sessions to teach that skill to the rest of us.

At the same time, we welcome data from birders who can only identify by sight can contribute as well. Professional ornithologists and highly skilled amateur birders can inform the rest of us, but this is not intended as an exclusive process. If, like me, you are unable to identify birds by ear, please do not let that inhibit you from participating. This is important and fun work in a beautiful part of North Carolina with a myriad of birds, and we want all willing members to help with the census monitoring process.

To learn more about IBAs, visit <http://ncaudubon.org/IBAs.html>.

~ John Little

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February 2007

Wingbeats

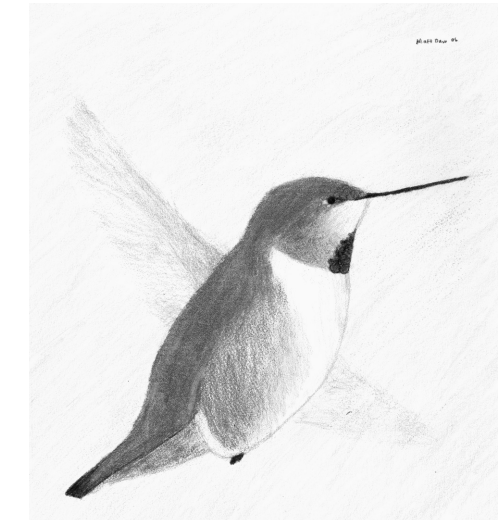
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Inside:

Happy New Year from Wake Audubon! Read the first message from our new president, Gerry Luginbuhl, inside.

December Bird Walk Cold but Rewarding

Six people gathered at Lena Gallitano's house on Dec. 9, 2006, for the December bird walk. We were graciously invited into her family room where we watched 12 Baltimore Orioles, including three gorgeous males, forage in her backyard. After watching them for a good while, we drove to the Governor's Mansion, where 25 minutes of waiting



paid off with excellent views of a Rufous Hummingbird at the hummingbird feeder.

We then drove to a nearby park, where we saw many bird species. Half of the group saw Red-headed Woodpeckers and, at the end of our visit, we watched two Ruby-crowned Kinglets chasing each other around the bushes with their splendid red crowns raised aggressively.

It was a great turnout with 34 species recorded, and nobody went home unhappy.

~Matthew Daw, age 13, is one of Wake Audubon's youngest and perhaps most promising members. Matthew is already a talented birder, and, as you can tell, a writer and artist as well. The drawing of the Rufous Hummingbird accompanying this article he drew after this trip. We adult birders welcome his energy and enthusiasm, and hope that other bird watchers from younger generations will not hesitate to join us.

New Year to Bring Training Sessions as Lumber River IBA Count Sites Well Underway

Wake Audubon continues to make good progress on the Lumber River Important Bird Area (IBA). On Nov. 10, Kendrick Weeks, Ansley Trivette, Lena Gallitano, and I paddled the Lumber between the Willoughby Road Bridge and US 74. We established 10 census points in that 8.1 mile stretch of the river, which contains two Lumber River State Park campgrounds and is the most wild and scenic we have paddled so far. Kendrick and I returned to Robeson County in December to complete the "ground truthing" process. On Dec. 14, we designated an additional five census points along four miles of the river between Matthew's Bluff and the Willoughby Road Bridge.

This was a tricky segment of the river with confusing channels; we gleaned information important to future trips by Wake Auduboners. All future work on this stretch should be performed or led by experienced paddlers. Inexperienced paddlers could become seriously disoriented in the maze of channels that can occur there — we certainly did! Later that day we completed the ground truthing process on roads within the IBA by identifying four additional census points. The following day we paddled the same stretch of river that a large group of Wake Audubon paddlers explored in March. We designated 10 more census



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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Leader's Choice Bird Walk: Blue Jay Point

Saturday, Feb. 10 at 8:30 a.m.

Meet at the Blue Jay Point Environmental Education Center for a walk around the lake and woods with Gerry Luginbuhl. Contact Gerry at 819-9967 for details.

Monthly Meeting — Feb. 13 Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education Center: A Model in Conservation and Education

Jeff Hall, Environmental Coordinator for Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education Center, will provide an overview of education, conservation, and research activities at this unique 1,700-acre outdoor learning center near New Bern.

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: Woodcock Walk Date and time to be announced based on availability of birds

Once again hoping for a nice Valentine's Day treat, John Connors will lead a woodcock walk, if birds can be found and conditions are right. John will scout out a reliable location for the birds, which exhibit elaborate mating dances this time of year and are best seen from around 5 p.m. until just after sunset. If he can find a good spot in Wake County, he will lead a group to watch on a Saturday evening.

To make sure you are contacted once John has located birds and set up the trip details, contact him at 755-0253 (home) or 733-7450 x 602 (work), or by email at John.Connors@ncmail.net.

Feathered Facts



Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) —

The Brown Creeper is the only species of "treecreeper" in North America, while there are seven species worldwide. "Ours" is found from Alaska and Canada south to northern Nicaragua. In North Carolina, it breeds in the mountains, mostly above 2,500 feet altitude, and most frequently in very mature northern hardwoods and spruce/fir groves. In winter it is found across the

state, but birds rarely visit a bird feeder. The nest location fascinates me — always wedged behind loose, hanging bark. The nest base is of twigs and bark strips held together by spider egg cases and insect cocoons; these also adhere the nest to the rough inner surface of the loose bark. Creepers start low and always creep up, often spiraling a tree trunk, assisted by tail tips that are as stiff as a woodpecker's. The European form is treated as a different species.

~John Gerwin

President's Message New Year, New Opportunities for Action

Often, when my family has some free time, we go out to parks or to special birding areas to look for birds. But come Feb. 18, we'll be at home on the lookout for favorite winter birds, such as Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers, finches and Cardinals as we participate in the 10th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. This year, during Feb. 16 – 19 will be a great opportunity to set aside some time just to sit quietly and watch birds around your yard. Some quiet sitting and watching will be a nice change from the usual rushing around that fills so many of our lives. If you are on the go a lot, you may not even have had the time to see what comes to visit your feeders during the day, especially in the winter, when the days are short.

Now that my granddaughter is almost three years old, she is starting to notice the birds that come to the feeders near the dining room window. We will take some time with her to watch for birds, squirrels and other wildlife. One nice thing about birding at bird feeders placed close to a window — no need for binoculars to determine what the bird is, and the birds often sit still long enough for beginners to get a good look. Of course, you may end up feeling a bit sorry for the birds out in the cold as you sit inside sipping hot chocolate. I'll tell my granddaughter that the birds don't like hot chocolate any more than we like suet.

You are not limited to your own backyard for the Great Backyard Bird Count. You can call any favorite birding site your "backyard for a day".

The Backyard Bird Count offers everyone a way to participate in "citizen science". If you choose to do more than just watch, you can count the birds you see and submit your observations to a national database. Participation is free. After your count day, log onto National Audubon Web site (www.audubon.org) and follow the links to submit your observations. You can also see the results of others' counting, and compare sightings in different parts of North Carolina and in different states. My mother isn't big on computers, but she loves to watch birds, so we will do our own bird sighting comparisons by phone Sunday evening — Raleigh, N.C. compared to Woodinville, Wash.. Birding is an activity everyone can share in.

Many schools and after school programs participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count too. Activities are tied in to lessons on bird watching, wildlife habitat and ecology. This year, Wake Audubon is teaming up with the Boys Club and Girls Club of Wake County to provide birding advice and support for the kids to participate in the count.

Happy birding!

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Volunteers Needed for Painted Bunting Monitoring Project

Wake Audubon Board member and Museum of Natural Sciences ornithologist John Gerwin and Jamie Rotenberg of UNC Wilmington are looking for volunteers to assist with a Painted Bunting monitoring project this spring.

Two ways exist for you to help. The first involves field work counting Painted Buntings at specific sites; the second asks volunteers to count Painted Buntings that come to bird feeders.

The field work consists of:

1. "Clusters" of points to survey, with six points per cluster. Volunteers must focus on Painted Buntings (PABU) only (not count other birds). Six points can be done in about two hours.
2. Surveys conducted from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and again in the afternoon, after about 3 p.m. John and Jamie hope volunteers will commit to survey their

points three times during the season, on different days but around the same time of day. These days do not have to be sequential, but can be.

"If anyone is available in early April to help lay out the points, that would be extremely useful," John says. "By 'laying out' I mean we will have to go visit where the point surveys will take place. USGS will provide maps and some aeriels and suggested starting points, but none of us knows the real lay of the land until someone visits." Training for the field work will likely occur in April as well.

For more information or to volunteer for the field work, contact John Gerwin at john.gerwin@ncmail.net. To find out how you (or someone you know) can count birds at feeders, contact Jamie Rotenberg at rotenbergj@uncw.edu.

Act Locally

Clean and Green: Alternative Household Cleaners

Did you know that pouring boiling water down a clogged drain can work as well as drain unclogging cleaning products? Or that basic kitchen cooking staples can be the ingredients to a safe and effective household cleaner?

As we get through these last months of winter and turn towards warmer weather, get ready for some environmentally-friendly spring cleaning!

You don't need an arsenal of harsh toxic chemicals to clean your house. A combination of reusable cotton rags (great way to recycle your holey socks!), a stiff scrubbing brush, baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, and water is enough to do most of your basic indoor cleaning. What's more?

The ingredients are safer to handle and breathe, are cheaper, and will not contaminate the environment. (Don't forget to recycle the containers!)

The North Carolina State University Extension Office has several household cleaner recipes at www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/housing/pubs/fcs3682r.html; you can also find a wealth of interesting cleaning suggestions and recipes at www.ecocycle.org.

If making your own cleaners is too much work for you, consider one of the many environmentally friendly cleaners on the market today, such as those by "Seventh Generation" or "Ecover" to name a few.

Either way, give cleaning the green way a try this spring. Happy cleaning!