

... *Piping Plover report, continued from page 3.*

National Seashore that produced the most chicks were sites with access to sound side foraging habitat. Two sites failed to produce any chicks. Mammalian predators and human disturbance appear to be the most important factors limiting success at these sites. It was the first time a pair of plovers attempted to nest on Bear Island (Onslow County). In addition, tropical storm Alberto hit the coast on June 14 during the peak of the breeding season and some nests were lost.

The highest productivity occurred on those islands managed by Walker/NC Audubon. These islands have historically been heavily impacted by human activity, but Walker and his staff have forged a good compromise. Visitors are allowed only limited access during the breeding season, but more island-wide access afterwards. The breeding areas (which include other threatened species) are roped off and posted, and Audubon staff patrol the area. Over time, most folks have come to appreciate the birds and accept the partial restrictions, thus demonstrating that when both sides are

willing to compromise, we can have "active" recreation while managing natural resources. Wake Audubon contributed 50 percent of its proceeds from the Wildathon to the "Coastal Sanctuaries" efforts of NC Audubon, and thus YOUR contributions have helped create this win-win situation.

Sadly, the situation on our Outer Banks has deteriorated, with the NPS apparently more interested in providing fulltime ORV access, and abdicating its duties to also effectively manage natural resources. The Park Service has a Web site for public review of environmental documents (<http://park-planning.nps.gov/>). It would certainly be helpful for the superintendents of both Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout to hear from folks interested in birds. They typically hear a lot more from other user groups.

To report any PIPL sightings, or if you would like to participate in any surveys, please email camerons@coastalnet.com or wgolder@audubon.org.

It's a great way to share some quality beach time, possibly with one of the cutest, dark-eyed things you'll ever see — trust me. ~ *John Gerwin*

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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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January 2007

Wingbeats

All Aboard! Wake Audubon Takes Train to Charlotte, Tours Raptor Center

It was well before dawn when 11 travelers set off from the AMTRAK depot aboard the Carolinian, headed for Charlotte. We all quickly settled in to the "Honey Bee" car and watched the sun rise over the Piedmont as we chatted and enjoyed coffee and pastries. A few of us caught up on our sleep, especially our youngest participant, 5-year-old Ethan (my son).

Judy and Pam, our guides for the day from Mecklenburg Audubon, greeted us at the Charlotte station. Once at the Carolina Raptor Center, Alan Barnhardt gave us a behind the scenes tour of their rehabilitation facilities. We watched as highly trained volunteers removed buckshot from a Red-shouldered Hawk. We also got "up close and personal" with some Barred Owls being taken for their daily exercise. While there we learned the Center rehabilitates around 700 raptors a year and has one of the best recovery rates in the nation.

We continued our tour along the public trails. There are many unreleasable birds on display, including Mississippi Kites, Bald Eagles, many species of owls, and a pure-white Red-tailed Hawk. It was a real treat to see these birds so closely and marvel at the beautiful details in their feather colors and patterns. We never get such a great look at them in the field!

Young Ethan was fascinated by the Turkey Vulture's rather gory dinner of ribs, so enticing that a few wild vultures were tried to break in for a bite. After a picnic lunch of our own (fully cooked and no ribs in sight!), and some birding around the grounds, Judy and Pam took us to some local birding spots. By mid-afternoon, Ethan was ready for something else besides, "Birds, birds, birds! Everything is birds!" Wake Audubon member Lena Gallitano gently explained, "Well, that's what birders do. Birds, birds, birds!"

We rushed back to the station just in time for our train back to Raleigh and had just as much fun on the way back as on the way out. We learned an incredible amount of facts about the railroad and the little towns the Carolinian serves along the way from our volunteer train host. We ate some more and talked some more and played board games and just relaxed after a long, fun day. ~ *Beth Hawkins*



Beth's son Ethan closely observes a Barred Owl at the Center.

Lumber River IBA Adoption Update

On Friday, Nov. 10, Lena Gallitano, Kendrick Weeks, Ansley Trivette

and I went back to the Lumber River IBA to identify additional point sites for future census taking. We selected 10 points whose GPS coordinates Kendrick recorded and entered into his computerized map, which when completed will be available to all users. Two more outings will be required to complete the point identification process.

There are now a total of 47 points; 37 are available from roads with no paddling and very little hiking required. Birders who prefer to avoid the water or have limited physical mobility will find the latter an attractive way to participate in this project. We anticipate training sessions in bird identification, record keeping methods, and directions to the point sites to begin soon. Want to participate? Contact John Little at jlittle17@nc.rr.com or by phone at (919) 781-0829.

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Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Leader's Choice Bird Walk: Birding the Buckeye Saturday, Dec. 9, TBA

Join our new president, Gerry Luginbuhl, for a walk along the Buckeye Trail. Contact Gerry at 819-9967 for details.

Monthly Meeting — Jan. 9 Islands of Enchantment: Natural History of the Galapagos

Join ecotour leader and Wake Audubon member Dave Davenport for a look at the beauty and mystique of the Galapagos Islands.

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.

Optimal Optics: Choosing Binoculars and Scopes to Meet Your Birding Needs Saturday, Jan. 20 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Ornithologist and Wake Audubon Board member John Gerwin will show us what birders should look for in binoculars and scopes. Different folks have different needs, and John will explain the features, the specifications, and all the ins and outs of choosing the optics best for you. Bring your own optics with you and we'll all compare as we watch birds in Linda Rudd's yard in the Swift Creek area.

Email John for details at John.Gerwin@ncmail.net or call Linda for directions at 851-5539.

Have you received email yet from Wake Audubon?

If not, sign up for our new LISTSERV now!

If your email address is already on file with Audubon, you should have received an email from us welcoming you to our new listserv — the newest way Wake Audubon is keeping you informed about what's going on with our chapter. If you did not receive an email but would like to, please contact Chrissy at cpearson17@nc.rr.com.

Feathered Facts



Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)

This is another small plover whose numbers are declining. No longer found in New Jersey or Maryland, Virginia is now the northern "limit", and it is endangered there. But it is still a regular breeding species in North Carolina. In 2004, North Carolina surveyors found 471 birds (vs. 520 in 1989). Along our coast we find them on dredge, estuary, and barrier islands, but only up to

Ocracoke now. They often nest very near other birds like Least Tern, Piping Plover, and American Oystercatcher (open beach/sandy areas). And they typically nest higher on the dune than Piper's. You won't hear much old-time, string music where this species occurs, as they feed mostly on fiddler crabs (and other crustaceans). WIPL migrate to Caribbean islands or further, returning in April.

~John Gerwin

President's Message New Year, New Opportunities for Action

Here it is, 2007 already. What will the new year bring? We may not be able to make dramatic worldwide changes (although we should surely try), but we can act locally to make our world a better place. For many of us, that may mean working to conserve and protect our local environment and doing more to educate ourselves and others about wildlife. What can we do this year?

We were hit hard last year by the battle to save Horseshoe Farm as a place for wildlife and environmental education. The battle is not over; we will continue to watch how the City of Raleigh develops not only Horseshoe Farm, but Durant, and its other premier environmentally situated park properties. Wake Audubon members showed their civic spirit by writing and coming out for important city council meetings, keeping the hope alive that these properties will be developed in a way that respects their unique qualities. We should take a moment to look back and be proud of what we have accomplished, and then resolve to keep up our vigilance and activity in the coming year.

Last year the club took on the new responsibility of monitoring one of North Carolina's Important Bird Areas, the Lumber River. In the coming year there will be some exciting, fun, and educational opportunities for all of us to get involved in learning how to monitor bird populations. For those of us who love to paddle and/or walk along the river, this

will be a labor of love. The Lumber River is a beautiful black-water river with very little development along its shores. There will be many birds and other wildlife for us to enjoy observing.

We will continue to lead local monthly birdwalks. These are good opportunities to ask a friend or neighbor along, and introduce them to the joys of birding and just being out on a Saturday morning. We will continue our walks along the Buckeye Trail and at Anderson Point. Please email me with your suggestions for additional local birding walks. Is there a lovely greenway trail or park that you would like to share with others? We could schedule one of our Saturday morning walks there and provide a leader if you don't wish to lead it yourself. These walks are a small way that we can let others in our community know more about birds, the environment, and Wake Audubon. You might also consider inviting a friend along to one of our monthly meetings. Check the calendar for talks that pique your interest, and bring a friend.

There are so many other ways that you can be involved in Wake Audubon activities. Please check the calendar and articles in our newsletter to find an activity that suits you. As your new president, I hope to continue the proud traditions of our chapter.

Let's have a great year!

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More Pipers Calling in North Carolina

Part 2 of 2: Piping Plover Report 2006

A dedicated group of biologists and other plover enthusiasts conduct a nationwide Piping Plover survey, annually. In North Carolina, waterbird biologist Sue Cameron (NC Wildlife Resources Commission) coordinates efforts. Sue, Jeff Cordes and Marcia Lyons (National Park Service biologists), Walker Golder of (NC Audubon Society), and their staff also monitor breeding activities along the coast.

This species has been declining (again) across much of its range, including NC, for the past decade. In 2006, 46 breeding pairs were found along NC coasts — the second year with an increase in breeding numbers (and 24 percent over 2005). These pairs raised a total of 40 chicks. This comes to 0.87 chicks/pair, a number we do not consider high enough to sustain the population. Pro-

ductivity was highest on Lea and Hutaff Islands where five pairs fledged eight chicks (1.6 chicks/pair) and Cape Lookout National Seashore with 33 pairs fledging 29 chicks (.88 chicks/pair).

The sites with high productivity had relatively little human disturbance and lower levels of predation than other areas. Also, those areas on Cape Lookout

continued on back page...



photo courtesy Walker Golder

Act Locally

Green as a Baby's Bottom — Diapering the EcoFriendly Way

Two Wake Audubon Board members in 2006 welcomed babies into the world, and both of them decided to use cloth diapers instead of disposable. Why? Disposable diapers are not biodegradable and make up a significant portion of municipal trash in landfills. It is estimated that cloth diapers use more water and energy for washing but disposable diapers contribute much more solid waste and contain more chemical irritants. But aren't cloth diapers a lot more trouble, you may ask?

Cloth diapering isn't what it used to be — no more pins and a lot more options. Prefold diapers, fitted diapers, pocket diapers, and all-in-one diapers are among today's options. While the initial cost of cloth diapers can be expensive, cloth nappies can be reused many times

and last through several children, providing cost savings in the long run. Plus, cloth diapers do not fill up your trash can or landfills, are more breathable than plastic diapers, and contain no irritating perfumes or harsh chemicals. Disposable diapers contain chemicals, dyes, and perfumes that can cause irritations. Which do you want for your baby or grandbaby?

Conventional single-use disposable diapers are easy to "get rid" of, but they do not go away. If you have a child in diapers, consider your options. If you are considering cloth diapers, there is a wealth of information available on the Internet and you can readily find a wide variety of diaper sizes and styles, and even washing instructions. Diaper baby's bottom the ecofriendly way!