

Birding Weekend in the North Carolina Mountains

Wear your hiking boots and bring your binoculars for a weekend of birding in the northern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina with Wake Audubon Board member and Museum of Natural Sciences Curator of Birds John Gerwin. For the past two years we have taken this trip, we have seen and/or heard 90 to 100 different species, including most of the area's specialties. We will visit Moses Cone and Julian Price National Parks, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Snake and Rich Mountain area north of Boone, and other areas as time permits. For birders of all levels, brush up on your birding skills as we explore some beautiful mountain habitats.

- When:** Friday, May 18 (1 p.m.) to Sunday, May 20 (6 p.m.)
- Fee:** \$20 for Audubon members (\$30 for non-members)
Fee covers travel and instruction. Lodging information will be available at registration.
- Leaders:** John Gerwin, Doug Pratt, and Becky Browning, Museum ornithologists
Curtis Smalling, NC Audubon Society
- Where:** Meet at Museum of Natural Sciences' Prairie Ridge facility, travel by Museum bus to field sites
- Minimum age:** 12 (minors must be accompanied by a registered adult)
- Activity Level:** easy to moderate
- Register:** email john.gerwin@ncmail.net or (919) 733-7450 x555

Wake Audubon Officers 2007

President: Gerry Luginbuhl
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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."

Wake Audubon Membership (includes membership to National Audubon)

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May 2007

Wingbeats

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"Year of the Purple Martin" Celebrates These Wonderful Birds

Wake Audubon Society has declared 2007 to be the "Year of the Purple Martin." These fascinating birds are in the swallow family and depend mostly on humans to provide their nest sites, as the huge, standing dead trees in which they used to nest have been mostly removed. They nest in colonies — sometimes HUGE colonies — in special houses provided to them by humans. Martins are migratory, spending their winters in South America and breeding here in the U.S. They are a great asset to humans as they consume a large number of insects.

Wake Audubon has chosen the Purple Martin as its first "Bird of the Year" to highlight the special needs of the species. Martins' natural nesting sites have

mostly been destroyed, so they depend almost solely upon humans to provide roosts for them. They have adapted very well to these manmade homes, and are in turn wonderfully tolerant of humans. While martins are not endangered, they have, in the past, been listed as a species of Special Concern. Visit the Purple Martin Conservation Association's Web site to learn more about martins, martin conservation, and how to become a purple martin landlord at www.purplemartin.org.

Each year, martin enthusiasts young and old, serious and "amateur" await the return of these magnificent birds. Already this spring, we are excited to say, the first martins have arrived in Raleigh. The main roost site is at the University Club of N.C. State University. There are other, smaller roosts at Prairie Ridge and Anderson Point Park. If you are near any of these areas this summer, be sure to check the skies and look for the martins' aerial acrobatics!

"Year of the Purple Martin" planned activities include educational and children's programs at the Neuse River Festival at Anderson Point Park on April 21 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., a purple martin "Baby Banding Party" in August (stay tuned for details), and a field trip to an amazing, gigantic roost at Umstead Memorial Bridge in Manns Harbor near Manteo (more details will be announced soon).

We are expecting this to be a great "Year of the Purple Martin!" Please stay tuned for more information on these wonderful birds and the different activities planned to celebrate them!



Wake Audubon
P.O. Box 12452
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www.wakeaudubon.org

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Wake Audubon thanks its sponsors who make this newsletter possible.

Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

Monthly Meeting

Picnic and Walk at Anderson Point

May 8 at 6:30 p.m.

Bring a dish to share and your binoculars, and enjoy food, fellowship and a little birding on the side! Take Business Highway 64 E from the Beltline two miles. Turn right on Rogers Ln. (before the grocery store) and turn right at the stop sign. The parking lot is at the end of Rogers Ln. **Please note that the time for the picnic is an hour earlier than our regular meetings!**

Bird Walk/Event

Spring Bird Count

May 12, time TBD

The spring North America Migration Count is set up very much like the Christmas Bird Count, attempting to survey the same sites in southern Wake County using the same count leaders. Birdwatchers of any skill level are welcome, and this is an excellent opportunity for beginners to experience birds in their full spring regalia and song. This count includes

all of Wake County, so we also send some folks to seek out special sites for nesting Bald Eagles, Cliff Swallows and even to the Raleigh landfill for gulls. It's a great way to enjoy the outdoors with birds and birding friends. To participate, contact John Connors either by phone (733-7450 x602) or by e-mail at john.connors@ncmail.net by May 10.

Anderson Point Event

Bluebirds of Anderson Point Park

May 19, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Learn to locate and identify bluebirds and view the bluebird houses in the native meadow at Anderson Point Park. A bluebird expert will talk about the natural history of bluebirds and give attendees the information needed to try to attract bluebirds to their own yards. Take Business Highway 64 E from the Beltline two miles. Turn right on Rogers Ln. before the grocery store) and turn right at the stop sign. The parking lot is at the end of Rogers Ln. Contact Melody at 881-2601.

Feathered Facts



Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) —

In North Carolina, Painted Buntings breed along the coast from Carteret to Brunswick Counties. Researchers across the southeast have begun a coordinated survey and study of this species, and a "Citizen Science" program has begun in North and South Carolina. Of the many thousands of Painted Buntings banded across North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, 10 males

were recaptured in Cuba — all caught by locals for pets. While Painted Buntings are clearly one of our most colorful migratory species, their beauty unfortunately makes them highly prized by cage-bird aficionados. Each year, more than 10,000 males are trapped in Mexico, where many birds winter, and are shipped abroad. To learn more, visit www.uncw.edu/paintedbuntings/.

~John Gerwin

President's Message

Say No to our "Throw Away" Ways

Wake Audubon's latest initiative combines awareness-raising with fund-raising. A few months ago I saw an article about the activities of an Audubon chapter in Oregon. This chapter was working to become more environmentally responsible, and one thing they were doing was promoting cloth grocery bags. What a great idea! Of course, some of you have been using cloth grocery bags for years, but many of us (me included) just never got around to getting those bags. Well, here is our chance, and I know that I am not going to pass it up. Wake Audubon is now selling large tote bags with our logo on the side. The bags are made of organic cotton, and should stand up to years of trips to the grocery store, farmers market, etc. We can feel good about not using paper or plastic, and our logo will be out there for more people to see.

What could be better? Well, at the risk of sounding like the saleswoman that I am, what about a coffee mug that you can take to your favorite coffeehouse or fast food restaurant? We will be selling these too. The mugs will also have our Wake Audubon logo on the side, so we will be sending the message that Wake Audubon promotes recycling and reusing wherever possible.

We will have other items for sale as part of our fund-raising efforts this year, but I am especially happy that we are combining our need to raise funds for our important chapter activities with an opportunity to educate the public about what we believe in and to practice what we preach. I hope to see our logo all over town!

Check out the photos and pricing to the right to learn how you can be the proud owner of a new Wake Audubon logo item!

Thank you for your support.

Wake Audubon Logo Items for Sale!

Help support Wake Audubon and show your WA pride by purchasing one of these stylish new logo items. All will be on sale at meetings or special events, or you can place an order online at www.wakeaudubon.org or by contacting Kendrick Weeks at kendrickweeks@earthlink.net or (919) 606-6305.



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Act Locally

Stuff: Reduce, Re-use, and Recycle

Reduce — Buy less stuff. It's that simple.

Re-use — Re-use other people's stuff. Visit your local thrift store, re-sale store, consignment store, children's consignment sale, yard sale, or on-line classifieds, where there are excellent bargains to be found. Kids outgrow clothing and toys so fast that many children's items are in like-new condition at a fraction of the new retail price. People remodel their kitchens, update their utensil sets, and receive duplicate household items as wedding gifts. If you look around, you can find these items later, often in excellent condition.

Recycle — Give stuff another life. Do you have items you want to clear out of your home? Donate them, host your own yard sale, or participate in a multi-family or neighborhood sale. You know someone out there is probably looking for a new coffee mug just like the one that's gathering dust in your cupboard. If you have unwanted furniture in good condition, many thrift stores provide pick-up services.

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