



# Audubon News

A publication of the Mecklenburg County Audubon Society  
volume 7, number 7      March 2002

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## Monthly Meeting

**"Listen to the Birdies Sing!"**  
Thursday, March 7, 7:30 p.m.

This month's meeting will focus on bird listening instead of bird watching because you often hear more birds than you can see when wandering through the woods. And as spring approaches the mornings will be filled with bird songs. Will you know who is serenading you? In fact there are some birds you can only accurately identify by sound such as the Alder, Least and Willow

Flycatchers. Judy Walker will introduce you to the fine art of bird listening by acquainting you with some of the more common birds and a few rare ones as well. She'll also give you tips on how to sort out the different sounds in your backyard. Remember, not all of those sounds are birds! So bring you ears and imagination to the Fellowship Hall of the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church located at 920 Sharon Amity Road.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR...

**International Migratory Bird Day**  
Saturday, May 11  
7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Join Mecklenburg Audubon and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department in a celebration of International Migratory Bird Day. Call Reedy Creek Nature Center at 704-598-8857 for an event brochure. More details in next month's newsletter.

## CELEBRATING ...

**"100th Anniversary of Audubon  
in North Carolina Conference**  
Saturday, March 2  
Morehead Planetarium

### Schedule

1:00 - 1:30 Registration  
1:30 - 1:40 Welcome  
1:40 - 2:30 Launching the Audubon Movement. Phil Manning, Audubon NC Board member, author & naturalist, and Oliver H. Orr, Jr., author of "Saving American Birds: T. Gilbert Pearson and the Founding of the Audubon Movement".  
2:30 - 2:45 Break

## MAS Calendar of Events!

### March

2 **NC Audubon Annual Meeting**  
7 **Meeting** - "Listen to the birds"  
9 **Field Trip** - Woodcock Walk  
16 **Field Trip** - Salamander Walk  
23 **Field Trip** - Green Swamp  
25 **MAS Board Meeting**

### April

4 **Meeting**  
22 **MAS Board Meeting**

### May

2 **Meeting**  
11 **International Migratory Bird Day**

2:45 - 3:45 Safe Haven: The Sanctuaries of North Carolina Then and Now. Walker Golder, Audubon NC Deputy Director, and Dr. James F. Parnell, Audubon NC Board of Trustees. Professor Emeritus, Department of Biology, UNC-Wilmington.  
3:45 - 4:00 Break  
4:00 - 5:30 The Legacy Lives On. Chris Canfield, Executive Director of NC Audubon.



## Field Trips

### "Woodcock Courtship"

Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge  
**Saturday**, March 9, 6:00 p.m.

**M**arch is prime time to see and/or hear woodcock courtship out at Cowan's Ford Refuge. We will meet at the observation deck at Cowan's Ford at 6 p.m. where Marek Smith will bring us up to speed on the courtship

### "Salamander Walk"

Whitehall Nature Preserve  
**Saturday**, March 16, 8:30 a.m.

**W**e will visit the Catawba Lands Conservancy's (CLC) Whitehall Nature Preserve south of Charlotte. This 40-acre upland depression swamp forest provides a perfect winter breeding site for marbled and spotted salamanders. In addition to amorous amphibians, we may also see woodcock and even wood ducks (especially if it keeps raining like this!). We'll check the drift fences that the CLC

### "Green Swamp"

Supply, NC  
**Saturday**, March 16

Taylor Piephoff will lead a field trip to the NC Nature Conservancy's Green Swamp Preserve for Bachman's Sparrows, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Swainson's Warbler in the pine savanna habitat. Located near Supply, NC

behaviors of these unusual birds. Then we will wait and see if any birds show up for our date. Wear warm clothes as the breeze off the river can be nippy, and study shoes. A flashlight would also be helpful. Unlike other field trips this trip is limited to 15 participants. If you are interested in seeing this rite of spring, contact Marek Smith at 704-549-4713 or [maresmit@aol.com](mailto:maresmit@aol.com).

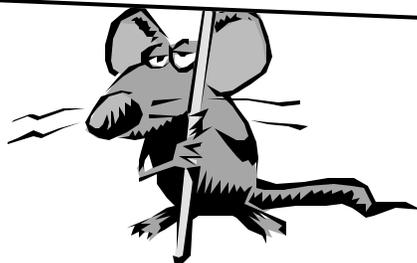
uses to monitor the movements and population of the salamanders and talk about the natural history of these two amphibians while walking the woods looking for birds.

We'll meet at the gate to the Preserve at 8:30 a.m. Take a right at the first light south of the I-485/S Tryon overpass (travelling south on Tryon) into the Whitehall Business Park. The Nature Preserve (surrounded by a white fence) will be on your left a quarter mile or so into the business park. For more information contact Rob Bierregaard at 704-333-2405 or [rbierreg@email.uncc.edu](mailto:rbierreg@email.uncc.edu).

in Brunswick County, the Green Swamp Preserve is a unique coastal habitat known for its pine savanna and exotic collection of carnivorous plants, including pitcher plants, venus flytraps and sundews. You will probably want to make this an overnight field trip. There are plenty of accommodations in the Southport/Oak Island area about 30 miles away. If you are interested in going please contact Taylor Piephoff at 704-532-6336 or

### "In Support of Environmental Education!"

Mecklenburg Audubon annually supports 35 Audubon Adventures classrooms in Mecklenburg County at a cost of \$40 per classroom. Look for details in the next newsletter for the upcoming April Birdathon.



## Presidents Perch



Judy Walker

### Backyard Habitat

The last couple of weeks we have had high winds that have probably knocked down some tree limbs in your yard. Before you feed those branches to the chipper for mulching think about using them to start a brush pile. Even in a small yard a brush pile can provide needed cover and make your yard more accommodating for birds and other critters. Over the past few months we have talked about ways to improve your backyard habitat by providing food, water and nesting spots for our feathered friends. The final piece to the backyard habitat puzzle is providing cover or shelter for the birds. And that is what a brush pile does all year round.

It's not hard to start a brush pile but you will have to give up the idea that your backyard will be immaculate. Brush piles are a bit untidy but the benefits are well worth the minor mess. They also don't cost anything to build except a little physical energy. When creating your brush pile start with large branches as a foundation. I started one of my piles with several limbs that fell during a storm. You don't have to cut the side branches off. They will help maintain holes and crevices in the pile that birds can hide in. After you have laid the foundation then add small branches and twigs. Don't pack things down. What you want to do is create a pile of "stuff" that the birds can get into for shelter. One year I wandered my neighborhood collecting discarded Christmas trees to start a second brush pile further back in the woods behind my house. They are a great foundation for a brush pile. Once you have a brush pile started it does need to be added to periodically because the stuff on the bottom does decompose. So like a fire, every so often add more branches and twigs to build it up again.

I have one of my brush piles is near my feeders. This allows the birds a quick hiding spot when predators appear. The cardinals use the brush pile as their staging area. They first fly to the pile. Check out the neighborhood and then hop up onto the feeder. During snows I have

seen doves, wren, sparrows, towhees and thrashers all using the pile for shelter. The years I have had fox sparrows in my yard they have always hung out around the brush pile. The wrens and sparrows also patrol the pile for hidden bugs. So it not only provides shelter it's also a fast food joint! I have also seen chipmunks hiding in it.

So this spring as you begin "picking up" your yard, don't mulch those branches and twigs. Start building a small apartment complex for the birds! You will be repaid with hours of watching enjoyment.



*continued from page 1...*

6:00 - 6:45 Social Hour

7:00 - 7:10 Welcome - Chris Canfield & Jim Martin, ANC Board Chair

7:10 - 8:15 Dinner Served, Program - Keynote by Carol Browner on Audubon's Role in the Environmental Movement.

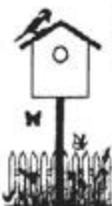
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**704-841-9453**  
M-F 10-6, Sat 9-6, Sun 12-5

Union Square Shopping Center  
Next to Harris Teeter • Monroe

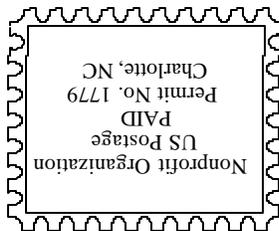
**704-225-8344**  
M-F 10-6, Sat 9-6, Sun 12-5

The Mecklenburg Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, September - May at 7:30 p.m. The meeting site is the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church, 920 N. Sharon Amity Road.

Keep up-to-date on issues!  
[HTTP://MECKBIRDS.ORG](http://meckbirds.org)

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*Audubon News*



**IMPORTANT:** Please use this form or add our chapter code (R50 7XCH) to a renewal form you may receive in the mail. This will ensure that our chapter receives membership dues reimbursement from National Audubon!

**National Audubon Society**



**Membership**

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- Student/\$15 (full-time status)
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Please make all checks payable to and mail to:  
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R50  
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**"Name that Bird!"**

If you're the type of birder who can't say "titmouse" or "booby" without snickering, don't worry. We humans have coined some strange names for the birds we pursue. As if the official name of some birds isn't cryptic enough, many birds have colloquial names that are rarely used today. For example, Timber Doodle is a frequently heard informal name for the American Woodcock as it "doodles" around in thick woods, and many old-timers know American Widgeons as Bald Pates for the bald appearance of their head.

Do you know which bird is called... *Big Cranky and Poor Joe*?

If you know...email or call Danny Swicegood at 704-892-9482 or (pamanddanny@earthlink.net). The first person with the correct answer wins a great T-shirt from Mecklenburg Audubon.