

Audubon News

October 2002

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From the President's Perch

The local and national news media have been covering the spread of West Nile Virus quite thoroughly. As a result of this coverage, I have received a number of inquiries about birdbaths and ponds. Birdbaths only become a problem if the water is not changed on a daily basis. In this dry weather the birds have managed to force this issue since they seem to empty the baths faster than I can fill them. As for ponds, below is an excerpt from a New Jersey Audubon Society article I found on the web.

Garden ponds are a special case. Most NJAS members install ponds in their yards to provide habitat for wildlife. Killing mosquitoes does not fit in with this overall theme. Luckily, this is not a problem. Garden ponds will attract dragonflies that lay eggs in the pond. Their larvae are the best mosquito control available. They need no encouragement from the pond owner to consume every mosquito larvae they can get their jaws on. In the unusual event that no dragonflies find your pond, a few feeder goldfish from the pet store are almost as good. Just give the dragonflies a few months to become established before panicking and throwing fish in, because fish will eat the dragonfly larvae.

This article which can be read in its entirety at <http://www.njaudubon.org/naturenotes/ssg3.html> includes a good historical perspective and level headed comments concerning the spread of the disease as well as suggestions for preventing exposure. National Audubon has also published a statement on the topic. You can read that at http://www.audubon.org/news/release/frank_gill_west_nile.html. For the most up-to-date information you can go to the Center for Disease

Introducing

Urban Owls

Eric Harrold, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina Charlotte, has been keeping track of a number of Barred Owls who call Charlotte their home. Over the past two years he has located, trapped, radio tagged and is now following at least a dozen Barred Owls within the city limits. Through his research he hopes to collect information on territory size, distribution of young, habitat requirements, etc. He has discovered some very interesting facts and gotten to know a few of these owls pretty intimately. One of them may be in your backyard!



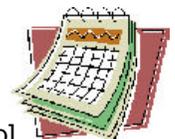
Don't miss this informative program, Thursday, October 3th at 7:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall of the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church on Sharon Amity.

Come see whoooo will be there!



Girl Scout Nature Bin Project: Brittany Stockman and Girl Scouts Hornets Nest Council, which serves eight counties in North & South Carolina, is in need of nature books. For a service project, she is assembling "nature bins" which include nature guides, binoculars, magnifying glasses and lesson plans for various ages. Troops or individuals will be able to check out these bins and do nature activities. If you can help out contact her through her mother at Lisbeth.Stockman@CELANESEACETATE.COM.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR



- Thu. 10/3:** Urban Owls [Monthly Mtg.]
- Sat. 10/5:** Jordan Lake/Audubon Art Print [Full Day Field Trip]
- Sat. 10/12:** Huntington Beach, SC [Full Day Field Trip]
- Fri./Sat. 10/15-20:** Wings Over Water Festival, Outer Banks [FYI]
- Sat. 10/26:** Owl Prowl, Cowan's Ford Refuge [Evening Field Trip]
- Sat. 11/2:** Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge [Full Day Field Trip]
- Thu. 11/7:** Water, Water, Everywhere [Monthly Meeting]
- Sat. 11/16:** Cowan's Ford Refuge [1/2 Day Field Trip]
- Sat. 11/30:** Sunset Beach, NC [Full Day Field Trip]

For additional activities and information go to <http://meckbirds.org>



Field Trips

Saturday, Oct. 5th
Audubon Print Exhibit, Raleigh, NC

You may have read the article in the Charlotte Observer about the Audubon Painting exhibit at the NC Art Museum in Raleigh. Some folks thought it might be fun to do a different sort of field trip to see these beautiful paintings. And on the way up and back we will stop at several places to get looks at the real things. This will give us opportunity to bird an area we don't usually go to. We will meet at the McDonalds at University Place [Harris Blvd and Rt. 29] at 6:45 AM. We will car pool up to the Raleigh birding on the way, have a picnic lunch, go see the exhibit and bird again on the return trip. If you are interested in going contact Judy Walker at 704 687-2559 (w) or 704-537-8181 (h) [leave a message or birdwalker@mac.com. There is no charge for the exhibit.

Saturday, October 12th
Huntington Beach State Park, SC

This is our fall sojourn to a South Carolina birding mecca. Fall migrants – hawks and warblers – will still be moving through, wintering shorebirds will have settled in and ducks may also have begun arriving. This is probably one of the best times of the year to peregrine falcons and merlins. And I am sure we will be delighted with spectacle views of hundreds if not thousands of tree swallows. It is a wonderful time of year to be on the beach. We will meet in the parking lot on the eastside of the causeway at 7:30 AM. Many members make this a weekend event. For information about hotels and camping check the web site. If you are planning to go contact Judy Walker at birdwalker@mac.com or 704-537-8181 [leave a message].

Saturday, October 26th
Owl Prowl, Cowan's Ford Refuge

This has become an annual event to celebrate a wild Halloween. After learning all about owls at the monthly meeting this field trip will give you an opportunity to encounter a few in a beautifully wild habitat. We will gather at the viewing stand about 6:15 PM. We need

to limit the size of this trip so please if you plan to attend contact Marek Smith at smithmk@co.mecklenburg.nc.us or 704-875-1391 [w], 704-549-4713 [h].

Saturday, November 2nd
Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge is a gem in the heart of the Piedmont. It has a wide variety of habitats including ponds, open fields and a wonderful bottomland hardwood forest along Brown Creek which cuts through the heart of the refuge to the Pee Dee River. Ducks and other winter migrants should be arriving at the Refuge by this time. Red-headed Woodpeckers should be abundant as will sparrows.

This is an all day trip which will include a fair amount of not very strenuous walking. Bring plenty of water, snacks and lunch. We will meet at the Mc Donalds at Windsor Square at 7:15 AM. If you are interested in going contact Judy Walker at 704-537-8181 [leave a message] or birdwalker@mac.com



Check It Out! News and Opportunities

Wings Over Water Festival

North Carolina's Outer Banks and adjacent lands that are a paradise of ocean beaches, rolling sand hills, scrub thickets, broad marsh areas, pocosins, black water swamps and maritime and inland forests. These varied habitats are rich in wildlife with large acreages protected as parks, reserves, and wildlife refuges. This five-day Wings Over Water event is your opportunity to enter this land of wildlife enchantment. Through field trips, workshops and seminars that you select based on your interests, you will get an insider's look at one of the most fascinating ecological settings in the United States.

This year Wings Over Water will include over 90 workshops, field trips and seminars. The programs will take

place in the diversity of ocean beaches, rolling sand hills, shrub thickets, broad marsh areas, pocosins, blackwater swamps and tracts of maritime and inland Northeastern North Carolina forests.

For additional information call: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce at (252) 441-8144 or go to <http://www.wingsoverwater.org> .

Wings Over Water is a must for serious birders, wildlife enthusiasts, and anyone wanting to get close-up and personal with these unique ecosystems. Come ... share the experience of a lifetime in your lifetime!



Citizen Science Projects

Several citizen science projects are currently underway at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and need volunteers. Some have fees associated with participation.

The Birdhouse Network: Collect breeding data on cavity nesting birds in your nest box(es) [<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse>]

Classroom FeederWatch: Kids do research and send data to scientists via the internet. Fee includes a curriculum guide. [<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/cfw>]

Great Backyard Bird Count: Count birds to help create a winter snapshot of bird populations [<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>]

Project Feederwatch: Count birds at your feeders [<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw>]

Urban Bird Studies: People of all ages study pigeons and other city birds [<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/ppw>]

Conservation Corner

National Wildlife Refuge Month

*Encourage Your Legislators to
Increase Funding to the NWR System.*

The closest thing we have to Bird Heaven is America's National Wildlife Refuge System - over 500 refuges that spans across 50 states, which protects one-fifth of America's wetlands and provides habitat for more than 700 species of birds, and provides the primary habitat for over 250 threatened and endangered species. Next March, the Refuge System hits a major milestone: it's 100th anniversary - 100 years in protecting our country's diverse bird and wildlife populations. But in spite of the important role, our Refuge System, and the safe harbor it provides to millions of birds, is in trouble.

Earlier this year, the Bush Administration submitted its budget to Congress requesting a \$56 million increase in funding for operating and maintaining the National Wildlife Refuge System. Prior to the August recess, the House voted to increase funding for America's National Wildlife Refuge System by \$60 million for Fiscal Year 2003. The Senate Appropriations Committee has also taken action, and set aside the President's request of \$56 million as well. The full Senate is expected to cast the final vote on this measure in early October.

If you think \$60 million sounds like a lot, keep in mind that at present, our Refuge System faces a backlog of nearly \$2 billion in unmet operations and maintenance needs - huge voids that are severely impacting bird and wildlife populations on refuges. Many refuges are in a state of crisis, jeopardized by imminent threats and failing to protect bird species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered or are included in Audubon's WatchList of species that could be

headed for extinction. Hundreds of refuges have no staff and no visitor center, no signs, brochures or restrooms, no way to serve the public and no aid for resident wildlife populations. As a result, the Refuge System is largely unequipped to address a range of serious threats. Limited water supplies, invasive species, and water pollution threaten the birds and wildlife that rely on refuges for sanctuary.

You can help insure that the Refuge System gets the help that it needs! Please contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to support a \$100 million increase in funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

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To instantly send your letter to your lawmakers on this conservation issue today go to: <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/contact/default.asp?subject=49>



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Mecklenburg Audubon is a chapter of National Audubon. Meetings are held at Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church, 920 N. Sharon Amity Rd. on the first Thursday of each month, September - May at 7:30 PM.

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West Nile Virus

control [<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/USmap2001.htm>].

Please keep in mind most people who get West Nile Virus have no symptoms or only mild ones and less than one percent of people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will develop severe illness. As with Lyme Disease there is no need to panic. We just have to take the appropriate precautions to protect ourselves when we are outdoors gardening, hiking or birdwatching.



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