

# Audubon News



September 2002

A publication of the Mecklenburg Audubon

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## From the President's Perch

Carole Bowman reported a Spotted Sandpiper near her home last week so I guess that means our winged friends are on the move again. Shorebirds actually start their migration from the Arctic tundra in early July. Once they start moving the other neotropical migrants can't be far behind. Nor can the first fall meeting of Mecklenburg Audubon.

The MAS board has once again put together an exciting fall schedule of programs and field trips. But that is not all that Mecklenburg Audubon does. The chapter has been committed to environmental education and habitat conservation for over thirty years. But the chapter is only as strong and effective as its members make it.

This past summer we lost 4 board members. Deb Sue Griffin and Don & Kim Seriff have taken time off to raise families. Danny Swicegood's wife has taken on a new, exciting job in Hendersonville. We will miss them greatly. However, their departure creates an opportunity for us to welcome new members to the board. Unfortunately, at the moment, we don't know who those new folks are. We're hoping it's you!

We need a couple of creative folks with new ideas and energy. Especially, someone with a desire to be creative with our newsletter. The positions currently open are: Newsletter editor, Program coordinator, Education coordinator and Member-at-large. You won't be alone in any position. Everything is a joint effort.

Think about it. You don't have to be an ace birder or anything like that. You just need to have a desire to give a little something back to an organization that is helping to protect something you love and enjoy.

## Introducing

# Ms Charlotte and Friends

And who is Miss Charlotte you ask? Well she's a neighbor of yours. A special neighbor who is helping ornithologists unravel some of the mysteries of migration. She's an Osprey who has made her summer home on Lake Norman. Her friends are other Ospreys from across the country.

Dr. Rob Bierregaard started his Osprey studies on Martha's Vineyard where he has monitored their productivity and survivalship for over 30 years. Several years ago he was able to secure some funding to radio collar a pair of Osprey who were nesting on the island. Last year he was able to raise additional monies to radio collar Miss Charlotte. Along with children at Brun Elementary School, he has been monitoring her movements to and from her wintering grounds in South America.

Since Ms Charlotte will soon be starting her journey back to South



American, we thought it would be fitting to hear about her travels at the first meeting of the fall. Rob will talk about the natural history of these birds and help us understand some of the birds unique characteristics. And of course he will discuss the information he and other researchers have collected about Osprey migration.

So don't forget to migrate over to **Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church, 920 N. Sharon Amity, by 7:30 PM on Thursday, Sept. 5th.** We will gather in the fellowship hall on the ground floor. See ya all then.

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Sat. 9/5 – Monthly Mtg: Introducing Ms Charlotte

Sun. 9/15 – Field Trip: Jackson Park

Sat. 9/21 – Field Trip: Hawk Watching

Fri./Sat. 9/28-9 – Carolina Bird Club Fall Meeting

Thu. 10/3 – Monthly Mtg: Urban Owls

Sat. 10/5 – Field Trip: Jordan Lake/Audubon Art Print [Raleigh]

Sat. 10/12 – Field Trip: Huntington Beach, SC

Fri./Sat. 10/18-9 – Wings Over Water Festival [Outer Banks]

Sat. 10/26 – Owl Prowl [Evening]





## Field Trips

### Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC Sunday, Sept. 15th

You may have heard about how fabulous spring migration is in Central Park, NY. Well Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC is a close rival, especially in the fall. Last year birds were dripping off the trees. We will meet at 7:15 AM at the Mac Donalds on Four Seasons Blvd. (Exit 18 off I-26). It's on the right as you are heading into Hendersonville. Rt. 74 makes this a quick 2 hour drive so you could drive out Sunday AM. There are hotels at Exit 18 if you want to go out Saturday. If you are interested in this trip contact Judy Walker [birdwalker@mac.com] at 704 687-2559 (w) or 704-537-8181 (h). She can give you names of hotels in the area if you need them.

### Hawk Watching, Mahogany Rock Saturday, Sept. 21st

Cars aren't the only ones who use the Blue Ridge for transportation. During the day Hawks, Eagles and Falcons use the warm thermals created along the mountain ridges as their highway to their wintering habitats. Neotropical migrants also use the mountain ridges as guides to their winter abodes. But they do most of their traveling at night to avoid those 'nasty' raptors on the move during the day. During the day, though, they can be found foraging through the treetops along the parkway. This trip will give you the opportunity to observe two very different types of birds in their migrant travels.

This is probably the easiest type of birding except for perhaps watching your feeder. Bring along a lunch as well as something to sit on (blanket, lounge chairs, whatever). Most of the day we will let the birds come to us but there will be some forays into the woods looking for warblers as well. I guarantee (except if its pouring rain) when you leave



## Check It Out! News and Opportunities

### Wings Over Water October 15-20, 2002

Autumn is a special time in Eastern North Carolina. The frantic summer tourist season is well past, and the land and water are left to those who wish to blend with nature. Wings Over Water will be your opportunity to enter this land of wildlife enchantment. Through field trips, workshops, and interpretive programs, you will explore one of the most fascinating ecological settings in the United States. Wings Over Water (WOW) offers programs for the amateur-to-serious birder, nature enthusiast, wildlife photographer, paddler and others who enjoy being up close with nature. For more information check out their website - <http://www.northeast-nc.com/wings/>

### Nature Bin Project

Girl Scouts Hornets Nest Council, which serves eight counties in North & South Carolina, is in need of nature books. For a service project, I am 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.

I need your help! If you have any

old nature guides in good condition or would be willing to donate new items or cash, please bring them to the September meeting. Or send my dad an e-mail message at AAS9@AOL.com if you want to contribute but don't plan to attend the meeting. I can provide receipts for tax purposes. You can make checks out to GSHNC Troop 12. Each bin will contain a list of people and businesses who contributed.

With your help, we can provide nature resources to girls that might not otherwise have access to them. Thank you!

Brittany Stockman, age 13, Girl Scout Troop 12

### Bird Watching Column

The Charlotte Observer has started running a weekly birding column written by David Sibly, author of Guide to North American Birds. David is a wonderful writer and has a wealth of knowledge to share. This column will be great way to spread the word about birds and bird conservation. The column will run on Thursdays along with the Gardening columns. If you get a chance, thank the Charlotte Observer for running the column. Now all we need to do is convince WTVI to run the Stokes' birding show!

### Field Trips Continued

this field trip you will be able to identify at least one raptor (if not 4-5) in the air and one butterfly. We will meet at the Mac Donald's at the Cornelius Exit (Exit 28) of I-77 at 7:15 AM. If you are interested in going contact Taylor Piephoff [PiephoffT@aol.com] at 532-6336.

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

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 [birdwalker@mac.com] at 704 687-2559 (w) or 704-537-8181 (h). There is no charge for the exhibit.

# The Piping Plovers and Wachovia

by Pam Popovich

It all started on Nantucket. You can't imagine what a row such a small bird can make.

I was there this past June 22 when I first heard about the piping plovers and the possibility that the Wachovia picnic the following week, in association with the annual conference of one of its departments on the island, might have to be cancelled. Either that or its location moved because the plovers were nesting right where the picnic was to be held, a picnic for 1200 people.

Now I know about the federally endangered status of the piping plover, a small ghostly-pale version of the more common killdeer that I saw daily in the fields of Indiana where I grew up. So, when I saw the piping plover on Assateague Island two years ago, I immediately thought of arrested development because that's the way this endangered bird looked to me, like a baby bird with its large, rounded head, no neck, and miniscule size—infantile characteristics present at maturity.

Anyway, having visited Nantucket in earlier years, I had become aware of the birds, presence when I noticed the bumper stickers proudly displayed on the backs of the pickups of native Nantucketers: "Piping plover tastes like chicken!" How stupid, I repeatedly concluded.

Upon arrival on Nantucket this summer and present in a large gathering, I first heard of this year's piping plover 'interference' with the Wachovia picnic; a comment was, "I wouldn't be surprised if someone takes a gun to those birds — or gets rid of the eggs."

Immediately my son-in-law's grandfather loudly announced to the entire room, "No, no, that's not right. Those piping plovers are worth more than all the people on Nantucket."

My daughter then turned to me as I was mentally jumping up and down and openingly clapping, and said,



"And you thought you were the only one left!"

Everyday after that there was little information about the picnic, but on Wednesday evening the picnic was held. No one knew what had happened to the plovers. But the next day was more than interesting.

I learned the plovers' nests had been surrounded by a tall fence. The front of the fence had large signs, placed every few feet, which announced what the fence protected and why. Stationed along the fence were educators who explained to curious onlookers what exactly was happening and why. Behind the fence were federal marshals who were armed. The picnickers were also prohibited from the boardwalk along the nesting area because the vibrations would have disturbed the birds. And the fireworks, traditionally shot off behind the dunes, were moved to a barge in the bay. It cost Wachovia to move the fireworks, but the option was not to have fireworks at all.

The show went on. Everyone, birds and people, were happy. But the people were relegated to only a certain part of the beach. How intelligent. Thank you, Endangered Species Act. Without it, the eggs would have been crushed, which of course is the reason these birds are endangered. People have developed or abused the beaches which these birds, and other animals, require for their existence.

May we humans stop our non-compassionate behaviors and continue to consider what we are doing to other flora and fauna with whom we share the earth.

## Board Members

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Rita Leonard - Member-at-large  
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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.

*New Summer  
Fledglings*



## Congratulations to –

*Don and Kim Seriff* on the birth of their son William Garrett Seriff, and to *Deb Sue Griffin and Steve Zakely* on the adoption of Caitlin Zakely.



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# Annual Fall Seed Sale



**Tuesday, Oct. 1 - Sunday, Oct. 6**

The Wild Bird Center in the Arboretum will be offering *15% off* all seed during our *Annual Fall Seed Sale*. Purchase as much seed as you like. Take only what you need now, and we will store the balance to be picked up as needed. this is a great opportunity to stock up for the winter months.



**Wild Bird Center**  
Arboretum Shopping Center  
8042 Providence Rd., Suite 1500  
Charlotte, NC 28277  
704-542-9453

## Join Now

**Important:** Please use this form for new membership or add our chapter code [R50 7XCH] to your renewal the renewal form you receive in the mail. this will ensure our chapter receives membership dues reimbursement from National Audubon.

### National Audubon Membership

1 year - \$20  Senior [62+] - \$15  Student [full-time] - \$15

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make all check payable to National Audubon and mail to:  
National Audubon, Membership Dept., P. O. Box 51005, Boulder,  
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