

# Audubon News

February 2003

A publication of the Mecklenburg Audubon

Volume 8, Number 6

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*There's nothin' like the*

## **Sweet Smell of a Swamp!!**

The Francis Beidler Forest in Four Holes Swamp contains the largest remaining virgin stand of tupelo gum and bald cypress trees in the world. In the heart of the sanctuary, ancient groves of cypress trees stretch skyward, towering over clear pools and meandering blackwater.

Beidler Forest provides pristine, secluded and complex habitat for a wide range of plants and animals. Old growth forests, like Beidler Forest, provide animals that require old trees, large downed logs or hollow trees for their nests or homes with a wide range of choices. Beidler Forest is a healthy system and our plant and wildlife populations reflect that.

Over 120 species of birds have been found in the forest which has been designated a *globally* IMPORTANT BIRD AREA. Beidler Forest also boasts over 70 species of these reptiles and amphibians from small lizards to large alligators. Plant life include the rare Dwarf Trillium (*Trillium pusillum*) and American Elm (*Ulmus americana*).

As a visitor walks through this ancient swamp, preserved for all time, they may wonder how it came to be that this piece of wilderness remains untouched? How is it possible that Four Holes Swamp escaped the mad rush for old growth forest timber that consumed so much of America's ancient forests? In short, the answer to that question lies with one man – Francis Beidler.

Francis Beidler was a champion of conservation practices on both private and public lands. He dedicated most of

his life, until his death in 1924, to the idea that nature can be conserved and practiced what he preached.

Beidler Forest was once part of the holdings of Francis Beidler in South Carolina. Following his death in 1924, his family continued to preserve large holdings within Four Holes Swamp. Eventually, the National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy pooled their resources to purchase what is today Francis Beidler Forest. The boardwalk first opened to the public in 1977 and is today one of the most appreciated natural areas in South Carolina.

Beidler Forest is rich in local history. The origin of the name "Four Holes Swamp" is steeped in mystery, much like the woods themselves. That mystery and myth of the swamp was used to full advantage by the forces of Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, and General Nathaniel Greene during the Revolutionary War. The silence and tranquility of the swamp was broken by the lightning

guerilla warfare strikes launched from here. Fossils abound deep in the swamp beds, as do archeological finds. You can almost imagine the silent movement of Native Americans passing among the trees.

Want to know more about this intriguing place? Then come to the February meeting of Mecklenburg Audubon to hear Norm Brunswig, South Carolina Audubon Director. Before becoming State Director Norm was 'in charge' of the Beidler Forest. He has seen it through its formative years [including Hurricane Hugo] and been instrumental in its becoming a premiere nature center and preserve. No one knows the swamp like he does!

We have also scheduled field trip to the swamp in March so you can experience it up close and personal. So don't miss this wonderful presentation on Thursday, February 6th in the fellowship hall of the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church [920 Sharon Amity] at 7:30 PM.



## From the President's Perch:

As you have probably already noticed this is an expanded edition of our newsletter. It contains a great deal of important information about upcoming events and the future of Mecklenburg Audubon. I particularly want to draw your attention to two major upcoming events - the Great Backyard Bird Count and the Mecklenburg Audubon Birdathon.

First the Great Backyard Bird Count, affectionately known as the GBBC. In 2000 the Raleigh had about 90 participants and we only had 61. So last year I challenged you all to beat Raleigh's participation. After all we are a larger community and of course we have better birds and birders!!!

Well you certainly rose to the occasion. Not only did we beat Raleigh, we left them in the dust. In fact we were third in the NATION!!!! with 246 participants. We also saw the most number of species in North Carolina - 79 - which is a little odd considering the coast has a lot more birds this time of the year.

Now, it's not that I am competitive but... I have a new challenge for you this year. We really should have been second. We were nudged out by a city that has become an arch rival of our

illustrious university - UNC Charlotte - for whom I work. Yes, Cincinnati beat us out by a mere 16 participants. [Atlanta was number one with well over 100 participants more than us. We can tackle them next year.] So the challenge is to beat Cincinnati this year.

Actually this won't be hard to do. We have over 900 MAS members and most of you feed birds. If everyone submitted only one list we would be way ahead of the pack. All you have to do is watch your feeder for 15-20 minutes one or more days of the weekend. Then submit a checklist to Birdsource for each day you count. Rain or shine, you don't even have to leave the comfort of your home. If you want to be more adventurous, you can go to a favorite birding spot like one of the greenways or a nearby park each day and submit those checklists. Or you can do a combination of both. If you don't have a computer drop the list off at one of the Nature Preserve's Education Centers or get it to one of the MAS board members and they will enter the information. Don't forget to give us your zip code. That's how they keep track of who is doing what where.

Also if you know of any schools that have bird feeding stations this is a great opportunity to get the kids involved in an important scientific project. Let the teacher's know about the project. There are special teacher guides on the web site which can help the teacher incorporate the project into the classroom. If they have any questions they can contact me at 704-687-2559 or [birdwalker@mac.com](mailto:birdwalker@mac.com).

So that is your assignment for February and it is just a warm-up of the big one in April - the Birdathon. Preliminary information about this exciting event is on page 5 of this newsletter. Although a serious fundraiser for the chapter it is also a lot of fun and can bring out the competitive birding spirit in just about anyone.

Hope you all are ready for the challenge. I know I am!

## FIELD TRIPS



*Please remember to contact the trip leaders several days before the trip. If you don't, you may not receive information about last minute changes or cancellations. Also, if we don't know you are coming we might leave without you!!*

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 MCDOWELL PRAIRIE [1/2 DAY]

Back in the fall we did an unexpected trip to this area when we had to rearrange the Pee Dee trip. Those who went really enjoyed it. We are making it an official trip so those who missed that trip can learn more about the area.

Mecklenburg Park and Recreation is in the process of restoring this area to a piedmont prairie similar to those which dotted the countryside before the first settlers arrived. It is also a haven for the endangered Swen Sunflower.

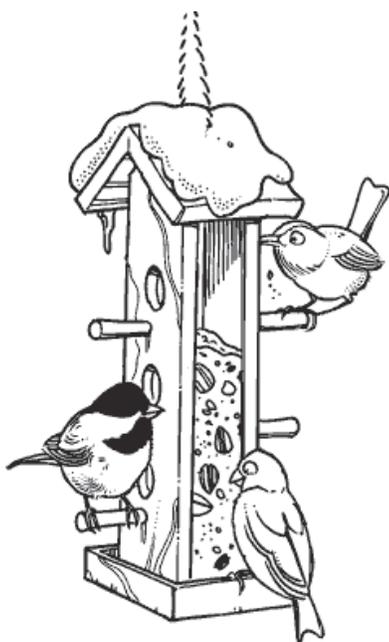
We will meet at the Burger King on Westinghouse Blvd. at I-77. Be there by 7:30 AM. We will need to car pool over to the prairie since there is not a lot of area to park. Be prepared for mud and sparrows. There will probably be a lot of both!

If you are want to join the trip contact Taylor Piephoff at 704-532-6336 or [piephoffT@aol.com](mailto:piephoffT@aol.com).

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22 PEE DEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We're going to try this one again. For those of you who missed the Pee Dee Christmas Count this will give you the opportunity to experience the refuge at its best - late winter. The ducks should still be in high numbers and of course sparrows will abound but you never know what we might find. Dress in layers and expect mud. Also bring food and water [snacks and lunch]. There will be a good amount of walking but it won't be over rough terrain unless we are in pursue of something exciting.

If you are interested in going contact Judy Walker at 704-537-8181 or [birdwalker@email.uncc.edu](mailto:birdwalker@email.uncc.edu). She will determine the meeting place once she has an idea of who is going.



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## MEMBERSHIP ISSUES AND CHANGES

Over thirty years ago a group of men and women led by Elizabeth and Eddie Clarkson decided their local bird club needed a way to be more effective in campaigning conservation issues locally, regionally and at the national level. So in March of 1970 they became the first National Audubon Chapter in North Carolina. As a result the members of Mecklenburg Audubon have been successful in promoting many conservation issues and in educating the public about birds and the need to protect their habitat.

When MAS became a chapter we agreed to a common mission: *"...to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."* How we will accomplish the mission together is spelled out in the Chapter Policy Plan which you can read on our web page. In broad outline, NAS agreed to give us the names of all people who join NAS and who live in our designated chapter area and we have agreed to do what we can to involve all members in the implementation of the Audubon Mission. To accomplish this task the chapters received a fixed amount of money for each member. In return, the chapter promised to provide specific services to members, such as regular newsletters, membership meetings and field trips.

I am not sure what the original dues share amount was but for the past ten years that I have been part of the MAS leadership team it has been \$5.50. This infusion of funds basically covered the administrative costs of the chapter such as the newsletter [printing and mailing], programming costs, telephone, etc.

Additional funds for conservation and environmental education programs/projects have always been raised separately.

For reasons I do not fully understand, about four years ago the senior management at NAS decided that the dues share policy needed revision. It was determined that instead of a fixed amount per member per year (\$5.50 at the time) chapters would receive a share of the net profit that was left after subtracting the expenses of NAS's membership department (staff, bulk mail and other recruiting methods) from the income generated by membership dues, membership list rentals and Audubon Magazine advertising revenue. For example if NAS had 500,000 members and \$500,000 profit (in this department), the share to each chapter would be \$1 per member.

Unfortunately, expenses at Audubon Magazine have risen (and, come to think of it, so have newsletter expenses) while advertising has fallen. In the fiscal year ending 6/30/2002 the NAS membership profit was 64¢ per member. This was predictable at the time, so instead of lowering the boom on chapters quickly, a phase-out of dues share was put in place that guaranteed about \$4.13 in 2001, and \$2.75 in 2002 and 2003. And unless the policy is changed, in 2004 the dues share will be gone.

To compensate for the lost of revenue at the chapter level NAS has made two important changes in the Chapter Policy requirements. First, we are no longer required to publish a newsletter. I am not sure about their reasoning here. The newsletter is indeed the largest administrative expense for the chapter but

without it we would not have an effective chapter!!! True, we are moving to alternative and less expensive ways to communicate with members via the Internet. But there are still costs involved and it will be a while before our entire membership is effectively wired. A monthly newsletter is vital to our existence and our conservation and environmental education efforts.

The second change does offer some significant assistance for the chapter. In the past we have not been able to have local, chapter only members. To belong to the local chapter you had to belong to National Audubon. NAS has removed this requirement. All the funds raised through local memberships stay with the chapter. All NAS asks of us is that we share with them the names of local members for their national fundraising campaigns. However, the local member does have the right to withhold his or her name from NAS.

After much discussion, the Mecklenburg Audubon Society Board has made some significant decisions about how we will service members. Essentially, to receive the local Audubon Newsletter [in paper or electronically] and eventually attend field trips free of charge, you will need to be a local member. The cost of a local membership will be \$10.00. You do not have to be a member of National Audubon to be a local member. If you are NAS member you do not have to be a local member, but after July 1, 2003 you will no longer receive a monthly newsletter.

Below you will find a Local Membership Form. Please, consider carefully your involvement in our local chapter. Local membership dues paid now will be effective through June 2004.

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### Mecklenburg Audubon Chapter Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership through June 30, 2004 is \$10.

Please do not share my name with National Audubon Society.

Return form with check payable to Mecklenburg Audubon to: Lucy Quintilliano, P.O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222.

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# Announcing the 6th Annual **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT** February 14-17, 2003

All across North America, our birds face survival challenges ranging from loss of habitat to introduced predators and diseases such as West Nile Virus. The Sixth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (February 14-17) - promises to add important new information to our understanding of birds' movement and overall health by focusing our common birds as well as on birds of special concern.

Once again, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society call on birders of every age and skill level to make the count possible. "We need every birder to join us," said Audubon Senior Vice President of Science Frank Gill. "The Great Backyard Bird Count has become a vitally important means of gathering data to help birds, but it can't happen unless people take part. Whether you're a novice or an expert, we need you to take part and help us help birds."

A project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited, the GBBC combines high tech web tools with an army of citizen scientist bird observers. The GBBC wants families, individuals, classrooms, and community groups to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders, local parks, schoolyards, and other areas during any or all of the four count days. Participants can enter their sightings at BirdSource, [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). This state-of-the-art website was developed by Audubon and the Cornell Lab.

Because many species are showing population declines, GBBC 2003 will put the spotlight on birds that appear on Audubon's Watchlist, an accounting of bird species in decline or at conservation risk due to dwindling habitat and other threats. "The WatchList is an early warning system designed to raise awareness of birds in trouble, before they become endangered or threatened," says Audubon's Gill. "Think of WatchList as preventative medicine."



This year's participants are asked to pay special attention to the nearly 200 species of birds on the WatchList. The GBBC web site includes features relating to these birds and what can be done to help them.

The GBBC is also important for more common species. In 2002, more than 47,000 participants counted millions of birds throughout North America. For the last four years, GBBC participants have shown that Eurasian Collared-Doves are also "on the go"; backing results from other studies such as the Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch. Since their introduction into Florida in the 1980's, the birds have increased in number in that state and have steadily expanded their range in the U.S. They were reported in 21 states during the 2002 count. GBBC 2003 participants will continue to help scientists keep track of the consequences of this movement.

The site invites beginners and experts alike to participate, providing useful information to make participation easy and enjoyable. There is a vocabulary section, bird watching and bird feeding tips, bird vocalizations, and more, including information about House Finch 'eye disease.

Educators will find the bibliography and geography sections especially handy; as well as suggestions on how to conduct the count with groups of kids. For those tired of winter and ready for spring, there will be tips about planning and preparing for the spring bird garden.

"The Great Backyard Bird Count is a terrific way for individuals, families, schools and community groups to contribute to a better understanding of birds," says the Cornell Lab's Fitzpatrick.

"In return, they learn more about birds in the process. I can't think of a more enjoyable and more rewarding way to spend a little time on a late winter day."

Instructions for participating can be found at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org). There's no fee or registration. Those who would like to participate but aren't online can visit one of Mecklenburg County's Nature Preserve Education Centers. The Wild Birds Unlimited store in SE Charlotte will also accept reports.

Would *you* like to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count? Would *you* and *your* family like to help scientists track birds in your community? Well here's a wonderful opportunity:

Here's what you can do:

- Count birds in your backyard at your feeders on any or all of the 4 days.
- Watch the birds for at least 15 minutes on each day that you participate.
- Enter your count online at the GBBC site (<http://www.birdsource.org>) and use your State Checklist to submit your highest counts for that day.
- See the results across the continent by visiting the Maproom.

To participate, visit <http://www.birdsource.org>. Also, to help promote this event, there will be a number of activities at various locations throughout Char-Meck for children & adults either during or prior to the GBBC.

For further information regarding these activities, you may contact the Carolina Raptor Center 704/875-6521; Mecklenburg Parks & Recreation 704/598-8857; and, of course, Wing Haven.

## **GBBC Family Gathering**

**Wing Haven Gardens & Bird Sanctuary  
Tuesday, February 11, 2003 from 4:00  
to 5:00 pm**

Prior to the Great Backyard Bird Count, join the folks at Wing Haven for a special program geared especially for children (ages 4 - 8) and their families. For centuries it has been a custom to hang food for the birds on trees & shrubs. With the GBBC just days away, you'll create food for our feathered friends to hang in your own backyard! Please register in advance by calling Wing Haven at 704/331-0664.

## Spring Birdathon

This is the event of the year for those birders with a higher than average competitive spirit. You may have read in one of your bird magazines about the World Series of Birding which takes place in New Jersey in May. Folks from all over the country descend upon the state to see how many bird species they can find in a 24-hour period. They race around the entire state looking for anything with feathers. In doing so they raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for bird conservation efforts. And that is what the Birdathon is all about raising funds for conservation and environmental education programs.

The MAS Birdathon won't be as grandiose but will be a fun and challenging way to raise funds for our environmental education and conservation projects which have been put on hold because of all the financial changes that have taken place in National Audubon. [See Membership Issues on page 3.]

The basic idea is to have folks sponsor you so much money [10 cents, a dollar, etc.] for each species of bird you see on April 19th. How involved you get is up to you. You can just count the species in your yard, which for some folks can be a pretty substantial number. Or you can go out to different habitats to really rack up the numbers. It is possible to see as many as 100 birds in the Charlotte area at this time of the year if you plan it right and the weather cooperates.

We will, of course, have prizes in a variety of categories such as the most species seen by a group and by an individual; the backyard with the most species, the person who raised the most money, the person with the most donors, and more. Although we want this to be somewhat competitive in the end every participant will be a winner because their efforts will go to help the birds and children.

Look for more details in the March newsletter. But **mark April 19th on your calendar now** and get out your calculator.



**CATS INDOORS!**

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SAFER BIRDS & CATS

Cats Indoors! [<http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/catsindoors.htm>] The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats, was initiated by American Bird Conservancy and endorsed by National Audubon to end the unnecessary suffering and death of birds and other wildlife caused by free-roaming domestic cats. Cats Indoors! seeks to educate cat owners, decision makers and the general public that free-roaming cats pose a significant risk to birds and other wildlife, suffer themselves, and pose a threat to human health.

Cats Indoors! encourages cat owners to keep their cats indoors and advocates laws, regulations, and policies to protect cats and birds, including the humane removal of free-roaming cats from areas important to wildlife.

The campaign promotes grassroots efforts to address the issue at state and local levels. You can go to the Cats Indoors! web site and become more informed on this issue. You can also encourage your local elected officials to look into this matter by going to <http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/county/mecklenburg.htm>. When you hit the send button, an email will be automatically generated to our county commissioners, asking them to enact a law that will keep cats safer and prevent them from killing wildlife by ensuring they are kept indoors or on a leash. Please tell your friends and neighbors about this.

### Introducing the

## AUDUBON NORTH CAROLINA LICENSE PLATE

Show your support for birds and bird conservation.

Audubon North Carolina is pleased to announce the new specialty license plate for North Carolina's birds! This official North Carolina license tag will feature a vibrant Red-headed Woodpecker and \$10.00 from every plate will directly support the conservation of birds and their habitats in North Carolina.



The plate is not yet available. Audubon must first collect 300 paid applications, so please take a minute to get your application to us today and encourage your friends to do the same. As soon as 300 paid applications are collected, the plates can be produced and mailed directly to you.

Audubon NC will deposit all checks received for Audubon license plates in a special account and hold the funds until all 300 paid applications are received. Then we will be allowed to work with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to finalize the plate design. DMV will process and distribute the specialty plates.

This length of this process will depend on how quickly the required 300 applications are collected (so get your friends to join in now!). It could take months, or as long as a year. Please be patient. We will update our progress on the web site periodically. Should it appear that for some reason it will not be possible to create and distribute the plates, all monies received will be refunded in full.

The annual fee for the Audubon specialty tag is \$20 (please note this does not include your annual license tag renewal fee). You may personalize your license plate for an additional \$20. For the link to the application go to <http://www.ncaudubon.org/License%20Plate.htm>.

# NC Audubon Annual Meeting

## March 28-29, 2003

Hosted by Wake Audubon Society at the  
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

Join Audubon members from across the state as Wake Audubon hosts the Audubon North Carolina Annual Meeting March 28-29, 2003, at the Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, NC. The format has been changed from previous years to include field trips to local sites and to increase time for socializing with other Audubon chapter members. Evening events and registration will be held at the Museum so attendees will have an opportunity to leisurely explore many of the exhibits.

The meeting begins **FRIDAY EVENING** with registration and a dessert social at the Museum. There are 15 **FIELD TRIPS** to choose from on **SATURDAY**. Sites we'll be visiting are described in the following information and in *A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle*. Late March is a transitional time of the year for birds-between lingering winter species and early spring arrivals but, of course, we'll also have our resident Piedmont birds. Remember to plan for early spring weather!

**SATURDAY EVENING** will begin with a social at the Museum followed by Chris Canfield's annual report and the Audubon NC video. Enjoy a casual dinner in the Museum as you stroll from the mountains to the sea exhibit before hearing our featured speaker, Jim Berry, speak on The Impact of Roger Tory Peterson on the Environmental Movement of the 20th Century and His Lasting Legacy. Jim is President of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History (RTPI) in Jamestown, NY, hometown of Roger Tory Peterson. RTPI is a nature education and cultural institution curating the life's work of Dr. Peterson. Jim is a lifelong naturalist who is happy he was able to turn his passion into a career.

Participation is open to members and non-members, so invite your friends. Join us as we welcome the new growth of spring and Audubon in North Carolina!

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### REGISTRATION FOR THE AUDUBON NORTH CAROLINA ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 28-29, 2003

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Audubon Chapter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NO. ACTIVITY	TOTAL
___ Registration(s) for Saturday field trips (covers the whole day) @ \$10	_____
___ Registration(s) for programs (covers Friday and Saturday) @ \$15	_____
___ Registration(s) for Saturday Night Dinner @ \$15	_____
Pre-registration for dinner required by March 18.	
Total amount enclosed:	_____

Register for your field trips below; trips limited to 15 participants.

Indicate which trip(s) you wish to participate in by writing the number and names of those participating.

	TRIP #	NAME OF PARTICIPANT[S]
All Day	_____	_____
Morning	_____	_____
Afternoon	_____	_____
Alternate Choice	_____	_____

Please send this form and a check payable to Audubon North Carolina to:  
Wake Audubon Society, PO Box 12452, Raleigh, NC 27605.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, March 28, 7:00-9:00 PM  
Registration and dessert social at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

Saturday, March 29  
Morning/Afternoon – Field Trips  
Evening [at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences]  
6:00 PM – Social  
6:30 PM – Audubon NC Annual Report and video, Chris Canfield  
7:15 PM – Casual dinner at the Museum  
8:15 PM – *The Impact of Roger Tory Peterson on the Environmental Movement of the 20th Century and His Lasting Legacy*, Jim Berry, Speaker.

### LODGING INFORMATION

HAMPTON INN, 1001 Wake Towne Drive, Raleigh, 919-828-1813  
GROUP RATE: \$55/night, plus tax, 2 double beds, including continental breakfast  
GROUP NAME: Audubon; based on availability up to 3/28/03

COURTYARD MARRIOTT, 1041 Wake Towne Drive, Raleigh, 919-821-3400, 1-800-821-3400  
GROUP RATE: \$55/night, plus tax, 1 King or \$59/night, 2 double beds; breakfast buffet is an additional \$7.95  
GROUP NAME: Audubon; rate expires 3/14

The Hampton Inn and Courtyard Marriott are adjacent to each other and located approximately four miles from the NC Museum of Natural Sciences. There are also many other options for hotels, camping, or bed & breakfasts in the Raleigh area.

### DIRECTIONS

#### HOTELS:

*From West:* Take I-40 East and exit for Raleigh at Wade Avenue. Take I-440/US-1 North ramp to the inner beltline toward Wake Forest/Rocky Mount. Exit at Wake Forest Road and turn right. Turn right on Wake Towne Drive at the Courtyard Marriott sign.

*From East:* Take I-40 West. Exit for Raleigh at I-440/US-64 East to the outer beltline toward Rocky Mount/Wake Forest. Exit at Wake Forest Road and turn left. Turn right on Wake Towne Drive at the Courtyard Marriott sign.

#### HOTELS TO MUSEUM:

Turn left out of the hotel parking lot. Turn right on Wake Forest Road. In approximately 1.5 miles, bear right onto Capital Boulevard toward downtown. Turn left onto Jones Street. Continue past the Museum to Blount Street. Turn right on Blount for the parking lot entrance on your right.

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# NC Audubon Meeting Field Trips

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**FIELD TRIPS WILL LEAVE FROM THE HOTEL PARKING LOTS.**

## ALL DAY TRIPS

### *Falls Lake State Recreation Area*

**Trip #1 8:00 am Bring beverage and lunch**

This trip offers a diversity of habitats from mature pine forest with woodpeckers and Brown-headed Nuthatch to the lake for scoping Common Loon, gulls, and waterfowl. After lunch at a picnic site, the trip will end in the open fields and swamp area of Brickhouse Road, searching for sparrows and Northern Harrier. 4-5 miles of walking.

## HALF DAY TRIPS

### *Anderson Point Park*

**Trip #2 and Trip # 11 8:00 am and 1:00 pm**

The confluence of the Neuse River and Crabtree Creek is in the bottomland forest of this city park. Learn how Wake Audubon is working to restore 10 acres of wildlife meadow through the Adopt-A-Park Program. We'll look for bluebirds vying for nest boxes, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Barred Owl, woodpeckers, and possible returning migrants such as White-eyed Vireo. If time permits, we'll also bird along the Neuse River Greenway Trail. Picnic tables are available. 1-2 miles of walking.

### *NCSU Dairy Ponds, Mid-Pines Road, and Lake Wheeler*

**Trip #3 8:00 am**

To comply with Statewide biosecurity measures, to prevent the introduction of exotic pathogens and pests, participants who have traveled outside the United States during the previous five days will not be permitted to visit this site. Bird a variety of habitats searching for late waterfowl and early shorebirds at the Dairy Ponds. Bird along Mid-Pines Road through cultivated and wooded margins of the NCSU research farm complex looking for Eastern Meadowlark, Loggerhead Shrike, and sparrows. If time permits, we'll also bird at Lake Wheeler. Approximately 1 mile of walking.

### *Greenview Pond at Dutchman's Creek*

**Trip #4 and #12 8:15 am and 1:00 pm**

Acquired by the NC Department of Transportation for wetland mitigation, Greenview's beaver ponds and marshes have been preserved but the pond has undergone alterations. Wake Audubon is working on a preservation management plan. We'll look for waterfowl, herons, hawks, sparrows, and Loggerhead Shrike. Long pants and sturdy footwear that may get wet are a necessity for this walk. Approximately 1 mile of walking.

### *Buckeye Trail*

**Trip #5 and #13 8:15 am and 1:00 pm**

One of Raleigh's paved greenway trails, we'll bird along the wooded flood plain of Crabtree Creek looking for woodpeckers, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and early returning spring warblers. We'll also bird the wetland on Raleigh Boulevard adjacent to the greenway where Great Blue Herons have begun nesting in recent years. 1-2 miles of walking.

### *William B. Umstead State Park*

**Trip #6 and #14 8:15 am and 1:00 pm**

Bird the easy to moderate, hilly terrain of the Crabtree section of Umstead off Ebenezer Road. Walk through mixed pine-hardwood and mature riparian stands looking for species such as Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and returning breeders. Approximately 2 miles of walking.

### *Yates Millpond County Park*

**Trip #7 8:30 am**

To comply with Statewide biosecurity measures, to prevent the introduction of exotic pathogens and pests, participants who have traveled outside the United States during the previous five days will not be permitted to visit this site. The millpond is a research area for the NCSU Zoology Department, and recently has partnered with Wake County to become a county park. We'll receive a guided tour of our soon-to-be park through a diversity of habitats, including a successional field, 100 year-old trees in an Oak-Hickory Forest, and marshland. Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Belted Kingfisher, Red-tailed Hawk, woodpeckers, and early migrants are expected species. We'll also hear the history of the historic mill. Picnic tables are available. 1-2 miles of walking.

### *Ecology at Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve*

**Trip #8 8:30 am**

This trip will focus on the ecology of Hemlock Bluffs by identifying plants, birds, and amphibians. The bluffs along Swift Creek create a microclimate that is cooler and wetter than the surrounding Piedmont area, which has allowed a relic population of eastern hemlock trees to thrive since glacial times. A staircase descending the bluffs accesses the floodplain along Swift Creek Trail. The Chestnut Oak Loop Trail accesses the upland areas. Approximately 2 miles of walking.

### *Guided Tour of NC Museum of Natural Sciences*

**Trip #9 and #15 9:00 am and 1:00 pm**

Join Museum staff members for a short tour and brief behind-the-scenes look inside the Museum. Meets at the Museum.

### *Wildflowers at William B. Umstead State Park*

**Trip #10 1:00 pm**

Join a wildflower expert at the Reedy Creek section of Umstead in search of early spring wildflowers such as Spring Beauty, Trout Lily, and Hepatica. Terrain will be easy to moderate. 1-2 miles of walking.

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# Audubon News

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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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## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR



Thu. 2/6 – Four Holes Swamp [Monthly meeting]  
Sat. 2/8 – McDowell Prairie [1/2 day field trip]  
Fri-Mon. 2/14-17 – Great Backyard Bird Count  
Sat. 2/22 – Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge [Full day field trip]  
Thu. 3/6 – In Search of Grouse [Monthly Meeting]  
Sat. 3/8 – Mallard Creek Greenway [1/2 day field trip]  
Sat. 3/22 – Beidler Forest/Four Holes Swamp [Full day field Trip]  
Thu. 4/3 – Mecklenburg Wild [December's Meeting Rescheduled]  
Sat. 4/5 – Evergreen Nature Preserve [1/2 day field trip]  
Sat. 4/19 – Mecklenburg Birdathon

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