

Audubon News

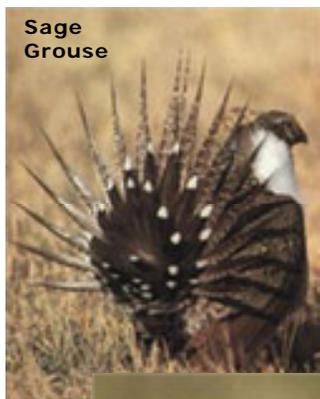
March 2003

A publication of the Mecklenburg Audubon

Volume 8, Number 6

Audubon News is published nine times a year, September – May by Mecklenburg Audubon

In Search of **GROUSE**



Sage Grouse



Ptarmigan



Prairie Chicken

Most people who watch birds are attracted to the pass time by the song birds frequent their yards. After a while they might branch out and start looking at water fowl and shorebirds. But it takes some pretty hard core bird watchers to pile into a rented van, drive nearly 2,000 miles around Colorado in five days through rain, snow, sleet and sun to see six species of birds. To top it off the only time you could see most of these birds was at the crack of dawn which meant getting up at 4 AM every morning. But no one groused about it, because they got to see grouse!

Judy Walker, was one of those intrepid folks. And for the March meeting she will share with us what she saw and learned about these unusual birds. She will probably also take us on a few side trips as well to introduce us to a few other western species she encountered on her whirlwind tour.

So join us on Thursday, March 6th in the Fellowship Hall of the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church on Sharon Amity at 7:30 PM for this informative presentation.

Celebrating
a Century of
Conservation



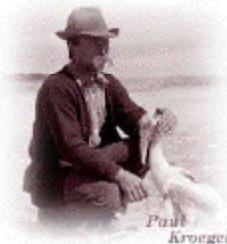
MARCH 14, 2003, marks a milestone in the history of wildlife conservation in America - the Centennial Anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It began in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt set aside a tiny island off the east coast of Florida for the protection of pelicans and other species from market hunters.

It all began with one man and one boat, protecting pelicans on a tiny five-acre island in Florida. From that humble beginning arose the world's largest and most diverse network of lands dedicated to the protection and management of a vast array of wildlife. America's National Wildlife Refuge System now encompasses over 95 million acres on more than 540 refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas.

In 1903 Pelican Island became the center of an epic battle between conservationists and feather hunters. After years of relentless slaughter, many of our most majestic birds were at the brink of extinction. Pelican Island was the last breeding ground for brown pelicans along the entire east coast of Florida. It was here a stand was made.

Urged on by a German immigrant named Paul Kroegel, many prominent people rallied around this small island to spearhead the protection of the last remaining areas vital to the survival of wildlife. Under the leadership of President Theodore Roosevelt, wildlife protection became a national interest, and for the first time, was based upon wildlife's intrinsic worth rather than its utilitarian value. With the stroke of a pen, on March 14, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt set in motion a commitment to the preservation of our wildlife heritage and, in so doing, prevented many species from certain extinction.

For more information visit <http://refuges.fws.gov/centennial/index.html>



Paul Kroegel

The Birdathon is Back!!!

Bigger and Better than Ever!

**Saturday
April 19th**

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.

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.

The rules are pretty simple. Birds can be identified by sight or sound. However, if you are in a group everyone in the group has to see or hear it. If you are by yourself, your sponsors are at the mercy of you honesty! You can go as far afield as you want but we ask that you stay in North Carolina. So if you are in the mountains for the weekend you can count there.

To add a little more competition to the effort. Taylor Piephoff has offered to lead a group in the Southport/Sunset Beach area. If you are planning to be on the coast for the Easter weekend this would be a great way to see new birding sports and help the cause. If you want to be in Taylor's group contact him at 704-

We will, of course, have prizes!!! Categories will include but be limited to [we may dream up a few more before the 19th] individual and group seeing the most species, individual and group raising the most money, backyard with the most species, person with the most sponsors, group and/or individual with the most unusual bird, and probably more.

Below is a form you can use to register for the event. Please let Rita Leonard know you plan to participate by contacting her at _____ or mailing the registration to Mecklenburg Audubon, P. O. Box 22109, Charlotte, NC 28222. This will give us an idea of how many prizes, etc. we will need. A sponsorship form can be found on the Mecklenburg Audubon web site [meckbirds.org].

Although this is a competitive event, everyone in the end will be a winner especially the birds and children of the area.

I look forward to competing with the best of you. May the best birder[s] prevail!!



Name: _____
Primary contact if a group.

Phone No: _____ **Email:** _____

plan to count in my backyard only.

Additional members of group [no more than five in group]

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Please contact Rita Leonard at 704-569-9622 [rll8bec5@email.cpsc.edu] or send this form to her at: Mecklenbird Audubon, P.O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222 by Wednesday, April 16th.



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, MARCH 8TH: MALLARD CREEK GREENWAY [1/2 DAY]

Most folks are familiar with McMullin and McAlpine Greenways in the south and southeast sections of Mecklenburg County. The County is also developing a greenway system in the northern part of the county as well. Mallard Creek Greenway meanders through the University Research Park area north of Harris Blvd. near I-85. Eventually, it is suppose to tie into Reedy Creek. We will spend the morning investigating the trails along the creek to look for early migrants and of course all our old friends. This will give the folks in the northern part of the county an opportunity to see

another area where they can walk and enjoy their feathered friends.

We will meet at the McDonalds in the University City Shopping center across from the Hospital at 7:30 AM. If you are interested in going contact Judy Walker at 704-537-8181 or birdwalker@mac.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND: BEIDLER FOREST/FOUR HOLES SWAMP

Now that you have heard about Beidler Forest at the February meeting, experience it first hand on this all day field trip. The forest provides a 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 identified in this Globally Important Bird Area. Early, breeding migrants such as the Yellow-throated and Prothonotary Warblers should just be arriving as

well as other migrants that will be passing through.

Since the Forest is about 4 hours away from Charlotte, it is recommended that you go down the night before. Check the Mecklenburg Audubon [meckbirds.org] web site for lodging recommendations.

For more details, contact Judy Walker at 704-537-8181 or birdwalker@mac.com.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5TH: EVERGREEN PRESERVE [1/2 DAY]

It's spring and there is no place better to be than at the Evergreen Preserve. Larry and Louise Barden will once again lead us into the wilds of east Charlotte for a pleasant morning of birding. Be prepared to do a lot of walking although not at any great speed. Migrants should be moving through so who knows what we might find.

We will meet at the Winterfield Elementary School parking lot at 7:30 AM. If you plan to attend contact Louise Barden at 704-535-6385 or louise@lbarden.com.

Did You Know??

- Osprey's feet are especially adapted to hanging on to slippery fish with two toes in front and two in back rather than the three-one configuration in most other birds of prey. They also have additional barbules on the bottom of the feet like sandpaper makes it easier to hang on to the fish.
- Sea birds have 'salt glands' that remove salt from their blood allowing them to drink sea water.
- Brown thrashers have more songs in their repertoire than any other North American species - even its cousin the Mockingbird.
- Woodpeckers have tongues that are barbed at the tip. This permits them to withdraw grubs and larvae from deep inside bark cavities and other holes in trees.
- Bird body temperatures are surprisingly close to those of humans. Most birds' body temperatures range between 100-112 degrees F.

For the Fun of it!

Common names of many birds often refer to characteristic habitats. Can you fill in the blanks to make a correct species name?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Bank _____ | 14. Pine _____ |
| 2. Barn _____ | 15. Prairie _____ |
| 3. Cedar _____ | 16. Sage _____ |
| 4. Chimney _____ | 17. Sandhill _____ |
| 5. Cliff _____ | 18. Savannah _____ |
| 6. Field _____ | 19. Snow _____ |
| 7. House _____ | 20. Spruce _____ |
| 8. Magnolia _____ | 21. Surf _____ |
| 9. Marsh _____ | 22. Tree _____ |
| 10. Mountain _____ | 23. Tundra _____ |
| 11. Orchard _____ | 24. Upland _____ |
| 12. Rock _____ | 25. Willow _____ |
| 13. Palm _____ | 26. Wood _____ |

For the answers go to the Mecklenburg Audubon web site [meckbirds.org]

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 phaseout 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 fund-raising 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.

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.

News From NC Audubon Board

By Rob Bierregaard

On January 25th the Board of Directors of our North Carolina office met at the Zoo in Asheboro, hosted by board member David Jones, the zoo's director. The meeting was led by our new president, Phil Manning, an award-winning nature writer from Chapel Hill.

We welcomed our newest board member, Jonathan Howes. Jonathan became Special Assistant to the Chancellor and Professor of Planning and Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in August 1997. Prior to that, he served as Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural. In addition to his work at the University, Mr. Howes was twice

elected Mayor of Chapel Hill and three times to the Chapel Hill Town Council. His teaching interests focus on environmental policy, North Carolina politics and public policy and the university and the community.

By appointment of the Governor, Mr. Howes serves as Chair of the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority. He recently completed service as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Academy of Public Administration and he currently chairs the board of directors of the Carol Woods Continuing Care Retirement Community in Chapel Hill. He is listed in Who's Who in America.

We had a very interesting report from Curtis Smalling, whom Audubon North Carolina hired on a part-time basis to work with bird data from the mountains. He is a very good birder and knowledgeable biologist who grew up in the Boone area. He has been working in some of the IBAs (Important Bird Areas) we identified in the mountains, getting quantitative data on population levels of species of special concern. He's also collecting bibliographies and information from the "gray literature" (unpublished theses, reports, etc.) on birds and a broad range of conservation related issues.

Andy Woods continues to impress with his environmental education efforts in Pender County. This is a long way from home for our chapter, of course, but he may be developing models that can work for the rest of the state. The latest development in our establishing our first Audubon Center in the state is that the Nature Conservancy is walking away from a deal they made with Nag's Head about establishing an environmental education center at the Nag's Head Woods. Andy has lead the charge on his white horse and we could wind up as the hero of the local politicians who had committed serious money to building a center (it's still available) and are very disappointed when TNC left them at the altar.

In absentia, Assistant Director Walker Golder presented a report on our Coastal Sanctuaries. Our sanctuaries, especially in the mouth of the Cape Fear River, are crucial breeding sites for a wide variety of shorebirds—including 10% of the breeding White Ibis in the country. Further up the coast, there has been a bit of a snag with our acquisition of Leah Island, but it won't affect our ability to monitor and protect the island.

Board member Joan Weld discussed her recent appointment to the Coastal Resources Commission, where she will help resolve key issues on the management and conservation of this delicate ecosystem.

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 nonmembers, so invite your friends. Join us as we welcome the new growth of spring and Audubon in North Carolina!

For more information go to <http://meckbirds.org/NCConference.htm>

Audubon News

Published by Mecklenburg Audubon
A Chapter of National Audubon
P. O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222
meckbirds.org

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1779
Charlotte, NC

Board Members

- Judy Walker - President
704-537-8181
birdwalker@mac.com
- Rob Bierregaard - Vice President
704-333-2405
rbierreg@email.uncc.edu
- Larry Barden - Secretary
704-547-4059
larry@lbarden.com
- Lucy Quintilliano - Treasurer
704-364-9028
LucyAQ@aol.com
- Taylor Piephoff - Field Trips
704-532-6336
piephoffT@aol.com
- Wayne Covington - Bird Counts
704-362-1774
WayneCovington@hotmail.com
- Marek Smith - Membership
704-875-1391
maresmit@aol.com
- Louise Barden - Publicity
704-535-6385
louise@lbarden.com
- Pam Popovich - Conservation
704-535-8398
ppopovich@hotmail.com
- Rita Leonard - Member-at-large
704-569-9622

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.

As of January 1, 2003 National Audubon Members of Gaston County have become part of the Mecklenburg Audubon family. Two members, Tony Goff and Duane Crane will be serving as 'virtual' members of the MAS board.

We hope that combining our efforts we can provide more services to Audubon members and speak as one voice on conservation issues that effect us all.

We look forward to seeing new faces and learning about Gaston County conservation issues and birding spots!

WELCOME

Gaston County Audubon Members

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Monthly Meeting Info	1
NWR Centennial	1
Birdathon	2
Field Trips	3
Did You Know?	3
Just for Fun	3
Membership Information	4
NC Audubon News	5

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR



- 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
- Thu. 5/1 – MAPS [Monthly Meeting]
- Sat. 5/3 – Latta Park [1/2 day field trip]
- Sat. 5/10 – International Migratory Bird Day [variety of activities]
- Sat. 5/31 – Mountain Birding [Full day field trip]

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