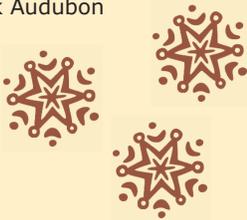


Audubon News



What's Inside

Monthly Meeting	1
Lower McAlpine Issue	1
Field Trips	2
NC Birds	3
Winter Birding	4
Ask Audubon	5



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
704-535-6385
larry@lbarden.com

Lucy Quintilliano - Treasurer
704-364-9028
lucyq@carolina.rr.com

Dave Lovett - Field Trips
704-507-7677
birdsallot@webtv.net

Jack Meckler - Conservation
704-540-1573
jmmeck@aol.com

Carol Ann Tomko - Conservation
704-752-9232
ctomko@ceenta.com

Wayne Covington - CBC
704-362-1774

Marek Smith - Education
704-545-9971
maresmit@carolina.rr.com

Louise Barden - Publicity
704-535-6385
louise@lbarden.com

Andrea Owens - Member-at-large
704-651-2232
andreaowens1@yahoo.com

Audubon News is published monthly from September through May by the Mecklenburg Audubon Society, a chapter of National Audubon. Local members receive the newsletter via postal mail and/or electronic mail. It is also posted on the Mecklenburg Audubon web site - meckbirds.org.

Volume 12, Issue 5

January 2007

Memorable Moment, Feasting On Great Food

As the New Year begins we all tend to take a few minutes to review the past year. For nature lovers that means reliving the year's outdoor adventures. Why not take this opportunity to not only reminisce about them but also share your experiences with others?



That's what happens at the January meeting. It's like the old kindergarten 'Show & Tell', except for adults which means it's more a 'Brag & Tell'. It doesn't matter, bring your pictures in print or on CD to share with everyone. If you're a budding digital video producer, bring those as well. We'll figure out how to project them. Some of us don't get to travel as much as others so this provides us an opportunity to travel vicariously through your experiences.

This meeting is also our annual POT LUCK dinner which means we meet at 6:30 PM and you can bring your leftovers from your New Year's bashes.

Please bring a place setting for each person coming. The club will provide coffee & other beverages.

So bring your pictures, videos, food and friends to the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church Fellowship Hall at **6:30 PM for Dinner** (the program will start around 7:30 PM) on Thursday, January 4, 2007 for food, fun and fellowship.

Lower McAlpine Sewer Debate



It is extremely urgent that you plan to attend two important meetings which will impact the route of a new sewer line along McAlpine Creek. The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Commission will meet at 6 PM on Tuesday, January 9, 2007 at the Park and Rec Administrative Office Building at 5841 Brookshire Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28216. The Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners will consider this item at one of their meetings in January or February.

Background

There is a need for more sewer capacity throughout Charlotte due to rapid growth. In south Charlotte, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities Department (CMUD) plans to run what is called a "relief sewer line" (i.e. a second sewer line parallel to the existing line) up McAlpine Creek from the pump station near Six Mile Creek to Lawyers Road. Phase I is to go just to NC 51, Pineville-Matthews Road.

Continued on page 3

**Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2007
6:00 PM
Park & Recreation Com.
Adm. Office Bldg.
5841 Brookshire Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28216**

Field Trips



Eastern Towhee

Thursday, January 11th

Anne Springs Close Greenway, Ft. Mill, SC [1/2 Day]

This morning we will explore a portion of the greenway known as the "field trial area". This area is mostly open field terrain with shrubs and thickets, ideal for grassland type birds and hunting raptors. In addition, flanking woods, adjoining Steele Creek, and 3 farm ponds round out the diverse habitat allowing for a good mixture of resident winter birds.

There is a \$2 daily use fee for this greenway. Meet at 9 AM at Starbucks on the corner of HWY 51 and Park Rd. in Pineville. If going contact Dave Lovett at [704-507-7677 or birdsalot@webtv.net].

Saturday, January 13th

Huntington Beach State Park, Murrell's Inlet, SC [Full Day]

Our winter excursion to Huntington Beach State Park is an annual favorite offering some different bird species than our Fall trip. Waterbirds-both freshwater and saltwater- have arrived in good numbers-including loons, grebes, and ducks. Gannets are numerous offshore along with shorebirds along the quiet beaches.

We will meet at 8 AM in the causeway parking lot. Be sure and dress warmly as the winds off the ocean can be chilling, and bring a lunch for a midday break.

For those interested, Saturday evening we will gather at a local restaurant for dinner. Sunday we will bird for half a day before heading home.

Local hotels with off season rates include: Litchfield INN [843-237-4211], Days Inn Surfside [843-238-4444], Brookwood Inn [843-651-2550]. Let Dave Lovett [704-507-7677 or birdsalot@webtv.net] know if you plan to go.



Common Eider

Saturday, January 20th

Latta Plantation Nature Preserve [1/2 Day]

On this winter Saturday morning, we will meet at 8:30 AM in the nature center parking lot of the nature preserve and spend the day exploring the preserve's woodlands, prairie, and shorelines for wintering birds and waterfowl.

If you bring a lunch, in the afternoon you can visit the Raptor Center or take a short drive up to Cowans Ford IBA viewing platform or Rural Hill's grasslands to add to your birding experience.

Fellow MAS member Ron "Calliope" Clark will be our guide for this excursion. Please contact him, Waxwing@Bellsouth.net or 704-866-0811 if you plan on coming.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Saturday, January 27th

McDowell Prairie [1/2 Day]

It is hard to find better winter birding in the Charlotte area than the McDowell Prairie Preserve located off Shopton Road West and southern HWY49 area. Grassy fields teem with multitudes of sparrows and other grassland birds. On a clear day Raptors soar overhead, hunting prey below. Two farm ponds and adjoining woodlands round out this ideal habitat, allowing a chance for waterfowl and other land birds. Recent trips have yielded Harriers, kestrels, rusty black-birds, meadowlarks, and many species of sparrows.

Join fellow MAS members Sharon Freeman and Susan Ellerman for this 1/2 day walk. McDowell Park is just a short distance further south for those who want to make a day of it.

We will meet at 8:30 AM in the Harris Teeter Parking lot on the S.W. corner of HWY 49 and HWY 160 [Steele Creek Rd]. From there we will carpool to the site which has limited parking access.

If going, either email Sharon [Birdwalk@AOL.COM] or Susan [Sueller@Mail.com] or call Susan at 704-334-0756.



Loggerhead Shrike

For detailed directions and maps go to meckbirds.org

Continued from page 1

Lower McAlpine Sewer Issue

In 1999 it was decided that the line would run on the south/east side of McAlpine Creek in the area between I-485 and Johnston Rd across the creek from Lower McAlpine Greenway at approximate mileposts 3.0 - 3.5. In 2004 the City of Charlotte purchased an easement for this purpose from the developer of Toringdon and Atkins Circle for \$84,000. When CMUD went to start the project last spring, they found that the developer had moved dirt, built a retaining wall and otherwise rendered the easement unusable without the expense of an additional \$2mm. For various reasons it does not appear that the city or county will be able to get the land changed back to its original configuration, nor to get the developer to pay the extra cost of installing the line in the original preferred alignment.

CMUD then laid out another route on the south side that went further into the creek to avoid all the obstructions. That was going to destroy almost 10 acres of wetlands and 4 acres of trees. The wetlands destruction alone would be devastating. They then decided to look across the creek to the north/west side (greenway side) and laid out a path that would intersect the greenway at two points with a 100' clear cut and destroy 5 acres of wetlands and 10 acres of hardwood trees. As opposition began to mount, they then laid out a path further inland that would still clear cut the greenway twice and would take 8 acres of wetlands and almost 9 acres of hardwood trees.

Due to the very strong public reaction at the South District Park Advisory Council meeting on November 29, 2006 CMUD revisited the original route and decided that maybe it wasn't unbuildable and infeasible as they had claimed all along, but merely less convenient and more expensive.



After that meeting they went back to see if they could use most of the original south/east side alignment and intrude further into the wetlands only when necessary to avoid obstructions. This will allow them to use their original preferred alignment, avoid despoiling the greenway and destroying vast amounts of valuable wetlands and hardwood trees but it will cost more than any of the other more destructive alternatives.

CMUD may have brought this upon themselves by not protecting their easement but it is the wetlands, trees, wildlife and greenway that may be destroyed as a result. There have been 112 species of birds observed near this area.

An overwhelming number of people is needed to attend these meetings, especially the County Commissioners meeting in January or February, to let them know that we want CMUD to spend the extra money (and it is NOT tax money - CMUD is a self funding organization) to avoid the unacceptable environmental destruction, which could have been avoided in the first place.

1. B 2. D 3. D 4. A 5. C 6. B 7. D 8. E 9. E 10. B 11. C 12. A B E

Do You Know Your NC Birds?

How knowledgeable are you about North Carolina birds? Here's a short quiz on to test your knowledge. So let's have some fun. Put on your thinking cap...and away we fly!

1. *What is the State Bird of North Carolina?* (A) Bald Eagle (B) Northern Cardinal (C) Eastern Bluebird (D) American Robin
2. *How many species of birds have been found in NC?* (A) Less than 100 (B) 100-250 (C) 250-400 (D) 400+
3. *How many species of birds breed in NC?* (A) Less than 100 (B) 100-200 (C) 200-300 (D) 300+
4. *What is NC's heaviest bird (weighs the most)?* (A) Trumpeter Swan (B) Bald Eagle (C) Wild Turkey (D) Great Blue Heron
5. *Which NC bird has the largest wingspan?* (A) Great Blue Heron (B) Bald Eagle (C) White Pelican (D) Wood Stork
6. *What is the fastest bird in NC?* (A) Ruby-throated Hummingbird (B) Peregrine Falcon (C) Chimney Swift (D) Canada Goose
7. *What is the smallest heron in NC?* (A) Little Blue Heron (B) Green-backed Heron (C) Black-crowned Night Heron (D) Least Bittern
8. *Which of these birds was historically not a native NC bird?* (A) House Sparrow (B) Cattle Egret (C) European Starling (D) House Finch (E) All of these
9. *What NC bird has the nickname "butcher bird?"* (A) Turkey Vulture (B) Black Vulture (C) Red-tailed Hawk (D) Golden Eagle (E) None of these
10. *How many species of eagle(s) are found in NC?* (A) 1 (B) 2 (C) 3 (D) 4 (E) None of these
11. *What is the most common winter hummingbird in NC?* (A) Rufous (B) Black-chinned (C) Ruby-throated (D). Calliope
12. *Which birds are the symbol for the North Carolina Birding Trail?* (A) Brown-headed Nuthatch (B) Black Skimmer (C) Carolina Wren (D) Northern Cardinal (E) Golden-winged Warbler

Cold Weather Birrrrding

Now that the temperatures have finally decided it is winter, it's time to talk about winter birding. However, I am not talking about identifying our winter visitors. I am referring to how to keep warm while trying to ID that duck in the middle of the pond or the sparrow flying through the brambles. New birders are always amazed at how chilly it can get even on a beautifully clear day, especially early in the morning when the birds are most active. So here are a few tips on how to stay warm this winter birding season.

The most important clothing items are a coat, pants, boots, hat, and gloves that are windproof and/or waterproof. Remember, do not buy clothing that is too tight -- it will bind or cut off circulation making you colder. And layering is the key!

LEG WARMERS

Long underwear is a must for winter birding. Check the information on the item for temperature and activity ratings (if you're walking you will be much warmer than just standing) and the percent of shrinkage.

Windpants are fantastic! Those that zip from the bottom are easiest to take off and on over boots. If you wear long underwear with a pair of fleece pants or heavy

sweatpants over the underwear and the windpants over both, it keeps you cozy and warm while allowing easy movement.

BODY ARMOUR

A windproof coat usually has a flap over the zipper (lots of cold wind can come in through a zipper) and fitted cuffs or Velcro tabs at the wrists to keep cold air from going up the sleeves. A hood is helpful to reduce cold air on the head or back of the neck.

Layered fashions (a windproof/waterproof coat with fleece jacket or vest underneath) are good for spring and fall as well as winter. Layers can easily be changed. A turtleneck with a warm sweater over it plus the fleece can keep you nice and toasty in even subzero weather. Any kind of warm clothing under the coat works.

KEEP A LID ON IT

There is an old saying, if your feet are cold, put on a hat. That's because we lose a lot of body heat through the top of the head and neck. A lined waterproof hat with a bill to shield your eyes or glasses from the elements is highly recommended. Earflaps add extra coverage if needed. Add a neck scarf of made of knitted fabric or fleece that can be pulled over the chin, nose, and even the ears. This will protect you from wind and rain.



WARM HANDS, HAPPY BIRDER

Take good care of your body's extremities. Wrists, hands, and ankles are bony and have blood vessels close to the surface, which allows the blood to be cooled if you are not properly protected. Wind goes right through even the best of knitted wool gloves. The most effective gloves are windproof and waterproof and have cuffs or Velcro fasteners to keep wind from cooling your wrists and hands. Glove liners can add extra warmth. Several of the knitted stretchy type are comfortable and can be worn in fall and spring without a heavier glove over them. Remember that you're going to have to focus your binoculars, so try all layers on to see if you can still move your fingers easily.

TOASTY TOES

Waterproof, insulated boots are a must to keep your feet warm and dry. Buy a boot that is a little big, this will allow room to wear extra-heavy socks. Heavy felt insoles can be added to the bottom of the boot under the boot liner or bootie. A lightweight wool insole can be put on top of the bootie to keep toes warm from above. Take socks, liners, and insoles with you when you try on boots. If you can't afford a pair of expensive boots right away, rubber galoshes worn over shoes with layered socks and insoles are good alternatives.

THE BASICS

Here are five good rules to remember when winter birding.

1. Always plan for it to be colder than what has been forecast.
2. Bird watching next to water usually feels at least 10 degrees colder than in surrounding areas.
3. Remember the wind chill factor; exposed skin is especially at risk.
4. It's always better to have too many clothes on than to have too few. You can take clothing off if you're too hot. Carry a daypack or tote bag to stuff things into that you don't need, or to carry layers to add.
5. Learn to dress in layers. Don't put all your layers on until you reach your destination, as you may get too hot while traveling.

Continued on page 5

Ask Audubon

"I try to recycle by re-using, such as the Chinese delivery plastic soup tubs, the plastic tupperware like containers some deli meat comes in, and recently learned I shouldn't microwave them. Is it ok to wash them in a dishwasher repeatedly or will they eventually "go bad" from the pressure and heat?" -- Submitted by Kim C. of New York, NY.

You're certainly doing the right thing by reusing as much as you can, but you are wise to have health concerns about plastic. Hot liquid and scrubbing can cause the plastic surface to degrade, with possible health implications. There are several types of plastic, each the subject of environmental and/or health issues.

Plastics are organized into six general categories. A triangle enclosed number from 1 to 7 can be found on the bottom of many plastic containers. Types 1, 2, 4 and 5 are generally considered to be the safer plastics. Plastic type 3, PVC, contains phthalates, ingredients which make the plastic flexible, but are known to be carcinogenic. Styrene, a suspected endocrine disruptor as well as a possible carcinogen, is a component of type 6, polystyrene. Plastic type 7 contains the hormone disrupter bisphenol A.

To promote and increase consumer choices and individual actions that protect birds and their habitat, Ask Audubon explores the most environmentally friendly solutions to life's daily questions. Readers are invited to email questions about consumer issues and products and their affect on the environment to Cynthia Blayer, cblayer@audubon.org.



Hot foods or liquids can cause plastics to leach or give off bits of component materials. Scrubbing vigorously or scraping the food from a plastic container with a utensil can cause particles to leach. Since plastic is a pliant material, small scrapes and indentations occur easily and can become a breeding ground for bacteria from embedded food or liquid. Much as I hate to see more plastic added to the waste stream, many experts recommend that you err on the side of caution and not reuse these items. Recycle what is allowable under your local regulations. Glass or ceramic containers are a better alternative for food storage, lasting indefinitely and posing no health threats. Glass is readily recyclable, which is not the case with many types of plastic.

Continued from page 4

Winter Birrrding

Sock liners are definitely worth purchasing. Socks that wick moisture away from your feet help keep your feet warm; layer socks as well. You must be able to wiggle your toes comfortably inside your boots with whatever insoles and socks you will be wearing, otherwise your circulation will be impaired.

A HELPFUL ADDITION

Chemical warmers for hands and toes are available in most sporting goods shops, usually in the hunting or skiing section. Try to find the ones that biodegrade. They can really help you warm up. Remember always to follow the directions for use.

KEEP THE FIRE BURNING

Remember, a snack of nuts, seeds, dried fruits, candy bars, or cookies can help maintain body temperature. A thermos with a good hot drink can warm your insides.

THE REWARD

Winter birds are worth getting out to see! With a little thoughtful preparation, you, too, can see the beautiful birds of winter in comfort and safety.

Mecklenburg Audubon Society

Join now and your membership will be effective until June 2007.

Because National Audubon has reduced the chapter share of the national membership, Mecklenburg Audubon now must offer a Local Membership to cover the cost of the newsletter, web site & cost of meetings.

Name _____

Phone _____

Address [Street, City, ST, and Zip] _____

E-mail _____

Individual Membership [\$10] Family Membership [\$15]

Please, save trees and send me[us] the newsletter electronically.

Please, add me to Meckbirds, the local electronic discussion list about birds and the environment.

I[we] would be willing to lead a field trip.

I[we] would be interested in participating in a work day at one of the local preserves.

I[we] would be willing to do a program.

Return to: Lucy Quintilliano, Treasurer, Mecklenburg Audubon Society, P. O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222

Audubon News

P.O. Box 221093
Charlotte, NC 28222



The Center for Biological Diversity has launched a free Endangered Wildlife Ringtones web page, featuring the calls of 20 rare and endangered owl species provided by the Global Owl Project. The web page is at <http://rareearthtones.com>.

Activities Calendar

- 1/4 Feast and Fotos [Monthly Meeting]
- 1/9 Lower McAlpine Sewer Issue Meeting
- 1/11 Anne Springs Close Greenway [1/2 Day Field Trip]
- 1/13 Huntington Beach St. Pk., SC [Full Day Field Trip]
- 1/20 Latta Plantation Nature Preserve [1/2 Day Field Trip]
- 1/27 McDowell Prairie [1/2 Day Field Trip]
- 2/1 Audubon Adventures [Monthly Meeting]
- 2/16-19 Great Backyard Bird Count



Who's New?

Janet Conway
Sare-Kathryn Ferrell