



# Audubon News

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March 2012

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, April 5, 2012 • 7:30 PM

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## Upcoming Events

04/05	Breeding Bird Atlas (Mtg.)
04/07	Congaree Swamp (FT)
04/11	McDowell NP
04/19	Latta Park (Dilworth)
04/21	Beginning Bird Walk
04/21	Latta Park (Dilworth)
04/22	Latta Plantation Prairie
04/25	Latta Park (Dilworth)
04/26	Avian Adventures
04/28	Spring Count
05/05	Latta Park
05/19	Beginning Bird Walk
05/19	Carolina Sandhills NWR
05/25	Anne Springs Close Grnwy.



## Who's New?

Lynn Baker  
Danielle Bogle  
Robert Gilson

Sharon Montgomery  
Paula Plonski  
Marshall & Mindy Salzman  
Robert & Rose Shoestock  
Leslie Strawn

## Who's living in YOUR Backyard?!?!



It's spring and that can mean only one thing. You will have some new neighbors raising kids in your backyard. Resident birds are sprucing up old digs or looking for new ones. Migrants will be here very set up house keeping. As they say in the real estate business location is everything. But what birds choose our location to raise a family?

That's what Mecklenburg Audubon's three-year Breeding Bird Atlas project wants to find out. What birds breed in Mecklenburg County? Last year volunteers spread out across the county in search of evidence of breeding. So now that we have a year's worth of data under our belt, Kevin Metcalf, Northwest Nature

Preserve District Manager with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Dept. will share with us some of the highlights and disappointment of the first season. There were some definite surprises and some potential disappointments, but we do have two more years to avoid them. For more information about the Breeding Bird Atlas project go to <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm> and then click on Mecklenburg in the left column.

Or join us on **Thursday, April 5th** at the **Tyvola Senior Center (2225 Tyvola Road.)** at 7:15 PM for light refreshment and chit-chat with the program starting at 7:30 PM.



Have you ever wanted to fly like a bird? If so, come to Discovery Place to experience Avian Adventure, **Thursday, April 26th - 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM**, a bird's-eye-view of what life is like for our feathered friends. See live birds and meet experts from local bird-centered organizations such as Carolina Raptor Center, Mecklenburg Audubon Society, Carolina Waterfowl Rescue, Companion Parrots Re-homed, Wing Haven, and more. Learn how to attract, identify, and enjoy birds in your own backyard, find out about conservation efforts of both native and non-native birds,

and hear about research in avian medicine. In addition you will discover how human interactions affect bird populations, what you can do to protect them and how rehabilitators treat and release injured or orphaned birds. Birds make a difference in all our lives; they are a measure of our environmental health and a sign of things to come. Whether you are simply intrigued by birds or a seasoned birdwatcher, you won't want to miss this opportunity to learn about the wonderful world of birds.

# Field Trips

All Mecklenburg Audubon Field Trips are free and open to the public. Directions for all trips can be found on the Mecklenburg Audubon website - [meckbirds.org](http://meckbirds.org). Click on 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 they don't know you are coming, they might leave without you!!

## Saturday, April 7th: Congaree National Park.

Full Day • Moderate • Contact: Ron Clark ([waxwing@bellsouth.net](mailto:waxwing@bellsouth.net))

We'll walk the two-mile boardwalk, and should see and hear quite a few migrants. This is an all-day trip, so bring lunch and insect repellent – it's a swamp. Afterwards, we'll check out the nearby White House Road loop and the wetlands beside I-77. We should be back in Charlotte before 5:00 PM. Meet at 6:30 AM in the parking lot of Food Lion at the corner of Regent Parkway & US 21. (Take a left at the Carwinds exit from I-77 south. Go one mile and the Food Lion is on the left.)

## Wednesday, April 11th: McDowell Nature Preserve.

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Dave Lovett ([birdsallot@webtv.net](mailto:birdsallot@webtv.net))

Join Dave Lovett as we walk wooded trails in the southern part of the county to look for newly arrived migrants. Meet at 8:30 AM at the nature center.

## Latta Park (Dilworth)

1/2 Day • Easy

Latta Park in Dilworth is a real gem in spring migration. It is possible to have a 15 warbler day, with surprises like Wilson's or Nashville. Add to this 4 or 5 thrushes, 3 or 4 vireos, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, both orioles and many others, and it's hard to stay away. We will have many trips to this birdy park in April and May. You will find birders there almost every day from mid-April to mid-May. We will be leading 'official' walks which will meet at 8:30 AM on the dates listed below. The meeting spot will be at the parking lot on East Park Ave. between Winthrop Ave. and Springfield Ave.

**Thursday, April 19th:** Contact - Ron Clark ([waxwing@bellsouth.net](mailto:waxwing@bellsouth.net))

**Sunday, April 22nd:** Contact - Judy Walker ([birdwalker@me.com](mailto:birdwalker@me.com))

**Wednesday, April 25th:** Contact - Dave Lovett ([birdsallot@webtv.net](mailto:birdsallot@webtv.net))

**Saturday, May 5th:** Contact - Ron Clark ([waxwing@bellsouth.net](mailto:waxwing@bellsouth.net))

**Wednesday, May 9th:** Contact - Dave Lovett ([birdsallot@webtv.net](mailto:birdsallot@webtv.net))

## Saturday, April 21st: Beginner's Bird Walk.

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Sally Miller

We'll meet at 8:30 AM at McAlpine Creek Greenway Park to learn the basics of birding. Binoculars will be provided if you need them.

## Saturday, April 21st: Latta Plantation Prairie

1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Judy Walker ([birdwalker@me.com](mailto:birdwalker@me.com))

We'll hike out to the prairie to see migrants such as the Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Indigo Buntings as well as resident birds. Meet at the Visitor Center just inside the entrance to Latta Plantation Park at 8:00 AM.

## Saturday, April 28th: Spring Bird Count

All Day • Contact: Jeff Lemons

It's time to count again. Join a team for the day or just a couple of hours to help conduct the annual spring census of birds in Charlotte. We will cover the same areas that we do during the Christmas Count but the weather should be substantially better. If you are interested in participating contact Jeff and he will assign you to a team.



Prothonotary Warbler



Scarlet Tanager  
©Will Stuart



### KEY TO PHYSICAL DIFFICULTY

**Easy** - Trails are level to slight grades usually paved. .5-1.5 miles of walking;  
**Moderate** - Trails can be uneven with some hills. 1-2.5 miles of walking;  
**Strenuous** - Trails vary greatly. 2.5+ miles of walking;  
\* - Trails are handicapped accessible.

Maps to meeting spots can be found at

[meckbirds.org/trips/trips.html](http://meckbirds.org/trips/trips.html)



## Saturday, May 19th: Beginner's Bird Walk.

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Sally Miller

We'll meet at 8:30 AM at McAlpine Creek Greenway Park to learn the basics of birding. Binoculars will be provided if you need them.

## Saturday, May 19th: Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge.

Full Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark (waxwing@bellsouth.net)

This all-day trip will be a drive through the refuge with walking stops along the way. This is a good area for red-cockaded woodpecker, Bachman's sparrow and, hopefully, lark sparrow. It's mostly open fields, ponds and pine forests. Bring lunch. We'll meet at 6:30 AM behind the McDonald's in Windsor Square on Independence Blvd. We'll be back in Charlotte by 6:00 PM.

## Wednesday, May 23rd: Anne Springs Greenway.

1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Dave Lovett (birdsalot@webtv.net)

Meet at 8:30 AM at the entrance off Hwy 21. The habitat is fields, lake and wooded trails with some hills. There is a \$3 entrance fee.

# Field Trips



Every time that you see and identify a bird, you are holding a piece of a puzzle. Whether you are casually watching birds in your backyard, or chasing rare species across the country, you are helping to put this puzzle together.

It might be a personal puzzle. For example, you might wonder when Red-winged Blackbirds appear in your backyard each spring or what time of day the Mourning Doves take a bath in your neighborhood fountain. Each time that you see and identify one of these birds—so long as you note the time and date—one piece of the puzzle falls into place.

Or it might be a regional puzzle. For instance, scientists might be wondering how quickly House Finches are spreading throughout your state or how rapidly Henslow's Sparrows are declining. Each time that you identify and count the numbers of one of these species,

you are piecing together a part of that puzzle.

Or it might be an international puzzle. Each year during migration, hundreds of species fly from southern wintering grounds to northern breeding grounds, following the flush of summer insects. When do they leave? Where do they breed? And when do they return home? Whether recording common birds in your backyard or searching for rarities along the Mexican border, your sightings of these birds – with time, date, and location included – are pieces that can help ornithologists put together the parts of that huge puzzle, day by day, week by week, and year by year.

Unfortunately, just like puzzle pieces, these observations lose their value if they remain separate from one another. The sightings tucked away in your memory, or in your desk drawer, or in an old shoebox in your closet leave gaps in a partially completed picture. In truth, the only way that all these bird sightings make a contribution to our understanding of nature is when they are collected and organized into a central database where they can help complete a picture of the life of birds.

You can access your own bird records anytime you want, allowing you an easy way to look at your observations in new

ways and to answer your personal questions about what birds you saw and when and where you saw them.

eBird is this database. With thousands of birdwatchers across the continent helping to construct it by contributing their sightings, eBird will soon become a vast source of bird and environmental information useful not only to bird watchers but to scientists and conservationists the world over. Want to find out what birds you'll see on your vacation? Want to know the closest spot to find a Least Bittern, or a reliable spot for Townsend's Warbler? Want to learn whether the crow population is growing in your state? Want to see if endangered Least Terns are continuing their decline?

By keeping track of your bird observations and entering them into the eBird database, you'll benefit, too. You can access your own bird records anytime you want, allowing you an easy way to look at your observations in new ways and to answer your personal questions about what birds you saw and when and where you saw them.

If you use the eBird web site to enter all your birding information—and get your friends, family members, students, and colleagues to use it as well—before long the answers to the never ending questions about birds will be found in the eBird database, for use now and for generations that will follow.



# Bird-friendly Wind Development

The Department of the Interior took an important step toward bird-friendly wind development by releasing new federal guidelines for minimizing bird and wildlife impacts from land-based wind development in the United States.

The guidelines were developed with the assistance of a 22-member Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee, which included experts from National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Defenders of Wildlife, Massachusetts Audubon and Bat Conservation International as well as representatives from the wind industry and state fish and wildlife agencies.

The committee, created under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) in 2009, worked with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to develop workable, science-based guidelines to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to birds and their habitats from wind energy facilities.

Audubon was instrumental in including in the guidelines measures to address habitat fragmentation, one of the most significant potential impacts of wind development on birds. As a result, wind developers who cooperate with the guidelines will be expected to thoroughly analyze the impacts of their projects on habitat values and avoid and minimize approaches that cut up and divide important habitats like forests and grasslands making them less suitable for wildlife.

The guidelines also give the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a place at the table for siting decisions and a sound basis

for recommending measures needed to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts of wind projects. Importantly, wind developers that fail to incorporate Fish and Wildlife Service recommendations risk prosecution under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and other applicable wildlife law.

Audubon worked collaboratively for three years to develop science-based, practical guidelines. Now, we are calling for the Department of the Interior to

implement these guidelines in the same collaborative spirit, and with the same respect for practical, science-based solutions to wildlife conflicts.

We invite everyone who cares about birds to join us in urging the Interior Department to ensure the federal guidelines, when implemented, provide the strongest possible protections for birds and habitat on the ground. For more information go to: <http://goo.gl/Hg30P>

## Statements by David Yarnold, Audubon President & CEO, and Mike Daulton, Audubon VP of Government Relations

“These first-ever federal guidelines are a game-changer and big win for both wildlife and clean energy,” said David Yarnold, President & CEO of Audubon. “By collaborating with conservationists instead of slugging it out, the wind power industry gains vital support to expand and create jobs, and wildlife gets the protection crucial for survival.”

“I’m proud of the pivotal role Audubon played in developing this strong, consensus-based approach. These guidelines are based on the best available science and provide a roadmap to better bird protections across each of America’s four great flyways.”

“These guidelines set a new industry standard for bird protection,” said Mike Daulton, Audubon’s VP of Government Relations who served on the advisory committee devising the new guidelines. “The guidelines steer wind turbines away from vital habitat, including Audubon’s Important Bird Areas, and toward land already marked by development. They give the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a place at the table for siting decisions; they help protect sites with high potential risk for birds; and they minimize habitat fragmentation. It’s a real-world, collaborative approach, with real-world benefits for birds and their habitats across the country.”

“We worked collaboratively for three years to hammer out science-based, practical guidelines. Now it is time to implement these guidelines in the same collaborative spirit, and with the same nose for practical, science-based solutions to wildlife conflicts. We are very optimistic that this is a path toward better protection for birds and their habitats.”





## Bird Collision Facts

- Glass kills between 500,000 and 1,000,000,000 birds each year – the majority on home windows
- Birds can't see glass and don't understand the architectural cues, such as window frames, mullions, and handles, that help people detect it
- Unlike some sources of bird mortality that predominantly kill weaker individuals, there is no distinction among victims of glass. Because glass is equally dangerous for strong, healthy, breeding adults, it can have a particularly serious impact on populations.
- Even small windows can be dangerous to birds that are accustomed to flying through small gaps between trees and shrubs.
- One or two decals on a small window may help reduce some collisions, but become less effective as window size increases because birds will simply fly around them.
- Tape is a cost effective way to make windows safe for birds and it is a quick way to treat large areas of glass.
- Research has shown that birds generally avoid flying through vertical spaces 4" or less, and horizontal spaces 2" or less.



# How to Avoid Collisions

Never had a bird hit your window? It's possible that you may be one of the lucky few, but chances are, birds have hit the glass on your house and you just don't know it. They may have flown away injured to die elsewhere, or been eaten by a cat, raccoon, fox, or dog before you found them. Your house may kill a dozen or more birds each year without you knowing. This may not seem like a lot, but it adds up ... to as many as a billion birds per year or more throughout the United States. Much of this mortality takes place during spring and fall when songbirds are migrating. Read more about bird collisions with glass

Birds hit your windows because they just can't see glass. They try to fly to reflected sky or trees, or they see through windows on opposite sides of your house and try to fly 'through the hole'. The impact of the collision is enough to kill a songbird, severely injure it, or stun it to leave it on the ground vulnerable to predators.

## Two Possible Solutions

- **ABC BirdTape** was designed and tested by bird experts at American Bird Conservancy, the leading bird conservation organization in the U.S., to alert birds to the presence of glass while allowing you to see out the window from inside. By applying ABC BirdTape in any of the recommended patterns, birds will see your windows and not try to fly through the gaps in between. For more information go to [www.abcbirdtape.org](http://www.abcbirdtape.org)
- **Acopian BirdSavers** consist of 1/8 inch diameter nylon cords (olive-colored parachute cord, available in many places) hanging four inches (4') apart. Any method you use to achieve this will significantly decrease the number of birds that are hitting a problem window. The bottoms of the cords don't need to go all the way to the bottom of the glass. Most people like the look of the cords when they stop about 3 inches above the bottom of the glass. There are various ways to attach the BirdSavers cords to a window. For more information go to [www.birdsavers.com](http://www.birdsavers.com).

## Eliminate Window Attacks

The above solutions may also help mitigate spring window attacks. These birds are just doing what comes naturally to them during the breeding season, protecting their territory. For watch ever reason, they see their reflection in the window and think it is another bird trying to horn in on their territory. Birds don't usually hurt themselves, but they do waste a lot of energy they need for raising their young. The best way to discourage this behavior is to eliminate the reflection completely.

## Research will shed new light on American Oystercatchers

*"This fine bird is most striking in appearance and exceedingly conspicuous. Broadly marked in solid brown-blacks and whites, with a large, brilliant vermillion-colored bill, red eyelids, and a large yellow eye, there is no possibility of ever mistaking it for anything but what it is—the feathered king of the shell-strewn sand-beaches."* (Birds of North Carolina, T. Gilbert Pearson, C. S. Brimley, and H. H. Brimley, 1919)



They're tall with striking black and white plumage, a large bright red-orange bill, and a loud unmistakable voice. Described as a 'sexy' shorebird by some, American Oystercatchers are probably the most recognizable of all North Carolina shorebirds. They occur along the North Carolina coast year round. They nest on beaches and islands and during migration and winter they gather on beaches and islands during high tide and venture out to oyster beds and intertidal mud flats to forage during mid to low tide.

American Oystercatchers are listed by the State of North Carolina as a "Species of Special Concern." They are listed by nearly every Atlantic coast state as threatened, endangered, or special concern, and the species is listed as a "Species of High Concern" in the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. The main threats to this shorebird include its low population (11,000 birds on the East Coast), widespread loss of beach habitat, recreational disturbance, beach stabilization, and predators that thrive in the presence of people. In partnership with N.C. State University, U.S. Geological Survey, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and

other partners, Audubon North Carolina launched the American Oystercatcher Conservation Initiative, the largest study ever conducted for a shorebird species in the state.

Through the three-year study, Audubon North Carolina and partners are assessing the productivity of oystercatchers nesting on beaches, natural islands, and dredged-sand islands, and

identifying the factors that contribute to nest and chick loss. A sample of chicks from all three types of nesting sites are banded with field-readable color bands and will hopefully be resighted at migration or winter areas, or on breeding sites in future years. Studies of migration and winter habitats will document the distribution, abundance, and potential threats at these areas. Many oystercatchers on the Atlantic coast are banded each season with field-readable color bands, so an extra effort is being made to document banded individuals. The research will shed light on the importance of the North Carolina coast to oystercatchers that breed in other states and will let us know where North Carolina's breeding oystercatchers spend the off-season.

The study will continue until 2012. When it is completed, we will know more than ever before about this distinctive shorebird.

Volunteer birders can help with this project by submitting sightings of banded American Oystercatchers. Visit the American Oystercatcher Working Group website (<http://amoywg.org/>) to learn more.

New edition of

## IBAs of North Carolina



Audubon North Carolina has released a new edition of Important Bird Areas of North Carolina, a full-color publication (available online at the Audubon NC blog) with detailed descriptions of North Carolina's most critical bird habitats. The book features 96 sites comprising nearly 4.9 million acres. Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, are places that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds at some time during their annual cycle, including breeding, migration, and wintering periods.

Well-known North Carolina IBAs include iconic landmarks such as Grandfather Mountain and Cape Lookout National Seashore. Nearly all of the state's IBAs include a state, federal, or nongovernmental conservation lands component, but many also contain a high percentage of privately owned and managed land.

"The IBA program is a wonderful tool for highlighting North Carolina's ecologically significant habitats and locations," said Curtis Smalling, IBA Coordinator and Mountain Program Manager for Audubon North Carolina. "IBAs provide so much more than just prime bird habitat. These special landscapes also provide clean drinking water, healthy populations of other species, and in many cases, special opportunities for people to connect to nature through recreation, education, and engagement."

To date, 30 North Carolina IBAs have been approved by BirdLife international

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# 2012 Audubon NC Annual Meeting

**June 1-3, 2012**

For complete details go to <http://goo.gl/4K442>

Audubon North Carolina and the Cape Fear Audubon Society are pleased to welcome all members, friends, and bird enthusiasts to the **2012 Annual Meeting** being held from **June 1-3** in beautiful **Wilmington, North Carolina**.

One of North Carolina's most historic cities, Wilmington is located at the center of the Cape Fear region which includes Pender, New Hanover, and Brunswick Counties. This area is one of North Carolina's birding and botanical hotspots with some of the highest concentrations of bird and plant species in the state. In a *Birder's Guide to Coastal North Carolina*, John Fussell states that over 400 species have been identified along our coast. A high percentage of those can be found in the Cape Fear area, which boasts 12 Important Bird Areas and 20 sites on the NC Birding Trail. Black Skimmers and Least Terns are easily viewed nesting on several area beaches, while great expanses of tidal salt marsh provide ample opportunity to see wading birds like Tri-colored and Little Blue Herons, and shorebirds such as Clapper Rails, White Ibis, and Willets. In the maritime thickets and forests fringing the marshes, Painted Buntings may be seen and heard during the summer.

The meeting will be headquartered at the Hampton Inn Medical Park, located at 2320 South 17th Street, Wilmington, NC. You must make a reservation with the hotel to book your room.

Annual meeting attendees will be able to participate in a variety of field trips and events throughout the weekend.

## **Cape Fear Audubon Society Reception**

Cape Fear Audubon Society will host a wine and beer reception with light snacks Friday night, 6-8 p.m. at Halyburton Park Education Center. Wilmington's first nature park, Halyburton is also a popular spot for weddings and receptions. The park is centered on a small Carolina Bay (unfortunately, now dry) and has several walking trails. Feeders are maintained to attract birds throughout the year. Weather permitting, some of the reception guests may move out onto the patio overlooking the park. Dinner will on your own and your registration packet will contain information about restaurant options near the hotel.

## **Photography workshop**

Mark Buckler is the Director of the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Sanctuary and Audubon Center at Pine Island and an accomplished photographer. He will take participants outdoors and provide tips on how to improve their nature photography. Participants will meet in the lobby of the Hampton Inn.

## **Amazing landscapes of coastal Carolina**

If you've waded in the surf at Bird Island—explored the dense canopy of live oaks at Springer's Pont on Ocracoke—enjoyed a jazz or gospel concert at Airlie Gardens—paddled down the tributaries of the Neuse—listened to the whisper of the longleaf at Pettiford Creek at the Croatan—found fresh produce at Popular Grove's Farmer's Market—strolled down the Morehead City waterfront—or watched the incredible Venus flytrap at the Brunswick Nature Park—then you've

enjoyed one of the special places the Coastal Land Trust has helped to save.

On Friday, June 1, 1-2 PM at Halyburton Park Education Center, Camilla Herlevich, CEO of the Coastal Land Trust and the first director of Audubon North Carolina, will share her success in preserving some of the unique environments found in coastal North Carolina. The results of these efforts are an amazing variety of habitats for birds.

## **Long Leaf Pine Exhibit**

The Cape Fear Museum was originally established to house civil war artifacts, but since its inception in 1898, it has broadened its mission to include the natural history and culture of the Lower Cape Fear region. Land of the Long Leaf Pine is one of their major permanent exhibits and the Museum Director, Ruth Haas, will provide additional information about the importance of the Long Leaf Pine to the Cape Fear area.

## **Be a Good Egg, Share the Beach**

The goal of the Be a Good Egg, Share the Beach project is to educate beachgoers about their impact on beach-nesting birds like Least Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers. From April through August, thousands of birds nest on the bare sand of many North Carolina beaches, usually at inlets. These scrappy survivors face many threats, including severe weather and predators. One person or dog walking through a nesting area will cause the adults to fly off their nests, exposing their chicks and eggs to predators

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## ANC Annual Meeting

and severe temperatures. Just a few minutes of exposure can cause an entire colony to fail. Volunteers will show beach visitors the nests through scopes and staff a table with educational materials.

### Reception and awards banquet

Join us for a reception prior to the banquet dinner on the patio outside of the Azalea Room at the Hampton Inn Medical Park Hotel. A specialty drink, beer, and non alcoholic beverages will be served. We apologize that we can not offer red wine this year due to hotel rules.

At the banquet and award ceremony, Heather Starck, Executive Director of Audubon North Carolina, will give a presentation on the new strategic plan for the National Audubon Society and how chapters, state offices, and the national organization will become One Audubon.

## Chicks: It's all gone to the birds



From March 31 through June 17 The Bascom in Highlands will present the exhibit "Chicks: It's All Gone to the Birds" in partnership with Highlands Plateau Audubon Society (HPAS) and the Highlands Biological Station. Audubon NC, the state office of National Audubon, is a sponsor of the exhibit.

In early May, as HPAS begins its new and ambitious schedule of weekly walks this season, a unique opportunity awaits those who participate. The upcoming bird-themed exhibit at The

Bascom will be augmented by walks and programs offered by Highlands Plateau Audubon Society and Audubon NC. All HPAS happenings are open to the public, and there is no cost to participate!

All May walks will leave from The Bascom parking lot, so that participants may return from seeing the birds in nature to the joy of the birds in The Bascom's excellent exhibit. The first walk of the year will be on Saturday, May 5th, meeting at 7:30 am, and will be especially directed at beginners. Following the walk, Bascom staff will offer a guided gallery tour at 11:00 am, enabling participants to learn more about the birds, art and artists. Lunch will be available for purchase at the cafe following the gallery walk.

On May 12 at 4 p.m., Curtis Smalling, Audubon NC's Coordinator NC Important Bird Area Programs & Mountain Program Manager will speak on "The Birds of the Highlands Plateau: Amazing Stories from a Remarkable Place."

On June 1 at 7:30 p.m. Mark Hopey of The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship Project (MAPS), and director of the mist-netting and bird-banding program at Tessentee Farms, a Land Trust for the Little Tennessee Reserve in Otto, will present at the exhibit.

For more information go to: <http://google.com/EGk9i>

## Now Being Seen Online



### Great Blue Herons

#### Join Cornell's LIVE Nest Cam Roster

In 2009, the herons brought in the first few twigs that would become the first known Great Blue Heron nest in the history of Sapsucker Woods.

This Great Blue Heron nest is in a large, dead white oak in the middle of Sapsucker Woods pond, right outside the Cornell Lab's Johnson Center for Birds and Biodiversity. Herons have nested here since summer 2009, hatching and fledging four young each year and raising them on a steady diet of fish and frogs. Though neither bird is banded, you can identify the male by the absence of a hallux (the rear-facing toe) on his right foot. Adult herons can be up to 4.5 feet tall, with a wingspan up to 6 feet. Despite their large size, they typically only weigh around 5 pounds.

The Cornell staff invite you to watch along with them as these magnificent birds begin their nesting activities for the year. They can see the nest from their staff lounge, and in years past they have enjoyed guessing when the eggs would hatch, watching for the day the chicks' little beaks first appear over the nest rim, and following them as they grow to four-foot tall adolescents

This year you'll be able to watch their progress from virtually inside the nest. Take a peep at [www.allabout-birds.org/page.aspx?pid=2433](http://www.allabout-birds.org/page.aspx?pid=2433)



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# IBA Book

as globally significant, including the Amphibolite Mountains, which provide habitat for Golden-winged Warblers; the Sandhills, which sustain Red-cockaded Woodpeckers; and Lea-Hutaff Island, which is inhabited by Piping Plovers.

Each IBA account in the book includes a detailed site description, a map (except for sensitive waterbird islands that are not open to the public), and a table showing key bird species and abundance. The state's IBAs vary in size from just a few acres, as in the case of several small waterbird nesting islands on the coast, to coastal plain sites covering more than 300,000 acres. And some IBAs, like the Outer Continental Shelf, are completely water-based.

To raise awareness about the state's IBAs, Audubon North Carolina will design a social media campaign around an IBA every month, beginning with the Pungo-Pocosin Lakes IBA in December.

Hundreds of dedicated volunteer birders and Audubon chapter members assisted with gathering data for the new edition, by surveying Important Bird Areas, conducting species specific surveys and research, and participating in longstanding censuses like the



Christmas Bird Count. Whether they are recording Cerulean Warbler songs to map territories, using playback to survey for Golden-winged Warblers, canoeing the quiet waters of the Lumber River, building observation platforms, or leading field trips, volunteers and agency staff across the state lead the way in working to conserve and share these Important Bird Areas.

Audubon North Carolina is distributing the publication in book and CD form to North Carolina land conservation agencies so they can utilize the information as they set priorities for public and private land conservation projects. The IBA program is not a regulatory initiative and places no restriction on land use or activities. Audubon staff works with managers of IBAs to support bird and habitat monitoring, habitat management, and education and advocacy efforts focused on birds.

Virtually every conservation planning entity in the state recognizes IBAs as priority sites for long-term protection. The IBA program has become a dynamic "blueprint for conservation" in North Carolina.

IBA data (including GIS data) is constantly updated and can be found at our blog and on the U.S. IBA website. The IBA program was created in Europe in 1981 as a program of Birdlife International. The National Audubon Society, as the U.S. partner of Birdlife International, launched the U.S. IBA program in 1995. State IBA programs are underway in approximately 47 states, with programs in all 50 states expected in the next few years.

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## 2012 Board Election Slate

	<b>Bill Duston</b>
	<b>Chris Hanna</b>
	<b>Jill Palmer</b>
	<b>Jim Pugh</b>