

Audubon News

Mecklenburg Audubon Society | P.O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28223

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Upcoming Events

- 3/24 Beatty Park
- 3/28 Six-mile Creek Grnwy.
- 4/2 Monthly Meeting
- 4/4 Mallard Creek Grnwy.
- 4/7 McDowell NP
- 4/11 Congaree National Park
- 4/12 Latta Park (Dilworth)
- 4/15 Latta Park (Dilworth)
- 4/18 Hinson Lake
- 4/19 Beginner Bird Walk
- 4/23 Latta Park (Dilworth)
- 4/25 Charlotte Spring Count
- 4/18 Latta Park (Dilworth)
- 5/2 Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge
- 5/10 Latta Park (Dilworth)
- 5/12 Lansford Canal
- 5/16 BlueRidge parkway

Who's New?

- Amy Busby
- Brett & Christine Corbly

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers

Life History and Recovery Efforts of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker in the NC Sandhills

The Red-cockaded woodpecker is a federally listed endangered species endemic to open, mature and old growth pine ecosystems in the southeastern United States. Susan Miller, Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will speak at our April meeting about the life history and recovery efforts of the Red-cockaded woodpecker in the North Carolina Sandhills. Her primary responsibilities include working with private landowners to implement the Safe Harbor Program for the benefit of private landowners and red-cockaded woodpeckers in the North Carolina Sandhills region. She also provides educational outreach about the Safe Harbor Program and red-cockaded woodpeckers and reviews and reports on commercial development projects and building permit requests (in coordination with local municipalities) to determine impacts on fish and wildlife. Additionally, she coordinates the activities of the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership and North Carolina Longleaf Coalition and is the president of the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council.

Join us **Thursday April 2nd to learn more at 7:15 PM in the Tyvola Senior Center (2225 Tyvola Road.)** Come early for snacks and refreshments including Birds & Beans Bird Friendly® coffee!



2015 Board Members Slate

The following folks have been nominated to replace outgoing members of the MAS Board. If you would like to include your name on the slate please let one of the current board members know before April 15th

Marcia Howden	<input type="radio"/>
Matt Janson	<input type="radio"/>
Tom Ledford	<input type="radio"/>

Field Trips

All Mecklenburg Audubon Field Trips are free and open to the public. Directions can be found on the Mecklenburg Audubon website - meckbirds.org/trips/trips.html. 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!!



Blue-grey Gnatcatcher
©Jeff Lemons



Prothonotary Warbler
©Will Stuart



Veery ©Ron Clark

Tuesday, March 24th: Colonel Francis Beatty Park

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Tom Ledford [tledford1207@gmail.com]

This under birded park in Matthews has woods, open areas and a large lake. Meet at 8:30 AM at the lake at the end of the main park road.

Saturday, March 28th: Six-Mile Creek

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

We'll hope to get some early migrants on this walk, such as Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Parula and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot on Marvin Road.

Saturday, April 4th: Mallard Creek/Clark's Creek Greenway

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

Early spring migrants should be arriving and perhaps a few lingering winter visitors will still be around. We will meet at the entrance to the Mallard Creek Greenway that is located in the University City Research Park area at the corner of Gov. Hunt Rd. & David Taylor Rd. at 8:30 AM.<

Tuesday, April 7th: McDowell Nature Preserve

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Tom Ledford [tledford1207@gmail.com]

This heavily wooded preserve should be have arriving migrants as well as beautiful wildflowers. We'll take a peek at the lake to see what's still hanging around. We'll meet at the Park Office at 8:30 AM.

Saturday, April 11th: Congaree National Park

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

We'll head south to meet the migrants in this national park near Columbia, SC. We'll be on a boardwalk for about 1 1/2 miles. Bring lunch. After we eat, we'll check the wetlands near the interstate. We'll meet at 6:30 AM in the Food Lion parking lot on U.S. 21. Take a left at the Carowinds exit on I-77 south. Go one mile and the Food Lion will be on your left. We should be back in Charlotte by 5:00 PM.

Sunday, April 12th: Latta Park (Dilworth)

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Matt Janson [m.janson.geolover@gmail.com]

This is the first of nearly weekly walks at this spring migration hot spot. Migrants are easy to spot as they come into the creek for a drink and/or bath. But be prepared to get warbler neck as well since some of them like to high in the tops of the trees. We will meet at the gazebo near the kids play ground at 8:30 AM.

Wednesday, April 15th: Latta Park (Dilworth)

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net] • MAP

Migrants are easy to spot as they come into the creek for a drink and/or bath. But be prepared to get warbler neck as well since some of them like to high in the tops of the trees. We will meet at the gazebo near the kids play ground at 8:30 AM.

Field Trips

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Saturday, April 18th: Hinson Lake in Rockingham

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Tom Ledford [tledford1207@gmail.com]

This trip takes us to 300-acre wildlife conservation area near Rockingham, NC. There are 2 1/2 miles of trails through mixed woods, marsh, open pond, meadow and beaver pond. Bring lunch. We will meet in the park at 8:30 AM. For GPS directions use 152 Hinson Lake Rd. in Rockingham, NC.

Sunday, April 19th: Beginner Bird Walk (Toby Creek Greenway)

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

This walk is designed for new birders, but anyone can come. Binoculars will be provided, if needed. We'll check out the wetlands first and then wonder down Toby Creek Greenway onto the UNC Charlotte campus. We will meet in the parking lot of the Kirk Farms Soccer Fields on Mallard Creek Church Rd. at 8:30 AM.

Thursday, April 23rd: Latta Park (Dilworth)

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

Migrants are easy to spot as they come into the creek for a drink and/or bath. But be prepared to get warbler neck as well since some of them like to high in the tops of the trees. We will meet at the gazebo near the kids play ground at 8:30 AM.

Saturday, April 25th: Charlotte Spring Count

All Day • Contact: Jeff Lemons [birdsalot@gmail.com]

We need all the eyes we can get to cover the area thoroughly. Please join a group even if it's only for a couple of hours. Contact Jeff for group assignment.

Tuesday, April 28th: Latta Park (Dilworth)

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

Migrants are easy to spot as they come into the creek for a drink and/or bath. But be prepared to get warbler neck as well since some of them like to high in the tops of the trees. We will meet at the gazebo near the kids play ground at 8:30 AM.

Saturday, May 2nd: Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge

1/2 Day • Moderate • Leader: Jill Palmer

After a few years of inaccessibility Mecklenburg County Natural Resources has given MAS permission to sponsor a walk on Cowan's Ford Refuge. We will be accompanied by Anne Marie Stevenson, Environmental Educator.

Mountain Island Lake IBA was designated in 1999 because of its extensive bottomland hardwood forests and its rich diversity of migratory songbirds and wintering waterfowl. Over 203 species of birds have been documented at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge alone, including 57 species of Neotropical migrants. Of these, 23 species of Neotropical migrants breed on the refuge and in the surrounding forests.



Summer Tanager
©Will Stuart

This trip will be limited to 20 participants to lessen the impact on the refuge land and wildlife. **You must email Jim Guyton – guytonj@att.net to sign up for this trip.** Jim will confirm your spot once the trip is full.

Sunday, May 10th: Latta Park (Dilworth)

1/2 Day • Easy • Matt Janson
[m.janson.geolover@gmail.com]

Tuesday, May 12th: Lansford Canal State Park

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Tom Ledford [tledford1207@gmail.com]

Tom Ledford will lead us to this park just below Rock Hill, and abuts the Catawba River. It is wooded with creek side, and is very good for prothonotary warbler and Acadian flycatcher. It usually has an active bald eagle nest. We will meet in the parking lot of the park at 9 AM. There is \$2 per person entry fee.

Saturday, May 16th: Blue Ridge Parkway (Boone/Blowing Rock area)

Full Day • Moderate • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

Details in the May newsletter.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO FEEL LIKE A MILLION BUCKS?

That's how you'll feel when you volunteer with us! We know you are passionate about our mission or you wouldn't be reading this newsletter. Volunteers get to talk about that passion and work with other like-minded people. They get to educate others, socialize with other bird enthusiasts, network with other environmental organizations and more. The work that Mecklenburg Audubon Society does has many fingers.

Currently we need more than 10 fingers to reach our goals. So, we are asking YOU to consider giving a few hours of your time to help answer the call of our community. One of our most crucial needs right now is for volunteers to represent MAS at events around town or to speak to schools and other groups. Spring has sprung and so have requests for MAS to participate at Earth Day events, Spring Festivals and more. Don't worry about not knowing what to do... we'll train you!

We also desperately need help with conservation projects. It's easy, it's fun and at the end of the day you'll feel like a million bucks.

To learn more or to sign up to volunteer email us at meckaudubon@gmail.com.



Have Used Equipment ... Will Sell

Below are some of the items that will be for sale at the April meeting. 10% of the proceeds will go to Audubon. Notify Anne Clark by Monday, March 30th, if you have additional items for sale. A final email will be sent to the list-serve prior to the meeting on April 2nd.



Swarovski Optiks Fixed Eyepiece (30XSW) for Swarovski scopes

Helicoid-type eyecup design accommodates eyepiece wearers; 30x magnification provides broad 126-foot FOV at 1,000 yards; Swarovski lens coatings increase color flexibility across spectrum; Measures 3.3 inches long by 2.2 inches in diameter; weighs 0.55 pound; Bought new, never used. Amazon lists a refurbished one at \$380. Price negotiable; make an offer.

Manfrotto 3265 Grip Action Ball Head with Quick Release.

Versatile, quick and easy to use. Just grip the handle and you can position your camera anywhere within a 180 degree sphere; Supplied with a 3157N quick-release camera plate and a secondary safety lock, built-in bubble level and tension adjustment; Made of cast aluminum. Ideal for 35mm cameras with short or medium focal length lenses or spotting scopes; Sells new for \$100. Will sell for \$50. If bought with tripod below, will make deal.

Manfrotto 3221W Wilderness Tripod with Leg Protectors & Spiked Feet without Head

Ideal for conventional or digital cameras, video cameras, medium format, and spotting scopes; Center column with three-faced design eliminates column rotation and increases stability; Low-angle adapter built in the center column for ground level shots; Padded grips for added comfort and protection from the cold (on two legs); 71.3-inch maximum height with center column, 13.3-pound maximum load; Bought new for \$350. Will sell for \$125. If bought with head above, will make deal.

Weekender Traveler Air Vest

Ultra Lightweight / Stain Resistant; 9 External Velcro Pockets; 4 Internal Pockets (2 Velcro, 2 Zipper); Breathable Mesh Backing; Great for travel, birding, fishing and photography; Bought new for \$72. Will sell for \$30.

Camera Gear

Tamron 60-300 mm zoom lens, with carrying case. Fits Nikon. \$40
Tamron-F AF 1.4 Teleconverter Fits Nikon \$10
Tokina 28-85 mm lens. Fits Nikon. \$20
Nikon Speedlight SB-15 flash. \$10
Nikon Nikkor 300 mm lens \$40

Field Guilds and books of birding interest

Books are \$1-\$7.

Perky Pet No/No Yellow Sunflower Basket Bird Feeder

Collapsible wire mesh, holds 1 pound of seed; Retail for \$17 on Amazon; Excellent condition. Will sell for \$5. All proceeds go to Audubon.

Wild Birds Unlimited EcoTough Upside Down Suet Feeder

Made from recycled milk jugs, will not rot; Holds a standard size suet cake; Retail price \$32.99. Like new. \$10. All proceeds go to Audubon

Tubular feeder - \$20



Citizen Science for Birders

Watching birds at the nest is fun--and fuels bird conservation

Ithaca, N.Y.—Springtime is nesting time, and that means another season of beautiful birdsong, colorful eggs, and downy nestlings. Spring also brings another season of **Nest-Watch**, a free citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Volunteers have been helping the Lab monitor nesting birds for 50 years, keeping tabs on open-cup nests and actively putting out the welcome mat for species that prefer a cozy cavity.

“Even those who already have birds nesting nearby can support more birds by putting up a nest box, or by landscaping for nesting birds,” says NestWatch project leader Robyn Bailey. “Supplying nesting materials, like wool, cotton, or pet fur is another great way to encourage more birds to take up residence.”

NestWatch provides an intimate glimpse into the lives of nesting birds but it is much more. NestWatch data

have been used in more than 130 scientific studies, yielding valuable information for scientists and land managers, such as:

When, where, and how many eggs are laid by certain species across a wide range

How to minimize the effects of forestry and agricultural practices on nesting birds

Revealing that some species, such as Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds, are nesting earlier as spring temperatures have risen.

These discoveries and others are made possible by people who simply enjoy watching birds in their backyard or local park.

“I find observing the behavior of the natural world endlessly fascinating,” says participant Kate Lowry. “NestWatch offers me the chance



to channel my efforts into this more organized method that can provide information to real scientists who, in turn, use the data in their studies.”

“Even after five decades there’s a lot learn,” says Bailey. “For example, data on the Eurasian Collared-Dove, a relative newcomer to North America, remains sketchy. We still don’t know how its presence affects our native Mourning Doves, or even how many times they can nest in one year.” Scientists need more data to understand how and why species respond differently to large, continent-level changes in the environment.

NestWatch can be a wonderful learning experience for the whole family. Find out more about the project, sign up, and learn how to locate and monitor nests at NestWatch.org.

YardMap



A free, social, interactive, online, citizen science mapping project about habitat creation and low-impact land use.

YardMap [www.yardmap.org] enables people to map their habitat management and carbon neutral

practices in backyards and parks, interact socially, and try out new landscape practices. Participants first locate their yards or parks on a Google map and then use easy point-and-click tools to define habitat types and sustainable activities, including actions like planting natives, putting up bird feeders, or installing solar panels. These practices are stored as data and linked to Cornell’s citizen science bird observations.

Integrated social networking tools give contributors the opportunity to form online learning communi-

ties and allow people to share their maps and practices broadly within the network. Participants also have access to a wide array of rich media and web-based learning resources with learning objectives ranging from bird and plant identification to conceptual understanding of complex habitat-bird relationships, including the importance of the size and arrangement of habitat patches and the potential for cumulative impacts of many small acts to make a difference to both bird conservation and carbon neutrality.

Join us at YardMap [www.yardmap.org] and put yourself on the map today!

Meet a Migrant: White-eyed Vireo

A busy bird of the thickets, most common in the southeast. Although the White-eyed Vireo usually stays in dense cover, it is not always hard to see; it will come up to examine and scold a birder who stands near the bushes and makes squeaking sounds. Even when it remains out of sight, its snappy song is distinctive. In Bermuda, where the bird is common, it is widely known as “chick-of-the-village,” a good rendition of the song.

Habitat

Wood edges, brush, brambles, undergrowth. Breeds in various kinds of dense low growth, including briar tangles on low swampy ground, shrubby thickets of maple, wild plum, willow, and other saplings in overgrown pastures, and scrub in open woods or near forest edges. Winters in a wide array of similar habitats.

Northern edge of range varies over time: for example, disappeared from Massachusetts and then re-invaded; spread into Michigan in 1960s. Surveys indicate slight declines over much of range since 1960s.

Nesting

Male sings incessantly from early spring to late summer to defend



Jim Brighton

www.marylandbiodiversity.com/viewSpecies.php?species=1179

nesting territory. In courtship, male displays to female by fluffing plumage, spreading tail, and uttering a whining call. Nest: Placed low (within 25' of ground, usually much lower) in shrub or sapling. Nest is supported by the rim woven onto a horizontal forked twig. Both parents help build nest, a deep, hanging cup made of twigs, roots, shreds of bark, grass stems, leaves, plant down, lichen, moss, sometimes fragments of wasp nests. Nest is bound with spiderwebs, lined with fine grass and fibers.

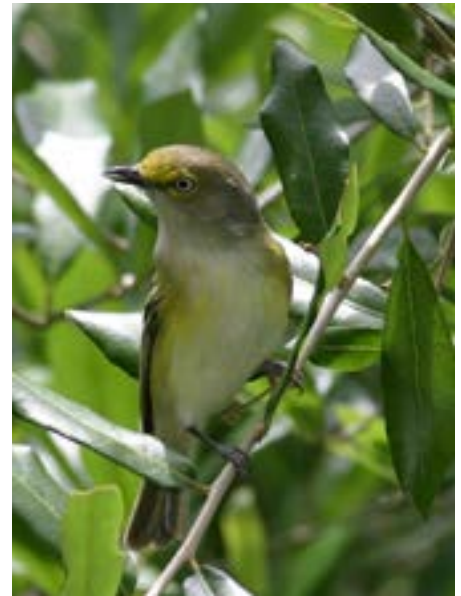
Lays 3-5 eggs. White with specks of brown or black. Incubation is by both parents, 13-15 days. Nests are commonly parasitized by cowbirds. Young: Both parents feed the nestlings. Young leave the nest about 9-11 days after hatching. 1 brood per year in the north, 2 in the south.

Both parents feed the nestlings. Young leave the nest about 9-11 days after hatching. 1 brood per year in the north, 2 in the south.

Diet

Insects and berries. In the breeding season, takes almost entirely insects, and nearly one-third of diet then may be caterpillars, moths, and butterflies. Diet also includes true bugs, scale insects, many kinds of beetles, ants, wasps, bees, grasshoppers; also spiders, snails, and occasionally small lizards. In migration and in winter, also eats berries and small fruits.

Forages deliberately by moving actively among twigs and branches in dense low cover with short hops or flights, pausing to look for insects by tilting its head and peering. Gleans insects by picking, hovering, reaching, lunging, hanging, or leaping.



Cool Facts

Both the male and the female White-eyed Vireo sing their primary song on the wintering grounds.

The only fossil record in North America for the entire family Vireonidae is a wing bone of a White-eyed Vireo from the late Pleistocene of Florida, from approximately 400,000 years ago.

The White-eyed Vireo bathes by rubbing against wet foliage.

White-eyed Vireo
Vireo griseus



Creating a Bird Friendly Yard



For the complete article - <http://www.audubon.org/node/2310>

We love our lawns. In the United States more than 45 million acres—an area eight times the size of New Jersey—are carpeted with them. And we're adding 500 square miles of turfgrass every year. Maintaining all that lawn is a huge undertaking and, for many, a source of personal pride. Annually, the average U.S. homeowner spends the equivalent of at least a full workweek pushing or driving a mower.

You could say the quest for perfect lawns—richly green, closely cropped, weedless, and insect-free—is almost as American as baseball. But this national preoccupation comes at a cost. Consider how many gallons of water and pounds of pesticides it takes to keep lawns lush. Depending on the conditions, a 25-by-40-foot yard can drink 10,000 gallons of water in a summer. Lawn care accounts for 70 million pounds of pesticides applied in the United States each year, 10 times more than even what is used in farming. The toxic runoff percolates into groundwater, threatening wildlife and human health.

What you get is a cookie-cutter landscape whether you're in Palo Alto, Houston, Cincinnati, New York, or Phoenix. "All around the country you can find the same few species of grasses and foundation shrubs mak-

ing up a national, undifferentiated residential landscape," writes Pam Penick in her new book *Lawn Gone!*. "It's like driving cross-country on the interstate and seeing the same four fast-food restaurants at every exit."

And wherever green grass grows there was once habitat—a forest, prairie, wetland, or even a desert. Which is why many gardeners concerned about disappearing wilderness and wildlife declines are trying to grow the habitat back. With support from conservation groups like Audubon—or just for the love of it—they are digging up their yards and replacing the grass with trees, shrubs, and flowering plants that can again provide birds and other wildlife with food, clean water, shelter, and places to nest. Their spadework is unquestionably restoring varied and colorful homes where chickadees can sing and butterflies can flutter. But until recently few scientists could say for sure whether such efforts are having a meaningful impact on wildlife. Now they are finding proof that even small habitats can make a big difference.

While cutting-edge research is expanding scientists' understanding of how people can support birds and other wildlife—one garden, schoolyard, and urban park at a time—

there is still a lot to learn. "Prior to this research, it was largely suspected that backyard habitats could be helpful in providing sanctuary to birds during nesting and migration," says Steve Kress, Audubon's vice president for bird conservation and author of *The Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds*. "Their research gives us solid information that shows how important the native plants are."

But he emphasizes that selecting plants that host the insects birds eat is only part of the equation. Fruiting plants and seeds fuel birds during migration, and are thus equally essential in any habitat. "Of course, plants should also be selected for other features than food, such as shelter during extreme weather and usefulness for nesting structure. Just as some plants sustain diverse caterpillar populations, others provide good options for nesting structure and safety from predators."

Nest boxes hung on posts or standing trees are another key feature, he says, because people tend to remove downed trees and other structures with cavities that birds would use naturally. In addition, birds need sitting perches where they can keep an eye out for predators; a place to

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Bird Friendly Yards

get out of the sun on a hot day or to weather a winter storm; water for drinking and bathing; and even some thorny shrubs like hawthorns that can provide a fortress against prowling animals, including cats.

At the same time scientists are taking a hard look at nonnative invasive species that provide birds with food but also harm the ecosystem. Porcelainberry is firmly on the National Park Service's "least wanted list" for its habit of forcefully twining through woodlands and smothering native plants. But apparently the birds aren't too picky. "[They] eat porcelainberries up the wazoo," says Michelle Frankel, a conservation biologist who is leading Audubon's Bird-Friendly Communities initiative in the Atlantic Flyway. Some people think: Why make such a fuss. Just leave it. But Frankel says you have to also consider the plants that porcelainberry displaces. What's more, not all plants are created equal. A recent study revealed that the highest fat content and energy densities in fruits that migrant birds ate at two field sites in Rochester, New York, came from native shrubs—not the aliens. The birds were choosing the higher-octane fuel and eating it more voraciously.

More and more, citizen science projects continue to deepen our understanding. Two such programs were launched last spring. "These initiatives are designed to look more closely at bird and plant associations and answer some of the questions, particularly having to do with backyard habitats," says Frankel.

YardMap [www.yardmap.org/] is a Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

project that encourages people to gather data about the habitats that they are most familiar with—their yard, their favorite birding spot, a schoolyard, even a cemetery—to provide insights about how they can aid wildlife. The program is like Google Earth, allowing users to zoom in on their place and mark the types of plants that exist there. "It's connected to eBird [a real-time online checklist program that collects and broadcasts bird data], so they can also keep track of the birds they see," says Frankel. "It's a very cool tool."

The program is being promoted to Audubon chapters around the country, and the schools, neighborhood groups, and municipalities receiving mini-grants to create "Urban Oases" demonstration habitats will be asked to track their sites with YardMap.

The second program, called **Hummingbirds at Home** [www.hummingbirdsathome.org], joins Audubon's citizen science programs, such as the Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count, by enlisting people to log observations of hummingbirds on flowers and note blooming patterns. Several recent studies indicate that the arrival of hummingbirds on their foraging grounds is out of sync with food availability and flower pollination. "The Hummingbirds at Home program aims to gain insights into what's going on, and how people can help," says Audubon chief scientist Gary Langham.

There is plenty of evidence to show that anyone can play a vital role in preserving bird habitats, says



Tennessee warbler on Pokeweed
David Disher of Winston-Salem, NC
<http://ncaudubonblog.org/?p=4210>

Tallamy, who even goes as far as to call it a moral imperative. "Our success is up to each one of us individually," he writes in *Bringing Nature Home*. "We can each make a measurable difference almost immediately by planting a native nearby. As gardeners and stewards of our land, we have never been so empowered—and the ecological stakes have never been so high."

For the complete article check out
www.audubon.org/node/2310

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