

Audubon News

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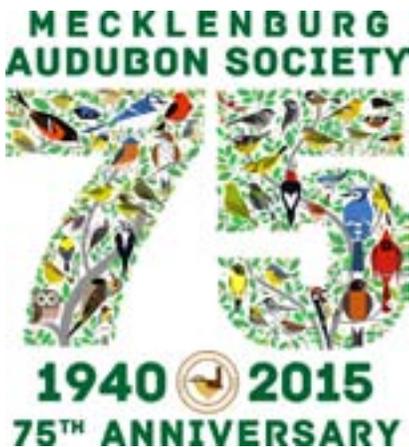
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Encouraging the Next Generation

"A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood." -- Rachel Carson



Saturday, October 10, 2015

12 Noon - 4 PM

**McDowell Nature Preserve
(Large Shelter)**

- Morning Bird Walks
- Catered Lunch
- Live Entertainment
- Engaging Speakers

Tickets go on sale August 21st
\$12 adults | \$6 children under 12

Helping people, especially children, connect to the earth has been a passion and mission of Steve Houser, Jr. ever since he realized, many years ago, that lots of people didn't have the opportunities to interact with the natural world as he has done all his life. He grew up in the small country town of Indian Trail, NC, when it contained 350 people, and many of those residents were his relatives. Today that town has approximately 36,000 residents, and few would be able to recognize the changes from the past that have occurred there, from the farm environment it was to the urban setting it is.

As an educator of young people for over 40 years, his main instruction focused on experimental, hands-on learning, especially in the outdoors. Steve is certified as an Environmental Educator by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In addition he has

received numerous national and statewide awards and honors. Even though Steve retired from the classroom this past summer, he currently is the Director of the Family Nature Summits (www.familysummits.org) Junior Naturalist Program.

Steve will share with us how we can help encourage young children to engage with the nature that is all around them. As a master storyteller, he will most certainly inspire us to do what we can to help fledge the next generation of naturalist. Without them the world will be a less accommodating place for both animals and humans.

So join us and experience something special, Thursday, October 1st in the Tyvola Senior Center (2225 Tyvola Road.) at 7:15 PM. Refreshments and fellowship from 6:45 PM.

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!!

KEY TO PHYSICAL DIFFICULTY

Easy - Trails are level to slight grades usually paved - .5-3 miles of walking

Moderate - Trails can be uneven with some hills. 2-4 miles of walking.

Strenuous - Trails vary greatly. 4+ miles of walking.

* - Trails are handicapped accessible.



Chestnut-sided Warbler (Fall)



Tue. Sep. 29th • 8:30 AM • James Boyce Park

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

This heavily wooded park backs up to McAlpine Creek Greenway which is not accessible at the moment due to construction. We'll meet in the parking lot at 8:30 AM.

Thu., Oct. 1st • Campbell Creek Greenway

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

Located on the east side of town, this 2 1/2 mile walk is on flat asphalt. It is mostly wooded with a creek. The parking lot is on Margaret Wallace Road. Meet at 8:30 AM.

Sat., Oct. 3rd • 8:30 AM • Ribbon Walk Nature Preserve

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

This area is mostly wooded, and includes three ponds and a large field. We'll cover about 1 1/2 miles. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot on Hoyt Hinson Rd.

Sun. Oct. 4th • 8:30 AM • Six-mile Creek Greenway

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

This greenway may be short (1 mile in length), but it has produced some interesting birds over the years. It has some interesting habitat that attracts migrating birds. We will also take a look at the large wetland across Marvin Rd. Meet in the parking lot at 8:30 AM.

Sat., Oct. 10th • 8:30 AM • McDowell Prairie

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

As the colors of the prairie change from green to gold, the inhabitants of this preserve also change as the birds continue their fall migration. This walk is part of the MAS 75th Anniversary celebration and will conclude in plenty of time for you to head over to the pavillion for the gathering. Brief directions: Turn right on to Shopton Road off Hwy 49. In 0.7 miles, turn left on Four Horse Road. Follow it about 3/4 mile to the green gate on the right.

Sat., Oct. 10th • 10:00 AM McDowell Nature Preserve

1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Tom Sanders [tsanders1993@msn.com]

This walk is for those who don't want to get up as early but would like to do some bird watching before MAS 75th Anniversary celebration. We will stroll along one of the preserve's nature trails and return in time to join the festivities. Meet in the picnic pavillion parking lot.

Sun., Oct. 11th • Big Sit: Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge

All Day • Easy* • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

This is a fun-filled day of birding with minimal walking. It takes place in the viewing stand at Cowan's Ford Refuge. It will start before

Field Trips

daybreak and end around 5-6, whenever the last folks leave. You can come for an hour or all day, no need to sign up. Bring a chair, snacks and binoculars. This is a great way to meet folks, and one of the few outings where talking is okay. We will have grill for some hot dogs around noon. Sign-up isn't necessary, just come and enjoy.

Sat., Oct. 17-18th • Huntington Beach State Park

Weekend • Strenuous • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

This is our fall sojourn to a South Carolina birding hot spot. Fall migrants – hawks and warblers – will still be moving through, wintering shorebirds will have settled in and a few ducks may also have begun arriving. This is probably the best time of the year to see Peregrine Falcons and Merlins, and I am sure we will be delighted with spectacular views of thousands of tree swallows.

We will meet in the parking lot on the eastside of the causeway at 7:30 AM. It can get pretty hot so remember a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water. We will eat lunch in the park so you will also need to bring food.

Since many participants stay for the weekend, we usually go out to dinner on Saturday night. At dinner we will plan where we will go on Sunday.

Sun. Oct. 18th • 8:30 AM • McDowell Nature Preserve

1/2 day • Moderate • Contact: Jeff Lemons [birdsallot@gmail.com]

If you aren't going on the Huntington Beach trip, here's another opportunity to wander this expansive restored piedmont prairie. Jeff wants you to know is a good time of the years to look for wandering Common Ground Dove at the prairie.

Tue., Oct. 27th • 8:30 AM • Four-Mile Creek Greenway

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

This two-mile stretch walking through a variety of habitats always produces interesting birds. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot on Johnston Rd.

Tue., Nov. 3rd • 8:30 AM • Latta Prairie Nature Preserve

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

As the temperature cool off, winter migrants will begin arriving in the area. This preserve provides access to a wide variety of habitats but is especially good for birds that like grasslands and early succession areas. Meet in the parking lot next to the nature center just inside the main gate at 8:30 AM.

Sat. Nov. 7th • 8:30 AM • McDowell Prairie/Copperhead Is.

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

Yet another prairie walk looking for early winter migrants include waterfowl at Copperhead Island. Brief directions: Turn right on Shop-ton Road off Hwy 49. In 0.7 miles, turn left on Four Horse Road. Follow it about 3/4 mile to the green gate on the right.



Looking ahead to Counts

Sat., Dec. 19th

Gaston County

Sun., Dec. 20th

Lake Norman

Dec. 26th

Charlotte

Sat., Dec. 2nd

Pee Dee NWR

Field Trip Etiquette

To ensure everyone on the field trip has a productive and enjoyable outing here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Contact the leader.
- Turn cell phones off or to vibrate.
- Be on time.
- Stay with the group.
- Carpool whenever possible.
- Stay behind the leader.
- Offer to chip-in for gas if you rode with someone.
- Don't monopolize someone else's scope.
- Wear muted colors.
- Avoid blocking other people's view.
- Silence is golden.
- Help the leader make sure everyone gets to see a bird.

So, the next time you are out birding with a group, whether it's an MAS field trip or not, keep these things in mind. They will help you see more birds and be more relaxed which is exactly what we want.



Become an Audubon Ambassador!!!

<http://climate.nc.audubon.org/ambassadors>

What Is An Audubon Ambassador?

Audubon Ambassadors are a committed, passionate group of individuals who love birds and want to do more to combat the effects of climate change.

Audubon Ambassadors volunteer their time to complete tasks every month that will help birds adapt to the effects of climate change. You will:

- Be the Messenger - Spread the message about climate change and birds
- Be the Solution - Take personal actions to make a difference
- Be an Advocate - Help change laws to protect our birds and our planet

Why Become An Ambassador?

You love birds. You care about our state and our planet. You want to be part of concrete changes that slow the effects of climate change and leave a better world for the next generation. You want to do more than talk, or sign another petition. You want to ACT!

Join the Audubon Ambassador program to:

- Volunteer to take action to protect birds as they face the impacts of global warming.
- Get access to tools to help make concrete changes.
- Help change or enact laws that protect birds and people.
- Meet like-minded people in your community and across the state.
- Be part of shaping the climate change conversation in North Carolina.
- Have lots of fun.

What You'll Gain as an Audubon Ambassador

Audubon North Carolina has created meaningful, easy actions to help you protect birds. We have created tools for you to have impactful conversations with your friends, families and communities about how climate change is affecting birds. We also have the right tools, so you can see how your actions add up to real protection for birds facing the effects of climate change.

By joining the Audubon Ambassador program you will get:

- Tips and training on how to talk about climate change with family, friends and your community
- Access to an exclusive Facebook group with climate change articles, tools, events and networking with your fellow Ambassadors
- Update emails with concrete ways you can take action through quick ideas and long-term projects, and reports on the progress of the entire group
- Access to Audubon Works, a password-protected site with climate tools and resources
- Support from the Audubon North Carolina staff via email and conference calls

"Because birds cover the landscape, literally, and their habits and moves are there for us to track every day, we are the keepers of the climate change ledger."
– Robert Doherty, Audubon North Carolina Board of Directors

NC Priority Bird

American Oystercatcher



©Ron Clark

American Oystercatchers are the most recognizable of all North Carolina shorebirds. They can be found along the North Carolina coast year-round, nesting on sandy beaches and islands.

A magnificent beach-nesting bird with striking black and white plumage, a large bright red-orange bill and a loud unmistakable voice, American Oystercatchers are the most recognizable of all North Carolina shorebirds. They can be found along the North Carolina coast year-round, nesting on sandy beaches and islands.



©Audubon NC

The main threats to the Oystercatcher include its low population totaling a mere 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.

Much more needs to be understood about the American Oystercatcher and its habitat use in order to understand its conservation needs, but through a partnership with Audubon Toyota TogetherGreen, NC State University and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Audubon North Carolina is conducting an ongoing study of American Oystercatchers. The American Oystercatcher Tracking Project (<http://oystercatchertracking.org/?p=293>) is monitoring the oystercatchers nesting on beaches, natural islands and dredged-sand islands, and identifying the factors that contribute to nest and chick loss. Studies of migration and winter habitats will also document the distribution, abundance and potential threats at these areas.

Through a national climate study, Audubon has identified the American Oystercatcher as a climate threatened bird. Learn more here at <http://climate.audubon.org/node/3186>



©Audubon NC

How Much Time Does it Take to Be an Ambassador?

As an Audubon Ambassador, we ask you to commit five hours each month to completing actions that benefit birds, other wildlife and people. We believe that just a little effort will add up to a lot of benefits. Just five hours each month will have a huge impact toward helping North Carolina's birds thrive.

Through the Audubon Ambassador eBulletin, you'll receive suggested activities and meaningful ways you can spend your volunteer time to help make a difference for birds. Each month, you'll pick the activities that work with your schedule and passion. Every action counts!

Ambassadors might spend five hours per month completing a mix of the following tasks:

- Have conversations about climate change
- Be a citizen scientist and help count birds
- Add bird-friendly native plants to your garden
- Complete a Climate Action Plan
- Educate yourself about climate change and its impact on birds
- Write letters and make calls to legislators to change or enact laws that protect our birds and their habitats

We'll also be challenging you to participate in longer term efforts, which may include:

- Giving a presentation about birds and our environment
- Starting a blog or creating a photography project
- Organizing local events
- Engaging legislators and city government

You will spend your volunteer hours at your home or in your community. There is no need to sign-in or show up anywhere. This is independent work with a local and statewide impact.

Audubon Ambassadors become part of a NATIONAL project

The Audubon Ambassador program is brand new, and you are joining at the ground level. This program is a model for the National Audubon Society. What you do now, as an Audubon Ambassador in North Carolina, will lead the way for thousands of concerned citizens across the nation. The National Audubon Society will use the best successes of the Audubon Ambassador program to implement similar efforts across the United States.

To help us measure the best successes and outcomes, we will ask you to track your actions in an easy-to-use tool. This will help inform the organization as to which tactics work best to shape the conversation about birds and climate change.

With the Audubon Ambassador program, we are asking more people than ever to work together for the benefit of birds.

Lead the way for change and become an Audubon Ambassador! Sign up here.

Not ready to commit to becoming an Audubon Ambassador? You can still help out by creating a Climate Action Plan.

To get more information and join go to <http://climate.nc.audubon.org/ambassadors>

MAS 75 Years Young!!!

We're having a PARTY and YOU are invited.

The celebration will take place at the large pavillon at the McDowell Nature Preserve in the southwest corner of Mecklenburg Co. on the banks of Lake Wilely. There will be early morning walks to the McDowell Prairie and around the preserve itself. Details for these can be found under Field Trips in this newsletter and/or on the website.

The party, however, will begin around 12 Noon and consisting of barbeque and fixin's catered by DELECTABLES by Holly. In addition we will have meatless options. Food will be served at 12:30 PM.

In addition to wonderful food and fellowship we will have music by Harry Taylor and an extra special presentation about the history of the club with additional memorabilia on display. There will be activities for the kids as well.

To join the party you can purchase tickets at the monthly meetings, online through our website (meckbirds.org) or use the form below. Tickets are \$12 for adults; \$6 for children 12 and under.

ALL tickets must be purchased by Sat., October 3rd.

Who's New?

- Matthew Banash
- Susan & Bob Barnhart
- Carol Barry
- Susan Bishop
- Lee Buchanan
- Jody Davison
- Madeline DeGrace
- Deborah Donahue
- Linda Halter
- Alycia Kivlighan
- Ray & Nancy Nesbitt
- Matt Nuttall
- Wendy Rayfield
- Linda & John Rogers
- Skip & Mary Davis Smart
- Peter & April Stvollmack
- Elizabeth Stuart
- Roy Therese
- Jean & Paul Wilson

75th Anniversary Celebration Tickets

Fill out the form below and mail it with a check to:

Treasurer, Mecklenburg Audubon,
P.O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222 by Oct. 3rd.

We will have your tickets waiting for you at the will call table the day of the celebration.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone# _____

In case we need to contact you about anything.

Additional names (if you are ordering more than one ticket):

	#Tickets	Total Cost
Adult tickets (\$12)	_____	_____
Child tickets [12 and under] (\$6)	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

Number of meatless meals: _____

MAS Executive Board

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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 website - meckbirds.org.

Tips for New Birders

"Birder's guide to Field Trip Survival"
by Don Feiday from *Pete Dunne on Birding* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003)



Going on a first field trip is a little like attending your first dance. You can either step onto the floor and let someone else lead or you can learn a few dance steps beforehand. Both approaches are fine.

But for those who like the assurance that knowledge brings, here is a list of field trip dos and don'ts I have collected from field trip participants, leaders and my own experiences in the field. Take them to heart and on your first field trip you'll spend more time enjoying the birds and less time tripping over your (or fellow birder's) feet.

Do ask questions about the trip before the trip.

Do make sure the leader knows before the trip about any special physical needs or limitations. Many times such needs can be ac-

commodated with advance notice.

Do honestly evaluate whether you are physically up to a particular trip or portion of a trip.

Do be early, or at least on time.

Do make sure you know how to get to the meeting place.

Do let the leader know whether there is a particular bird you would like to see. However, don't harp on the birds you are missing.

If someone calls out a bird and you cannot find it, **say so!**

Do call out yourself if you see a bird. One of the chief advantages of birding with a group is having multiple sets of eyes all looking at once.

Do know when to be quiet. Being quiet means more than not talking loudly. It means not moving unnecessarily and moving quietly when you have to move.

Do learn how to give and receive directions to a bird's location.

Do watch the leader. If s/he stops suddenly with head cocked, stop. Undoubtedly the leader heard a bird – maybe your next life bird.

Do wear quiet clothing in quiet colors.

Do stay with your leader.

Do be prepared for less than adequate bathroom facilities.

Don't insist on driving alone. If carpooling is possible, do it. The fewer vehicles involved in a trip, the better.

Don't drag significant others along unless they are eager to come and understand what is involved. Make sure they have binoculars.



<http://feederwatch.org>

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Anyone interested in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. Participants watch their feeders as much or as little as they want over two consecutive days as often as every week (less often is fine). They count birds that appear in their count site because of something that they provided (plantings, food, or water).

New participants are sent a Research Kit with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster and more. You provide the feeder(s) and seed. Then each fall participants receive our 16-page, year-end report, Winter Bird Highlights. Participants also receive the Cornell Lab newsletter.

There is a \$18 annual participation fee for U.S. residents. The participation fee covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and the year-end report (Winter Bird Highlights). Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible.

Bird Seed Cookies



Photo by Heather Katsoulis

Here's a quick project to encourage young birders.

What you will need:

- bird seed (any type)
- cookie cutters
- water
- flour
- corn syrup
- unflavored gelatin
- string
- skewer
- non-stick cooking spray

Spray your cookie cutters with non-stick spray to make the cookies easier to pop out.

In a large bowl, mix together: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water, 3 tablespoons corn syrup, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon gelatin, and 4 cups of desired bird seed. Stir until the bird seed is evenly distributed.

On a tray or sheet of wax paper, lay out your desired cookie cutters (sprayed with cooking spray). Fill the cookie cutters with the mixture and press into shape firmly. Make a small hole in each cookie with the skewer for the string.

Let the cookies dry overnight, turning them occasionally to dry both sides equally. When dry, carefully pop the cookies out of their molds and thread a string through the hole. Hang the ornaments from a tree, pole, or hook outside your windows and watch the birds devour them! (This recipe makes about 12 medium-sized ornaments).

For more projects for young and old alike check out Cornell's Bird Sleuth <http://www.birdsleuth.org/?p=9624>

SKETCH

EVERY BIRD HAS A STORY. DRAWINGS BY JASON POLAN.



Acclaimed artist Jason Polan's charming bird illustrations headline Audubon's latest online weekly series: The Sketch. Accompanying each drawing is a personal story about that bird. Take the Galapagos Penguin, which favors equatorial climes over frozen icescapes. Did you know these heat-loving birds keep cool by panting like dogs? Read more at <https://www.audubon.org/node/50256>



As the MAS activities gear up for the fall, it's a reminder that it's time to Renew your membership. Don't worry if you recently joined you are good until June 2016. But the rest of us have to dig into our piggy banks to find some funds to renew our memberships for another year.

Local membership dues help cover administration costs such as the website, programs, printing display materials and much more. In contrast, all of the monies we raise through coffee sales, raffles, auctions, etc. are used for conservation and education efforts.

Take a few minutes to fill out the form below and send it to our illustrious treasurer. Or go to the website (meckbirds.org/membership.html) and pay with a credit or debit card.

Mecklenburg Audubon Society

Join now and your membership will be effective until June 2016.

Local Membership covers the cost of the newsletter, web site, meetings and other administrative commitments.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

- Individual Membership [\$10]
- Family Membership [\$15]
- Additional Donation \$ _____

Volunteer Opportunities

- Lead field trips
- Do a program
- Help at events

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