

# New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter

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<http://www.newhopeaudubon.org>



## Migration Facts to Amaze & Amuse by Norm Budnitz

In general, when we think of bird migration, we think of the long-distance, north-south journeys of our North American wood warblers and other passerines and shorebirds. Some of these migrations are quite spectacular:

- Arctic Terns migrate from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back each year of their lives. That's a distance of about 44,000 miles, round trip. For comparison, the circumference of the Earth is a mere 25,000 miles. Of course, these migrations are not non-stop. The birds take their time, feeding and resting as they work their way north and south.
- Bar-tailed Godwits, on the other hand, do not go quite as far, but they cover enormous distances non-stop. One female, wearing a satellite tag, was recorded making a non-stop flight from her breeding grounds in Alaska to her wintering grounds in New Zealand. That's a distance of over 7,000 miles! No resting. No stopping for a snack. Just flying, flying, flying for 7,000 miles.
- In their southward migration Blackpoll Warblers, weighing in at  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an ounce, travel non-stop over the Atlantic Ocean from eastern North America to northern South America, traveling 1,500 to 2,000 miles.
- Some Ruby-throated Hummingbirds ( $\frac{1}{10}$  of an ounce) cross the Gulf of Mexico non-stop, a distance of up to 500 miles. Some Ruby-throats go the long way around, along the east coast of Mexico and Central America.

On the other hand, not all migrations are north-south. Some species are altitudinal migrants, breeding at high elevations and wintering nearby at lower elevations.

## Feeder Watch



by Tom Driscoll

As I watch the birds checking out and eating from the suet feeders in my yard, I am struck by the notion of "pecking order". Having heard this term most of my life and having seen how true it is for our feathered friends (and us), I note that the birds appear to be very aware of the pecking order and do not try to eat out-of-turn! Mostly, the pecking order is based on size of the bird; crows eat first and Ruby-crowned Kinglets eat last. However, in some cases, the aggressiveness of the bird will make up for its size. For example, the Red-bellied Woodpeckers are higher in the pecking order than the Blue Jay, at least at my feeders. In most cases, the birds will eat alone at the suet feeders. In the case of



Cont'd from pg 1 Migration Facts

- Black Rosy-Finches, for example, breed at the highest elevations in the Rocky Mountains, but come down several thousand feet in winter to feed in wind-swept areas with little snow and at bird feeders.
- Most Dark-eyed Juncos migrate north-south, but some populations are altitudinal migrants. The southern Appalachian population, distinguished by its bluish-white bill (unlike the pinkish bill of other juncos), does just that. It breeds at higher elevations and then moves down and spreads out at lower elevations in winter.

There are other North American species whose 'migration' cannot be put into any particular category.

- The Eastern Bluebird is an interesting example in that some populations move while others do not. The bluebirds that breed in central North Carolina tend to stay as permanent residents. But in winter, the numbers of bluebirds swell for two reasons—the young of the previous breeding season and the influx of bluebirds from the north who have migrated south from harsher northern winters. Those migrants leave again in the spring to go back to their breeding sites.
- Red Crossbills are perhaps best characterized as nomads. Typically, they are found in areas of the northern, boreal forests where cone crops are abundant. But when seeds are depleted, crossbills will move in large numbers to other areas where food is more plentiful. Sometimes these movements are southward, as was the case last winter, 2012-13, when we had crossbills showing up in central North Carolina. But more commonly, these birds stay within their boreal forest habitat, moving east or west, hundreds of miles, in search of fuller larders.
- Canada Geese tell yet another story. Some populations that breed in the arctic move north and south each spring and fall. Most of the Canadas that we see in winter in eastern North Carolina are members of these groups. However, the Canada Geese we see in our parks, golf courses, and industrial campuses are non-migratory. They are descendants of introduced birds that had been bred in captivity for many generations and had lost their migratory tendencies. They do move around a bit locally, but they seem quite content to leave their poop close to home year round.



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- It seems like there are always Blue Jays around the neighborhood—spring, summer, fall, and winter. But are they the same individual birds being seen as permanent residents? Perhaps not. Most Blue Jays do seem to migrate southward for the winter, but some southern breeders who fly south are replaced by northern breeders who have come in to take their place. And some individuals don't migrate at all, or don't migrate some years, but do migrate other years. So are Blue Jays migrants? Yes and no.

Many North American species do not migrate at all. Our cardinals, chickadees and titmice are here year-round. And those feisty little Carolina Wrens are happy to poke around your garden patch without ever a thought of moving elsewhere.

[Some of the information in this article was gleaned from *The Birds of North America Online*, <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna>.]

## Calendar of Activities



Saturday, January 4, **Stream Watch** with John Kent 9:00am

Saturday, January 4, **Field trip with Tom Driscoll**, Meet at the Wild Bird Center, Eastgate Mall in Chapel Hill parking lot. We will be out for 2 to 3 hours looking for winter birds. The location is to be determined. The hiking will be easy. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks. If you plan on attending, then please contact Tom Driscoll at [spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com).

Thursday, January 9, **Membership Meeting**, NC Botanical Gardens, 7:00pm,  
Norm Budnitz, NHAS: "Birding Bhutan in the Himalayas"

Sunday January 12, **Eagle Count** with Steve McMurray, 7:00am-8:30am

Saturday February 1, **Stream Watch** with John Kent, 9:00am

Thursday, February 6, **Membership Meeting**, NC Botanical Gardens, 7:00pm. Jeff Phippen, Duke University: "Butterflies of North Carolina"

Sunday, February 9, **Bird Walk with Tom Driscoll**, Meet at the Mardi Gras parking lot in Chapel Hill (Farrington Rd. at Hwy. 54). We will be out for 2 to 3 hours looking for winter birds. The location is to be determined. The hiking will be easy. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks. If you plan on attending either of these bird walks, then please contact Tom Driscoll at [spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com). Birdwatchers of all skill levels are welcome!



## NHAS Membership Meeting Speakers for 2014

Our membership meetings are held in the Visitor Education Center at the North Carolina Botanical Garden, 100 Old Mason Farm Road, Chapel Hill, on the first Thursday of every month (except June, July, and August). Everyone, including non-members, is welcome! See you at a meeting soon!

Date & Time	Speaker	Topic
January 9, 2014 7:00 pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month	Norm Budnitz, NHAS	Birding Bhutan in the Himalayas
February 6, 2014 7:00 pm	Jeff Phippen, Duke University	Butterflies of North Carolina
March 6 2014 7:00 pm	Ed Corey, NC State Parks,	Dragonflies of North Carolina
April 3, 2014 7:00 pm	Chris Hakkenberg, UNC	Tracking Forest Dynamics from Space
May 1, 2014 7:00pm	Mark Kosiewski, NHAS	Piedmont Barn Owl Initiative



## ***Feeder Watch by Tom Driscoll cont'd from page 1***

Eastern Bluebirds, they will eat as a gang! Some of the smaller birds will share the suet; the Pine Warblers will share with others of similar size, like the Carolina Wren. Pine Warblers and White-breasted Nuthatches will also sneak onto the suet feeders to get a quick nip before being chased off by the bigger birds! What have you noticed about the pecking order at your feeders? Our winter visitors, Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and other migrants from the north are here now and they are hungry. I am serving up much more food than in the autumn months. I have been putting millet out for the ground feeders; unfortunately, when I spread food on the ground I am feeding squirrels as well. The birds are finally eating my nyjer seed as well. They weren't eating this seed for months. Are your birds eating nyjer?

I continue to use tube feeders and platform feeders. Some of the birds are not as adept at dining from the tube feeders, so the platform is helpful for them. Sometimes, I also put millet on the ground for towhees and some of our winter sparrows. Also, during the winter, there are periods of no or little rain. Make sure your birds have a source of water.

At this time of year, many of the birds, especially Northern Cardinals, may appear scraggly as they are molting into their new plumage. This is a gradual process that may take several months. During the winter, the juvenile birds will molt into their adult plumage for spring.

Some residents, such as American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds, eat berries from the holly bushes, dogwood, and juniper or cedar trees in your yard. We have seen Cedar Waxwings in our yard eating berries. Have you seen the Cedar Waxwings yet? Our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have departed for warmer climes. However, keep your feeders up for another month or so because we sometimes have "western" hummingbirds, such as Rufous or Calliope Hummingbirds, spend the winter here. There have been two Rufous Hummingbirds seen in Chapel Hill and many more seen in Raleigh. If you are still seeing a hummingbird, please let me know!

Although I discuss the birds I am seeing or you can see at your feeders, I am hoping to receive reports and questions about the birds you are seeing. This will make the articles more interesting if you have ideas about topics to discuss, want to report on the birds you are seeing, or have questions about the birds you are seeing, please send me an email at [spttdrshnk@yahoo.com](mailto:spttdrshnk@yahoo.com).



## ***NHAS Birding Trip***

The New Hope Audubon Society is hosting a birding trip to eastern North Carolina on the weekend of January 17 - 20. We plan to spend Friday night in Plymouth at the Holiday Inn Express. If possible, we may do an owl prowl at Pettigrew State Park. On Saturday, we plan to go to Pungo Lake to look at swans, ducks, and geese. In the afternoon, we plan to go to Lake Mattamuskeet to look for waders, swans, ducks, and geese. Afterwards, we plan to go to Manteo to spend two nights. We plan to go to Bodie Island, Pea Island, and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges on Sunday and Monday and will return on Monday afternoon. You are welcome to join us later in the trip or leave early; whatever works for you! There is a \$35 fee for this trip to be paid to the New Hope Audubon Society. Last year on this trip, we saw 112 species of birds. Several Snowy Owls have been seen in Eastern North Carolina and we will look for them. There is a chance to see Brown Bears as well. You must contact Tom Driscoll by January 10, if you plan to go. We plan to carpool and let us know if you would like to share a room.

## ***2013 Bird Seed Sale Results by Mary George***

Many thanks to all of you who purchased bird seed this year and for those of you who also included donations with your order! The bird seed sale is one of New Hope Audubon Society's major fund raisers to assist in funding projects such as their Piedmont Barn Owl Initiative and trail building at their Wildlife Observation Platform at Jordan Lake. Net proceeds from the sale this year were \$2978.54. Thanks go to the cheerful crew of volunteers who helped on pick-up day loading cars and delivering seeds...John Paul, Norm Budnitz, Frances Sample, Karen Hattman, Mark Kosiewski, Mary George and Jim George. A huge thank you goes to Tracy Rehberg, the new owner of The Wild Bird Center in Eastgate Shopping Center, and her staff for allowing us to use her store for the bird seed distribution and for co-sponsoring the sale.



## New Hope Audubon Officers for 2013-2014

<b>President</b> .....	<b>Norm Budnitz</b>
<b>Vice President</b> .....	<b>Robert “Bo” Howes</b>
<b>Secretary</b> .....	<b>Pat Reid</b>
<b>Treasurer</b> .....	<b>Jill Paul</b>
<b>Director</b> .....	<b>John Kent</b>
<b>Director</b> .....	<b>Mark Kosiewski</b>
<b>Director</b> .....	<b>Robin Moran</b>

## *Committee Chairs and Special Projects*

<b>Bird Seed Sale</b> .....	<b>Mary George</b>
<b>Christmas &amp; Spring Bird Counts</b> .....	<b>Norm Budnitz</b>
<b>Conservation Chair</b> .....	<b>Mark Kosiewski</b>
<b>Eagle Count</b> .....	<b>Steve McMurray</b>
<b>Education Chair</b> .....	vacant
<b>Hospitality Co-Chairs</b> .....	<b>Jim and Mary George</b>
<b>Important Bird Area, Eno River</b> .....	<b>Tom Driscoll</b>
<b>Important Bird Area, Jordan Lake</b> ...	<b>Bo Howes</b>
<b>Membership Chair</b> .....	<b>Jim George</b>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b> .....	<b>Pat Reid</b>
<b>Program Chair</b> .....	<b>Mark Kosiewski</b>
<b>Publicity Chair</b> .....	<b>Tom Driscoll</b>
<b>Stream Watch</b> .....	<b>John Kent</b>
<b>Webmaster</b> .....	<b>Norm Budnitz</b>
<b>Wildathon Chair</b> .....	vacant
<b>Wildlife Observation Platform</b> .....	<b>Bo Howes</b>