

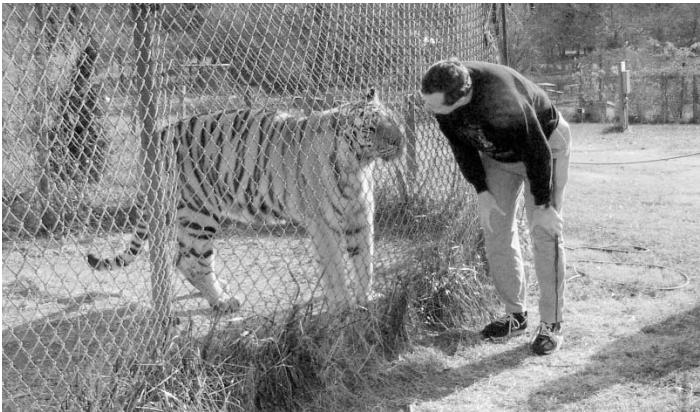
New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter



Volume 32, Number 2: March-April 2006

Guided Tour of Carnivore Preservation Trust

Dianne Byrne



Our December 4, 2005 field trip to the Carnivore Preservation Trust (CPT) in Pittsboro, NC was quite a treat. My choice of that site for a field trip followed reports that visitors were able to see the lions, tigers, and other "cats" up close and that the guided tours were very informative. My information proved to be entirely accurate. Our tour guide was Dr. Mark Zeringue, who was extremely knowledgeable and more than willing to answer our many questions. He told us the history and current mission of the Trust and described the characteristics of each of the animals, as we watched them in their outdoor habitats. The 55-acre refuge was started in 1981 to ensure the survival of specific species critical to the survival of threatened ecosystems (due to their role in seed dispersal or rodent control, for example). To this end, the CPT provided a breeding program for caracals, servals, ocelots, and binturongs to keep a viable population of these species in trust until home habitats were sufficiently protected to support them again. Once the public learned of the trust, people approached CPT with large cats in need of care after being discarded from the entertainment industry or exotic pet trade. The CPT began accepting rescued animals, and today it is a wildlife sanctuary that provides for carnivores in need. An equally important mission is educating the public about what threatens these animals. The facility no longer conducts its breeding program.



While we observed their activities, Dr. Zeringue spoke about how each animal came to be at the Trust (some were rescued after being abandoned, some were donated, some were born at the refuge). We saw keepers give chicken carcasses (previously frozen and already cleaned) to several of the larger cats and watched a serval (the size of a large house cat) jump for food tossed onto the rooftop of a shelter. We delighted in hearing the "chuffle" sounds made by the tigers. We were warned to stay clear of the tigers' backsides in case they decided to signal their territorial superiority by spraying urine. (One or two individuals didn't stand quite far enough away and received an unexpected take-home memory). Participants were fascinated by the animals and entertained

by Dr. Zeringue's interesting stories. Towards the end of the tour, we had a lively discussion of which species was the most beautiful. Some thought the snow leopard was the most beautiful cat they had ever seen, but others were particularly fond of the tigers, caracals, or servals residing at the CPT.

The guided weekend tours are very informative and entertaining, and seeing these animals just a few feet away is a special delight. Treat yourself to a guided tour, obtained by registering at the CPT's website (www.cptigers.org).

WILDATHON 2006

The 2006 New Hope Audubon Society Wildathon, our annual fund raising activity, begins in mid-April and runs through May 15th and we want you to participate! We need your support to continue the nature advocacy and environmental work we do in the community. There are 3 ways to participate:

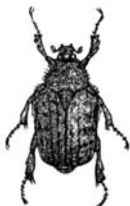
1. **Make a financial contribution.** Contributing is one of the best ways to protect important bird and wildlife habitat here in Chapel Hill (Mason Farm) and at the Coast (Audubon Coast Islands Sanctuary).
2. **Lead a team and/or join a team.** The Wildathon is a day in April or May where teams go out to identify and, more importantly, count bird, plant, reptile and amphibian, insect, and/or other species. Usually, donations are based on the number of species counted. You do not have to be experienced to be on a team.
3. **Help bring in donations.** Beyond making a donation yourself, participants can help raise money by soliciting donations on behalf of their team.

Your contribution is **tax deductible** and your participation will be **noted in our bi-monthly newsletter and on our website** (www.newhopeaudubon.org). If you have any questions or would like to discuss your participation further, then please contact Tom Driscoll at (919) 932-7966 or btdriscoll@bellsouth.net.

A Triangle Naturalist's Almanac

Patrick Coin

Flower Scarabs – Spare Them The Bad Rap



Beetles, as a group, suffer from a bad reputation with gardeners. Most of this is due to the depredations of a few species, especially the introduced Japanese beetle, *Popillia japonica*. Few realize that we have several showy native beetles that visit flowers. While they do sometimes nibble at blossoms or foliage, most are after pollen, and some may be important in fertilizing native plants. Their bright colors and bold patterns make them as “watchable” as butterflies.

“Flower scarab” is a term for some diurnal members of the *Scarabaeidae*, or scarab beetle family. Members of the genus *Euphoria* are perhaps the most commonly seen. These are medium-sized (about half an inch) with wide flat bodies. They make a bee-like buzzing sound in flight. If this mimicry does not deter a potential predator, they are adept at playing dead for extended periods. All four of our species can be distinguished by coloration. The bumble flower scarab, *Euphoria inda*, is found along woodland trails in spring and fall. It is a mottled yellow-brown, and very hairy. I have not seen it come to flowers, but it is reputed to like ripe fruit. The dark flower scarab *Euphoria sepulcralis*, is almost black, with irregular white marks. It is found on flowers of spring and early summer. The white heads of our native *Marshallia obovata* are particularly attractive to this species. The beautiful emerald *Euphoria fulgida* is seen occasionally near

woodlands, and sometimes on flowers. It resembles a miniature green fruit beetle, *Cotinis nitida*, and is likely overlooked among its abundant, and sometimes pesky, relative. *Euphoria herbacea* is found in old fields and woodland edges from late spring into summer. Its colors are muted greens and browns, with irregular white spots. I have never seen it at flowers, but find it buzzing low over mossy areas of woodland edges. This is presumably where the female lays eggs.



Another spring flower scarab is *Gnorimella maculosa*, reported to be fond of dogwood blossoms, but seldom seen. Scarab expert Phil Harpootlian knows of no published photograph of this species in the wild. The photo included here *may* be a first in print!

Life cycles of many scarabs are poorly known, or at least, not available in the popular literature. The larvae, or grubs, of most scarabs are presumed to live in decomposing organic matter such as vegetation, or even dung. Some species are suspected of being associates of ants – the technical term being *myrmecophiles*. The one *Gnorimella maculosa* I have observed seemed very interested in a line of ants marching across the trunk of a tree. *Euphoria* species have been reported to land on anthills, perhaps to lay eggs. Watch for such behaviors this spring – you may contribute to the study of our native scarabs.

For more information on flower scarabs, see: Dillon and Dillon, *Manual of Common Beetles of Eastern North America*; Harpootlian, *Scarab Beetles of South Carolina*; White, *Field Guide to the Beetles of North America*; web site, bugguide.net.

Falls Lake Field Trip

Tom Driscoll

We had a very good field trip to Falls Lake, north of Durham, on January 15th. I was pleasantly surprised to find 9 people wanting to go and another from Raleigh contacted me to meet us at Falls Lake. Participants included Sarah Dendy, Pat Boswell, Rhonda Washington, Harry Shaffner and his wife, Anne Geer, Dick Fox and his wife, and Eric Nelson. I'm sorry I'm so bad with names. The Shaffners had done the Falls Lake Christmas Count, so they lead us to several areas including Beaverdam Park.

We tried 5 spots at Falls Lake to look for ducks which mostly eluded us. We did see a perched adult male Bald Eagle which was a life bird for some. We also got great looks at a close, perched Belted Kingfisher which was a life bird for some. We also got very good looks at Hooded Mergansers and we saw a flock of 100, at least, which was the biggest flock I had ever seen.

We mostly studied gulls. We saw four species, Ring-billed, Bonaparte's (everyone got good looks at one), Greater Black-backed, and Herring. Not too bad for a windy, chilly Sunday afternoon!

Feeder Watch

Tom Driscoll

When our new newsletter editor, Pat Reid, asked me what birds could be currently seen at our feeders, she also asked me to write a column on birds seen at the feeders during the different seasons. So, Feeder Watch will report on birds you could be seeing at the bird feeders and/or in your back yard. If you have ideas about what to write, want to report on the birds you are seeing, or have questions about the birds you are seeing, please send me an email at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net.

You should be receiving this newsletter in mid-February. This is often the coldest part of the year. Birds should be feeding greedily from your feeders. Are you putting out more feed? Often, birds, such as Pine Warblers, Baltimore Orioles, and Eastern Bluebirds feed on suet during February. The winter visitors, migrants from the north, will usually remain through February and March.

During the winter, we have visitors from the north and/or the mountains. Have you noticed slate-gray black birds with pink bills and white outer tail feathers? These birds are named Dark-eyed Juncos and are part of the sparrow family. White-throated Sparrows are often common feeder birds at platform feeders or picking up the "leftovers" on the grounds. There are several plumage forms of this sparrow, but all have white throats. Another winter visitor is the Red-breasted Nuthatch. These birds look like our White-breasted Nuthatch, but have

red breasts and a white stripe through the eyes. We also have Purple Finches occasionally during some winters. These birds are bigger than their cousins, the House Finch. They can be difficult to tell apart. The Purple Finch usually has more purple in its plumage. Also, the upper bill, called the culmen, is straight whereas the House Finch has a curved culmen.

As the weather warms up and the days become longer, birds will start singing and practicing their mating songs. See if you pick out the "Missus Peabody, Peabody, Peabody..." of the White-throated Sparrow. Also, some birds, such as the Eastern Bluebird, will start pairing up to mate. Make sure your bluebird boxes are up. If you need one, the New Hope Audubon Society sells them. Please contact me if you would like to purchase one. Free delivery!

If you don't recognize these birds or the bird names, then may I suggest you pick one a bird guide that are available in many stores. I challenge you to learn the names and calls of your feeder birds! Please let me know if you do. If you have questions or notice an unusual bird, then please contact me.

NHAS Board Vacancies

Want to have some fun working with some nice folks on projects that are important to Chatham, Durham, and Orange Counties? Want to help plan some of the activities of the New Hope Audubon Society? Do you want the New Hope Audubon Society to address some environmental or nature advocacy issues in our local communities? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you may need to become a board member for the New Hope Audubon Society. We have several vacancies and, with terms ending in April, we may have a few more. If you are interested, then please contact Tom Driscoll at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net. Thank you for your consideration!

Lake Pungo



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Keep Cats Inside

Do you want to help protect wildlife? If you or your neighbors have cats, please keep them inside and encourage your neighbors to do likewise. Outdoor cats are responsible for the deaths of millions of songbirds every year. For more information go to the American Bird Conservation web site at www.abcbirds.org and click on Cats Indoors (or google: "Keep your cats inside").

New Stream Watch Group Monitors Northeast Creek, Durham County

A new stream watch group has been formed in Southern Durham County to monitor Northeast Creek. We are registered with the NC Stream Watch Program and have adopted the creek from Grandale Road to NC 54. In January, we collected water quality data at two sites on the creek. We have also participated in two hikes along the creek.

Upcoming events will be a wildflower/amphibian hike along the creek in March, and a trash clean up around Earth Day. We have requested road signs marking the creek from the NC DOT, and we are putting up our two Stream Watch signs. We will have weeknight planning meetings in February and March.

Our long-range goal would be to monitor the creek from its headwaters and tributaries to Jordan Lake and work on

environmental issues and human use of natural areas throughout the drainage basin. We are interested in wildlife habitat improvements and would like to be involved with public education events. We are also lobbying for trails along the creek. We welcome new members to help with these activities. Anyone interested in joining can contact Michael Pollock at Michael_Pollock@yahoo.com or (919) 544-7397 for more details.

Eagle Platform Cleanup

The clean-up/trail maintenance for the Eagle Platform trail is slated for March 18th (rain date March 25). Don't forget your pruning shears, saw and work gloves also snacks and water. We'll meet at 8:30 in the parking lot.

The trail is located off Hwy. 751 South, about 10 miles from I-40. Any questions please call Tom Driscoll 932-7966 or Phil Johnson 933-0144.

Partners in Flight

Don't forget the Partners in Flight meeting Monday, March 28th, 9:30-4:30 at Blue Jay Point County Park on Falls Lake. Some topics: Ovenbird, Painted Bunting, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. For more information visit their web site at: www.faculty.ncwc.edu/mbrooks/pif/.

Upcoming NHAS Membership Meetings

On March 2, Chris Moorman will be talking about "Making Your Backyard a Wildlife Habitat Area." Chris is a graduate student at North Carolina State University. Have you ever wondered how to get birds to come and nest in your yard? Come hear how you can, just in time for spring planting!

On April 6, our own Curtis Smalling will discuss the "Birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains" and he will talk about the importance of Important Bird Areas. Curtis works for the North Carolina State Audubon Society and has led several field trips for us and, believe me, few people know more about Blue Ridge birds. He will be speaking just in time for the spring migration.

On May 4, Loren Hintz will discuss the "Flora and Fauna of El Salvador." Loren should have some great pictures and discussion of his trip there. Loren is a biology teacher at Chapel Hill High School.

As always, our membership meetings are held at the Totten Center at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens. The gardens are on Hwy. 15-501 at the intersection of Old Mason Farm Road. The meeting starts at 7pm with refreshments, chatting with friends, and meeting visitors or new members. There is chapter business at 7:20 or so and the presentations start at approximately 7:45 and run through 9:00. Everyone, even non-members, is welcome!

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY • SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2006 • 8:30 A.M.

Interested folks should call Phil Johnson to confirm.

New Hope Audubon Society Field Trips Calendar

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	CONTACT
Saturday, March 4 9:00 a.m.	Stream Watch	Trip Leader: John Kent
Saturday, March 11 8:00 a.m.	Bird Walk, Duke Gardens, Durham We will meet at 7:55 a.m. in the parking lot near Duke Gardens Visitor Center. Note: All levels welcome.	Trip Leader: Cynthia Fox
Sunday, March 12 1:00 p.m.	Bird Walk, destination to be determined by recent bird sitings. We will meet in the parking lot in front of Mardi Gras bowling lanes, Intersection of NC 54 and Farrington Road. Note: All levels welcome. See general note below.	Trip Leader: Tom Driscoll
Saturday, March 25 8:00 a.m.	Bird Walk, Local Birding Spot We will meet at the Wild Bird Center at Eastgate Shopping Center at 7:55 a.m. Notes: All levels welcome.	Trip Leader: Cynthia Fox
Saturday, April 1 9:00 a.m.	Stream Watch	Trip Leader: John Kent
Saturday, April 8 8:00 a.m.	Bird Walk, Duke Gardens, Durham We will meet at 7:55 a.m. in the parking lot near Duke Gardens Visitor Center. Note: All levels welcome.	Trip Leader: Cynthia Fox
Saturday, April 22 8:00 a.m.	Bird Walk, Local Birding Spot We will meet at the Wild Bird Center at Eastgate Shopping Center at 7:55 a.m. Notes: All levels welcome.	Trip Leader: Cynthia Fox
Saturday, April 22	Adopt-a-Highway	Trip Leader: Phil Johnson
Sunday, May 7 1:00 p.m.	Kid's Bird Walk, Mason Farm We will meet first at a parking lot in front of Mardi Gras bowling lane at 1:00 p.m. Carpools from there will stop at a parking lot at NC Botanical Gardens to pick up additional participants. It is a short drive from there to Mason Farm. Note: A special walk for kids of all ages. Beginning and first-time birders welcome. All that is needed is interest and enthusiasm. Walk will last approx. 2 hours. See general note below.	Trip Leader: Tom Driscoll

GENERAL NOTE FOR MARCH 12 AND MAY 7 WALKS: Occasionally we need to change the departure time, destination, or date of a bird walk. Please notify trip leader or field trip chair at least one day before the walk if you plan to join us. Contact Tom Driscoll at (919) 932-7966 or Dianne Byrne at (919) 929-8266.

New Hope Audubon Society 2005-2006 Officers

OFFICE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
President	VACANT		
Vice-President	Robin Moran	383-3514	robomo@earthlink.com
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Treasurer	Karsten Rist	490-5718	karsten.rist@verizon.net
Education Chair	Kate Finlayson	545-0737	katefin@yahoo.com
Conservation Chair	Susan Pratt	967-0593	sepratt@email.unc.edu
Field Trips Chair	Dianne Byrne	929-8266	DianneByrne713@aol.com
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Adopt-a-Highway	Philip Johnson	933-0144	pjphilip@earthlink.net
Eagle Count	Stewart Pearce	942-7660	spearce@yankelovich.com
Hospitality Chair	Joanna Hiller	968-3791	hille006@mc.duke.edu
Eagle Platform	Judy Murray	942-2985	jmurray@unc.edu
Membership Chair	VACANT		
Birdseed Sales Chair	Judy Murray	942-2985	jmurray@unc.edu
Wildathon Chair	Tom Driscoll	932-7966	btdriscoll@bellsouth.net
Director	Philip Johnson	933-0144	pjphilip@earthlink.net
Director	Judy Murray	942-2985	jmurray@unc.edu

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