

New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter



Volume 33, Number 12: November-December 2008

If It's Good for the Birds, It's Good for the Rest of Us.

by Jane Tigar, Conservation Chair

One of the things I like best about the Audubon Society, is that our work isn't just for the birds -- when we protect a tract of land or a body of water for birds, we are also protecting our food supply, our water supply and the health of all other beings in the ecosystem. If it is good for the birds, it's good for the rest of us.

National Audubon and our chapter work together with many like-minded not-for-profit organizations devoted to preserving and cleaning up our natural environment. You've seen the successful results of Audubon North Carolina's Executive Director Chris Canfield's efforts on behalf of Audubon North Carolina and National Audubon in protecting shore birds at Cape Hatteras. For that formidable legal effort, Audubon teamed up with Defenders of Wildlife and the Southern Environmental Law Center.



Here in our own communal backyard, New Hope Audubon Society is working with several local groups to protect against development proposals that we believe will harm our local ecosystems. This summer we joined the Triangle Land Conservancy, Friends of West Point Park and others to oppose development of Black Meadow Ridge development because of our concern that sedimentation and run off from such development will harm the Eno River and our water supply. As NHAS President Bo Howes wrote to the Durham Commissioners: "We urge the County Commissioners to work with the State of North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, the Eno River Association, the Triangle Land Conservancy, the Friends of the West Point Park, the Upper Neuse River Water Quality Commission, and other groups to preserve this land and ensure good water quality for our area."

A Resolution Supporting the Friends of West Point Park

WHEREAS, the West Point on the Eno Park provides a unique and positive experience to the people of Durham, and

WHEREAS a 60-acre tract neighboring the park known as the Black Meadow Ridge overlooks the park and may be the subject of development, and

WHEREAS, the West Point on the Eno Park will be significantly harmed unless the Black Meadow Ridge is protected from development, and

WHEREAS the state of North Carolina has expressed interest in acquiring the West Point Park and the Black Meadow Ridge tract for incorporation into the Eno River State Park,

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the New Hope Audubon Society urge the City of Durham and the Durham County Commissioners to take all necessary steps to purchase, or cause to be purchased, the Black Meadow Ridge Tract; that, if the State Park System's offer is the only means with which to preserve the Tract, such offer be seriously considered, such that preservation of the tract is achieved while maintaining flexibility within the park for Durham residents; and that the New Hope Audubon Society expresses support for the Friends of West Point Park.

It's Autumn and the Activism is E-Easy: Do Cyber Activism -- It Works.

by Jane Tigar, Conservation Chair

I used to wonder as I haphazardly “clicked” on activism alerts from Audubon, if I was really accomplishing anything. I learned in Audubon’s Leadership Training Workshop this summer, that these E-alerts are powerful tools that alter the outcome of critical House and Senate votes and decisions by our federal agencies.



When you fill out an Action Alert and click “submit”, your form goes to a human National Audubon coordinator who prints out your letter and submits it to the appropriate North Carolina elected officials or federal agency. At the leadership training session, one of these real, live, breathing, human Audubon employees who handles these alerts, gave us examples that have encouraged me to “click” on those emails. She told us of a case in which the one undecided tie-breaking member of Congress, who, when presented with a pile of print outs of our Action Alert email letters, voted our way on bills. She also told of an official who said he wasn’t inclined in our favor because hadn’t heard much from constituents in favor of Audubon’s position -- so she handed him a stack of printed forms that the legislator had received -- if I’m remembering the anecdote correctly, he ended up supporting our position.

Are you signed up for National Audubon’s Action-Alerts? If yes, make sure you click on the Take Action alerts with which you agree -- I’m guessing you’ll agree with all of them. If you’re not signed up yet, there’s no time like the present: Carry this newsletter, right now, to your computer, log on and go to <http://takeaction.audubon.org/> and sign up for Audubon’s action alerts.

You’ll find over the year that Audubon’s Action Alerts will cover a range of environmental topics, from (not) drilling in Alaska to migratory songbird protection. It’s a good way to stay informed and help. But there are more entertaining ways to help, just outside your door.

It's Autumn and the Activism Can Be Aerobic.

by Jane Tigar, Conservation Chair

Physical activism takes a little more time, but it’s so much more fun. It’s a little bit like an exercise regimen -- if you “just do it”, afterwards, you feel so good, physically and mentally, that you wonder how you could ever have thought you didn’t have time to for that bird walk or bird count. So, keep an eye on our NHAS calendar, published in each of our newsletters for birding and citizen science opportunities.

One of the most important projects we have are our local NHAS IBAs -- Important Bird Areas. Important Bird Areas are part of an international effort to identify and protect specific areas for bird conservation. You can think of it as a sort of triage -- identifying the areas we should focus on as priorities for conservation. Here at New Hope Audubon Society, we have identified Jordan Lake and the Eno River as our IBAs. As you can see from the position we are taking on Black Meadow Ridge -- our focus is on the impact on those two important IBAs. Note also, that protecting the birds protects our water supply, which we know, from recent severe drought experience, is fragile.



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According to Curtis Smalling, our Audubon North Carolina IBA coordinator, North Carolina has 96 recognized IBAs across the state. All nine of our chapters, including New Hope Audubon, have formally adopted 18 sites across the state. According to Curtis, "many of these, like New Hope's adopted IBAs (Eno River and Jordan Lake) have state parks partners involved. The replacement of the eagle platform is a great example of the kinds of projects chapters are involved in."

How can you help? Please participate in our Christmas Bird Counts, our IBA point counts and eagle counts. Watch this newsletter for opportunities to work in our new Eagle Observation area.

You can also help by joining us on our regular bird walks. We have what I like to call "generous birders" on our walks, who are happy to help new birders learn to identify birds. Bird walks are not just fun in a selfish way, they help build our community (you'll make new friends) and you will improve and develop birding skills that are very useful for our Citizen Science projects.

Our New Hope Audubon Society bird counts and surveys benefit not just those of us here in Orange, Chatham and Wake counties. As Curtis explained to me, the Christmas Counts, the Eagle Counts, and the IBA Point Counts help provide National Audubon with much needed information to support the IBA program and the many partners who use that data. Curtis noted that IBA data is currently incorporated into the NC Comprehensive Conservation Planning process. Remember, our IBA work goes even beyond North Carolina and the United States -- IBAs are part of a world-wide conservation effort. For more information about IBAs, please go to the National Audubon website: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/IBA/>

Eagle Scout Candidate Installs Benches and Implements Trail Improvements for Future New Hope Creek Park

by Tom Driscoll

Mitchell Feldman, of Durham Troop 451, designed, constructed, and installed 4 benches at the future Hollow Rock Access to the New Hope Preserve. He asked me to sponsor him on his Eagle Project and I have been working with him for about 18 months. He was assisted on this project by Scouts and friends, and by his Scoutmaster, parents and grandfather. He has now completed all the Boy Scout requirements for Eagle Scout. He researched various bench designs and then worked with Rich Shaw the Land Conservation Manager for the Orange County Environment and Resource Conservation Department to choose the bench design and appropriate locations along an existing trail. He was originally slated to build benches on the Eagle Platform trail on Jordan Lake, but that project was postponed because the area was closed by the Army Corps. of Engineers. Mitchell also removed debris, filled in holes, and cleared adjacent areas to enhance the trail. This park site is located near the intersection of Pickett Road and Erwin Road, in Durham. A park master plan is underway, and will be presented for public viewing and comments in October. The New Hope Preserve is a joint project by Orange and Durham counties in collaboration with the Triangle Land Conservancy. The New Hope Audubon Society is grateful for the great work by Mitchell and we are scheduled to recognize his efforts at the November 6 membership meeting. Come meet Mitchell!



Christmas Bird Counts 2008

The Christmas Bird Counts are coming soon. Below is the schedule for our local area. For more information go to www.carolinanature.com, click on "Chapel Hill Bird Club" and scroll down to "Triangle Area Bird Count Schedules" which includes: Raleigh, Kerr Lake and Falls Lake. For the statewide schedule go to www.carolinabirdclub.org and click on "Christmas Bird Counts". You do not have to be an expert birder in order to join a count – all are welcome. If you would like to participate, contact the person in charge of each count and he/she will assign you to a group or if you are "expert" will assign you to a count area. It is great fun and gives you a chance to meet other birders in the area. So pick up that phone or type that email and get involved.

Durham: Sunday, 14 December 2008, Contact: Jeff Pippen, jspippen@duke.edu, (919)383-8040

Chapel Hill: Monday, 28 December 2008, Contact: Will Cook, cwcook@duke.edu, (919)382-9134

Jordan Lake: Sunday, 4 January 2009, Contact: Carol Williamson, cncbrdr@yahoo.com, (919)383-2364

New Board Members

Looking to get more involved??? We have at least two opportunities to serve in the leadership of the New Hope Audubon Society. First, we have an opening for a Director on our Board of Directors. This broad position is a great way to participate in many of the projects and programs of our chapter.

Second, we need a new coordinator of our Eagle Count. As many of you know, Stewart Pearce, under the increased pressure of a growing family and new home has found he can no longer give this job the time it requires. All of us at New Hope Audubon thank Stewart for his years of service to Audubon and look forward to working with him spotting eagles in the future. If you want to be more involved this is the time to act. Please contact Bo Howes at (919) 370 3202 or rchowes007@hotmail.com for more information.

Eagle Platform Update

After delays, changes of plans, and an early summer of inactivity, there is movement afoot regarding New Hope Audubon's Jordan Lake Eagle Observation Platform. At the



insistence of our partners at the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, we have had to change the location of our Eagle Observation Platform and nature trails at Jordan Lake. Our new location is north of Martha's Chapel Road near the intersection of Farrington Point Road and Martha's Chapel Road. The plans for the new platform have been approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers and work has begun by the Wildlife Resources Commission to clear the parking area and construct a short walking trail to the site of the new platform. We hope to complete construction of the platform by the end of November. We will have a call for volunteers to help construct nature trails and beautify the site as soon as construction is complete. Please contact Bo Howes at (919) 370 3202 or rchowes007@hotmail.com for more information.

Audubon NC Annual Meeting

We have agreed to host Audubon North Carolina's annual meeting for 2009. Come April 17, 18, and 19 our region will be overrun with bird lovers and their loved ones. We are forming committees, sub-committees, and armies of volunteers to help plan and produce an Annual Meeting of unrivaled excellence. Keep your calendar clear for the 17th through 19th and look forward to your opportunity to help with this project. For more information contact Bo Howes at (919) 370 3202 or rchowes007@hotmail.com. Thanks for your support.

Feeder Watch

by Tom Driscoll

Hi, there. As you're reading this, it must be around the middle of October. The autumn transition has begun. Already, some of the birds have left your backyard. Your hummingbirds have probably left for warmer climes. Remember, some western hummingbirds, such as Rufous Hummingbirds, sometimes spend the winter in North Carolina. So, please leave your feeders out for another month. Despite what you may have heard, leaving hummingbird feeders will not deter hummingbirds from migrating south. I heard from one reader, Jim Pick who says that they have 20 or more hummingbirds (mid-September) and that his wife Judy maintains 10 feeders, seven grouped in one area in their back yard, one on the overhang of their back patio and one each on the limbs of two trees. The area is about 50 by 60 feet, but most birds come to the grouped feeders. Jim says, "[f]eel free to use this information with the caveat that it's difficult to count accurately the numbers of birds that we see."



Your resident birds are still here though and they may still be filling up on seed and suet. One of my favorites is the Brown-headed nuthatches. It is one of the smallest birds in North Carolina and will eat sunflower seeds and suet. Listen for them, as their "squeak toy" call is very distinctive. Another bird that seems to call more in the fall is the Pine Warbler. This warbler actually warbles, so if you have pine trees listen to its song. Our Pine Warblers eat suet. We normally use the red pepper suet that doesn't melt and repels squirrels. The winter visitors, such as the Dark-eyed (formerly Slate-colored) Junco and the White-throated Sparrow, will start showing up soon. Look for them in your yard!

Adopt a Highway

by Phil Johnson, Chair

Thanx MUCH to Carol Sloan, Judy Murry, Patsy Bailey, Tom Driscoll, John Suhrbier and urs truly for a really good clean up. Actually, there was much more trash than visible!

We had excellent weather in spite of the guns banging for whatever creatures. 13 bags, 2,5 hrs are we getting really good at this !!!!!!!

JD Wilson where were you ??? Not to mention others Phil Johnson

Next pickup = Dec 13 !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Membership Meetings

by Tom Driscoll, Program Chair

We have some great speakers lined up for our November and December membership meetings. On November 6, 2008, we have Jennifer Ginsburg speaking to us about Box Turtle Conservation. She will tell us what some are doing to ensure we have a healthy and sustainable box turtle population. On December 4, 2008, Norm Budnitz will talk to us about Alaska birds and mammals in the winter and summer. As always, we meet at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens on Hwy. 15-501 and Old Mason Farm Road. The meetings start at 7pm with refreshments and catching up with friends. New Hope Audubon Business is conducted from 7:20 to 7:45pm and the speaker starts around 7:45pm. Everyone (including non-members) is welcome. See you there!

New Hope Audubon Society Calendar of Activities

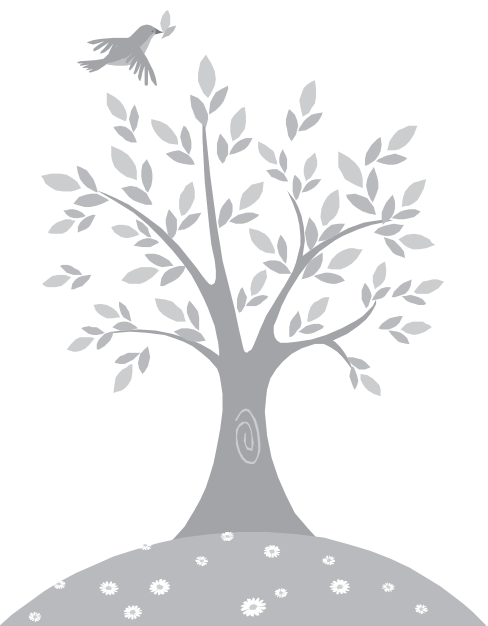
Saturday Nov. 1 **Bird Walk at Duke Gardens** with Cynthia Fox

Saturday Nov 1 **Stream Watch with John Kent** 9:00 a.m.

Thursday Nov **Membership Meeting** – NC Botanical Gardens – 7:00 p.m. with Jennifer Ginsberg on “Box Turtle Conservation”.

Saturday Nov. 15 **Bird Walk to Local Hot Spot** with Cynthia Fox, owner of Wild Bird Center in Eastgate Shopping Center, Chapel Hill. Meet at the store at 7:55 a.m. and return to the store by 10:00 a.m. Carpools leave from the store.

Sunday Nov. 16th. Tom Driscoll will lead a **Bird Walk** to a to be determined destination in the Triangle. Meet at the Mardi Gras parking lot (Farrington Rd. at Hwy. 54 in Chapel Hill) at 1 p.m.. We will look for recent winter arrivals. Please bring water and sturdy hiking boots. We should be gone 2 to 3 hours. Please contact Tom Driscoll at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net if you intend to attend this trip.



Saturday Nov. 29 **Bird Walk to Local Hot Spot** with Cynthia Fox, owner of Wild Bird Center in Eastgate Shopping Center, Chapel Hill. Meet at the store at 7:55 a.m. and return to the store by 10:00 a.m. Carpools leave from the store.

Saturday Dec 6 **Stream Watch with John Kent** – 9:00 a.m.

Thursday Dec 4 **Membership Meeting at NC Botanical Gardens** – 7:00 p.m. with Norm Budnitz on “Alaska in Summer and Winter”.

Saturday Dec 6 **Stream Watch with John Kent** – 9:00 a.m.

Saturday Dec 13 **Adopt a Highway with Phil Johnson**

New Hope Audubon Society 2008-2009 Officers

OFFICE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
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Director	Jane Tigar		taratigar@yahoo.com
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Eagle Count	Stewart Pearce	942-7660	spearce@yankelovich.com
Eagle Platform	Robert "Bo" Howes	370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
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Important Bird Areas: Jordan Lake Chair	Robert "Bo" Howes	370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
Mini Breeding Bird	Marsha Stephens	618-2298	stephens@mail.fpg.unc.edu
Stream Watch	John Kent	933-5650	jkent@tmug.org
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