



The Audubon Society of Forsyth County Newsletter

January, 2003

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This Month's Meeting

Dr. Erich Jarvis, of the Department of Neurobiology at Duke University Medical Center, will be our featured speaker. He will discuss the evolution of vocal learning in birds: particularly in the hummingbirds, parrots and songbirds. He will specifically focus on what hummingbird brains have that are special and similar with other vocal learning birds and with humans. He will also discuss behaviors in which they use their learned vocalizations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 7 - Board Meeting: Arbor Acres Clubhouse, 7:30 PM

January 11 - Second Saturday Birdwalk – Salem Lake: . Salem Lake is at its best as a birding spot in the dead of winter, when a variety of ducks shows up. Loons, grebes, and gulls, possibly including Bonaparte's, are also a possibility. Meet us in the main parking area at 9:00 AM. You never know what will turn up!

January 18 - Third Saturday Field Trip – Greensboro Lakes : (Joint Trip w/ Piedmont Bird Club – See details on the back page of the newsletter)

January 24 - Winter Field Trip – Chincoteague, VA : (More information inside)

January 28 - Chapter Meeting – SciWorks: Join us for munchies and small talk at 7:00 PM. The meeting itself will start at 7:30 PM. (See above for details of the program.)

February 4 - Board Meeting: Arbor Acres Clubhouse, 7:30 PM

February 8 - Second Saturday Birdwalk: Washington Park, 9:00 AM

February 25 - Chapter Meeting: SciWorks, 7:30 PM (Social at 7:00 PM)

March 15 – “ASFC Wild & Wonderful” Wildlife Fair: Stay tuned for more information. It's going to be a great one!

March 28-29 – Tenth Annual Audubon North Carolina Meeting: This year's statewide Audubon meeting will be hosted by Wake Audubon at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, in Raleigh. Most of you reading this will have already seen the write-up about the meeting in the most recent Audubon North Carolina newsletter. Plan now to attend, and stay tuned for more info.

Welcome to 2003! (How are we doing?)

Another new year is upon us, and as is the case every year at this time it's worthwhile to pause and take stock of our organization. When we look at Forsyth Audubon, what do we see? We see a strong, active Audubon chapter, with a growing number of committed and enthusiastic members. We see an organization planning its biggest community event ever, the ASFC Wild & Wonderful wildlife fair coming up in March. We hear a strong voice for conservation in our Conservation Chair, Nancy Sommer, which is echoed in the efforts of the many members who respond to her regular calls for action. We see monthly local birdwalks, open to everyone and welcoming to beginners. We see our representatives presenting dozens of programs every year for local schools,

garden clubs, church groups, and other organizations. We see excellent programs at our monthly chapter meetings, and attendance numbers at the meetings that are the envy of Audubon chapters across the state.

We have reason to be proud of what the chapter has accomplished and what it has become over the past few years, under the presidential leadership of Jim Martin, Linda Davis, and now Marilyn Shuping, all building on the strong foundation established by their predecessors throughout our long chapter history. With the many challenges facing us today, and all the threats to the natural world we are so passionate about, it's good to know that ASFC is in its best shape ever. Keep up the good work!

Conservation Corner

Happy New Year to all ASFC'ers ! I hope that your holiday was restful, because the 108th Congress convenes on 1/7, and it looks like we will be busy this next session, trying to keep the "people" in our government "of" and "by". National Audubon has warned us that the environmental gains made in the last 25 years are all up for grabs now . . . they can be rescinded, ignored, or reinterpreted at the request of corporations. We have one example in the very successful Clean Air Act of the 70s, which is being severely weakened by a re-interpretation of its requirements. This will allow old, polluting power-plants (which were to be replaced) to continue their polluting! One former EPA enforcement official has resigned in protest, saying, "Under this administration, not only is the cop off the beat, but the EPA is proposing to legalize harmful pollution that today is illegal!" (NRDC)

We know that our fight to keep Big Oil out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) will have to be re-done, and this time, Senator Daschle (who was the Senate leader last April, and who voted NOT to open ANWR) will be replaced by the new Republican leader, Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee (who voted to OPEN it). Just remember, we kept them out last time, and we must work harder to keep them out again ! Stay tuned . . .

Remember "the Road to Nowhere" proposed in the 60's to go through the Great Smoky Mountain National Park around southern Fontana Lake ?? We helped the National Park Service defeat it then, and to not break up the most-visited national park in the country. Well, look out, they're trying to bring it back, too, and one outstanding NPS superintendent has taken early retirement rather than be assigned to GSMNP, and have to support the road!

Yes, we have our work cut out for us! But there IS at least one bit of GOOD news: Tyson Foods and Purdue Farms have both committed to reducing the anti-biotics fed their chickens ! And I DO have a New Year's gift for all of you who are tired of unwanted and commercial e-mail and telemarketers' calls. There is an address where you can remove your name from mailing lists (for 5 years!), from catalogue lists, and from telemarketers' lists: www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance. This is the address of the Direct Marketing Association, and being on their list made a big difference for us! Skip #1 - it costs money. I don't think any of the others do. Happy New Year to all!

Anticipated Federal Policy Shift

According to the national environmental group American Rivers, "The Bush Administration is expected to announce a rulemaking in late December or early January that could exclude intermittent and ephemeral streams, small tributaries, and wetlands adjacent to those waters from coverage under the Clean Water Act." If the Administration moves forward with this plan, more than 60 percent of all the nation's river miles and wetlands adjacent to those waters could lose all protection under the Clean Water Act.

Sharpen your pencils - it's going to be a long couple of years!

Winter Field Trip

A Reminder: We're going to Chincoteague, Virginia January 24th, 25th and 26th. We have booked ten rooms at the Refuge Inn @ \$60. If you want to confirm your room, you may go ahead and call them. They will hold the rooms through January 15th. Phone number is (800) 544-8469 Their web site is www.refugeinn.com A good website for birding at Chincoteague is <http://www.chincoteaguechamber.com/birding.html>

Chincoteague NWR, on the Virginia Eastern Shore just below the Maryland border, is a great place in winter for waterfowl and shorebirds. When combined with the other great birding areas in on the Delmarva Peninsula, it will provide a full weekend of memorable birding. Try to join us!

(Please contact Jim Martin at 777-1677 for more information.)

Join the Sixth Annual Grassroots Conference!

The Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition invites you to join a diverse group of individuals and organizations from throughout the Southeast to discuss and plan how we can work together to influence the management of our native forests. If you value our southeastern forests and want to become involved, this conference is for you.

Activities include: Forest Advocacy Workshops and Trainings, Panel Discussion from Outdoor Recreation Groups, Winter Tree ID Hike, Scavenger Hunt and Contra Dance!

WHEN: Saturday, February 1, 2003; arrive Friday evening for songs, storytelling & socializing around the campfire with Doug Elliott (www.dougelliott.com)

TIME: Conference 9:00AM - 6:00PM with Drinks, Dinner and Dancing to follow.

WHERE: Lake Logan Conference Center, near Canton, North Carolina (lakelogan.org)

PRICE: Day Rate: \$25 /person (no lodging, includes 3 meals)

Basic Rate: \$50 /person (Two nights lodging for Dorm Style Bunk House, shared bath, includes 3 meals Saturday and breakfast Sunday)

Deluxe Rate: \$70/ person (Two nights lodging for Cottage Room, private bath, includes 3 meals Saturday and breakfast Sunday)

For more information please contact Jackie Dobrinska at 828-252-9223 or Jackie@safc.org

Forsyth County Congressional Delegation

Sen. John Edwards,

825 Hart Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20515

senator@edwards.senate.gov

Sen. Elizabeth Dole

The Hon. Richard Burr

1513 Longworth House Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20515

richard.burrnc05@house.mail.gov

The Hon. Mel Watt

1230 Longworth House Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20515

nc12.public@mail.house.gov

Noteworthy Sightings

through 12-27-02

Salem Lake: 5 Buffleheads

Mallard Lake (Bethania): 35+ Ring-necked Ducks, 14 Buffleheads

Hummingbirds: 3 Immature Rufous in Lewisville, 1 male Rufous on Forest Dr., 1 unidentified in Tobaccoville.

Feeders/ Yards: Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, Purple Finches (2 locations), large flock of Cedar Waxwings.

Thanks for all the reports.

-Ramona Snavelly

(Note: Preliminary, incomplete results from the Christmas Bird Count, based on reports at the count dinner on Dec. 28, had 75 species observed on Count Day. Among the surprises were several reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers, which have been scarce in recent years, and several large flocks of Rusty Blackbirds. We'll have a summary of the count results in next month's newsletter.)



Kirsten Munson

Birding Quiz

Last Month's Answer:

Kentucky is the state that has both a highway and a state park named for John James Audubon. Audubon lived for some period of time in the town of Henderson, on the Ohio river in western Kentucky. That's where John James Audubon State Park is located. The Audubon Parkway runs from near Henderson eastward to Owensboro.

This month's question:

There is a great deal of support for splitting the Fox Sparrow into as many as five separate species. How many of the current sub-species can you name, and which one or ones are found in this area?

(Check for the answer in next month's newsletter.)

Surfing the internet? Visit Forsyth Audubon on the web at www.forsythaudubon.org for chapter news, upcoming events, shopping links, etc.

Chincoteague Bonus – Birding the CBBT

For those of you who might be planning to go to Chincoteague for the Winter Field Trip (24-26 January 2003), here's a heads up on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT).

As most of you know, the CBBT Authority allows birders to stop on the four islands that are a part of the CBBT complex. Due to increased naval activity in the area, the rules for accessing the islands are a bit different from the past. There has been some confusion about the new rules, so I called the CBBT recently to get the straight skinny.

The CBBT is renowned for some regular winter residents and some surprising vagrants. Among the regulars you might expect to see are Great Cormorant, Purple Sandpiper and Harlequin Duck. Lesser Black-backed Gull and all three scoters might also be seen. All gull flocks should be carefully screened for the possible vagrant.

If you plan to join us for the Field Trip this month, and if you plan to drive and wish to stop on the islands to bird, please note the following:

1) Each car **MUST** have a permission letter from the CBBT that allows the car and its occupants to stop on islands 2, 3 and 4. [Island 1, where the Sea Gull Restaurant is located, is open for anyone to stop – to eat, bird, fish, whatever.]

The letter can be requested from:

Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel
Dept. 001
P.O. Box 111
Cape Charles, VA 23310-0111
(757) 331-2960
(757) 331- 4565 (fax)

If you call, tell the operator to transfer you to Public Relations.

The letter can be either mailed or faxed to you. If you decide rather late that you need the letter, arrangements can be made for it to be held for you at the office building at either end of the CBBT – 24 hours notice needed for this option.

The letter is good for a calendar year.

2) When you get to the entrance to the CBBT there is a small office building to the right, **BEFORE** the toll booth. Pull in to the parking lot there, go inside and show the authorities your permission letter, your car registration and license number and your driver's license. You will be logged in. [It was unclear whether the other people riding with you would need to check in, but be aware of that possibility. As a precaution, everyone should have a government-issued ID on his person.]

3) Proceed to the toll booth, show the letter to the toll taker, pay the toll (\$10) and proceed.

4) See lots of good birds.

The same procedure will need to be followed on the return trip.

Depending on the level of tension in the world, all of the rules might change.

Hope many of you can join us at Chincoteague. It's great for winter birds.

Good birding,
- Bill Sugg

2002-2003 Chapter Board

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Vice President:	Pam DeNeve	769-1102
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Bird Count:	David Disher	765-9356
FC Bird Records:	Ramona Snavelly	768-7141
Hospitality	Bill/Susan Hammond	924-1522
Webmistress	Liz Schmid	595-6379
At-Large:	C. Sommer	761-8216
At-Large:	Alice Hinman	723-0458
At-Large:	Linda Davis	924-1751
At-Large:	Tom Schmid	595-6379

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Membership:

For membership information, please call Bill Gifford at 721-0201. If you don't wish to join the Audubon Society, but would like to subscribe to our newsletter, send \$10.00 (make check to ASFC) to: Bill Gifford, 608 Oaklawn Ave., Winston Salem, NC 27104
Please include your name, address and zip code.

Greensboro Lakes Day Trip

On Saturday, January 28, the Audubon Society of Forsyth County will join forces once again with our Guilford County friends from the Piedmont Bird Club for a joint outing. The PBC folks will guide us on a tour of the Greensboro Lakes, a popular area for ASFC outings and a great, nearby area to look for wintering waterfowl.

The Forsyth Audubon folks will have their choice of gathering spots for this trip. We will plan to leave Thruway Shopping Center at 8:00 AM, then stop at Triad Park to meet anyone who wants to start from there. We'll leave Triad Park at 8:30 AM and hook up with the PBC at Lake Higgins Marina at 9:00 AM. Please plan to carpool if at all possible – parking will be limited at some of the stops.

At Lake Higgins we will check the waterfowl at the marina first, but we don't expect to find anything more unusual than coots unless one of the resident eagles makes an appearance at that late hour of the morning. If the marshy west end of the lake isn't flooded, we'll take a short drive to check it out, and then come back east to the intersection of Battleground and Hamburg Mill Rd. The marsh there often is quite good, assuming that it, too, isn't flooded.

From there we will continue on to Plainfield Marsh and to several overlooks on Lake Townsend. Usually we don't bother with the Lake Townsend marina, but we will do

special requests if folks want to. If people have the time and inclination, we also could check Buffalo Lake on Cone Blvd in town as the last stop on the way out.

This is mostly a driving tour with not much walking at most stops. Scopes will be very useful. People should dress in layers and be prepared for a low wind chill factor; the damp wind off the lakes can be brutal!

Moving fairly rapidly, it takes about three and a half hours to do the tour. If we have a lot of people to round up and keep moving, it may take longer. Since we're getting a late start, folks may want to bring a sandwich, and they definitely should bring plenty to drink. We will not be near any restaurants.

This should be a great day. Don't miss it!

