

***Outer Banks, NC***  
***Winter 2007 Field Trip***  
***January 18th through January 23rd***

Forsyth Audubon had another great trip to the Outer Banks (OBX) of North Carolina over the long weekend of 18-21 January 2008. In addition to 23 local members we were joined by two Audubon members from Greensboro, one from Camden, South Carolina, two from Raleigh, and a contingent of six from Asheville. It made for a wonderful group of experienced and relatively new birders who complemented each other very well.

On Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> most traveled to our motel, the Comfort Inn North in Kill Devil Hills, via Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge or Mattamuskeet NWR. Birding along the way, the group had counted several species before we began our activities on the OBX. That evening all gathered in a motel suite for a get-acquainted social and the beginning of our master bird list. A local Audubon member suggested that evening that we begin early on Saturday because the weather would turn foul later in the day.

Gathering together at 7:30 AM on Saturday we set out for Pea Island NWR, the premier birding spot on the OBX. We were met there by Neal Moore, the above mentioned Audubon member, who guided us around the refuge and offered tips on what to see. The refuge was a harbor for a great number of different ducks to include an untold number of Redheads. There were numerous Tundra Swans and a careful look by our President, Phil Dickinson, led to two Mute Swans in the mix. Black-crowned Night Herons and American White Pelicans posed for pictures like professional models.

The weather reports were unfortunately right about the rain and by late morning it was time to move on to other locales. American Avocets were found near Pea Island and as the group traveled back towards the motel we stopped at Oregon Inlet on both north and south ends of the Bonner Bridge, Bodie Light, and wherever we found birds. The heavy rain limited birding for the rest of the day but did not dampen the spirits of any of the birders. That evening we gathered at local restaurants like Kelly's and Tortugua's Lie to sample local fare.

Sunday dawned bright and cold with a Northwest wind that forced us to bundle up good. We once again carpooled and headed south to Cape Point, a good decision because it snowed later in the morning at Pea Island and Kill Devil Hills. We were met at the Cape by Neal and Pat Moore who offered to guide us out to the tip of the point. Those who could not fit in our group's 4X4 vehicles piled into their two and off we went. Neal and Pat do this all the time for anybody who is interested and they were wonderful guides to the area and local birds. Horned Larks, shorebirds, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were life listers for several people. The trip out to the Cape was a real highpoint for all and Forsyth Audubon made some new friends in Neal and Pat, a very gracious couple. The rest of the day was spent revisiting Oregon Inlet, Bodie Light, and other places of interest. Along the way some of our birders spotted the Common Eider at Oregon Inlet, a real good find.

Sunday night we gathered at The Outer Banks Brewing Station for a farewell dinner and bird count. It was a good way to end the OBX part of the trip. The next day all traveled

home, visiting Alligator River, Mattamuskeet, and Pungo Lake along the way where we added several new species to the count. The final count for the trip was 124, not bad considering the weather. In the end what mattered most though was that all enjoyed the fellowship and the opportunity to see so many birds in beautiful settings.