

SPRING BIRD COUNT 2008 RESULTS

The ASFC Spring Bird Count, held on May 3rd, found forty counters afield on an overcast morning. Several team reports are outstanding at press time, but currently 130 species and 3518 birds were reported for count week.

Species of note are a Sora Rail, heard in the wetlands at Tanglewood Park by the Dishers, Paul Powers & Hop Hopkins. That same group sighted three Short Billed Dowitchers at Archie Elledge Sewage Treatment Plant.

The Bethabara team, led by Phil Dickinson, reported a Warbling Vireo near the Mill Creek Bridge. Post count week, John Haire spotted Tree Swallows at Salem Lake and Willow Flycatchers at Salem Creek. Tree Swallows were reported by Ramona Snavely as “a fairly common spring and less common fall transient” – if nesting is confirmed, this will be a new Forsyth County record. According to the same records, the Warbling Vireo is “an uncommon spring and less common fall transient, suspected to be a rare breeder but no documented records.” A Laughing Gull at Salem Lake was a rare find also.

Contribute to Birdathon

Now that Spring Count results are in, don't forget to make your contribution to Birdathon. This is our only fundraiser for the year. Half of your contributions support Chapter conservation and educational activities; the other half goes to protect North Carolina coastal sanctuaries. The recent legal settlement on ORV vehicle access to Cape Hatteras beaches emphasizes how important our sanctuaries are. Donate an amount per species counted or whatever you can afford. Send contributions to ASFC, P.O. Box 15111, Winston-Salem, NC 27113.

Linda Davis and Phil Dickinson



Wood Stork in flight



SPRING AT ACE BASIN

The salt marshes, pine hammocks and cypress swamps of eastern South Carolina provide a wonderful opportunity for spring birding. On April 23-26, the destination for our Spring Field Trip was the ACE Basin area between Walterboro on I-95 and the coast. Along the way, seven local birders stopped at the Orangeburg sod farms and the Audubon Center at Beidler Forest, where Prothonotary Warblers flitted all around us.

Our primary destinations were the Bear Island and Donnelley Wildlife Management Areas and the Grove Plantation section of the ACE Basin National Wildlife Reserve. A trip highlight came early Saturday morning when Marilyn Shuping and Tara O'Leary spied the first of four Least Bitterns. The morning at the WMAs also included such species as Tri-colored Heron, Black-necked Stilt and Wood Stork, Northern Harrier, Loggerhead Shrike and a flock of Bobolinks. In addition, Larry Davis's sharp eye also found us Bald Eagles and a nesting Osprey. However, even for birders, it was hard to compare these with the sight of a thrashing 14-foot bull alligator and its mate.

As we lunched at ACE Basin NWR, Linda Davis was the first to spot some Mississippi Kites. These were soon joined overhead by two graceful Swallow-tailed Kites. Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak and Yellow-throated Warbler were colorful additions to our list. Another afternoon highlight for some of us was finding a Wood Stork rookery at Donnelley, complete with chicks on the nest. Shelley Rutkin and Kitty Jensen were able to add several birds to their growing life lists, and with a few more species at Edisto Beach State Park the group totaled 112 species. Much thanks to Don Adamick for organizing the trip and finding us good accommodations.

Phil Dickinson

CONSERVATION CORNER

As those of you on the forsythbirds listserv know, there have been many exciting avian visitors in the area this spring. Even if you missed the Lawrence's Warbler or Orange-crowned Warbler at Reynolda (thanks to John Haire for finding them!) you have likely been blessed with the beautiful sight of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Chipping Sparrows and/or Indigo Buntings in your yard, mixing it up with the local American Goldfinches and Northern Cardinals who are now especially brightly colored for breeding season. Or perhaps you have thrilled to hear the melodious Wood Thrush's call echoing in your back yard or local park. Spring birding offers visual and aural delights that we eagerly anticipate each year.

This is a good time to consider how our individual choices and daily activities can ensure a future for these winged wonders who lift our spirits and add so much enjoyment to our lives. A few months ago I came across an American Bird Conservancy publication listing the Top 10 Tips for Bird-Friendly Living. I will list some of those suggestions here, plus a couple that I have received from other sources. There is nothing "new" - in fact I have included slightly updated tips from past newsletters - but I think this is a helpful and practical list. Even if each of us only follows one or two of these suggestions, the world will be a better place for birds. Plan your yard for diversity; perhaps go so far as to have it certified by the National Wildlife Federation (visit www.nwf.org)

- Provide birds with fresh food and clean water. (visit backyardbirdcare.org for more details.)
- Prevent window strikes (see www.abcbirds.org for more information)
- Donate your old binoculars to conservation through the Birders Exchange Program. (visit americanbirding.org/bex/index.html for details). Better yet, donate your binoculars to a school or park (such as Historic Bethabara or Hanging Rock) that sponsors nature outings.
- Drink shade-grown coffee. Ask your local grocery store or coffee shop to stock a shade-grown alternative.
- Reduce your carbon footprint by being a carbon-conscious consumer.
- Reduce your use of pesticides. For more information visit www.abcbirds.org/pesticides.
- Keep your cat indoors. For more information on how to make your cat a happy indoor cat, visit www.abcbirds.org/cats

- Eat organic bananas. Non-organic, commercially grown bananas are among the fruits most heavily laden with pesticides and other chemicals. This is bad for consumers, and very bad for workers who manage the banana crops
- Preserve wetlands by purchasing a Duck Stamp at your local post office or sporting goods store. Each stamp costs only \$15.00, and approximately 98% of the money collected goes to purchase or lease wetland habitat for protection under the National Wildlife Refuge system. *The 75th Anniversary Duck Stamp will be released on June 27, 2008 and will feature a beautiful depiction of Northern Pintails. Please visit www.fws.gov/duckstamps for details.*
- Consider, again, purchasing a Memory Tree through the Winston-Salem Department of Recreation and Park. Call Kim Young at 659-4305 for details. August is the deadline to purchase a tree for the fall planting schedule.
- Join your local land trust. Strong land trusts not only facilitate conservation but also signal to policy makers that voters care about preserving the environment. As many of you know, our local land trust is the Piedmont Land Conservancy. Their website is piedmontland.org. Their office is in Greensboro and the phone number is 691-0088.

Remember, small steps by man create giant leaps for mankind.

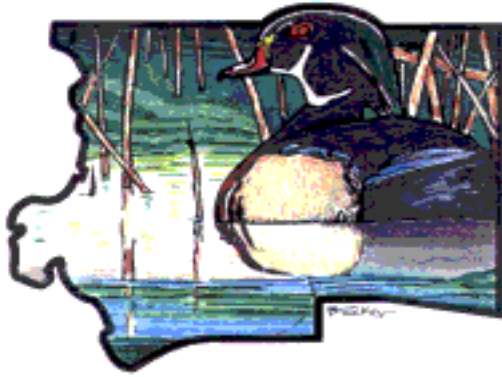
Peace and good birding, Ann Robertson



Lawrence's Warbler

Our Mission

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems—focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and North Carolina's biological diversity



Visit us on the web at www.forsythaudubon.org

Audubon Society of
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PIEDMONT BIRDING TRAIL

The North Carolina Birding Trail officially opened its Piedmont Region on May 15th at ceremonies held in Raleigh's Durant Park. The Coastal Region opened in 2007, and the Mountains Region is scheduled for completion a year from now. The Birding Trail is a driving route that seeks to link birders with great birding sites, along with local tourist attractions, accommodations and other businesses.

Forsyth County has five stops on the new birding trail: Historic Bethabara Park, Reynolda Gardens, Miller Park, Salem Lake and Civitan Park, and Tanglewood County Park. Nearby Hanging Rock and Pilot Mountain State Parks also are included in the birding trail, as are several parks in Guilford County. These include the Piedmont Environmental Center in High Point, the Bog Garden and Guilford Courthouse National Military Park. Many other Piedmont sites can be reached in an hour or two. The Official Trail Guide should be available sometime in June. Get your copy for \$10 from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (www.ncwildlife.org, 1-866-945-3746).

MEMBERSHIP

For membership information, please contact Lois Schneider at 768-6645. If you don't wish to join the National Audubon Society, but would like to subscribe to our newsletter, send \$15.00 (make your check payable to ASFC) to: Audubon Society of Forsyth County, P.O. Box 15111, Winston-Salem, NC 27113. Please include your name, address and zip code.

Phil Dickinson