

New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter



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*From Chris Canfield,
Executive Director of Audubon NC*

OLF UPDATE

This is it - the real thing. Put a fork in the Pocosin Lakes OLF issue; it's done!! We can celebrate Victory at that site. See the statement at the far bottom for details from the Navy. I just issued the other below statement to press.

On a more personal note, I have a long, long list of thanks to offer. From Joe Albea and Tom Earnhardt who started us on this path, to Brian Roth, mayor in Plymouth, the fantastic folks at Southern Environmental Law Center (Derb and

Michelle especially), lawyers at Kennedy Covington, Doris and Jennifer and the NO OLF group, all the chapter leaders and members who got engaged early and for the long haul, the refuge staff and FWS leaders, our political representatives who, in increasing numbers, sought the truth on this (especially Congressmen Price and Butterfield and the governor's office - including Sec. Bill Ross at DENR and the Wildlife Resources Commission, the Museum of Natural Sciences). Defenders of Wildlife and NC Wildlife Federation who joined in the suit. Our Audubon DC staff and sr staff and board... on and on. All our donors and supporters. So many will be left off this list - my apologies.

It is incredible to think that the most diverse coalition of groups and people aligned about this globally significant IBA and community. Special thanks are due to those that stepped outside their normal comfort zones to align with "environmentalists" or for those of us willing to align with others we normally don't. I have benefitted so from getting to know and respect such wonderful people I'd have missed without this struggle.

I hold no lingering grudge toward the Navy. I see evidence now that our struggle may have actually helped the Navy in its approaches to decision-making like this. Admiral Anderson now leading the effort has seemed to offer a new tone in the work and a new model for community engagement that could serve us all well long after this particular case is forgotten. There were many good people involved for the Navy from the start, and I suspect their voices of reason were probably instrumental in this outcome in ways we may never know.

There are other sites under consideration, with complications possible at those, and we will remain attentive and sensitive to that process, but we should at least take time to celebrate today's clear victory on this hard-fought and cleanly won battle over the past 5+ years.

Parking Area for Indian Creek Wildlife Observation Area on Jordan Game Land Will Close

Raleigh, N.C. (Jan. 29) – Due to ongoing enforcement issues, the parking area at the Indian Creek Wildlife Observation Area on Jordan Game Land will close after Feb. 1. The site, which is located approximately 5 miles south of Durham on the west side of Hwy. 751 in Chatham County, has a history of criminal activity going back several years. Escalating complaints in recent months involving public nudity, solicitation and harassment have prompted the closure out of concern for public safety. Managers of the site are evaluating alternative sites for re-locating the observation platform from the Indian Creek area and will work as quickly as possible to re-establish the platform and wildlife-viewing opportunities at a safer location. A free online map of the Jordan Game Land is available on the Commission's Web site: http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg04_HuntingTrapping/pg4a2_jordan.pdf. **Media Contact:** Isaac Harrold, Manager, State Lands Program Phone: (919) 707-0050

A Triangle Naturalist's Almanac

Patrick Coin

Dwarf Irises

Most of us are familiar with the tall irises of gardens—descended from a European species, but the native irises of our area are dwarves just a few inches tall. These two dwarf iris species are similar in form, but different in coloration and habitat. Dwarf Iris, *Iris verna*, is a plant of dry edges and open woods and blooms in early spring, from March to April. The flower is violet, with a deep yellow patch at the throat, and it is said to be fragrant. It is common in the Carolina Sandhills, but can also be found in dry situations in the Piedmont. Sometimes the common name “Dwarf Violet Iris” is applied to this species. Dwarf Crested Iris, *Iris cristata*, is rather more common in our area, widespread on moist wooded slopes and bottomlands that are not flooded too deeply. Its flowers are a pale blue, with a prominent folded “crest” at the throat, and just a tinge of yellow. They are said to be scentless. About six other species of Iris occur in North Carolina, but these two are the only ones I have encountered in the Durham/Chapel Hill area. The name *Iris*, incidentally, is from the Greek word for rainbow, referring to the wide range of colors in some species.



All members of the genus *Iris* share the same odd flower structure. The most prominent part of the flower is the lower projecting lobe, actually a modified sepal. It is sometimes called a “falls”, and usually has prominent bright spots that serve to guide visiting pollinators towards a safe landing and then towards the center of the flower. Some species have ruffled or beard-like structures on the falls. These help visiting insects get a good foothold. As they proceed inward, insects rub against against the style arm, a female part of the flower, which resembles a petal. The pollen-bearing stamens are held deeper under the style arms. The other prominent parts of the flower are the standards, which project above the falls. The standards actually **are** petals. Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium*), our only other native member of the Iris family (Iridaceae) does not share the unusual floral structure of the genus *Iris*. The relationship between the two genera can be seen in the their leaves.

For more information on irises, see: Radford et al., *Vascular Flora of the Carolinas*; Coffey, *History and Folklore of North American Wildflowers*; Eastman, *The Book of Swamp and Bog*; Conrad, *The Backyard Nature Website*.

Important Bird Areas — Point Count Training

Tom Driscoll

Ever wonder how scientists, researchers, and others (such as you and me) know how birds and bird populations are faring? One of the most important things the Audubon Society and other bird advocacy groups do is to count birds. Not only do we count birds, but we count them in a systematic way at static intervals. This way we have trend data on bird populations.

As Audubon and others collected more data and understood better where birds occur and what areas, on migration routes or wintering grounds, are important to them, they took steps to identify areas to conserve. In other words, they identified areas that provide the greatest habitat value and support significant populations or an exceptional diversity of birds. These Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are essential strongholds of avian abundance and diversity.

IBAs are identified according to standardized, scientifically defensible criteria based on numbers of birds or assemblages of birds regularly occurring at a particular location. Once nominated, a site undergoes strict review by a technical committee comprised of the state's leading experts on birds. Once approved by the technical committee, the site is designated an IBA. For more information on IBAs, see <http://www.ncaudubon.org/IBAs.html>.

You may have heard at one of our membership meetings or read in our newsletter that the New Hope Audubon Society sponsors two IBAs at Lake Jordan and the Eno River Bottomlands. One of the first steps we are taking is to continue the assessment of the bird populations in these areas. To this end, we are working with Audubon North Carolina to obtain some point count training.

The training is scheduled at the Eno River State Park visitor center on April 20, 2008 at 8 a.m. There will be a half-day training on how point counts are conducted. A point counter does not have to be a great birdwatcher or know all the bird songs for the birds of the Eno River. If you are interested in helping and/or just want to learn more about IBAs and point counting of birds, then I encourage you to attend. If you have any questions, then please contact me at bttdriscoll@bellsouth.net. I look forward to seeing you there.

CHIMNEY WATCH SEEKS VOLUNTEERS IN THE RESEARCH TRIANGLE. Chimney watch is a partnership of federal, state, and non-profit Agencies that seek to understand and reverse the recent declines in Chimney Swift populations throughout North America. We have selected the research triangle of North Carolina as one of our focus regions to test a new protocol for monitoring breeding chimney swifts. The protocol consists of three 15-minute visits to a route of 3-6 chimneys from mid-June to mid-July to determine whether the chimneys are occupied by breeding pairs. We are now looking for volunteers to run routes in Person, Orange, Durham, Chatham, Wake, Harnett, Johnston, and Franklin counties. For more information contact Rua Mordecai at: rua.mordecai@gmail.com

Feeder Watch

Tom Driscoll

Feeder Watch reports on birds you could be seeing at the bird feeders and/or in your yard. This article covers the middle of February through the middle of April. If you have ideas about bird feeding topics, 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're probably still putting out a lot of feed. I am, especially during the colder days. Our winter visitors, like the juncos and the White-throated Sparrows (the winter visitors may stay around until late April), should still be at your feeders, along with the resident birds such as the Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Eastern (Rufous-sided) Towhee, woodpeckers, Blue Jays, and others. Do you recognize these birds? If not, then I recommend buying a birding guide to help you figure out your birds? Do you recognize the various bird calls? If not, then

I encourage you to try to learn the calls by watching the singing birds. This way you'll know when you hear new calls that birds may be arriving from wintering grounds, for example.

Our hummingbirds will be arriving in early April, so the first week of April is the time to get out your feeders, clean them, and prepare your sugar water. Remember, four parts water to one part sugar. During April, some of our resident birds will start nesting. If you're inclined to clean out your bluebird boxes and other bird houses, now is the time for cleaning. Don't have a bluebird house and want to buy one or two? The New Hope Audubon Society sells bluebird boxes for only \$15. Free delivery! Note that other birds, such as titmice and chickadees, will use these boxes as well.

Again, I challenge you to learn the names and calls of your feeder birds! Please let me know if you are successful or are having some trouble with the calls. If you have questions or notice an unusual bird, then please contact me. See you at the next membership meeting and keep reading this column in the next newsletter!

EDITOR'S NOTE: It has been brought to my attention that there was a mistake in the Conservation article in last month's newsletter. This article involved the Chatham Conservation Partnership. It was incorrectly referred to be the Chatham County Partnership. The correct listing should be Chatham Conservation Partnership. Please accept my apologies for any misunderstandings with the listing in the newsletter.

New Hope Audubon Society Calendar of Activities

Saturday, March 2: **Stream Watch** 9:00 a.m. – Leader John Kent

Thursday, March 6: **General Membership Meeting** at the Tooten Center at NC Botanical Gardens. 7:00 p.m. Speaker - Patrick Coin "Insects of Central North Carolina"

Saturday, March 8: **Bird Walk at Duke Gardens** with Cynthia Fox. Meet at Gardens parking lot at 7:55 a.m.

Saturday, March 15: **Adopt A Highway** Leader Phil Johnson. Meet at Stagecoach Road

Saturday, March 22: **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.

Thursday, April 3: **General Membership Meeting** at the Tooten Center at NC Botanical Gardens 7:00 p.m. Speaker Trish Finn MacPherson , NCDWQ "Stream Bugs: NC Benthic Macroinvertebrates"

Saturday, April 5: **Stream Watch** 9:00 a.m. – Leader John Kent

Saturday, April 12: **Bird Walk at Duke Gardens** with Cynthia Fox. Meet at Gardens parking lot at 7:55 a.m.

Sunday, April 13: Carol Ann McCormick will be leading a **hike for the Eno River Association to the Triangle Land Conservancy's HORTON GROVE property** in northern Durham County. The time of the trip will be 2-4 p.m. The walk is free of charge. Horton Grove: http://www.tlc-nc.org/lands/tlc/horton_grove_property.shtml Difficulty level: Off trail, fallen trees, small stream crossings and hilly terrain. **DIRECTIONS:** Coming from the west, take Duke Street North from I-85 (Exit 176). Turn right on Murray Avenue (sign to the Museum of Life and Science), go until it reaches Roxboro Street, turn left and look for the brown sign to Stagville. [Coming from the east, you can take Roxboro Street directly from I-85.] Turn right here on Old Oxford Road. If you pass Walmart you have missed the turning. Go about three miles until Old Oxford crosses the Eno. Continue north on Old Oxford for about 4 miles, then turn LEFT onto Jock Road (SR 1626). Go about 0.5 miles on this gravel road, past a gray barn. Park along the roadside at the second small stream crossing.

Sunday, April 20: Curtis Smalling will be leading a **field trip to teach how to count birds**. Meet at the Eno River State Park visitors center at 8 a.m. We will be there for about 3 to 4 hours. Please contact Tom Driscoll at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net for details or if you have questions or plan to attend.

Saturday, April 26: **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.

New Hope Audubon Society 2007-2008 Officers

OFFICE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
President	Marsha Stephens	618-2298	stephens@mail.fpg.unc.edu
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Director	Tom Outlaw	202-494-5355	TomoutlawDC@aol.com
Director	Vacant		
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Education Chair	Kate Finlayson	545-0737	katefin@yahoo.com
Field Trip Chair	Linda Gaines	968-9787	lggaines.95@alum.mines.edu
Hospitality Chair	Martha Girolami	362-5759	mgiorlami@mac.com
Membership Chair	Karen Olson	489-1283	karenolson@earthlink.net
Program Chair	Tom Driscoll	932-7966	btdriscoll@bellsouth.net
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Webmaster	David Curtin	919-245-3475	dfcurtin@mail.fpg.unc.edu
Adopt-a-Highway	Phillip Johnson	933-0144	pjphilip@earthlink.net
Bird Seed Sale	Judy Murray	942-2985	jmurray@unc.edu
Eagle Count	Stewart Pearce	942-7660	spearce@yankelevich.com
Eagle Platform	Robert "Bo" Howes	370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
Important Bird Areas: Eno River Chair	Marsha Stephens	618-2298	stephens@mail.fpg.unc.edu
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
Wildathon Co-Chairs	Vacant		

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WILDATHON 2008

Fund-Raiser for the New Hope Audubon Society

May 5, 2008

Please help make our annual Spring fund-raiser a success by acting on one or more of the three suggestions below. Clip and mail the form at the bottom of this page today!

1. MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION.

Contributing to the New Hope Audubon Society's WILDATHON is one of the best ways to protect important bird and wildlife habitat right here in Chapel Hill at the Mason Farm Biological Reserve and on the NC coast at our Audubon Coastal Islands Sanctuary (see reverse side for more info), and to help further the chapter's outreach and educational efforts.

2. LEAD A TEAM OR JOIN A TEAM.

You do not have to be an expert on birds, flora or other fauna to participate. Each team will have experienced members. You also do not have to solicit pledges in order to be on a team (although it is a great help to the fund-raiser if you do). Team leaders establish exact times, meeting location, and routes. The Wildathon has proved to be educational, challenging, and quite a lot of fun. Consider forming teams with friends, families, neighbors or co-workers. Call Marsha Stephens (942-7205) if you want more information, or if you want to lead a team or to join a team.

3. HELP BRING IN DONATIONS.

See if your employer will provide matching funds for your donation. Beyond making a donation yourself, participants can help raise money by soliciting donations on behalf of their team. It's not as hard as you think when you believe in such a goal. Written materials can be provided to assist you in your fund-raising endeavors. Just call for help (942-7205).

If actual species counting or donation soliciting is not your forte, please volunteer to help with other aspects of our fund-raiser, such as dissemination of information, including posters and fliers, follow-up for pledges, etc.

NEW HOPE AUDUBON SOCIETY WILDATHON PLEDGE FORM 2008

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

- My tax-deductible gift of \$_____ to support the Wildathon effort is enclosed.
Please make checks payable to New Hope Audubon Society.
- I pledge \$_____ per species identified by the Team. (Team leaders will be listed in the newsletter).
- A matching gift is enclosed. My company name is _____, and matches my charitable gifts.
- I pledge \$_____ per species I observe in my neighborhood or at my feeder on Wildathon Day.

Signature _____

Please return form to: New Hope Audubon Society Box 2693 Chapel Hill, NC 27515,
Commitments to form or join a team are requested by May 1. Pledges are due by May 15, and payments by June 1.

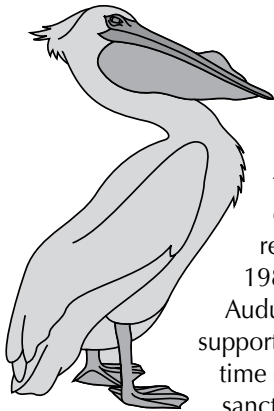
Where Your Wildathon Contribution Goes

Mason Farm Biological Reserve



What is now the Mason Farm Biological Reserve and surrounding lands were willed to UNC by Mary Elizabeth Mason (great-granddaughter of the first settler of the area, Mark Morgan), and her husband, Rev. James Pleasant Mason. The land, given in memory of their only heirs – their daughters – who died of typhoid fever in their early twenties, passed to UNC in 1894. Mason Farm supports around 50 research projects and fieldwork for 10-20 different undergraduate courses each year. It also provides great enjoyment to local naturalists, including New Hope Audubon Society and Chapel Hill Bird Club members, many of whom congregate yearly to watch the Woodcock mating displays. Mason Farm is an area of such concentrated study because of its diversity of wildlife. Three areas within Mason Farm have been nominated (but never approved) for the NC Natural Heritage Program – the Big Oak Woods, the Shagbark Hickory Forest and the Rhododendron Slope. The entire Reserve has recently been nominated as an Important Bird Area; an official announcement of this designation will be forthcoming. These and other diverse habitats, including wetlands of various types, open fields and edges, support 65 species of butterflies (out of 78 found in the entire country), 215 avian species (one less than the entire country), mammalian predators including the bobcat and 100 species of other vertebrates. Even longtime frequenters of Mason Farm need to stop and remind themselves of how truly important this place is to all of us as adjacent areas continue to encroach. It is one of the last large, undeveloped areas remaining in the Piedmont. There are fewer places for the bobcat to roam, and Mason Farm continues to be one. Despite all of these impressive statistics, the only funding the Mason Farm receives from UNC is for road upkeep. The dollars you give will go toward open field maintenance, new construction and repair of benches, addition or replacement of interpretive guide posts and fences, and registration materials.

North Carolina Coastal Islands Sanctuary



The Audubon Society began protecting coastal birds in North Carolina in the very early 1900's, when plume hunters had nearly wiped out many of our species. The practice of killing birds for their feathers has long since vanished, but equally devastating problems associated with coastal development and a rapidly growing human population threaten many birds. National Audubon recognized this threat and launched the North Carolina Coastal Islands Sanctuary program in 1989 to acquire and protect habitats critical to the survival of wading birds and seabirds. Today, Audubon's Coastal Islands Sanctuary includes 20 islands between Cape Fear and Cape Hatteras that support more than 60,000 nesting seabirds and wading birds. Walker Golder, the Sanctuary's one full-time employee, must (with volunteer help) count nests, monitor the sanctuaries, raise money to support the sanctuary, keep trespassers away, coordinate research and management projects, and work to acquire new sanctuaries. That's where we come in. The money we raise assists him in these endeavors. And his work is paying off. Fully one-half of the nesting seabirds and wading birds on the coast of North Carolina nest on Audubon Sanctuaries. Audubon recently restored 7 acres of nesting habitat on Wainwright Island, which now supports 1,600 nesting pelicans and 11,000 nesting terns. Since Golder began posting Battery Island, the number of nesting ibises has doubled to almost 18,000. Golder says, "Thanks to our conservation efforts along the coast, many water birds are doing well. All they needed was a little help – and I'm glad New Hope Audubon was there to assist."

