

New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter



Volume 33, Number 11: September-October 2008

Armchair Citizen Science to Escape the Heat Waves

by Jane Tigar, Conservation Chair

Many years ago, my mother told me that “there’s an advantage to everything and it’s your job to find it.” When it comes to North Carolina summer heat and humidity, the advantage I found is that it creates a wonderful opportunity to sit in a cool dehumidified space and read -- or watch a DVD.

Here are two conservation gems I found this summer, while taking advantage of my desire to stay cool and indoors. One is a DVD course on geology and the other a book on the geology and ecosystems of our very own piece of the Piedmont.

DVD Lecture Review:

The Nature of Earth: An Introduction to Geology by Professor John J. Renton of West Virginia University. Available through the Teaching Company, <http://www.TEACH12.com> or 1-800-TEACH-12.

I did not know to be interested in geology, beyond a great appreciation of beautiful rocks and stones from an aesthetic point of view, until our very own New Hope Audubon Society’s February 2008 meeting at which geologist Kenny Gay talked to us about the geology of the Central North Carolina Piedmont. While I may have read about plate tectonics before, this was the first time I “got it” and I was blown away by the idea that I moved not just to the Piedmont, but to what was once Africa.

Kenny Gay’s lecture, which gave an overview of plate tectonics, the formation of the Appalachians, a comparison with the Himalayas and then zoomed in on the specific geology, left me wanting to know more. I soon found on line a lecture course on geology from the Teaching Company, a source from which I have enjoyed lectures on several topics in the past.

The Nature of Earth is a 3-DVD set containing 36 half-hour lectures. That’s 18 hours of conservation learning in a cool indoor setting. Professor Renton’s goal for the course is not, he says, to turn us into geologists (though, I could see how this could happen because his enthusiasm is contagious) but “to have you carry what you learn in this course with you wherever you go for the rest of your life so that you may more deeply understand and appreciate the landscape and the geology that surrounds you.”

As Professor Renton puts it, he gives you enough basic knowledge to help you “understand much of what you see around you as you tour the world, whether that tour represents going to some distant exotic place or a short trip to the office or shopping center.”

While there were plenty of flashy topics, along with dramatic scenery, such as volcanoes and earthquakes and the formation of mountains, it was some of the less glamorous topics that particularly grabbed my attention and that apply specifically to problems we need to solve here in the Piedmont. These core topics are: Soils, erosion, groundwater, ground water contamination.

The lectures on groundwater and groundwater production, emphasizing that groundwater is not a renewable resource, were eye opening for me -- and chilling. My immediate reaction after viewing them was: Everyone in the Piedmont should be forced to watch these two lectures, and every commissioner should be forced to watch them twice. If we all understood the mechanics of where our drinking water comes from, we would be making very different decisions about development, how we build our communities and how we live. I remember one comment from Professor Renton in which he pointed out it took 800 years for some groundwater to be created -- hardly a “renewable” resource.

Continued on page 2.

The Nature of Earth is a 3-DVD set containing 36 half-hour lectures. That’s 18 hours of conservation learning in a cool indoor setting.

I'm not sure I'm succeeding in conveying how fascinating these lectures are -- I was quite surprised at how engaging the lecturer is and how I felt I "couldn't wait" for the next lecture. These are very information-packed, so one or two lectures was all I could absorb in a day, but I eventually made it through to Lecture 34 (only two more to go.)

Coincidentally, this summer my husband and I went to Japan for several weeks, and yes, I can say that Professor Renton met his goal. Japan features frequently in the lectures on volcanoes and earthquakes, and I do feel that having taken this DVD course, I had a much deeper appreciation of what I was seeing, where I was walking and what I was experiencing. When, in the Japanese Alps, I dipped my hand into water from a hot spring -- I had a deeper awareness than I would have had before of how it was that this water was so hot and why it had such a mineral content. When, in Nara, Japan, I sat, strapped into a chair, in an earth quake simulator (I think I "experienced" a 6.5), I had a deeper understanding of what forces create such movement, than I would have had without having taken this geology course. I sat, shaking, knowing the difference between an epicenter and a focus, a Love wave and a Rayleigh wave.

I will bring the set with me to the next New Hope Audubon Society meeting if you'd like to have a look at it.



Book Review

Time and the Piedmont: A History of Its Natural Systems, by Edward J. Keunzler, Chapel Hill Press, Inc.

As I learned from Professor Renton, knowledge of geology enhances your understanding whether you travel far away or look in your own backyard. This is literally the heart of this recent posthumous publication of Time in the Piedmont. I found my copy at McIntyre's Fine Books in Fearington Village.

This is a gem of a book. It's odd and quirky in a way -- not a standard tex book, but as substantive as a good textbook and a better read. It's a story of the area in which we live, looking at the geology and ecology from the point of view of time-lines. "I undertook to explore the time dimension because the public seems to lack an appreciation of its importance at its many scales -- from the cosmic to the daily functioning of local natural systems."

Time in the Piedmont, Preface, xvii

Through time lines -- whether the long time lines of plate tectonics, the shorter time line of the life of a butterfly or a tick -- Professor Kuenzler takes us deeply into the life of everything, and I mean everything, in our own backyards. I found that a walk to the mailbox became all the richer, for having read this book. And that's how it should be -- there is so much around us, if we only learn to see. This book teaches us how to see and how to care.

Like the DVD course reviewed above, this book is information packed. It's not a light read, but it's that good kind of compelling and substantive read that for me, at least, is a joy to discover.

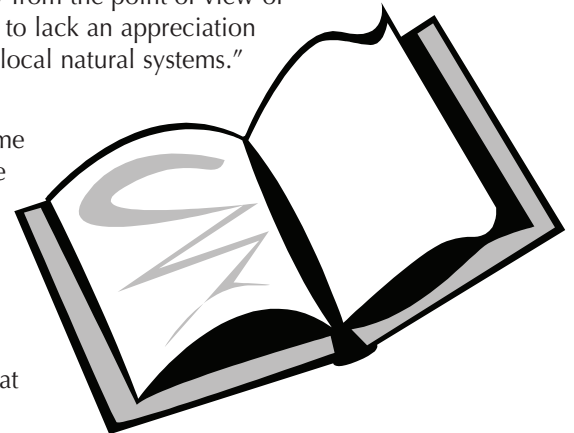
The book is also a call to action. I believe that we get a call to action when we understand what is around us. This book does a fine job of introducing us to the richness, the biodiversity, the magic of the Piedmont -- and how deeply at risk it all is. As Prof. Kuenzler puts it in closing the book:

"Do we have the will to support efforts to preserve large tracts of habitat for the precious plants and animals that we inherited? How much of our public and private money shall we appropriate for the work of the national and state parks and forests, for game management and wildlife preservation, and for private conservancy efforts? What legacy will we leave our descendants? What they will be able to see, enjoy, and appreciate in time to come depends on our foresight, work, and investments now." Time in the Piedmont, P. 266.

Prof. Kuenzler taught environmental sciences and ecology courses at UNC Chapel Hill. He and his family lived in the Piedmont on a 154-acre farm for more than 30 years. During that period, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service website, Prof. Kuenzler identified over 400 different species of flora and fauna.

Professor Kuenzler appears to have practiced what he preached. The beloved land that taught him so much is the Kuenzler Wildlife Habitat Preserve. Here is the link to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service web page featuring the Kuenzler property and describing the ways in which he and his family worked with the Triangle Land Conservancy and various government agencies to protect the land and bring back native vegetation and fauna.

<http://www.fws.gov/nc-es/es/partners/featuredproj.html>



Upcoming New Hope Audubon Society Membership Meeting Presentations for 2008-2009

In the table below, there is a list of our presentations for the upcoming year! Our first meeting is a pot luck supper with slide presentations from our attendees. Please bring a dish to share with others and a hearty appetite. Please bring 10 to 15 slides or pictures. There will be a slide projector and laptop with a digital projector. This meeting is a "what I did on my summer vacation" show. Please note this meeting begins at 6:30pm.

Our regular membership meetings are held at the Totten Center at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens on the first Thursday of every month (except June, July, and August). The gardens are on Highway 15-501 at the intersection of Old Mason Farm Road on the southeast corner. The parking lot is variable because there is construction; currently parking is along the street next to the botanical gardens. The meetings start at 7pm with refreshments, chatting with friends, and meeting visitors or new members. There is chapter business at 7:20 or so and the presentations start at approximately 7:45 and run through 9:00. Everyone, even non-members, is welcome! See you at the next meeting!

I am always looking for speakers or nature/environmental topics. If you have a good nature or environmental presentation, or know of a good speaker or a topic that you would like to hear, then please contact me at btldriscoll@bellsouth.net.

NHAS Speakers for the 2008-2009 Year

DATE	TITLE	SPEAKER	CONTACT INFO
September 4, 2008	Pot Luck Dinner and Slides	Membership	btldriscoll@bellsouth.net
October 2, 2008	Bird Photography	Bill Majoros	bmajoros@duke.edu
November 6, 2008	Box Turtle Conservation http://boxturtleheadstart.org	Jennifer Ginsburg	dalisnake@mindspring.com
December 4, 2008	Alaska in Summer and Winter	Norm Budnitz	nbudnitz@gmail.com
January 8, 2009	Gemstones of North Carolina	Kenny Gay	Kenny.Gay@ncmail.net
February 5, 2009	Birds of New Zealand	Reggie Daves	rd6222@sccoast.net
March 5, 2009	Lemur Study in Madagascar	Meredith Barrett	meredith.barrett@duke.edu
April 2, 2009	Flora and Fauna of Peru or Antarctica	David Smith and Judy Heitmuller-Smith	david.f.smith@gsk.com
May 7, 2009	Gardening with Drought Tolerant Native Plants	Chris Liloia	liloia@email.unc.edu

Handy reminder to cut out and put on your refrigerator:

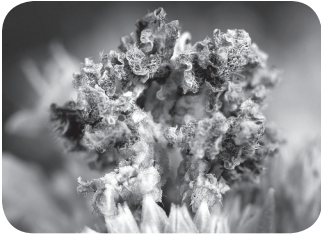
DON'T FORGET !!

**Pick Up your New Hope Audubon Society BIRD SEED and COFFEE
On SATURDAY, November 8, 2008 • 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
WILD BIRD CENTER at Eastgate Shopping Center**

Triangle Natural Almanac

by Patrick Coin

Decorated Looper - Hidden in Flowers



Fall flowers such as goldenrod are magnets for butterflies and beetles, but look closer and you may find a marvel of camouflage, the Decorated Looper, a tiny caterpillar that has the remarkable habit of

adorning itself with pieces of flowers. The disguise is very effective, but one can learn to look for little clumps of flower petals that appear just a bit too tightly clustered to be part of one flower, and sometimes the flower moves a bit—a sure indication that something is up!

The Decorated Looper is the larval stage of an elegant green geometer moth of the genus *Synchlora*. (We have perhaps two similar species in this area.) The adult may be found at porch lights from time-to-time. It is a striking green with thin wavy white lines on the wings. The caterpillar is found on plants with clustered heads of flowers, such as goldenrod, mountain-mint, and Joe-pye weed. To achieve its remarkable camouflage, the caterpillar chews bits of petals and cements them onto its back with bits of silk secreted by glands near the mouthparts. As the caterpillar grows, it molts its skin, along with the camouflage. According to Thomas Eisner, they generally do not resume feeding until they are cloaked again.



Underneath all those petals, which can be removed with tweezers, is a rather ordinary-looking "inchworm". I have noticed, too, that the camouflage goes a bit further than the covering—the body of these caterpillars is quite yellow when found on yellow flowers, but white when found on white flowers. Years ago, I found one on the pink flowers of Joe-pye weed, and I believe the caterpillar's body was a matching pink. (I have to rummage through my old slides to be sure.) I don't know if this is an inherited coloration, or if the caterpillars are able to change color depending on their background.

Look for these caterpillars on flowers of old fields and roadsides that have large clusters, such as mountain-mint, Joe-pye weed, goldenrod, and crownbeard. Caterpillars may be found from April to October. The adult moth can be found at lights near larval habitat from March to October.

For further information on this caterpillar and the moth it becomes, see: Wagner, *Caterpillars of Eastern North America*, and Eisner, *For Love of Insects*.

Feeder Watch

by Tom Driscoll

It's the middle of August now and some birds, especially the young, have moved on and are finding their own territories. Bird activity at your feeders is limited to very early or late in the day, when the temperatures are cooler. Most of your birds are singing less too. Although the temperatures are hot and the birds are less active, they are still eating quite a bit of my sunflower seeds and suet. The regulars, such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, House Finches, and woodpeckers are still eating a lot here. Because our regular brand of peanut butter suet easily melts, we are using a "no melt" kind with hot pepper that appears to be just as tasty to the birds. Because squirrels don't like the hot pepper, we put one of our feeders on a tree. This allows easier access for some birds. Our hummingbirds are still here and defending the feeders. Did you notice that there didn't seem to be as many hummingbirds this year? Are they still feeding at your house?

Although I haven't noticed any birds on nests lately, some babies are still being fed and we can hear them whining for food. Have you noticed how different they look, compared to their parents? The juveniles are usually duller and they look somewhat like females (in some species). Juveniles of most species don't obtain adult plumage until their second year, although some hawks and eagles take four years to grow into adult plumage. Also, now and in the next two months, some of our backyard birds will be molting. That is, they will be shedding their old feathers and growing in new feathers. In some cases, the birds look unhealthy, and even bald, but they can still fly and forage for food. If you want to report interesting bird observations or have questions, please contact me at btldriscoll@bellsouth.net and I will answer your question in this column. Keep birding!

Duke Gardens

Photo by Pat Reid



New Hope Audubon Society Calendar of Activities

Thursday Sept 4 **Membership Meeting - Potluck Dinner and Slides** Totten Center at NC Botanical Gardens 6:30 p.m.

Saturday Sept 6 **Stream Watch** with John Kent. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Contact John at 933-5650. jkent@tmug.org

Saturday Sept 6 **Bird Walk at Duke Gardens** with Cynthia Fox. Meet at Gardens parking lot at 7:55 a.m.

Saturday Sept 13 **Adopt A Highway** with Phil Johnson Meet at Stagecoach Rd.

Sunday, September 14th. **Bird Walk** with Tom Driscoll. Meet at the Mardi Gras bowling alley (Farrington and Hwy. 54) at 7:30 a.m. We will be looking for migrants passing through the area. The destination will be announced when we meet. Please bring hiking shoes, long pants, insect repellent, and water. We should be gone 2 to 3 hours. Please contact Tom Driscoll at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net if you plan to attend. Non-members are welcome to attend. See you there!

Saturday Sept 20 **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 Oct 2 **Membership Meeting** Totten Center at NC Botanical Gardens. 7:30 p.m. Topic Bird Photography with Bill Majuros.

Saturday Oct 4 **Bird Walk at Duke Gardens** with Cynthia Fox. Meet at Gardens parking lot at 7:55 a.m.

Saturday Oct 4 **Stream Watch** with John Kent. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Contact John at 933-5650. jkent@tmug.org

Saturday Oct 18 **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.

Audubon NC *Chris Canfield, Executive Director*

As a nice cap to the wonderful coverage we've had on the sanctuaries of the southern coast (sent out by Ida Lynch recently) was this excellent editorial in the Wilmington paper. Here is a case where our persistence in making the case for conservation in combination with education and community outreach has turned a controversy into a celebration. Walker Golder, Andy Wood, and all the coastal staff for Audubon have every reason to be proud of this ongoing success story.

<http://www.starnewsonline.com/images/logo2.gif> <http://www.starnewsonline.com/>

For the Birds, For Everyone *Published: Tuesday, July 22, 2008 at 6:50 p.m.*

Away from the sunbathers, surfers and swimmers at Wrightsville Beach, nature is thriving. And it's all due to the foresight of federal officials and environmentalists who insisted that an inlet relocation project – designed to save the Shell Island Resort from certain doom – also include a sanctuary for shorebirds.

It's working. This past season, more than 500 pairs of shorebirds – terns, black skimmers, piping plovers and a half-dozen oystercatchers – made their nests along the sandy tip of Shell Island.

A paradise for bird-lovers, to be sure. But you don't have to know a plover from a pigeon to appreciate how little of our coastline is undeveloped. This project presented the opportunity to help oceanfront property owners and create a wildlife habitat that will remain undisturbed. Well, mostly.

Despite no-trespassing signs, the vigilant folks with the Audubon Society have to run off dogs and their people every so often to avoid scaring off the winged residents. The key to continued preservation is to make sure the area remains off-limits to foot traffic.

For most people, this is no more than a minor inconvenience. The beach itself along the ocean and Mason Inlet are still open for anyone who wants to stroll or simply lounge in the sand.

And the sanctuary, a stopover for migratory birds during the fall and winter, have attracted off-season tourists who prefer the beach at its quietest. They (and their money) will return as long as the birds do.

The inlet relocation was a desperate effort to prevent the Atlantic Ocean from swallowing the investments of a group of New Hanover County taxpayers. Six years later, the Shell Island Resort is still standing, and flocks of shorebirds are raising families next door.

Not a bad definition of success.

New Hope Audubon Society 2007-2008 Officers

OFFICE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
President	Robert "Bo" Howes	370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
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Treasurer	Karsten Rist	490-5718	karstenrist@verizon.net
Director	Robin Moran	383-3514	robomo@earthlink.net
Director	Jane Tigar		taratigar@yahoo.com
Director	Vacant		
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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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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@yankelovich.com
Eagle Platform	Robert "Bo" Howes	370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
Important Bird Areas: Eno River Chair	Tom Driscoll	932-7966	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	Tom Driscoll	932-7966	btdriscoll@bellsouth.net
	Karsten Rist	490-5718	karstenrist@verizon.net

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