

New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter



Volume 35, Number 1: January-February 2010

Eagle Observation Platform

by Bo Howes

Through much hard work, the new Eagle Observation Platform on Jordan Lake is nearing completion. We of New Hope Audubon owe a big thank you to Garry Scronce and his crew. The new platform is a solid and professional viewing platform that would have been difficult for us to pull off without their able leadership. At the time of this writing, we do not have a date for a dedication ceremony and official opening. We all hope to have the platform and parking lot open to the public soon.



On a side note, my extended family was in town over the Thanksgiving Holiday. I took several of these folks to see the progress being made on the platform and trails on Friday morning. Included in our party was my niece of ten years of age. She had never seen a bald eagle and was keen to do so. We arrived at the site and wandered around the parking area and went down to the platform area. After ten to fifteen minutes of

looking around the site we saw cormorants, ring billed gulls, and a great blue heron but no eagle. Finally, as we were beginning to head back up the trail an immature eagle flew by and gave us a nice

look. As I explained how long it takes a Bald Eagle to grow into it's distinctive white head and tail feathers an adult Bald Eagle in all its glory swooped over us and proceeded to meander up the lake shore. My niece was ecstatic and I was relieved. An Eagle Observation Platform indeed!



Photos by Linda Gaines



Bird Walk

by Margaret Wainwright

On November 15th, a picture perfect Sunday afternoon, Tom Driscoll took eight people on a bird walk at Jordan Lake. Already in the Mardi Gras parking lot he pointed out a bald eagle overhead. Most of us were beginners, so Tom began with elementary instruction (always keep the strap of your binoculars round your neck) and helpful hints (when you spot a bird with the naked eye, don't look down at your binoculars as you raise them). On the road to Jordan Lake we saw turkey vultures and black vultures overhead and feeding on roadkill.

We went to the new Eagle Observation Platform first and it is still under construction. Those who had seen it a couple of weeks before were amazed to see that the recent rain had brought the shoreline 15 feet further in so that the platform was only just above the water level. From the platform we saw three or four more bald eagles, a herring gull, Bonaparte's gull and many ring-billed gulls, several double-crested cormorants, and a belted kingfisher; also we were lucky enough to see a horned grebe. We spent some time there and Tom made sure that everyone knew where to look and actually saw the birds. Among our number were two middle school boys who had chosen to study ornithology for a science competition. They had a list of over 200 different types of bird on which they will be quizzed. I was impressed by the seriousness with which they approached that formidable task.

We moved on to a wooded area following a power line cut toward the lake. We could hear various warblers and managed to spot several of them as they flitted across the path or among the trees. These were the Eastern towhee, white-throated sparrow, song sparrow, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, pine warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, rub-crowned kinglet. At the end of the afternoon everyone was keen to go on other bird walks.

January and February 2010 New Hope Audubon Society Membership Meeting Presentations

Our membership meetings are held at the "new building" at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens on the first Thursday of every month; in this case January 7 and February 4, 2010 The gardens are on Highway 15-501 at the intersection of Old Mason Farm Road on the southeast corner. The parking lot is finished, so there is easy parking very close to the new building. 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!

C Kenny is a state geologist and well-versed on the geology and minerals of North Carolina. He has spoken to our group before and his talk was very popular. We look forward to his presentation!

Our February speaker will be Jeff Phippen from Duke University who will discuss the butterflies and odonates (dragonflies) of North Carolina. Jeff is a very enthusiastic speaker who, in addition to being a great birdwatcher, is very knowledgeable about the butterflies and dragonflies of North Carolina. He is a great photographer as well, so his slides will be great!

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 bttdriscoll@bellsouth.net.



Triangle Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic Needs Community Support

You're jogging through the woods and you see a small bird struggling to fly. You're driving down the highway and you spot an owl on the side of the road alive but unable to move. Your neighbor's cat has something in its mouth struggling to get free. You are mowing the grass and find a small nest of baby rabbits and only one is still alive. A turtle is slowly crossing the highway and you see the oncoming car as it strikes but does not kill. You're having your morning coffee and you hear a crash at your window and look out to find a bird lying on your deck stunned but alive.

This is a small sampling of the calls coming in to Triangle Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic on a daily basis. In the spring the phone will ring nonstop morning to night with urgent cries for help, asking for guidance and assistance. The phone rings because people care. Animal control agencies, veterinary hospitals, and concerned individuals search for help and guidance on how to care for wildlife in need. Taking proper care of wildlife requires specialized



skills and training. Triangle Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic is open to the public and able to provide this specialized help through its veterinarian and skilled rehabilitators seven days a week.



When the call came in about a red tail hawk that had been shot we were all prepared for the worst. The animal control officer who called TWRC thought the prognosis seemed fairly certain. During the examination we found that the pellet had gone through the wing breaking it at the radius. The pellet had continued through the side of the bird into the thoracic cavity where it was still lodged. The officer felt that any bird that was still alive after all this deserved a chance and that is why she brought it to us. After extensive care for over 30 days this hawk is still alive and is undergoing physical therapy and flight therapy at Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte. We will be releasing this special bird in about 30 more days.

Triangle Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic opened in August to fill the void left by the closing of Piedmont Wildlife Center's rehabilitation hospital. TWRC cares for sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife in North Carolina. In addition to medical care, our knowledgeable

and dedicated rehabilitators, volunteers, and staff veterinarian are also available to assist the public with wildlife questions and concerns. TWRC works together with Wildlife Welfare Inc. the largest network of home rehabilitators in the triangle area. Together, TWRC and Wildlife Welfare comprise the largest network of experienced licensed wildlife rehabilitators in the area. TWRC also works in cooperation with local veterinary hospitals, animal control officers, state and federal agencies, the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Carolina Raptor Center. The ultimate goal of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife is the successful release of these animals back to their natural habitat to balance the wildlife affected by our continued growth and development throughout the Triangle.

Triangle Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic is the only wildlife hospital in the Triangle area and needs your help to continue to assist the public and care for wildlife in need. Most people do not recognize the need for a clinic like this until they find themselves in a situation like one of those described above. Immediate funding is essential to keep the doors open for that next crisis. Make giving to TWRC a conscious choice and habit - **every dollar makes a difference.** By donating to TWRC we enrich our perspective on the native wildlife surrounding us. **All donations are tax deductible.**



Whether you are interested in becoming a Founding Member (donation of \$1,000.00 or more), a sustaining member, or are interested in volunteer and training opportunities, please visit our website at www.trianglewildlife.org. We are all in this conservation effort together.

Pamela Bayne, President of Triangle Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic

2009 Bird Seed Sale Results

by Judy Murray, Chair

Many thanks to all of you who purchased bird seed this year enabling us to pursue our educational goals. The seed sale turned out to be better than I had expected. We cleared about \$2,400. Some members posted notices, approached friends, co-workers and neighbors with sale forms and as a result generated multiple orders. Many thanks for the extra effort from all of you. Also, I want to thank those members who helped on the pick-up day loading cars and delivering seed—Patsy Bailey and John Kent. Last but not least a Huge Thank You to Cynthia Fox of The Wild Bird Center in Eastgate Shopping Center for allowing us to use her store.

Feeder Watch

by Tom Driscoll

For the past month or so, the feeding had abated some, but now the birds seem to be eating a lot more birdseed and suet. One of my readers sent me a message asking where her birds were hiding. During the late summer and early fall, there is usually a lot of food around and fewer birds (the winter visitors have not yet arrived and the summer visitors have begun migration) are here, so there may be less activity at your feeders.



Have your winter visitors all arrived yet? Some of the less common birds I have seen in my yard include White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Be on the lookout for these unusual birds. I also have some birds such as Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers eating my suet. If you don't provide suet for your birds because the squirrels eat it, consider using the hot pepper suet. My squirrels avoid it! Sometimes, orioles and other birds will eat jelly, so you may want to consider putting out some jelly or using an oriole feeder. Some of the local bird food stores, such as the Wild Bird Center in Chapel Hill can show you these feeders. If you see one of the rare birds or want to recount another feeder story, then please contact me at spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com. I would like to include some reader's bird feeding observations and stories, so please send me some. Although you may be feeding birds, you may want to provide them with water as well. Most winters can be somewhat dry here. Your birds may be having trouble finding water. To ensure that they continue to come to your feeders, adding a water bath or tray would be very helpful to your birds.

One reader recently asked me how to get rid of crows on her feeders. This has been very difficult problem for me as well! As you know, crows and corvids (order) in general are smart birds. They have seen using tools, such as twigs, to dig into holes to extract food, for example. So, they may eventually figure out how to thwart any strategy to keep them from your feeders. However, there are some feeders that have small holes and small perches to keep larger birds away. If you have strategies that have worked for you, then let me know and I will share with my readers. Enjoy the holidays and I will see you in 2010!

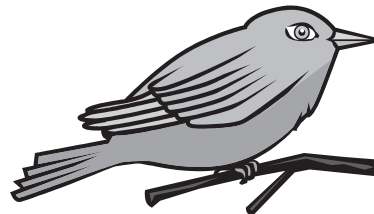
Eagle Count

by Martha Girolami, Chair

NHAS held its recent Bald Eagle count on Lake Jordan on Sunday, October 11, 2009. Eight volunteers at five sites counted 34 Bald Eagles –17 adult, 14 immature and 3 undetermined. The day was cool and breezy with occasional light showers and the lake level was low. The next count will be held on Sunday, January 10, 2010 from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Please contact Martha Girolami if you would like to join a count team at 362-5759.



Bluebird Houses For Sale



They are great "last minute" holiday gifts. They are reasonably priced at \$15 and free delivery! Call Tom Driscoll at 919 932-7966 or email at spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com.

Adopt-a-Highway Program



The next Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup is March 6, Saturday, at 7:30 a.m. Meet the second Stagecoach Road parking lot. Bring long pants and shirts. Bring work gloves and sturdy shoes. Bags and pick up equipment are provided. We're usually through by 9:30 a.m.! Call or email Tom Driscoll for more information!



Adopt-A-Highway

by Kasey Sorrell

My day off from school, I get to sleep in, it's 7:20 a.m. on a Saturday, and it's raining. My mom woke me up and said "It's time to go sweetie." I let out a groan..... "You need to make up your mind now, you can stay home by yourself or go with me!" I slipped on my clothes and headed out the door, with nothing to eat. My stomach was growling on the way. My mom said, "We might not even do it, no one may be there." Well... somebody was there, Tom Driscoll and a woman were cleaning up garbage along the highway. Tom offered a jabber or a grabber to pick up trash. I was clueless. "Go ahead and take

both," Tom said. So my orange vested mother and I both, headed down Stagecoach road with the jabber and grabber and tons of orange garbage bags. It was still raining. We jabbed and grabbed all sorts of things from foam cups to molded shoes. My morning was not what I would call "fun." When the cars flew by, you felt a mist of water which almost soaked you. We walked past a hunting spot and saw many car parts. My mom thought it was a wreck sight, and so did I. I currently am watching the television show *Bones*. The whole scene was eerily close to the shows theme. I was looking for a skull or any type of human bone. I did see up a wet stuffed cat, police flashers, and a ruined speed limit sign. I am twelve years old and helped my planet today. We could use your help or my mom is going to bring me with her... again, but I don't mind.

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New Hope Audubon Society Activities Calendar

Thursday, Jan 7. **General Membership Meeting at NC Botanical Gardens**, 7:00 p.m. Speaker is Kenny Gary, of the NC Department of Natural Resources, he will speak on Mineralogy of North Carolina: Past, Present, and Future.

Saturday, Jan 9 **Stream Watch** with John Kent 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Jan. 10. Tom Driscoll will lead a **Bird Walk** at a location to be determined. Meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot at 1 pm. Be prepared for moderate hiking; bring boots and good walking shoes and water. Dress warmly. Please contact Tom Driscoll at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net if you have questions or plan to attend.

Thursday Feb 4. **General Membership Meeting** at NC Botanical Gardens 7:00 p.m. Speaker will be Jeff Pippen from Duke University who will discuss the butterflies and odonates (dragonflies) of North Carolina

Saturday Feb 6 **Stream Watch** with John Kent 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Feb. 7. Tom Driscoll will lead a **Bird Walk** to Kerr Lake for our annual trip. Meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot at 9 a.m. Be prepared for moderate hiking. Dress warmly. There are often loons, odd ducks and gulls, and other birds. We will probably eat lunch at a nearby restaurant. Please contact Tom Driscoll at btdriscoll@bellsouth.net if you have questions or plan to attend.

Sometimes, **impromptu field trips** are scheduled a day or two before they occur. If you are interested in being on the list for the impromptu field trips, please contact Linda Gaines at lgtgaines@alumni.mines.edu or sign on to the New Hope Audubon Society listserv. The directions are on our website at www.newhopeaudubon.org

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