

New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter

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P.O.Box 2693, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
<http://www.newhopeaudubon.org>



North Carolina Botanical Garden - Garden of Wonder Bird Blind

By Norm Budnitz

Elisha Taylor of the North Carolina Botanical Garden (NCBG) in Chapel Hill approached us a few months ago, asking if we might be interested in sponsoring a bird blind for a new section of the Garden being set up for children of all ages--the Garden of Wonder. We jumped at the opportunity, offering both financial support and labor. Dave Ringenburg volunteered to be the designer and construction supervisor. Dave donated many, many

hours of his time, and with his expert guidance, a number of NHAS members hauled lumber, pounded nails, and climbed the roof to lay down shingles. The bird blind is now finished and being used by adults and children as they look out at bird feeders in the Garden of Wonder.



Charlotte Jones-Roe, Associate Director of NCBG recently sent us this note:

"Elisha was kind enough to share the good news with me, and I wanted to take this opportunity to add my thanks to all of you in New Hope Audubon, especially Tom [Driscoll] who jumped at the idea and Dave [Ringenburg] and every single one of you who came out and contributed so generously of your time, effort and skills to make the project happen. I am so pleased to hear that the blind is now finished and that it will be in



Confessions of a Lister Pt 1 by Norm Budnitz

Bird listing is a sport, of sorts. But unlike most activities we categorize as sports (football, basketball, baseball), there are no referees or umpires. That's not quite true. Each participant is his or her own referee. And the rules of this sport? Another enigma. Each participant can determine his or her own rules! Many listers, and I am one, choose to follow the rules set out by the American Birding Association (ABA), and some of us submit our lists for annual publication by the ABA. Does ABA check up on us? No. We have to let our consciences be our guide.

Kinds of Lists. People keep bird lists of all sorts.

- *Life list:* This is perhaps the most common list that people keep. For example, I have kept a list of all the birds I have seen. Ever. Anywhere in the world. Starting at about age 14.
- *World list and ABA area list:* I maintain lists in both of these categories. The world list includes all birds I have seen anywhere on Earth. The ABA area, on the other hand, is a subset of the world, basically defined as all of North American north of the



Garden of Wonder Bird Blind - Continued

use right away. As sturdily built as the blind is, I trust it will be in use for a long time to come!

"I have never forgotten the critical role New Hope Audubon members played in saving Mason Farm Biological Reserve from being bisected by the Laurel Hill freeway during our 15-year struggle, attending hearing after hearing, until the DOT and the University finally took the lines off the map. I couldn't be more pleased that NHAS has remained a strong supporter of the Garden and its mission, individually and as a group, through your generous contributions to the Education Center--and now by constructing this wonderful new facility to share the love of birds with our youngest naturalists. Thanks, New Hope Audubon members, for your investment in future generations of young bird watchers and nature lovers."

Yes, your donations to New Hope Audubon are being put to good work. Thank you, our members, for all your support.

Parkwood Elementary's GBBC

By Sarah Dendy

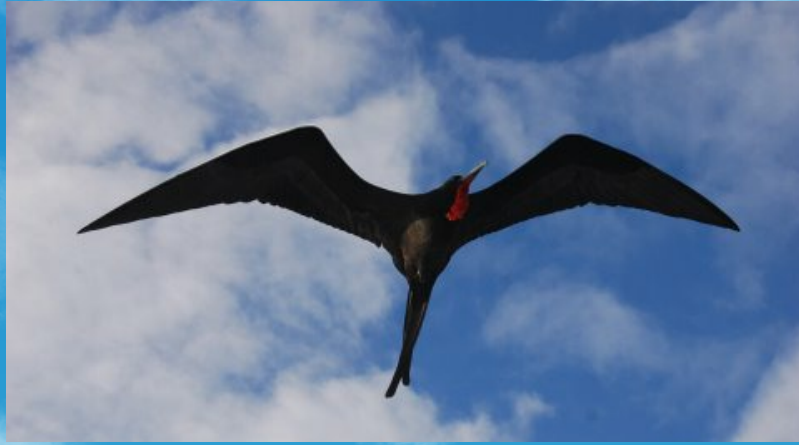
For the 4th year, Parkwood Elementary students participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count on their campus in Durham. Some of the students had become familiar with birds by observing visitors to feeders outside two classrooms. They used field guides and the internet to help them learn to identify birds by sight and sound. On the count days, 149 students were helped by teachers, assistants and volunteers. They counted 178 individual birds and identified 31 species. Thanks to the loan of binoculars by New Hope Audubon and NC Botanical Garden, two 4th grade classes were able to use binoculars to observe distant birds. This is becoming a tradition at Parkwood and students are especially enjoying counting the robins on their playing fields and checking for bluebirds on the fences this week.

Blue Bird Houses For Sale

NHAS has bluebird houses for sale for \$15.00. Now is the time to get yours as the bluebirds are pairing up and nesting. Don't be without one. See our website at <http://www.newhopeaudubon.org> to order.

These Bluebird houses have been carefully designed and constructed. Features include:

- Entrance hole diameter is just right for Bluebirds, too small for Starlings.
- Metal flashing around the entrance hole helps deter predators such as squirrels.
- Grooves on the inside of the door below the hole help the fledgling Bluebirds climb out of the nest
- Hinged door makes it easy to clean out old nesting material.
- Written instructions included to help with proper placement and maintenance.
- Back board: 17" tall
- Box cross section: 6"wide x 6"deep.



Confessions of A Lister Pt 1

- Rio Grande—including Canada and Alaska, but not including Hawaii.
- **State lists:** I also keep lists of birds in each of the states I have lived in or visited with some regularity. Am I a bit wacko? I'll leave that for others to assess.
- **Yard list:** I keep a list of all the birds that have shown up on my property.
- **Other lists:** I know birders who keep county lists, a USA list (all 50 states), a lower 48 list, and country lists for each country they visit.
 - **Commuter list:** Some friends and I keep lists of all the birds we have seen while commuting to and from work, door to door. It's amazing how many birds can be counted on the short walk between my front door and my car!
 - Birds seen on power/telephone lines.
 - Birds that have pooped on cars.
 - Birds drinking from Sapsucker wells (the holes that Sapsuckers chisel out to get at tree sap).
- **BIG lists:** This is a category unto itself.
 - **Big Year.** Perhaps you have seen the movie of the same name. The object of a Big Year is to see as many bird species as possible from midnight January 1 to midnight December 31. (Do this on a leap year and you get an extra day.) Of course, you may do a Big Year for any of the categories listed above—world, ABA, etc. This can be an expensive proposition. Birders seriously competing in the ABA area, for example, may need to fly from Key West, Florida, after seeing a La Sagre's Flycatcher to Gambell, Alaska, in the Bering Sea in hopes of seeing a Pallas's Bunting.
 - **Big Day.** Midnight to midnight on any given day. Some people do Big Days for each month of the year in a given locale—North Carolina or Orange County, for example. Big Days can be exhausting if you are over a certain age. Is there no end to this nonsense?
 - **Big Sit.** Some folks in Connecticut, being a bit daunted by Big Years and Big Days, devised a less strenuous competition. For a Big Sit, participants lay out a circle 17 feet in diameter and count all birds seen or heard from within the circle in a 24-hour period. Lawn chairs and coolers full of food and drink (yes, even beer, though this may skew the results) are all allowed. Why 17 feet? The founders said that it just seemed like a good number.

Rules. As mentioned above, each person may play by his or her own rules.

- For example, for my yard list, I count any bird that I can identify by sight or sound, on or from within my property. So I may count a Whip-poor-will that I hear calling at night, even if I can't see it. And I may count a bird seen from my garden that is flying over my neighbor's back yard. Too bad my property is surrounded by trees. If I lived on the coast, I could count any birds out over the ocean that were visible through my spotting scope! But there are people who choose to be much more restrictive than I. They will only count birds that enter the airspace immediately above their property. Or only birds that actually land on their property, trees included, I suppose.
- People who wish to join in one of the self-refereed competitions described above, or people who just prefer to follow somebody else's guidelines, may choose to abide by an established set of rules. The ABA, for example, allows people to list 'heard only' birds as well as birds actually seen. Black Rails, tiny little ghosts of birds that live in coastal marshes, are relatively easy to hear. But seeing one may require wading into a grassy marsh with a group of people, forming a circle around a calling bird, and slowly closing the circle by moving toward the center. With luck, the little guy may scoot between someone's legs in an effort to escape.
- The ABA only allows birds actually encountered within the ABA area and its territorial waters. So seabirds off the coast of North Carolina are countable. But if a birder is standing on the Texas side of the Rio Grande and sees a bird on the Mexico side, that's too bad. Unless that bird can somehow be coaxed over the border, it must go uncounted.
- What about bird's that are seen clearly by others but only glimpsed by a particular person? Some birders have been known to ask their guides, "Did you see it well enough for me to count it?" Or how about this story: A group of birders on a pelagic birding trip encountered a rare species of Shearwater that flew close by the boat. Unfortunately, one member of the group was in the head when the cry went out. He appeared with his pants barely raised to a modest position, only to see the bird as a speck on the horizon. Countable? He did. I wouldn't. The sport is self-refereed.

NHAS Trip to Kerr Lake by Tom Driscoll

On Feb 27, Steve Foster, Steve Buczynski, Peggy Maslow, and I went bird watching at Kerr Lake. We knew it would be a good day when we drove up to Palmer Point and saw an adult Bald Eagle swoop down to catch a fish. We were met there by Paul Glass of South Boston, VA and Mary Foster from near Danville, VA and they showed us some of the good birding areas in southern Virginia. We saw many Common Loons, but no Red-throated Loons this year. We also saw some ducks both at Kerr Lake and Clyde's Pond in Dick Cross Wildlife Management area. Although the day was warm and the trees are budding out there, we saw many of the winter visitors including Fox, White-crowned, Swamp, and Savannah Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. We also saw a Lesser Black-backed Gull among all the gulls below the dam. We did see our first Tree Sparrow of 2012 as well. Another highlight was Steve B. sharing home made spring rolls (with rice paper) with home made peanut sauce at lunch time!

All in all, a great trip! See you on the next bird walk!



New Hope Audubon Society Membership Meeting Presentations for March- and April 2012

Our speaker for the April 5, 2012 membership meeting will be Dr. Kendra Sewell, a researcher at Duke University, who will discuss "Call learning in Red Crossbills: Implications for social and population dynamics (Speciation in Red Crossbills and thoughts on bird speciation in general)". Many of the "listers" or twitchers in our group will be interested in learning how bird species and subspecies may be split into additional species!

Our speaker for the May 3, 2012 membership meeting will be Johnny Randall, Director of the NC Botanical Gardens who will discuss "Rehabilitation and Restoration Work at Mason Farm and Penny's Bend". As you may know, the New Hope Audubon Society donates funds for Mason Farm upkeep and maintenance each year and this area remains one of the best areas in Orange County for birdwatching!

Our membership meetings are held at the Education Building at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens (on the north side very near the parking lots) on the first Thursday of every month. The gardens are on Highway 15-501 at the intersection of Old Mason Farm Road. 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 until 7:15 or so when the presentations begin. Most of the presentations will last 45 minutes to one hour. Everyone, even non-members, is welcome! See you at the next meeting!

Upcoming Field Trips

By Tom Driscoll

On March 25, we will be bird watching at a site to be determined. I am considering a trip to Weymouth Woods State Park in Southern Pines to look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Bachmann's Sparrows and early migrants from the south. If you are interested in going to Southern Pines, please email me. We will meet at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot at the intersection of Highway 54 and Ferrington Road at 8:00am. The hiking will be easy. Please bring sturdy shoes, water, and snacks. All bird watching skill levels are welcome. If you're interested in participating, then please contact Tom Driscoll at spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com.

We don't have any bird walks scheduled for April because many spring bird counts are scheduled. There is an article concerning spring bird counts in this newsletter. If you are interested in participating, please contact us. Also, I encourage you to look at our Facebook page or list serve where we put notices of impromptu bird walks!

The Wild Bird Center in Chapel Hill has regularly scheduled bird walks every other Saturday. For more information, our calendar has the particulars. Also, Edith Tatum leads bird walks some Saturdays at the Eno River State Park at the end of Cole Mill Rd. in west Durham. For more information, check out the Eno River State Park website at www.enoriver.org.



FEEDER WATCH

By Tom Driscoll

Birds should be feeding greedily from your feeders. Are you putting out more feed? Often, birds, such as Brown Thrashers, Pine Warblers, and Eastern Bluebirds feed on suet during February. The winter visitors, migrants from the north, will usually remain through February, March, and some into April. However, I have noticed that some of the earliest returning birds or birds that don't eat at the feeders are now returning. I have seen Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Common Grackles at my feeders recently. They usually visit in March and April.

We also have our regular visitors from the north and/or the mountains. Have you noticed the Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows at your feeders? They are common feeder birds at platform feeders or picking up the "leftovers" on the grounds. I still have White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Eastern Towhees, Carolina Wrens, Pine Warblers, and Yellow-rumped Warblers at my feeders. I have also noticed that Northern Flickers have been visiting my suet feeders. Although they are woodpeckers, they often eat ants and insects on the ground. The regular woodpeckers, the Red-bellied and the Downy, are also visiting my feeders every day. If you don't recognize these birds or the bird names, then may I suggest you pick up a bird guide. They are available in many stores. I challenge you to learn the names and calls of your feeder birds! Please let me know if you do. If you have questions or notice an unusual bird, then please contact me.

Also, it is time to clean out your bluebird boxes or houses. Clean out your bluebird houses by removing old nests and clean out with a weak bleach solution. If you would like to purchase a bluebird house, the New Hope Audubon Society sells them for only \$15 on our website: www.newhopeaudubon.org. Or you may contact me at the email address below if you would like to purchase one. Free delivery!

Feeder Watch continues to report on birds you could be seeing at the bird feeders and/or in your backyard. If you have ideas about what to write, want to report on the birds you are seeing, or have questions about the birds you are seeing, please send me an email at spttdrshnk@yahoo.com.



Fun Bird Facts

By Jae Furman

Birds migrate, not necessarily for climate, but for accessibility to food. The changes in sunlight tell them when it's time to move on.

If you have a fun bird fact, and you would like it to be mentioned here or on Twitter, send them along with your name to Jae Furman at: OutdoorEvents@gmail.com.

View more fun bird facts at [Twitter.com/newhope_audubon](https://twitter.com/newhope_audubon).



Jordan Lake Spring Bird count

By Norm Budnitz

The 2012 Jordan Lake Spring Bird Count will take place on May 6, 2012. Carol Williamson Chelette (cncbrdr@yahoo.com, 919-383-2364) is our count organizer. If you are interested in counting, please contact Carol. Participants must sign up with Carol.

NHAS sponsors Spring and Christmas bird counts each year in a count circle centered in the area of Jordan Lake in Chatham County . We encourage participants of all stripes—beginners and experts, young and old. If you have never counted before, we will team you up with more experienced people. Check this page www.newhopeaudubon.org/count.html for information about this count, including:

- Contact information for signing up to participate and for submitting data
- Count checklists for electronic and hard copy submission of count data
- Rare bird report forms in the event that you find an unusual species
- Compiler's notes from the most recent Spring and Christmas counts
- Historical data summarizing counts since 1977 when we began

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2012-2013

The New Hope Audubon Nominating committee has proposed the following slate of officers for the 2012-2013 year. They will be formally presented at the April general membership meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor .

- President - Norm Budnitz
- Vice President - Robert "Bo" Howes
- Secretary - Pat Reid
- Treasurer - Jill Paul

- Director - Robin Moran
- Director- John Kent
- Director - Mark Kosiewski



Calendar of Activities



Sunday March 25, **Field Trip** led by Tom Driscoll, at a site to be determined. I am considering a trip to Weymouth State Park in Southern Pines to look for red -cockaded woodpeckers. We will meet at 8:00 am at the Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot at the intersection of Highway 54 and Ferrington Road. If you plan to attend or have questions, then please contact Tom Driscoll at spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com

Thursday, April 5, **Membership Meeting** at NC Botanical Gardens 7:00pm The speaker will be Kendra Sewell on "Call Learning in Red Crossbills"

Saturday , April 7, **Stream Watch** with John Kent 9:00 am

Sunday, April 15, **Eagle Count** with Martha Girolami 7:00-8:30 am

Sunday, April 22, **Nature Walk at Blackwood Farm** 7:30 am The New Hope Audubon Society is offering a guided walk through Blackwood Farm to discover birds that live and pass through this area during the Spring. While walking through this 150-acre paradise of forest, meadows and restored 19th century farm buildings just south of Hillsborough, we will explore a habitat encompassing a pond and a system of dams being built by beavers to extend the pond into the surrounding forest. Bring a lawn chair and a bagged lunch if you would like to picnic in one of the meadows after the walk. Limited to 15 participants, pre-registration required. To register, send email to newhopeaudubon@gmail.com. Visit www.newhopeaudubon.org for more information.

LAKE JORDAN BALD EAGLE COUNT ON SUNDAY, January 8, 2012

By Martha Girolami, Chair

NHAS held its first Bald Eagle count at Jordan Lake on January 8, 2012 at 7:30 to 9 am. It was a partly sunny day in the low 50's with no wind. The lake level was normal. Thirteen observers counted ten total eagles -- 6 adult and 4 immature.

The next Lake Jordan Bald Eagle count will be held on April 15, 2012 from 7 to 8:30 am.



Zen and the Art of Attracting Birds
By Jae Furman

With warmer days just ahead, now is the time to begin preparing your yard for guests who will reward your hospitality with beautiful sounds, dance and color, while also providing pest control and weed control, and even help you with your meditation efforts. That's right, we are talking about birds. With so much potential for joy and delight right outside your window, how do you encourage these special creatures to stay at your place rather than the local pond or other locations in your neighborhood?

When it comes to attracting birds to your yard, the first thing that comes to mind might be a bird feeder. Food is definitely important and birds will be happy to help you dispose of seeds, nuts, scraps, and fruit. Equally important to birds, is water. A clean water source is essential to keeping birds healthy and present. If possible, moving water is best because birds can see and hear it much easier than standing water. Birdbaths, ponds, waterfalls, and streams are good water sources. When setting up a birdbath(or bird feeder), consider raising it from the ground, and have a little open space around it, locating it close to trees and dense shrubs. These features help birds feel safe from predators.

When selecting shrubs or trees to plant near your birdbaths and birdhouses, try to pick varieties that provide food in addition to shelter. Trees that birds like are ash, crabapple, dogwood, holly, magnolia and mulberry. Fruit trees like apple, cherry, peach, and plum are also good. Shrub choices to consider are butterfly bush, pyracantha, mahonia, prunus, elderberry, spicebush and viburnum. Some of these plants will provide food to wintering birds when the warm months have passed. With either trees or shrubs, native plants are best as they will offer optimum nutrition and will be less invasive to your habitat.

Whatever you decide to do for your guests this spring, remember to make sure you are having fun. Don't overdo it. Even a single birdhouse or birdbath can make a difference.



New Hope Audubon Officers for 2011-2012

Position	Name	Phone	Email
President	Norm Budnitz	919-383-0553	nbudnitz@gmail.com
Vice President	Robert "Bo" Howes	919-370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
Secretary	Pat Reid	919-542-2433	photopr@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Jill Paul	919-933-0806	jillpaul@gmail.com
Director	Robin Moran	919-383-3514	robomo@earthlink.com
Director	John Kent	919-933-5650	jjkent25@gmail.com
Director	Steve Foster	919-294-8878	sfoster239@gmail.com

Committee Chairs and Special Projects

Committee	Name	Phone	Email
Conservation Chair	Jae Furman	919 725-7070	OutdoorsEvents@gmail.com
Education Chair	Vacant		
Field Trip Chair	Vacant		
Hospitality Chair	Martha Girolami	919-362-5759	mgirolami@mac.com
Membership Chair	Tom Driscoll	919-932-7966	spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com
Program Chair	Tom Driscoll	919-932-7966	spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com
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Adopt-a-Highway	Tom Driscoll	919-932-7966	spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com
Bird Seed Sale	Judy Murray	919-942-2985	jmurray@unc.edu
Eagle Count	Martha Girolami	919-362-5759	mgirolami@mac.com
Eagle Platform	Robert "Bo" Howes	919-370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
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Important Bird Areas: Jordan Lake Chair	Robert "Bo" Howes	919-370-3202	rchowes007@hotmail.com
Stream Watch	John Kent	919-933-5650	jkent25@gmail.com
Wildathon Chair	Tom Driscoll	919-932-7966	spttdrdshnk@yahoo.com