

New Hope Audubon Society Newsletter

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<http://www.newhopeaudubon.org>



My Two Cents Worth

by Tom Driscoll

Chasing

Late summer and fall is a special time of year for birdwatchers! Migration begins and you aren't sure what birds you will see when you go birding. Our breeding migrants are leaving, northern migrant breeders, especially warblers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, grosbeaks, cuckoos, shorebirds, and others, are coming through on their way south to wintering areas, and finally the northern migrants that winter here are arriving. During this time, some birds fly here that are either lost or have been pushed out of their breeding area (such as juvenile birds).

Each year, we have juvenile Little Blue Herons and White Ibises that show up at the end of August. It seems that their parents chase them out of the areas where they were born so these juvenile herons and ibises look for other suitable areas. Often, they can be seen at Jordan and Falls Lakes.

Another type of "chasing" is driving to look for rare birds or vagrants that show up in an area. Some of the birders in the New Hope Audubon Society will travel very long distances, including remote Alaskan islands in the Bering Sea to see vagrants. Currently, there is a Buff-bellied Hummingbird in Winston-Salem at a feeder. Many birdwatchers, including me, have driven to see this beautiful male! This bird is native to Southern Texas and Mexico and is not a long-distance migrant so why did it show up here? One expert says that there are several reasons, such as strong winds or other weather-related reasons (see <http://www.wpr.org/migrating-birds-end-course-many-reasons-expert-says>), for birds being "off course". But most of the reasons impact long-distance migrants and not birds that generally do not migrate long distances.

Why they are here we may never know, but it is fun chasing them.

Truth is Stranger than
Fiction - Pt 2

by Norm Budnitz

"My own suspicion is that the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we *can* suppose." J. B. S. Haldane, *Geneticist and Evolutionary Biologist (1892-1964)*

Imagine yourself, as a human being, accomplishing some of the following feats.



Consider: The Bar-tailed Godwit is a shorebird that breeds in the Arctic and winters in Australia and New Zealand. That's a pretty long journey to make twice a year—once in the spring to get to breeding grounds in the tundra where the sun never sets and once in the fall to get to warmer climes when the Arctic is frozen solid. Lots of migratory birds make similar journeys, but Bar-taileds have



Truth is Stranger than Fiction Pt 2 cont'd from pg 1

been studied carefully by scientists who have outfitted them with radio transmitters so they can be tracked by satellite. (The photo below shows a canon net being deployed by New Zealand scientists to catch godwits for banding and installing radio transmitters.)



The round trip, south to north and back again, covers a distance of about 18,000 miles. Arctic Terns cover even greater distances, round trips in the neighborhood of 45,000 miles. But the terns leisurely follow coastlines and make lots of feeding stops along the way in both directions. The godwits, on the other hand, do something nearly unbelievable. One female, tracked in her *non-stop* flight from Alaska to New Zealand, covered a distance of 7,258 miles! Non-stop! No eating. No drinking. She burned up about half her body weight, and not just from fat stores. She also burned protein from muscles and body organs, burning bits of just about everything except brain tissue. Need to go on a diet? How about flying half way around the world, not in an airplane.

Consider: The Common Swift of Europe and Asia, a close relative of our Chimney Swifts in the New World, is another remarkable flyer, but in a different way. These birds fly and fly and fly and essentially never stop except during the nesting season. They eat on the wing, flying through the air catching insects and other goodies with their wide mouths. They drink on the wing, flying low over lakes and ponds, dipping up water with their bills. They often mate on the wing as well. And perhaps most remarkable of all, they are able to sleep on the wing! Apparently, they can shut down half of their brain for sleeping, while the other half keeps them flying. Don't try that while you're on a long distance drive on the Interstate. When young Common Swifts fledge--that is, when they leave the nest for the first time--it is thought that they fly continuously until they themselves are ready to lay and incubate eggs as adults, perhaps 2 to 3 years later.

Consider: The Southern Elephant Seal breeds on South Georgia Island in the South Atlantic Ocean. After she weans her pup (see the article in the last issue of our newsletter), she heads out to sea to replenish the fat



Truth is Stranger than Fiction Pt 2 cont'd from pg 2

supplies she has used up in lactation. She heads to the coast of Antarctica where she feeds and feeds and feeds, rebuilding her muscles and fat stores. Scientists have tracked these seals using satellite tracking devices that show where they are on Earth, but also show where they are with respect to the surface of the ocean. It is now known that these seals can dive to depths of a thousand feet where they can fall asleep. They then slowly rise back up, finally breathing again only when they awake at the surface. Apparently, elephant seals at sea may spend 90% of their time below the surface and as little as 10% of their time at the surface to breath. In other words, they only spend about 6 minutes of every hour breathing. Try that if you want to get into the *Guinness Book of World Records*.



Getting to Know Your Bird Neighbors

New Hope Audubon Society, serving Orange, Durham and Chatham counties in North Carolina, invites youth and their families/friends to get to know their bird neighbors through games, hands-on activities, and educational displays.



Karen MacAulay

When: Saturday, November 14, 2015 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

**Where: Orange County Public Library
137 W Margaret Lane, Hillsborough**

Youth of all ages and their families are welcomes!





Feeder Watch

By Tom Driscoll



With this article, “Feeder Watch” begins its tenth year of discussing feeder birds. Although I discuss the birds I am seeing or you can see at your feeders, I am hoping to receive reports and questions about the birds you are seeing. This will make the articles more interesting. If you have ideas about topics to discuss, 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.

The leaves are starting to fall, which will make the birds easier to spot! The days are much shorter and the temperatures are colder; all these factors have made the birds feed more actively at my feeders. Our winter visitors, Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and other migrants from the north may be starting to show up. Have you seen any winter migrants yet?

Our year-round residents that frequent feeders include Eastern Towhee, Brown Thrasher, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Blue Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. I am putting out much more food for them. The Northern Cardinal, our state bird, is always quick to come to the feeders and I sometimes see as many as eight at once on my platform feeder. There are often 3 or 4 species at the platform feeder at once, but since it is large there is usually a truce and all birds can use that feeder at the same time. I also use tube feeders. I use a blend of millet, black oil sunflower seeds, and peanuts for the platform feeder and one tube feeder. I also put out Nyjer seed for the goldfinches and House Finches. Some of the birds are not as adept at dining from the tube feeders, so the platform is helpful for them. Sometimes, I also put millet on the ground for towhees and some of our winter sparrows. Also, during the winter, there are periods of no or little rain, so make sure your birds have a source of water.

At this time of year, many of the birds, especially Northern Cardinals, may appear scraggly as they are molting into their new plumage. This is a gradual process that may take several months. During the winter, the juvenile birds will molt into their adult plumage for spring.

We have several species, including Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers that regularly come to the suet feeders. Other woodpeckers and other resident birds, such as Eastern Bluebirds, Pine Warblers, and Brown Thrashers, may also eat suet. I use the red pepper suet that deters the squirrels from eating it! Some resident birds, such as American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds, eat berries from the Holly Bushes, Dogwood, and juniper or cedar trees in your yard. Cedar Waxwings also eat berries. Consider planting some native berry plants in your yard for these birds. There is information on native plants on the New Hope Audubon Society website at www.newhopeaudubon.org.

You may not be the only one watching the birds at your feeders. Hawks, such as Cooper’s and Sharp-shinned Hawks, feed on small birds and may also be “feeding” at your feeders. Have you seen any smallish hawks?

Most of our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have departed for warmer climes. However, keep your feeders up for another month or so because we sometimes have “western” hummingbirds, such as Rufous or Calliope Hummingbirds, spend the winter here. If you are still seeing a hummingbird, please let me know!



NHAS Membership Meeting Speakers for 2015 – 2016

Our membership meetings are held in the Visitor Education Center at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens, 100 Old Mason Farm Road, Chapel Hill, on the first Thursday of every month (except June, July, and August). Everyone, including non-members, is welcome! See you at a meeting soon!

Time/Date	Speaker	Topic
7:00 pm November 5, 2015	John Goebel Durham Open Space and Trails Commission	Sandy Creek Park
7:00 pm December 3, 2015	Jeff Beane NC Museum of Natural Sciences	The Natural History of the Southern Hognose Snake
7:00 pm January 7, 2016	Jeff Phippen JP Ecology Consulting	Habitat restoration in Montana
7:00 pm February 4, 2016	Natalia Ocampo Penuela & Scott Winton, Duke University	Birds and Window Collisions
7:00 pm March 3, 2016	Stephanie Krueger North Carolina Zoo	Birds of the North Carolina Zoo Aviary
7:00 pm April 7, 2016	Derb Carter Southern Environmental Law Center	To be announced
7:00 pm May 5, 2016	Norm Budnitz New Hope Audubon Society	Birds—What are they? Who are they? What do they do?



Calendar of Activities



Thu Nov 5 7:00 - : 0 pm: "Sandy Creek Park"

NHAS Monthly Meeting at the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill.

Sat Nov 7, 9:00 am: Stream Watch with John Kent

John will lead the New Hope Creek Stream Watch monitoring. John leads a team that conducts monthly monitoring of the pollutants and microorganisms in the creek to gauge water quality. If interested in participating, then please contact John at jkent25@gmail.com.

Thu Dec 3, 7:00 pm- : 0 pm: "The Natural History of the Southern Hognose Snake!"

NHAS Monthly Meeting at the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill
Kim Brand of Audubon North Carolina will discuss Bird Friendly Communities.

Sat Dec 5, 9:00 am: Stream Watch with John Kent

John will lead the New Hope Creek Stream Watch monitoring. John leads a team that conducts monthly monitoring of the pollutants and microorganisms in the creek to gauge water quality. If interested in participating, then please contact John at jkent25@gmail.com.

EAGLE COUNT by Steve McMurray, Chair

Greetings from Jordan Lake! The Eagle counts have been outstanding this past year, especially the last two in July and October. Not only are we seeing Eagles at every count, but we have hooked a few more volunteers!! For the first time, we have manned over half of all sites around the lake for the last two counts. Let's keep this going! We are always looking for volunteers or anyone who wants to participate. All skill levels are welcome to join us.

If you don't think your skill level is good enough, check out the new display at the Visitor Center at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. Photographer Ellen Tinsley (Doc Ellen) has graciously donated several photos of eagles taken here at the lake. One set of photos includes pictures of a chick, a yearling, a two year old, a three year old, a four year old and an adult. It's a great sequence to see the differences the eagle goes through before becoming the adults we all recognize. The other sequence is of an eagle catching a fish. If you are an eagle enthusiast or want to learn more, these photos are perfect!

If you are interested in joining us for the next count, please do so. Mark your calendars--the next two counts take place on Sunday, January 10 & Sunday, April 10, 2016. If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact me at steve.mcmurray@ncparks.gov or at [919-362-0586 ext. 219](tel:919-362-0586).



NEW HOPE AUDUBON'S BIRD FRIENDLY HABITAT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IS UP AND RUNNING!



We already have: certified several yards; certified Fearington Village's central square and business area; and given honorary certifications to Sandy Creek Community Park in Durham and the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill. If you want to sign-up to have us visit your yard (or church or business) or just want to find out more about bird-friendly gardens and the certification process, please visit our website at: newhopeaudubon.org/birdfriendly.html

At a site visit to your property, we will:

- Catalog all of the native plants on your property, determine the number and diversity of plants at each vegetative layer (canopy, mid-story, and ground layer), and note what percent of the yard is covered by natives.
- Catalog all of the invasive plants in your yard and the percent of your yard covered by invasives.
- Note all of the optional wildlife habitat options you have implemented.
- Make a decision about your current level of certification based on the above information.

Following the site visit, we will send you a completed form detailing our findings and your current certification status. If you qualify, you will receive a certification sign to display and an official certificate. We will make detailed recommendations for continuing to improve wildlife habitat in your yard and how to qualify for higher levels of certification, if applicable.

Even if you feel you will not qualify yet for certification, a yard survey will be of considerable value since you will then know what steps you need to take to make your property more bird-friendly! We then will come back and survey again as you make progress toward certification.

The certification team includes: Barbara Driscoll, Jim George, Ben Skelton, Alan Johnson, Elizabeth Keating, and Marcia Mandel. We operate under the aegis of the Conservation committee chaired by Mark Kosiewski. Contact us at: newhopeaudubon@gmail.com

Native Plant Profiles from Audubon North Carolina

Visit the Audubon NC website to learn more about several plants that have been identified as especially beneficial to birds and other wildlife: < <http://nc.audubon.org/conservation/bird-friendly-communities/bird-friendly-native-plants/native-plant-profiles>>. They include: eastern blue phlox, spicebush, winterberry, beautyberry, trumpet creeper, and Virginia sweetspire.



Field Trips for November and December by David Anderson, Chair

I have been asked to serve as the new Field Trip Coordinator for New Hope Audubon. I hope to provide you with some exciting field trips and bird walks. In that regard, it would be useful to hear from you how the trips and walks are working out, and to hear any feedback you can offer. I also am interested in hearing if you would like to continue field trips or bird walks during the week, not just on weekends. And, would you like us to explore field trips to places like the Duke University Lemur Center, the Carolina Tiger Rescue in Pittsboro, the Sylvan Heights Bird Park (where we plan to go next month) or other sites?

These field trips usually last 2-3 hours; it's best that you wear long pants and sturdy shoes. Bring water and snacks if you like. The trails are mostly flat and rated easy to moderate difficulty. For any questions you have or any additional information you need, and to let us know if you plan to attend, please contact me at d47anders@gmail.com.

Most of our trips start at 7:30 AM (unless otherwise noted) from the parking lot in front of the Wild Bird Center in East Gate Shopping Center in Chapel Hill. Please consult our online calendar for details: <http://www.newhopeaudubon.org/calendar.html>. Following is a list of dates for upcoming trips:

Wednesday, November 4th, Norm Budnitz, leader. We will visit Sandy Creek Park in Durham. There may be a few lingering migrants, but surely some returning winter birds.

Wednesday, November 11th, Vern Bothwell, leader. Destination to be announced. We expect to find winter and resident birds on this trip.

On Sunday, November 15th, we have made special arrangements to go to Sylvan Heights Bird Park with Bo Howes. This will entail an \$8-10.00 admission fee. It's a 2 1/2 HOUR DRIVE. Meet at the Wild Bird Center in Chapel Hill at 8:00. Bring a picnic lunch if you like. We will tour a couple of hours and then have lunch. WE NEED TO KNOW IN ADVANCE IF YOU PLAN TO GO. Please contact either me, David Anderson d47anders@gmail.com or Bo Howes at bohowes@gmail.com to confirm.

Wednesday, November 18th, Vern Bothwell, leader. Destination to be announced.

Saturday, November 21st, TWO TRIPS TO CHOOSE FROM:

Mark Kosiewski will lead a trip to Fearington Village and Bynum Bridge in Chatham County. Meet at 7:30 by The Goat Café in Fearington Village. This should be an exciting trip with easy walking.

Also on Saturday, November 21st, Tom Driscoll, leader. Destination to be announced.

Wednesday, December 2nd, Vern Bothwell and David Anderson leaders. Ellerbe Creek in Durham.

Wednesday, December 9th, Vern Bothwell, leader. Destination to be announced.

Saturday, December 12th, Tom Driscoll, leader. Destination to be announced.

Wednesday, December 16th, Mark Kosiewski will lead another trip to Fearington Village and Bynum Bridge in Chatham County. Meet at 7:30 by The Goat Café in Fearington Village. This should be especially good for winter birds with easy walking.

Christmas Bird Counts. Please visit our website for more information: www.newhopeaudubon.org

Sunday, December 20th, Durham

Sunday, December 27th, Chapel Hill

Sunday, January 3rd, Jordan Lake



New Hope Audubon Officers for 2015-2016

President	Tom Driscoll		
Vice President	Bo Howes	Director	Mark Kosiewski
Treasurer	Vern Bothwell	Director	John Kent
Secretary	Pat Reid	Director	Vacant

Committee Chairs and Special Projects

Education Chair	Mary George	Bird Seed Sale Chair	Mary George
Conservation Chair	Mark Kosiewski	Christmas & Spring Bird Counts Coordinator	Norm Budnitz
Membership Chair	Vacant	Eagle Count Coordinator	Steve McMurray
Publicity Chair	Jim George	Wildathon Chair	Vacant
Newsletter Editor	Pat Reid	Wildlife Observation Platform	Bo Howes
Programs Chair	Mark Kosiewski	Important Bird Area, Eno River	Tom Driscoll
Stream Watch	John Kent	Important Bird Area, Jordan Lake	Bo Howes
Hospitality Chair	Jill Paul	Archives Coordinator	Vacant
Webmaster	Norm Budnitz	Field Trip Chair	David Anderson