



The Piedmont Birder

Newsletter of the Piedmont Bird Club

Feb. – Apr. 2008. Volume 19, No. 1
Newsletter of the

Piedmont Bird Club

PO Box 38833
Greensboro, NC 27438-8833

piedmontbirdclub.org

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1. Alamance Co. *FT

1. Bog Garden FT

2. President's Perch

2. Greater Backyard Bird Ct.

3. Landfill FT

3. Mears Fork FT

3. Conservation Com.

3. Haw River **SP

4. PBC Archives

4. PBC Anniversary

5. Welcome

5. Membership Form

6. Calendar

*Field Trip, **State Park

The next deadline for newsletter items
is Apr. 15, 2008

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OFFICERS FOR 2007-2008

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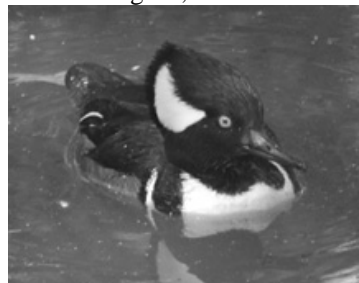
Past President Dan Chambers

ALAMANCE COUNTY

December 1, 2007 By Lynn Moseley

Saturday, December 1, began with temperatures below freezing, but warmed up nicely as the morning progressed. A small but sharp-eyed group of five birders had an excellent day in Alamance County, where we concentrated on two sites: Lake MacIntosh, in the western part of the county, and Cedarrock Park, which combines trails through typical Piedmont forests and fields with an historical working farm representing rural life in the 19th Century. By 12:00 noon, a respectable total of 52 species had been recorded. Highlights included several nice species of waterfowl on the lake (including Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Hooded Merganser, and Ruddy Duck), a Horned Grebe, a three-year-old Bald Eagle that caught a fish right in front of us and took it to a tree where it ate the fish while we watched, and an excellent sighting of a Northern Harrier cruising low over an old field.

Other birds of interest included Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Bonaparte's Gull, Red-headed and Hairy Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Nuthatches as well as the other two more common species, both Golden- and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Hermit Thrush.



Hooded Merganser at the Bog

By Louise Brown

BOG GARDEN

November 11, 2007 By Louise Brown

It was a beautiful day, not cold, but fairly breezy, which might be the reason a few species such as the kinglets were not seen (although I thought I heard some a couple of times.) Most of the winter birds were there - Sapsuckers, Northern Shovelers, Ring-necked Ducks, one very tame Hooded Merganser, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. There were a number of raptors seen in a variety of places - Cooper's, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and some Turkey Vultures.

When I had gone on a scouting trip the day before, I had seen, much to my surprise and delight, a Rusty Blackbird, a Pine Siskin, and a Purple Finch (with photos to prove it!) I was only hoping we could be lucky enough to spot them again. Alas, we did not. As a few of us went over to the Bicentennial Garden to avail ourselves of the restrooms after most folks had left, wouldn't you know, two Rusty Blackbirds were feeding in a grassy area nearby! They were lovely, the sun making the "rusty" areas on their heads almost golden.

A few of us went out to the Church Street crossings of Lake Townsend. At the first crossing we were charmed to see, thanks to Lou Skrabec's scope, a flock of about 14 American Pipits. We also saw Killdeer, lots of American Crows, Cormorants, and some Bluebirds. At the second crossing there were lots of birds, including nine Great Blue Herons, two Great Egrets, a large number of crows, a Kingfisher, and two Rusty Blackbirds. Then we went for a quick check at Plainfield Marsh, where we saw a lively bunch of Red-headed Woodpeckers, and a pair of Purple Finches, among others.

There was a good turnout for this trip - almost 20 people. We observed 44 species of birds.



From the PRESIDENT'S PERCH

By Susan Weimer

70th ANNIVERSARY

This year is the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Piedmont Bird Club. It began as a group of concerned citizens pursuing the protection of birds and the environment. When they approached the City Council looking for approval of an ordinance, they were told that they needed to be an "organized" group to be able to ask for an ordinance. Thus, the Piedmont Bird Club was formed on February 6, 1938.

Forty-five presidents later the Piedmont Bird Club continues to grow and contribute to the community. Conducting education projects and conservation projects, generating bird lists, conducting Christmas and Spring Bird Counts, hosting the Carolina Bird Club, sponsoring students to Audubon Camps, providing the Audubon Film series for the general public to view, and leading field trips are some of the ways that the Club has contributed to the people in this local area.

The Piedmont Bird Club is not only about birds; it also is about people. Members of the Piedmont Bird Club have spent many hours gathered together at the homes of various members, dined at the yearly Fall and Spring Picnics, enjoyed many a Holiday Dinner, and celebrated their 50th anniversary with style and grace.

The Club has grown with many new members joining and becoming outstanding contributors to the Club.

HOLIDAY DINNER

Great food, great company, great show. Everyone went home a winner.

SNOW DAZE

The Piedmont Bird Club meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 17 was cancelled due to questionable weather. The meeting will not be rescheduled but the speakers and the presentation will be scheduled at a different time. We are sorry for any inconvenience this might have caused, but we felt that it was not worth anyone taking a risk driving on roads that were likely to be icy. We also had to think of our speaker who was having to travel from a distance. We will see you at the February meeting.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

February 15-18, 2008

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent.

Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count Web site: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

In 2007, participants reported a record-breaking 11 million birds of 616 species. They submitted more than 80,000 checklists, an all-time record for the ten years of the count.

Why count birds: Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

We need your help. Make sure the birds from your community are well represented in the count. It doesn't matter whether you report the five species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Excerpts from:

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>



<http://piedmontbirdclub.org>

Check out the Piedmont Bird Club Web site. You can't catch our webmaster, Louise Brown, sleeping! She has posted wonderful pictures by club members, reports on field trips, related birding sites, a history of the Club, an eagle update and a host of other services. Let's hear a "wing roll" for Louise!

MEMORIES OF A THANKS- GIVING FISH DINNER, NAG'S HEAD 2007!

By Carolyn Allen

The Outer Banks always provide excellent birding even in cold and wind and even when some of us who have been at this many years forget to take our heaviest coat! We had a grand "mix" of seasoned birders and some very new to this pursuit. Emily Tyler, Dierdre Poe, and Carolyn Allen formed one "cluster" for birding along with Rosemary Lancaster, a relatively new member of the Bird Club but a longtime birder during her years living in Florida, and her daughter Wendy Lancaster, whose experience was a nodding acquaintance with some backyard birds. Another "cluster" was made up of Phillip Kellam and his parents and Larry Gaspar. We had the privilege of birding together at South Pond because of the two volunteers, Neal and Pat Moore, who regularly lead field trips at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Though South Pond is closed to the public (where various scientists have on-going studies underway) the Superintendent gave us permission to go in with the Moore's guidance.

The following day the Moores provided us with a marvelous opportunity to drive, in their 4-wheel drive van, around Hatteras Point. Given the wind and temperature, we would not have seen many of the species that we enjoyed without their generosity. The two "big birds" of this swing were the Peregrine Falcon (carefully observing ducks in the salt-water pond below him) and the Brant. Neal Moore knew exactly where the Snipe was hiding, and again, without his leadership, we would not have seen this bird. For some of us this was the first opportunity to study a Lesser Black-backed Gull standing between Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls.

The Tyler "cluster" saw 74 species. I know that Phillip, his parents, and Larry saw a number of species that we did not including Marbled Godwits and several additional duck species.



LANDFILL

January 12, 2008

By Melissa Whitmire

We had quite a nice morning at the landfill. In spite of the lack of garbage these days, there were plenty of good birds to see. Much to our amazement, our local celebrity Peregrine, "City Boy," was seen cavorting with some vultures. Lou Skrabec was the first to notice something smaller in among the big birds and once we all got our bins on him, we could clearly see his solar-powered antenna. Thus, we knew it was our City Boy who was seen downtown over the holidays by a variety of club members. I got a few quick shots off, and the antenna is actually visible in one of the pictures.

We also had nice looks at a kiting male American Kestrel, such a beautiful bird, and those of us who hung around after part of the group left were fortunate to see a female Northern Harrier. We chased her around the landfill before getting great looks at the white rump patch but it was worth the bumpy ride. According to Emily Tyler, who has done the Christmas and Spring counts there for many years, that is the first Harrier to be seen out there. Sorry, I didn't get any pictures of it.

There were 38 species observed in all. Other "birds of interest" included White-crowned Sparrows.

So the dump is still worth the trip even though the garbage, and accompanying smell are gone! It's been a great start to the New Year!

MEARS FORK WALK

January 5, 2008

By Jack Jezorek and Gregg Morris

Twelve PBC and Pearson Audubon members walked the Conrad tract on Mears Fork on January 5. The property, purchased by Guilford County in 2006, was the first acquisition as part of its Open Space Program. Approximately 50 acres, the tract is composed of bottomland forest and wetlands through which the main creek and several tributaries meander. On the south side are mixed oak/hickory/beechn bluffs up to 100 feet above the wetlands below. The county is working to acquire several other parcels along Mears Fork with the intention of protecting a corridor along what has been called the cleanest creek in Guilford County.

Birding was not the primary purpose of this field trip. Rather, it was simply to spend some quality time outdoors with friends while at the same time becoming better educated about the status and goals of the Open Space Program, an initiative vital to the protection of this rapidly diminishing resource. Our group enjoyed a leisurely amble along the wide paths out to the farthest extent of the tract and down to the creek, marveling at the wonderful view out into the tops of the bottomland trees. The Conrad tract should provide superb birding and wildflower viewing during the spring.

GREETINGS FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

By Cal Weimer, Chair

All members of PBC are invited to participate in an Adopt-A-Park event at Country Park in Greensboro on Saturday, March 8 from 9 a.m. to about 11:30 a.m. This is the day we clean the park, especially around the lakes, and we expand out from the lakes if we have enough volunteers. There will be a tailgate party with coffee and treats afterwards. We meet in the parking lot at the north end of the park, off of Orman Road. Look for my red 1988 Ford pickup. It will have a pendant flying from it with our bird club logo on it. Find us there by the truck and you will be assigned an area to clean.

The park cleanup is a one-day event, but we have another event: Monitoring the Bluebird nest boxes at Country Park. It begins in mid- to late March and ends in late July or early August.

Join us this year if you want a close personal experience with birds. Your help will make it a successful breeding season for them.

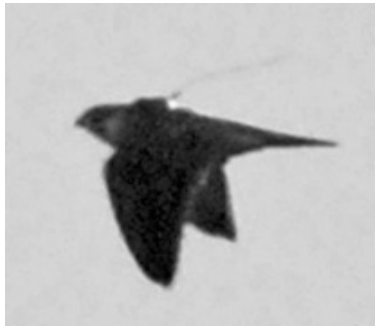
Give me a call if you need more information on either of the PBC Conservation events. See you there at Country Park.

Cal Weimer

288-2160, cweimer@triad.rr.com



PICTURES FROM THE GREENSBORO LANDFILL



"City Boy"

Photo © by Melissa Whitmire



Sumiko Dowling, Emily Tyler, and trip leader, Carolyn Allen.

Photos by Susan Weimer



Melissa Whitmire scoping out the ducks

FROM THE PBC ARCHIVES

By Susan Weimer, History and Archives Chair

CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A HUMMINGBIRD . . .

by Grace Draper, August, 1990

This hot September morning I was watering roses suffering from a most prolonged drought here in mid-North Carolina (summer of 1990) when suddenly a female ruby-throat appeared at the nearby white four o' clock blossoms. It immediately spotted the cascading water from my hose, and started flying back and forth across the spray, alternating with sitting on a wire perch covering some garden flowers and shaking its tiny wings with obvious delight. It continued with this procedure for several fascinating minutes while I remained motionless behind the source of its pleasure. Then, as suddenly as it had appeared, it darted off, leaving me actually breathless from my magical encounter!

On another occasion I was privileged to hold a tiny, delicate, feathery hummingbird cupped in my hands; I had to remove a female ruby-throated hummingbird from the living room where it was frantically beating against a window, having entered the house through an open door.

PBC IS WITNESS TO FIELD TRIP OFFENDERS

Greensboro News & Record, April, 1967

Mrs. Robert E. McCoy presented a skit "What's Wrong With This Field Trip?" for members of the Piedmont Bird Club when they met last night in McIver Building at University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Assisted by Mrs. Darl Tipton, Mrs. William D. Seawell, Miss Inez Coldwell, Mrs. Ralph Weisner, and Miss Ida Mitchell, a mock field trip was enacted to point out rules of a successful field trip. Mrs. Tipton and Mrs. Seawell assumed roles of the "talking and visiting" types when, according to Miss Mitchell, complete silence is essential for good results in Bird Watching. The two "offenders" also waved their hands in animated gestures of conversation. "You might as well say 'shoo' to the birds as to permit unnecessary body motion," said Miss Mitchell. Other offenses depicted in the skit were members tearing down a fence through carelessness, picking strawberries and cherries on private property and digging up wild flowers to be transplanted at home.

According to PBC member, Mrs. Margaret Y. Wall, "It is the policy of the Piedmont Bird Club to never take such liberties when it is granted the privilege of bird hunting on private property."

The humorous, but factual skit demonstrated 11 "sins" of bird hunting and watching. The meeting was conducted by the president, Miss Sidney Holmes, during which she reminded members to make reservations for the bird trip to Southport May 19 - 20, to be led by Dr. Archie D. Shaftesbury.

VICTORY at HAW RIVER STATE PARK

The breaking news on January 10 was that the Bluegreen Development Group withdrew its request for rezoning the 700 acre tract near the Haw River and agreed to sell it to the state. This was accomplished largely by the efforts of the Citizens for Haw River State Park, who managed to generate enough public interest and support to sway the Guilford County Commissioners. Not to be ignored was a huge contribution by an anonymous "angel" of \$20,000 for legal fees. According to Carolyn Allen, a couple of other significant factors were the drought, which heightened public awareness of water issues, and the collapse of the housing market which certainly made it much easier for Bluegreen to relinquish its interest in the land.

We offer hearty thanks and congratulations to all involved! You can learn more about it on this Web site:

<http://citizensforhawriversp.blogspot.com/>.



PBC'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Threescore and ten years ago our fathers and mothers brought forth in this county a new club, conceived in love of wild birds and dedicated to the proposition that cats should not eat them. (with apologies to Abe)

On February 6, 2008, the Piedmont Bird Club celebrates its 70th anniversary! Originally formed by a group of earnest Greensboro citizens who were concerned about the depredations by cats on the bird population, the Club has evolved into a large association of birders who not only like to feed and watch birds, but who also actively work to educate the public and promote habitat conservation.

In commemoration of this important anniversary, we will be producing a new PBC shirt, which will be offered for sale this spring at a date to be announced later. Order forms will be posted on our Web site and also e-mailed or snail-mailed (if you don't have e-mail) to all members at that time. The proceeds from the sale will be used to further the objectives of the Club.



WINTER BIRDS



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Photo © by Dan Chambers



Pine Siskin

Photo © by Melissa Whitmire

**WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS!**

We look forward to sharing our upcoming activities with our new members!

NEW MEMBERS
Marylee Brown

Anne Steighner

RETURNING FORMER MEMBERS
Scott DePue



1589-134 Skeet Club Road
High Point, NC 27265
841-2572

433 Pisgah Church Road
Greensboro, NC 27455
282-4458

PBC members get a 10% discount on all regularly priced items in the store - mention your membership **BEFORE** you make a purchase!

-- Calendar, cont.' from p. 6

Saturday, March 8

Adopt-a-Park: Members will improve the environment by picking up trash at Greensboro Country Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot that can be reached by turning onto Orman Road from Lawndale, and then turning left at the intersection. (Rain date Mar. 9 at 2:30 p.m.) Leader: Cal Weimer. 288-2160, cweimer@triad.rr.com

Saturday, March 15

Field Trip: Waterfowl on the Greensboro Lakes, Part #2. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Contact the leader for location. Ducks, geese, grebes, mergansers, and gulls are our target birds on this tour of the lake overlooks. Dress warmly and bring a thermos of something hot; the wind off the lakes can be chilling. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Leader: Henry Link. 273-4672, linkh@bellsouth.net

Thursday, March 20

Since the January meeting was cancelled due to bad weather forecast, this presentation was rescheduled to this time slot.

Meeting: Birds of Hawaii, Doug Pratt & John Bowles. This will be a 50-year retrospective on the birds of Hawaii and changes in bird populations there. John grew up in Hawaii and began a survey of bird populations of the area. Twenty years later Doug Pratt, an internationally known ornithologist and author, continued this study and has added to it in recent years. One of his many accomplishments is the writing and illustration of A Field Guide to Birds of Hawaii. He also has illustrated many plates for the National Geographic Society's Field Guide to Birds of North America and numerous other publications.

Bird of the Season: Red-tailed Hawk

Thursday, March 20- Sunday 23,

Easter Trip – Savannah, Georgia area, including Savannah River NWR and Harris Neck NWR. Watch for de-

tails. Leaders: Emily Tyler, 375-5770, ettyler@triad.rr.com and Don and Carolyn Allen, 288-3045, texallennc@aol.com

Saturday, April 5

Earth Day Celebration at Kathleen Clay Edwards Family Library in Price Park. Keep alert for further details of this event closer to the date.

Saturday, April 12

Field Trip: Potluck #4. Leader: Henry Link. 273-4672, linkh@bellsouth.net

Thursday, April 17

Meeting: Declining Bird Populations in Guilford County, by Herb Hendrickson. A retired professor of biology at UNCG, Herb is the only professional card-carrying ornithologist in the Club. He will address this topic of grave concern to us all. National bird studies suggest that many bird populations are in trouble. Our contributions in the form of the Christmas and Spring Bird Counts confirm that Guilford County has the same problems as the rest of the country.

Bird of the Season: Red-shouldered Hawk

Saturday, April 19

Field Trip: We will visit the Whittacre's farm in the Bunch Rd. area of Guilford Co. for an easy walk to look for late winter and early spring birds. If time allows, we also may visit one of the lakes to look for waterfowl. Leaders: Carolyn & Don Allen. 288-3045, texallennc@aol.com

Saturday, April 26

Field Trip: Randolph Co. for migrants and breeding birds. We will travel about 45 minutes south (from Greensboro) to the rural Randolph Co. home of member Jane Lewis to explore the forests and fields. This is a joint field trip with TGP Audubon. Leaders: Jane & Mark Lewis, 381-1696, jane_lewis@vfc.com



PIEDMONT BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Individual (\$15.00)___ Family (\$20.00)___ New___ Renewal___

Our fiscal year is from June 1st to May 31st. Mail payment to:

PIEDMONT BIRD CLUB - PO Box 38833 - Greensboro, NC 27438-8833

Calendar

Reminder: If you are interested in going on a field trip, always contact the trip leader prior to the trip. That way you will be informed of last minute changes or cancellations, or the leader may need to modify plans according to the number of attendees.

Programs (unless otherwise noted) are at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, October -- April, at the **Kathleen Clay Edwards Family Branch Library**, 1420 Price Park Road, Greensboro



This year we are introducing a new kind of trip: **Potluck**. These are spur-of-the-moment trips with no previously set destination. It will be more important than ever to contact the trip leader in advance to express your interest in participating so you may be informed of the exact itinerary and meeting place.



February 1-3

CBC Meeting: Georgetown, SC, See the CBC Web site for complete information: www.carolinabirdclub.org

Saturday, February 2

Field Trip: Potluck #3. Leader: Henry Link, 273-4672, linkh@bellsouth.net

Saturday, February 9

Field Trip: Waterfowl on the Greensboro Lakes, Part #1. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Contact the leader for location. Ducks, geese, grebes, mergansers, and gulls are our target birds on this tour of the lake overlooks. Dress warmly and bring a thermos of something hot; the wind off the lakes can be chilling. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. No walking. This is a joint field trip with TGP Audubon. Leader: Henry Link. 273-4672, linkh@bellsouth.net

Friday, February 15- Monday, February 18

Great Backyard Bird Count. Join in this important bird conservation effort of data collection. For more info go to:

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

Thursday, February 21

Meeting: An Historical Review of the PBC for its 70th Anniversary. Meet Dr. Wesley Taylor, founder of the PBC. Go back into the past. Learn how the PBC accomplished its field trips during a gas shortage, how a group almost spent the night in the Graham Building at UNCG, and what was accomplished to preserve natural areas not only for the birds but also for other kinds of wildlife. Interviews will be conducted by the Club President, Susan Weimer. Starring the renowned Jean McCoy with supporting roles by Emily Tyler, Lynn Burnette, and Don and Carolyn Allen.

Bird of the Season: Barred Owl

Saturday, February 23

Field Trip: A&T Farm. Meet at 8 a.m. Easy hike around a farm pond and along the edge of wet woodland. This is our best site for Wilson's Snipe. Wear water-resistant footwear, dress in layers. Leader: Emily Tyler, 375-5770, ettyler@triad.rr.com

-see Calendar, cont' on p. 5



Piedmont Bird Club

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