

The Piedmont Birder



Vol. 22 No. 2

Bur-Mil Park Fall Festival: Saturday, October 8, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



David Wagner

Join the Piedmont Bird Club at the annual [Bur-Mil Park Fall Festival](#). We will be one of the more than 50 vendors and exhibitors participating in this event this year. Our exhibit focuses on birds' nests and nest-building. At other tables you will find everything from craft demonstrations to wildlife and environmental information.

In addition to the exhibits, you can enjoy hayrides, kids' crafts, face-painting, live music, clogging, and lots of good food. Get your Halloween pumpkin and decorate it at the pumpkin patch or adopt a new friend from the Red Dog Farms Animal Rescue Group.

The Fall Festival is a fun opportunity for the PBC to meet with the public and educate folks about birds and birding. If you can spare a couple of hours to help us in this endeavor, please contact Education Committee Chair Emily Tyler, 375-5770, ettyler@triad.rr.com. No experience necessary.

Field Trip Report: Pilot Mountain Hawk Watch - Sunday, September 18

-by Julien McCarthy

There are exceptionally memorable field trips that we take now and then. This year the Pilot Mountain hawk watch trip, led by Scott Depue, was one of them. As Charlie Brown would have said "GOOD GRIEF!!!!"

There were many folks from Forsyth Audubon and a few from the PBC, along with casual visitors who paused to learn from us at the overlook that day. Well, you could not order up more perfect circumstances for us to experience a plethora of hawk sightings. The weather had been rainy and blustery for the two previous days as a front was passing through, and while it was breezy and chilly on this particular day, we were dressed for the occasion and ready for some birds. They did not disappoint.

As the day started out, we saw the usual – occasional groups of 2-7 Broad-winged Hawks, a few Cooper's Hawks, some Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and a couple of Sharp-shinned Hawks, as well as a few Bald Eagles. But then, as the day wore into the late afternoon, out of the cloud cover came droves of Broad-winged Hawks. It was wonderfully fascinating

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One of the amazing sites at this year's hawk watch at Pilot Mountain: a kettle of Broad-winged Hawks, photographed by Phil Dickinson, Forsyth Audubon.

Pilot Mountain Hawk Watch, continued

to watch them pause to kettle up in thermals right in front of us, and then at great altitude, to bail out and streak southward to the Southern Hemisphere where they will overwinter. Time after time, enormous flocks repeated this performance for their audience and you could hear the excitement in the voices of us all as we audibly cheered the sights. WHEW, what a day!!

The general public was there, too, and they shared our enthusiasm, asking questions and getting a little education in response. The comradery was also rewarding, as we shared our

stories and excitement at the sightings unfolding in front of us. Of course Scott “the human scope” Depue found us most of the birds as usual. (This guy can spot a flea on the head of a pin at 100 yards.) We are most grateful to him for his leadership and skills. His field trip was one for the books.

The totals for the day were: 4 Osprey, 1141 Broad-winged Hawks, 5 Bald Eagles, 7 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 5 Cooper’s Hawks, and 3 unidentified raptors.

In Our Community: Celebrating Native Habitats of the Piedmont - October 4



Virginia Bluebells
photo by Ann Walter-Fromson

The [Piedmont Land Conservancy](#) is partnering with [Reynolda Gardens](#) and [Historic Bethabara Park](#) for a special event on Tuesday, October 4. Timothy Spira, botanist, author, and professor at Clemson University, will come to Winston-Salem for the day and speak at events in three locations for [Celebrating Native Habitats of the Piedmont](#). Details of each event are below.

12:30 – 1:30 Exploring Native Plant Communities at Reynolda Gardens

Botanist Tim Spira introduces you to a new way of looking at native plants by emphasizing their relationships with each other. Tim will reveal the multi-layered tapestry of plant life in the Piedmont by showing us how to see plants as unique botanical communities, including the key factors that determine their distribution across the landscape. This lecture will enhance your appreciation of native plants whether you enjoy them in their natural habitats or grow them in your home landscape.

(45-minute presentation followed by discussion and a book signing)

3:30 – 4:30 Guided Plant Walk at the Emily Allen Wildflower Preserve

Tim Spira will lead a guided tour through a Piedmont woodland garden that harbors a rich diversity of native wildflowers. By going a “step beyond identification” participants will learn to look at plants and natural habitats in a new way. Space is limited. Call PLC at 336-691-0088 to make a reservation.

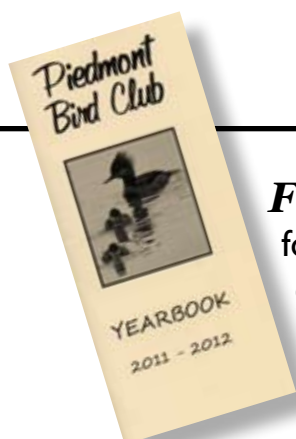
5:00 – 6:00 Wildflowers and Plant Communities in the Piedmont of North Carolina at Historic Bethabara Park

Tim Spira will provide an overview of the key characteristics of selected native plant communities in the Piedmont landscape of North Carolina. For each community presented, Tim will highlight fascinating features of selected wildflowers, including some rare and unusual ones.

(45-minute presentation followed by discussion and a book signing)

About the Speaker:

Tim Spira, Ph.D., is a plant ecologist, native plant gardener, photographer, and professor of botany at Clemson University where he teaches field botany, plant ecology, and the natural history of wildflowers. He is the author of the recently published book, *Wildflowers and Plant Communities of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and Piedmont: A Naturalist’s Guide to the Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia* (University of North Carolina Press).



For Your Convenience - A digital copy of the PBC Yearbook, in either .pdf or .doc format, is available on request. Keep it handy on your computer desktop. E-mail addresses contained therein are hyperlinked, so to inform a field trip leader that you plan to attend, simply click the contact information provided in the trip description and say, “I’ll be there.”

Contact Louise Brown, 233-7531, piedmontbirder@triad.rr.com, to get your digital yearbook.

Adopt-A-Park: Country Park Clean-up - Saturday, October 22



Greensboro's Country Park is well-used by a variety of folk: picnickers, dog-walkers, exercisers, fishermen, playing children. Stuff collects. Although the park staff do a very good job of keeping the grounds clean, it is inevitable that some debris winds up in the lakes, where it tends to collect at the less well-patrolled shoreline and may present a hazard to wildlife. So twice a year PBC members spend a couple of hours combing the lakeshore and

other more remote areas of the park, picking up trash. It doesn't take long, and afterwards we have a little tailgate party on the parking lot with coffee, muffins, and cookies.

If you can help, let Cal Weimer know and meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Orman Street [parking lot](#) of Country Park. PBC provides trash bags and trash "grabbers." Coordinator: Cal Weimer, 790-5286, cweimer@triad.rr.com.

News of Members: John Bowles



PBC Board Member John Bowles, affectionately referred to as "Batman" by some, due to his previous career and expertise on the subject of those flying mammals, is recuperating from back surgery performed on July 19. Since his release from the hospital, John has been staying at Camden Place Health and Rehab Facility here in Greensboro, where he undergoes daily physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

John's recovery, which is complicated by his Parkinson's Disease, has been slow but steady, and he is making good

progress. In the small-world department, his speech therapist is the son of PBC member Terry Preston, and they find plenty of things in common to talk about.

John sends his greetings to PBC members and would enjoy visitors. Since his rehab schedule is so full, be sure to call his wife Gay first to find out when would be a good time.

What Do You Know?

See if you know the answers to these questions about migration.

1) What is the #1 reason that birds migrate?

- a) to escape cold weather
- b) for year-round access to food supplies
- c) to find space to breed

2) Which birds migrate during the day?

- a) songbirds
- b) raptors
- c) swifts and swallows

3) How fast do birds fly during migration?

- a) 5-10 mph
- b) 20-30 mph
- c) 30-50 mph

1) Answer - b

It all boils down to finding enough to eat for the birds and their babies.

2) Answers - b & c

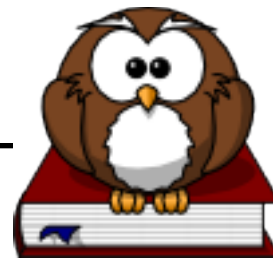
Many soaring birds, such as hawks, migrate by day. They travel inland by flying and catching thermals (rising columns of warm air that spiral upward and lift the birds so they can fly without flapping) that occur only over land.

Insectivores, such as swifts and swallows, also fly during the day, feeding on insects as they fly. Flocking birds, such as waterfowl and some finches, also fly during the day,

Most songbirds travel at night. During the day they rest and search for food.

3) Answers - b & c

In still air, most songbirds fly at 20 to 30 mph. Waterfowl and shorebirds can fly at 30 to 50 mph. Some species, for instance the Blackpoll Warbler, pick up speed as they get closer to their destination.



PBC Newsletter Committee 2011-2012

Jean Murdick, editor
John Bowles
Herb Hendrickson
Mary Hess

Judith Pate
Lucy Sullivan
Lary Treanor
George Wheaton

We welcome contributions from PBC members. Send us articles about good birding trips you've taken, interesting bird behavior you have observed, PBC committee activities, entertaining internet links, etc.
Contact: Jean Murdick, lonandjean@triad.rr.com

Outings and Field Trips

The PBC Field Trip Committee has outdone itself this year. If you take a look in your new yearbook, you will see a wide variety of trips and lots of 'em. And, you may notice that some of them are labelled "outings" and others are designated as "field trips." What's the difference?

Outings are local 1/2 -1 day excursions; bring water and snacks. Field trips are usually farther away and last more than one day; you'll need to pack a bag and make hotel reservations. Either way, you are in for a treat.

Interesting Internet

This section contains links to interesting/fun sites that PBC members would like to share with the rest of the Club.

[Slo-Mo Owl](#) Beautiful slow motion footage of a Eurasian Eagle Owl in flight.

find us on [facebook](#)

Check out the [October program](#) to learn about this gorgeous bird, which nests here in North Carolina.



Welcome, New PBC Members!

Leslie Harmon



October Calendar

Tuesday, October 4

Celebrating Native Habitats of the Piedmont

See article page 2 for details.

Saturday, October 8

Bur-Mil Park Fall Festival - 10am-4pm

See article on page 1 for details. If you can help staff our table for a couple of hours, contact Emily Tyler, 375-5770, ettyler@triad.rr.com. No experience necessary.

Saturday, October 15

Outing - Thornburg Farm

Located in the [Birkhead Mountains Wilderness](#) of the Uwharrie National Forest in Randolph County, the Thornburg Farm Trail passes through a variety of good birding habitats. Leader: Ron Morris, 294-7631, rmorris1125@hotmail.com

Note: Birkhead Mountains Wilderness is also State Game Lands. Hunting is allowed in this area. Orange is not required for hikers, but highly recommended during the months of September through January.

Thursday, October 20

Program - "I Have Some Beachfront Property to Sell You: Where Traditional and Citizen Science Meet"

Research Scientist John Gerwin discusses an ongoing Painted Bunting research project involving the collaborative efforts of homeowners and various agencies from NC to FL. Meet at 7:00 p.m. at the [KCEF Library](#). Join the Early Birds at 6:30 p.m. for some social time before the meeting.

Saturday, October 22

Adopt-A-Park at Country Park

See article page 3. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Orman Street [parking lot](#) of Country Park. Coordinator: Cal Weimer, 790-5286, cweimer@triad.rr.com

Sunday, October 23

Outing - Searching for Sparrows

Bird along the edges of roads and fields in northern Guilford County in search of Vesper, White-crowned, and other sparrows, as well as raptors and late migrants. Bring a scope if you have one. Meet at the [Lake Brandt Marina](#) at 8:00 a.m. for carpooling. Leader: George Wheaton, 540-8953, gcwheaton@earthlink.net