

# The Piedmont Birder



Vol. 22 No. 4

## Field Trips: the Far Side

by Julien McCarthy

You know how the ducks are always on the FAR side of the lake? Well, here comes a golden opportunity for PBC members to identify, observe, and photograph wintering migratory waterfowl in Guilford County at close range: Neil Thompson, Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department Lake Activity Specialist, has scheduled Sunday afternoon pontoon-boat birding trips on Lake Townsend or Lake Brandt. There is also a chance that we can get spontaneous use of the boat on other days when rare birds are sighted, provided a captain is available.

DATES: Nov. 27 --- Dec. 4, 11, 18 --- Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 --- Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26 --- Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25. These are all Sundays.

TIMES: 2:30-4:00 p.m. Overflow trip time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. Trips depart the dock on time, so arrive before these times of departure.

COST: \$4.00 per person, CASH.

REGISTRATION: Register in advance with Madeleine Carey, 373-3816, to reserve a seat and to discover which lake is on the agenda. Minimum number of participants is 4 and maximum is 8 – first come, first served. When necessary, a waiting list for a second trip on the same day at 1:00-2:30 p.m. will be established for “overflow”.

Life jackets will be provided and should be worn.

Trips will be cancelled in the event of high wind or rain. Check with the coordinator, Madeleine Carey, 373-3816, if weather is questionable.

This information is not in your PBC Yearbook, so save this newsletter.



Hooded Mergansers by Dennis Burnette



Greater White-fronted Geese by Lou Skrabec

## 12th Audubon Christmas Bird Count: December 17



White-throated Sparrow by USFWS

Both new and experienced birders are needed to help cover designated areas within Greensboro's 15-mile count circle. The information gathered during the Christmas counts around the country is useful because of the long period of time over which it has been gathered. Bird count data have been used to document fluctuations in bird populations and geographic ranges, and have been the basis for initiating conservation efforts for bird species found to be in serious decline.

The Christmas Bird Count is a great way to learn your birds and an enjoyable challenge to see how many species can be found in winter. If you can join a team for all or part of the day, contact Elizabeth Link, 273-4672, [elzlink@yahoo.com](mailto:elzlink@yahoo.com).

## Field Trip Report: Greensboro's Bog Garden - November 12

– by Louise Brown

It was a beautiful sunny day with a respectable attendance of 15 people, mostly PBC members.

The winter birds had arrived: the underbrush rustled with the vacationing White-throated Sparrows and at least one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker worked the tree trunks. We also saw Yellow-rumped Warblers and Dark-eyed Juncos. Some winter waterfowl were present – a flock of about 20 Ring-billed Ducks accompanied by three or four Blue-winged Teal and a couple of Pied-billed Grebes. At the far end of the pond, while we examined the ducks with the sun at our backs, we were delighted when a Great Blue



Field Sparrow by U.S. National Park Service



Winter Wren by A. Drauglis, Furnituremaker

Heron flushed and flew over our heads in its ponderous pterodactyl manner.

We saw one bird new to the Bog Garden species list (now at 145) – a Field Sparrow, clearly out of its comfort zone. An aptly-named bird, the Field Sparrow really does like open areas, so it must have been pausing en route to somewhere else. Another good bird was a Sharp-shinned Hawk, resting on a bare branch above the pond.

And the “Best Bird of the Day” goes to a Winter Wren, spotted by Lou Skrabec and George Wheaton when they were separated from the main group. It is indeed possible that that is why they saw it, as Winter Wrens are shy and elusive and will skedaddle under rocks or branches at the least disturbance. They are also tiny, weighing in at ¼ ounce or less, and reddish-brown in color, blending in perfectly with fallen leaves and detritus, so are not easy to spot at best.



Yellow-rumped Warbler  
by Donna Dewhurst, USFWS

### Species List:

Pied-billed Grebe  
Great Blue Heron  
Canada Goose  
Mallard  
Blue-winged Teal  
Ring-necked Duck  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Mourning Dove  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
Winter Wren  
American Robin  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Northern Cardinal  
Eastern Towhee  
Field Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

### Interesting Internet

This section contains links to interesting/fun sites that PBC members want to share with the Club.

[The Beauty of Pollination](#) - slo-mo and time-lapse photography, showing pollination of flowers by hummingbirds and insects

[A Murmuration of Starlings](#) - synchronized flight at its amazing best; be sure to click on the still photos below the video, too.

[Imperial Woodpecker](#) - the only known photographic documentation of this 2-foot tall relative of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, captured on film by a dentist and amateur ornithologist in the 1950s

[Imperial Woodpecker 2](#) - detailed account by Cornell's Tim Gallagher of how the bird came to be filmed

[Very Cute Owl](#) - Huffington Post's “Cute/Ridiculous Animal Thing of the Day”

[Attracting and Feeding Wild Birds](#) - ornithologist Max Wood shares some information

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# Well, What Do You Know?

We all know that a group of birds is called a flock. And a group of geese is a gaggle, right? But only if they're not flying; in flight they are a skein of geese; and if they happen to be flying in a v-shaped pattern, they are a wedge of geese.



See if you can match up the group names on the left with the birds they refer to on the right. Answers on the next page.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1) murder       | a) quail        |
| 2) covey        | b) vultures     |
| 3) congregation | c) owls         |
| 4) party        | d) jays         |
| 5) exaltation   | e) gulls        |
| 6) murmuration  | f) thrushes     |
| 7) unkindness   | g) ravens       |
| 8) herd         | h) crows        |
| 9) charm        | i) sparrows     |
| 10) parliament  | j) larks        |
| 11) quarrel     | k) plovers      |
| 12) mutation    | l) wrens        |
| 13) squadron    | m) woodpeckers  |
| 14) colony      | n) eagles       |
| 15) descent     | o) flamingos    |
| 16) wake        | p) starlings    |
| 17) flamboyance | q) pelicans     |
| 18) convocation | r) hummingbirds |

# December Calendar

*Always contact trip leaders in advance if you are planning to attend.*

## Saturday, December 3

### Outing - Alamance County

Alamance County sites: Lake Macintosh, Alamance County Historical Museum, and Cedarrock Park. 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Bring water and a snack. Trip is limited to 15 participants, so be sure to contact trip leader Lynn Moseley, 336-226-4353, [lmoseley@guilford.edu](mailto:lmoseley@guilford.edu)

## Sunday, December 4

### Outing - Rusty Blackbird Search

Starting at [Mayo River State Park](#), we will travel to at least 3 locations looking for Brown Creepers, nuthatches, woodpeckers, kinglets, Pine Siskins, winter sparrows, Turkeys, and Rusty Blackbirds.

Bring drinks, snacks, & lunch. Be prepared for some mud and check the weather so you will wear the right clothing. Carpooling will be essential!

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in front of the office at Mayo River State Park. Click [here](#) for map and directions. Trip will last until about 2:00 p.m. Leader: Martin Wall, 587-1872, [martin@martinwallphotography.com](mailto:martin@martinwallphotography.com).



## Tuesday, December 6

### Holiday Dinner - 6:00 p.m.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 607 N. Greene Street, Greensboro. [Map & directions](#). Reservations required. Contact: Janet Goins, 665-1883, [gons5@aol.com](mailto:gons5@aol.com).

## Saturday, December 17

### Christmas Bird Count

See article, page 1. Contact: Elizabeth Link, 273-4672, [elzlink@yahoo.com](mailto:elzlink@yahoo.com). Countdown (tally) is Sunday, December 18, 2:00 p.m. at [St. Andrews Episcopal Church](#).

## Great Christmas Gift Idea!

One of the most significant ways to help our migratory songbirds is by purchasing shade-grown organic coffee - and not just at Christmas.



Why should I buy shade-grown organic coffee?

Click →

Where can I purchase shade-grown organic coffee? Click →

And also →

## History & Archives: PBC in the Forties

– by Stephen Bryant



This article highlights some of the PBC's activities from the 1940s.

In 1941, a club library was created to hold bird books. The bird club also held its first Christmas dinner in 1941 at the Women's Club, in honor of Ernest Thompson Seton, the award-winning wildlife illustrator, naturalist, and conservationist. This started the annual Christmas dinner still held today.

In May of 1942, the club was host to the North Carolina Bird Club's meeting. That year the bird club held its first Christmas Bird Count.

In 1943, the Northern Cardinal was elected the official state bird of North Carolina. The Piedmont Bird Club sent in the most votes for the cardinal out of any club in the state.

In 1944, a plan was made by the new president, Mrs. Charles M. Stewart, to make North Carolina a bird sanctuary. The club also started the first weekly Junior field trips, and held their

first bird house contest.

In 1945, Greensboro was declared a bird sanctuary through a city ordinance.

In 1946, the Education Committee was granted 100 bird houses. These houses were put up all over Greensboro.

In 1947, the Piedmont Bird Club acquired its first telescope.

In 1948, the club had an important change: instead of having the officers take over in January and serve all year, elections took place in the spring. The officers would serve their term the following year. In this way, the Piedmont Bird Club's activities would not be disturbed.

In 1949, the club decided to present Jam Handy filmstrips about birds to the Audio-visual Department of the Greensboro Public School System to help teachers teach about birds in school.

The 1940s was a time of many accomplishments for the Piedmont Bird Club.

## Happy Holidays from PBC



### Answers – Well, What Do You Know?

- |     |                            |      |                               |      |  |
|-----|----------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|--|
| 1-h | a murder of crows          | 7-g  | an unkindness of ravens       | 13-q | a squadron of pelicans                 |
| 2-a | a covey of quail           | 8-l  | a herd of wrens               | 14-e | a colony of gulls                      |
| 3-k | a congregation of plovers  | 9-r  | a charm of hummingbirds       | 15-m | a descent of woodpeckers               |
| 4-d | a party of jays            | 10-c | a parliament of owls          | 16-b | a wake of vultures                     |
| 5-j | an exultation of larks     | 11-i | a quarrel of sparrows         | 17-o | a flamboyance of flamingos (I'll say!) |
| 6-p | a murmuration of starlings | 12-f | a mutation of thrushes (huh?) | 18-n | a convocation of eagles                |

