



Audubon News

A publication of the Mecklenburg County Audubon Society
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Monthly Meeting

"Plenty of Pelagics Roam the High Seas!"
Thursday, May 2nd, 7:30 p.m.

Now that you have been birding for a while, have you noticed there are certain sections of your field guide that never read? For me one of those sections lies between grebes and pelicans and another comes before the pigeons at the end of the shorebirds. There are also a couple of pages sandwiched at beginning shorebirds that don't get much use either. These pages consist of strange names like booby, shearwater, storm-petrel, frigatebird, jaeger, skua, razorbill, guillemot, murrelet, auklet and my personal favorite phalarope. These are not fictitious birds, included by the publishers so they charge more for the field guide. They are a group of birds which combined are referred to as pelagic birds.

International Migratory Bird Day May 11th, 2002

Nearly **75%** of the birds that nest in forested habitats of eastern North America are neotropical migrants - birds that breed in North America and winter in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. For several reasons, populations of many of these birds have experienced dramatic declines in the past two decades.

To support and promote the conservation of neotropical migratory birds, join Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation and Mecklenburg Audubon Society in celebrating the springtime arrival of these fascinating birds. We have planned an assortment of bird walks, banding demonstrations, and fun activities and programs for the entire family.

pelagic birds are unique in that they spend most of their lives at sea. So to see pelagic birds and get to use those unsullied pages in your field guide, you have to make a conscious effort to step on a boat and risk the perils of the sea. In fact, if you find yourself on the Outer Banks there are several boats that will be glad to take you out to the Gulf Stream to see these magnificent flyers.

To help us understand the call of the sea and the birds,

introduce us to a few of the more common pelagic birds found in the Gulf Stream off the coast of North Carolina. I am sure he will also regale us with stories of his fateful trips. So join us, Thursday, May 2nd at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church located at 920 Sharon Amity

MAS Calendar of Events!

May

- 2 Meeting
- 3-5 Carolina Bird Club Spring Meeting
- 11 International Migratory Bird Day
 - Landsford Canal State Park
 - Huntingtown Farm Greenway
- 18

See page 2 for a schedule

HELP US SAVE MONEY * RECEIVE the monthly Mecklenburg Audubon Newsletter electronically. If you are interested send an email message to Judy Walker at birdwalker@mac.com with your name and email address.



Field Trips

"Landsford Canal State Park"

Near Lancaster, SC
Saturday, May 18, 7 a.m.

This should be the height of the spider lily bloom at Landsford Canal State Park and the chances of seeing an active Bald Eagle's nest are pretty good as well. We will also be looking for the late migrants and local breeding birds. We will meet at the Bojangles on Carowinds Boulevard at 7 a.m. to carpool to the park (about 40 minutes). There will be an entrance fee and bring a lunch for a meal along the banks of the canal. If you are interested in going contact **Judy Walker** at 704-537-8181 or birdwalker@mac.com.

"Huntingtown Farm Greenway"

Saturday, May 18, 7:15 a.m.

who can't make the longer trip to Landsford Canal State Park, **Iosue and Dean & Vivian Sprehe** will lead a morning walk

at the Huntingtown Farm Greenway. Hopefully the Mulberry trees will still be in bloom and dripping with birds like indigo buntings, and orchard orioles. We will meet at the McDonalds at Arrowood and South Blvd. in front of Walmart at 7:15 a.m.. If you are interested contact **An**

insectogirl@yahoo.com, or Vivian Sprehe at 704-552-1861.

International Migratory Bird Day

May 11, 2002

Programs and Festivals Schedule

Birding for Kids

Reedy Creek Nature Center

Do you have a budding birdwatcher in your family? Then this is the program for you! Participants will explore basic bird characteristics, learn how to use binoculars, and search for birds around the

Birds of the Greenway Hike

McAlpine Creek Greenway - Old Bell Rd Entrance

Reedy Creek's best birding areas, this greenway boasts 188 species on its bird checklist. This hike will explore bottomland hardwood and open field habitats that are ideal for passing migrants looking to replenish their energy supplies.

Bird Banding Demonstration

Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge

Join us at our bird banding station for a unique demonstration of mist netting and banding procedures and learn how biologists rely on these techniques to monitor individual birds, nesting success, population trends, migration distances, and many other facets of the avian world. Why a bird in the hand can truly be more exciting than two in the bush!

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Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge

Here's your chance to peek into the lives of our resident birds as we monitor our nest boxes within the refuge. Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge has more documented species of birds (204) than anywhere else in Mecklenburg County so while we're observing nesting bluebirds, chickadees, and titmice, we'll keep an eye out for raptors, herons, warblers,

Birds of the Woodlands Hike

McDowell Nature Center

Participants on this hike will search for birds that are often more difficult to find outside of large, intact forests. With nearly 1,100 forested acres, McDowell Nature Preserve is a great place to search for Pileated Woodpecker, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-headed Vireo, Northern Parula, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and other woodland birds.

Birds of the Prairie Hike

Latta Plantation Nature Center

In addition to providing important habitat for rare and endangered plants, our Piedmont Prairie restoration sites have also turned out to be excellent birding areas. We'll look for such species as Indigo Bunting, Eastern Bluebird, Prairie Warbler, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, and other birds of open habitats.

McDowell Nature Center

It's never too early to start birdwatching! Here's a program designed just for school aged children that will introduce them to the fascinating world of birds. Through fun activities and crafts, participants will learn about bird behavior, nests, songs, and more.

All programs and hikes are free, but space is limited and pre-registration is required. Call Latta Plantation Nature Center -875-1391 to register.



Family Festivals



In addition to the exciting programs and hikes listed above, from 10 a.m. - 2 pm, Reedy Creek, McDowell, and Latta Plantation Nature Centers will all be hosting a variety of educational displays, crafts and activities for children, door prizes, and more! All activities are free.

For more information on any of the day's events, please contact -598-



Judy Walker

Fine Feathered Friends

Many people when asked what makes a bird a bird will re- wings, because they allow them to fly. But think about it. Some birds like ostriches and kiwis don't fly.

a lot of things that do have wings and fly but aren't birds such as insects, bats, and maple seeds. Some things with wings, like airplanes aren't even alive! So what is so unique about birds? It's their feathers that distinguish birds from any other living thing. There are numerous other unseen physical characteristics also unique to birds but feathers are what most people no-

Obviously feathers are essential for bird flight and they also keep the bird warm in the cold and cool in the heat.

did you know, primary feathers are aerodynamically shaped to provide the best lift and control? Where do you think aeronautical engineers learned everything they know? It didn't start with the Wright Brothers. Man didn't invent velcro either. Take a cl feather under a magnifying glass or microscope. There are minuscule hooks and loops that hook together to keep the feather smooth and in one piece, which is important for flying. Birds do not grow feathers all over their body (except for the ostrich). Instead the feath-

ers grow in what are called feather tracks. The feathers extend from the tracks and cover most if not all of the body. This probably makes it easier for the muscles

feathers and for the bird to move it wings more easily. Imagine what it would be like to have to move your arm if you had feathers growing out of your armpits! Every feather has its own muscle so it can be moved. This how the bird can puff itself up to warm or make itself real skinny to cool off. A feather called the "filoplume" is actually a sensory organ. They

he breast and other strategic areas of the body and gather information about air pressure. The bird then uses that information to make adjustments while flying. Although flying may look effortless to us, the birds are constantly making feather adjustment maintain position and altitude. And they do it without computers. For some birds the feathers actually weight

ts skeleton. There are over 25,000 feathers on a swan. Over 20,000 of them are found on the head and neck. The color of a feather is usually caused by pigments. However, the iridescence of indigo buntings and hummingbirds are created by the structure of the feather. That's why the indigo bunting is brilliant in the sun but hard to find in the shade and the hummingbird's throat changes color depending on which way it is facing.

As you can see, feathers are fascinating. So the next time you pick up a feather take a closer look at makes a bird a bird.

An International Migratory Bird Day

As neotropical migrants are flooding into your yard you might want to see how much you really know about these bundles of energy. Test yourself with the quiz below. You might be surprised to find how much you do

1. Which of the following groups of birds are i A) Swifts & Swallows; B) Tanagers & Orioles; C) Wood Warblers & Sandpipers; D) All of the

s of owl is a neotropical migrant: A) Barred Owl; B) Flammulated Owl; C) Northern Saw-whet Owl; D) None of the above.

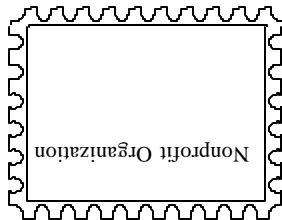
Which thrush is not seriously threatened by loss of tropical forest habitat? A) Wood Thrush; B) Swainson's Thrush; C) Veery; or D)

Which of the following woodpeckers are neotropical -bellied Sapsucker; B) Black-Woodpecker; C) Red-cockaded Woodpecker; D) None of

This endangered neotropical migrant nests in jack-ts in Michigan and winters in the Bahamas. A) Pine Warbler; B) Yellow Warbler, C) Canada Warbler; D) Kirtland's Warbler.

pted from Wildbird Sept. 1993)

The Mecklenburg Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. *Audubon News* is published nine times a year, Sep - May by the Mecklenburg Audubon Society. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, September - The meeting site is the Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church, 920 N. Sharon Amity Road.



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Audubon News

IMPORTANT

code (R50 7XCH) to a renewal form you may receive in the ensure that our chapter receives membership dues reimbursement from National Audubon!



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Membership Department

You've always known that goldfinches aren't gold, Purple Finches aren't purple, and Red-tailed Hawks don't have red eyes color, many birds are named for their call or sound - will, and chickadees, for example. Those bird names are onomatopoeic, meaning their call suggests their name.

The subject of this month's "Name that Bird" is named _____ call, which does NOT suggest the bird's name. Ultimately derived from an Old English word referring to the bellowing of a bull, this bird has been known over the years as the Bog Bumper, Water Belcher, Thunder Pumper, and Stake Driver.

If you know this bird by its common name, email or call Danny good (pamanddanny@earthlink.net or 704-892-_____) The first correct answer wins a great T-shirt from Mecklenburg

The winner of the first name that bird is John Chapman who knew that the Great Blue Heron has been called Big Cranky as well as Blue Crane.