Where have YOU been?
What have you seen?

The beginning of a New Year is a time to take stock. We look back on the previous year to see what we have done and look forward to the next year to plan what we are going to do. For birders this means reliving great bird trips and planning for new ones. And that’s what the January meeting is all about – folks sharing where they have been this past year (or so) and talking about where they would like to go this next year.

We start this ‘share fest’ off with a potluck dinner at 6:30 PM. That’s right, anything left over from your New Year’s celebration is fair game as long as it’s not growing anything new. This is a great time to get to know members we’ve seen at the meeting but haven’t really had an opportunity to chat with because of time constraints. There are always good eats. And we’re going to try something new that was suggested by one of the members. If you can remember, as you are packing in up the food to throw in a place setting for yourself including cup/glass and anyone else coming with you, it will help save some trees. As a chapter we are trying to be conscientious about trash and recycling. After all we are an environmental group! [Of course we will have back-ups but let’s make this our first resolution and a new tradition for 2005.]

The program for this meeting is also dependent on you the members. Although Judy Walker will start us off with some highlights of one of her recent trips, you are suppose to bring slides [traditional and/or electronic], videos, pictures, etc. of you recent [or not so recent] adventures. It is well known some members have taken some pretty impressive trips this past year and we are all waiting with bated breath to hear about them. Think of this as a grown up ‘show-n-tell’ time. And like ‘show-n-tell’ it serves several purposes. The sharer gets to brag [great for one’s self-esteem]. Those who have been tied to their desks get to live vicariously through those who can wander at will around the globe. And those who are thinking about taking a trip this year may get some very useful ideas and tips.

So this meeting is dedicated to YOU the members of Mecklenburg Audubon. Don’t forget the details – dinner at 6:30 PM [bring a dish and a your own place setting if you can]. The program starts as usually around 7:30 in the fellowship hall of the Sharon 7th Day Adventist Church [920 Sharon Amity]. If you can’t make the dinner, we will miss you.

This month’s Potluck Dinner starts at 6:30 PM. Bring a dish for dinner plus a place setting and a mug. Slides, pictures, videos for Program at 7:30 PM. Items for the our local bird rehabilitator.

Great Backyard Bird Count February 18-21, 2005

Things to Remember

- This month’s Potluck Dinner starts at 6:30 PM.
- Bring a dish for dinner plus a place setting and a mug.
- Slides, pictures, videos for Program at 7:30 PM.
- Items for the our local bird rehabilitator.
- Great Backyard Bird Count February 18-21, 2005
**FieldTrips**

*Please, remember to contact the trip leader several days before the trip. If you don't, you may not receive information about last minute changes or cancellations. Also, if we don't know you are coming we might leave without you!!*

---

**Sunday, January 2nd:**

Pee Dee NWR Christmas Count

[Full Day]

The Pee Dee Christmas Count is a great way to start the new year birding. Every year it produces surprises. One year it was turkey tracks in the snow and lots of sparrows. Another sight to behold is seeing the ducks take off in the morning or watching them come back in at dusk. Because of the wide variety of habitat and its central location we usually have a pretty good list of birds including Bald Eagles, swans, and lots and lots of sparrows and ducks.

If you want to carpool, meet at the McDonalds at Windsor Square Shopping Center at 5:45 AM [on Independence]. Otherwise meet at the Pee Dee Maintenance Building [main entrance off Rt. 52] at 7 AM. Lunch will be provided but you will want to wear lots of layers and bring snack foods and something hot to drive while you are out in the field. If you want to be part of this exciting count contact Judy Walker at 704-537-8181.

---

**Saturday, February 5th:**

Evergreen Nature Preserve

[1/2 day]

Evergreen Preserve anytime of the year is a wonderful place to bird. The new pond and surrounding wetland plants has been a great addition. Winter birding in the preserve usually includes a variety of sparrows, woodpeckers, and wrens.

We will meet at the Winterfield School parking lot at 7:30 AM and should be done just about noon.

---

**Who’s Who in Bird Names?**

Most bird names are straightforward and descriptive; there is no ambiguity about the appearance of a red-winged blackbird, for instance. But Brewer’s blackbird begs the question – just who was Brewer anyway? He was Thomas Mayo Brewer, a Boston physician and a friend of John Audubon, who is immortalized by two North American birds; Brewer’s blackbird and Brewer’s sparrow, both western species.

There are 77 North American birds named for people, from Abert’s towhee to Xanthus’ murrelet. Most are western or northern, for a good reason – birds of the eastern colonies were known by colloquial names generations before serious naturalist began studying them. But as explorers penetrated the wilderness in the 1800s, scientists accompanying them had an opportunity to name their finds in honor of friends, colleagues, collectors and financial supporters.

Baird’s sandpiper memorializes Spencer Fullerton Baird, secretary of the Smithsonian in the 1880s; Swainson’s hawk, thrush and warbler are names for William Swainson, an erratic British naturalist; and Xantus’ murrelet commemorates John Xantus, a Hungarian ornithologist with a fair does of con man in his makeup (he once claimed to have been a U.S. naval captain, basing that contention on a stint as a tide observer along the pacific coast).

With four bird names for him (a storm-petrel, plover, phalarope, and warbler), Alexander Wilson, often considered the “Father of North American ornithology”, is better enshrined in field guides than any other person. Although not as well known today as Audubon, Wilson had an arguably greater impact on early American ornithology, and his illustrated American Ornithology preceded Audubon’s work by many years.

No other group of birds has as many members named for people as...
What’s in a Name?

Recently, someone commented about the name change of one of our common backyard birds. Some folks came to know and love this bird as a Rufous-sided Towhee. A name that seemed appropriate since the bird did indeed have lovely brownish red [aka rufous] on its sides and actually uttered its own name – towhee. However, folks in the east were not aware there was another bird living out west with the same name that looked a lot like the bird in their backyard but not quite. It had the same rufous sides but it had white spots on its back and it didn’t sound quite the same. Then one day, there were no longer any Rufous-sided Towhees at all! In their place were Eastern Towhees and Spotted Towhees. What happened to the beautifully descriptive name?

Well, what happened is called in scientific circles a ‘split’ in species. Ornithologists had studied both species’ habits, habitat and genetic coding and decided the birds were not really the same species. So an organization called the American Ornithological Union [AOU], which is responsible of identifying and naming birds in North America, decided to give each species its own name. Our beloved Rufous-sided Towhee became the Eastern Towhee and the western bird became the Spotted Towhee.

Of course the birds themselves didn’t suffer any identity crisis since they already knew who they were and didn’t give a twit what we call them. But it did cause both joy and consternation for those who watch birds and like to know their names.

Many who have been watching birds for a while refuse to call the bird by its new name, which is fine since most long time birders know what they are referring to when they use the old name. It is, however, a little confusing for new birders since they are looking at newer editions of field guides that don’t list the Rufous-sided Towhee. Some avoid the confusion by just referring to the bird as a towhee, which is fine if they are in an area where there is only one towhee species. The further west one goes the more complicated it gets because there are six species of towhees one might encounter once you cross the Mississippi.

For those who keep a life list, the splitting of the towhees may be a boon. If, like myself, they had birded out west and recorded seeing a Rufous-sided Towhee, when the split was announced they could automatically add a bird to their life list never having to leave the confines of their home. However, the reverse is also true. If the AOU decides to combine two species [often referred to as ‘lumping’] like the Audubon’s and Myrtle Warblers, as they did back in the early ’80, into one species called the Yellow-rumped Warbler, then the lister loses a bird from their life list.

The case of the Rufous-sided Towhee is only one of more widely known species split/name changes the AOU has initiated in recent years. Every year a committee meets to review the ornithological literature and recommendations and have the birds end up on or off the AOU’s list. For example, the AOU split the Towhee’s into two species and then later decided lump them back into one species. A lister would have added a bird to their list without leaving the confines of their home the first time the split was announced, but later on the bird would be removed from their list. It’s a bit confusing, but not as confusing as it is for birders who have birded in both the east and west.

Name Origins

- No one is sure of the origin of the name grebe. It may come from the Breton word krib, for “crest.”
- While loons may be thought to have been named for their crazy calls, the term actually is a corruption of the word loom which means “lame” in the language of the Shetland Islands and refers to the awkwardness of these birds on land.
- Pelican, curiously, traces back to the Greek for “woodpeckers,” a term used by ancients for any bird with an impressive bill.
- Gannet is from the Anglo-Saxon for “little goose”; gannets were long thought to be close relatives of geese.
- Anhinga mean “water turkey” in the South American native language Tupi. The Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga) is unique among North American birds in having all its names the same.
- Bittern comes from Old English for “bellowing of a bull,” referring to its call.
- Heron comes from the Middle English name for “herons”; Egret comes from the French and Old High German meaning “small heron”.
- Flamingo is from the Spanish for “flame” (red).
- Stork and “starch” have the same roots in Old English, indicating the bird’s stiff posture.
- Crane come from the Anglo-Saxon cran – “to cry out”.

From Birder’s Handbook by Paul R. Ehrlich.
Stumping, Super Squirrel!!

“There’s a philosophical element to our effort to outwit squirrels, as well. We’re supposed to be smarter than squirrels. Right? Squirrels have brains the size of large nuts, and our brains are simply larger. So if we can’t outwit squirrels how ever can we expect to get a man or woman to Mars.” Bill Adler, Jr.

He is a thief, genius, entertainer and perhaps a friend. He can be counted on to find the weakness in any plan devised to keep him off your feeders.

Up at dawn, super squirrel begins feeding and gathering food for future use, burying as many as five nuts in four minutes. Many kinds of nuts must be completely buried before they will germinate, and it is probably safe to say that most hickory, butternut, walnut and oak trees in maturity today are the result of some squirrel’s activity years ago. He is a diligent, provident and persevering, leading one to conclude, perhaps, that he is an effigy of what an ideal well balanced, fun loving (though mischievous) human being should be. No. Wonder we still laugh at him in the midst of our exasperation.

Since it’s a long tumble for a squirrel that misses his hold in the trees, he is born a natural acrobat, much to the chagrin of many backyard bird feeders. His most useful possession is his perky, bushy tail, which is a counterbalance when he is “tight rope” walking, an airfoil for gliding, a brake and parachute for leaping, a blanket for protection against rain and cold, and a flag to send messages of indignation.

One of the reasons he seems to gnaw his way through just about anything you may put up is that, like the beaver, he has to constantly chewing to wear down his teeth. His incisors grow six inches per year. If he doesn’t chew the can grow too long for him to eat.

Still, if we want to feed the birds we must take steps. One good method is to feed him corn, one of his favorites, in an area removed from your other feeders. However, cracked corn strewn on the ground or in a platform feeder will also attract grackles, starlings, pigeons and deer. If you don’t want to feed him, you could dispense safflower seed, a seed that squirrels are not nearly as attracted to as sunflower. Cardinals, chickadees, and titmice, as well as other feeder birds, learn to consume safflower very quickly. Another benefit of safflower is that it is also unattractive to grackles and European Starlings. Niger seed, or thistle, used to attract American Goldfinches, is also not on the squirrels’ all-time favorite list. For those of you tired of squirrels stealing all of the suet that you put out for your woodpeckers, try 100 percent pure suet. It doesn’t sound as attractive as “Party Mix” suet, but it is effective.

On the topic of discouraging squirrels by manipulating what you feed, one thing that has no place in bird feeding is the use of any of the hot pepper products currently available. Their main ingredient is capsaicin, the concentrated substance that makes peppers hot, to inflict pain on the squirrels, thereby discouraging them from using your feeders. That alone is reason enough not to use it. However, while it is true birds’ tongues lack the taste receptors to feel the heat, it does not mean it would not be incredibly painful if they got it in their eyes. Also, the possibility of capsaicin having serious effects on their gastro-intestinal system exists as well. These products can also be hazardous to human beings. Those with any kind of upper respiratory ailment could suffer from inhaling of these products. Also children, who as we all know stick their hands in their mouths or eyes readily, could be seriously hurt. Stay away from these products. They have no place in bird feeding.

Another effective method is to put one or more, large baffle discs or tubes on the post of your feeder, well above his jumping height. A squirrel’s muscular, double-jointed hind legs help him run up and down trees quickly and leap upwards 4-5 feet or downward-to-the-side 10-12 feet. The baffle must be wide because he will climb the post to just the right height and make an angled leap, grabbing the edge just enough to swing himself up and on top of the baffle. With a final mad scramble he may reach the post before he slides off! If he fails, you can count on it that he will try again; probably more often than you will have the patience to observe.

For hanging feeders, similar baffles on the hanging wire can help. But remember, a squirrel can leap from the branch or horizontal hanging cable at a very flat angle, completely by passing your baffle and landing directly on you feeder. So if you haven’t situated your feeder beyond the above distances, no baffle, no matter how good, is going to stop the squirrels. A dome-shaped hanging baffle is very effective because you can place the feeder up, almost inside the dome to avoid these angled leaps from the side. If the feeders are suspended from a horizontal wire try putting pieces plastic tubing around the wire. It will rotate as the squirrel tries to crawl out to the feeder causing him to fall off.
There are many “squirrel-proof” feeders available. They come in two basic types, those that attempt to exclude the squirrels by enclosing the feeder in a cage and those that shut the food supply off when the squirrel attempts to eat from the feeder. The feeders with cages around them vary widely in their ability to deter squirrels, based largely on how close the feeder is to the cage itself. The closer the cage is to the feeder, the easier it is for the squirrel to reach through and get seed. Some feeders have the cage right on the feeder. These feeders are only squirrel-resistant, not squirrel-proof. When purchasing caged feeders, metal or lexan tops and bottoms are vital. Stay away from those with a thin plastic body. They will wind up being chewed within hours.

The other design basically uses the squirrels’ weight against them. A trap door assembly closes off the seed ports when the much heavier squirrel attempts to feed from the feeder. These feeders must be made of metal and are usually quite effective. Look for ones that are spring-loaded as opposed to counterweighted. There are reports of ingenious squirrels “tag teaming” such feeders by having one stand on the counterweight while his partner eats his fill, and then they swap positions.

Another tactic to take is to use repellents, which emit an odor the squirrel does not like. Gardeners suggest mothballs and they work. Mammals don’t like to smell them but neither do people. The problem with mothballs, besides the potential health impacts, is you must use a lot of them in order to get the desired effect. Mothballs are flammable; they burn very well. And some types of mothballs are also potential carcinogens. Safer repellents can be found at local home improvement stores or on-line at sites like Improvements [www.improvementscatalog.com]

Finally, Bill Adler, Jr., author of Outwitting Squirrels has some words of encouragement, “… to outwit squirrels you have to be willing to spend time and effort. For nearly every strategy you come up with, over time, squirrels are going to undo that strategy. So you have to be willing to adapt. And most importantly, try to look at your backyard from the squirrel’s perspective. You have to be able to combine anti-squirrel techniques. That means, don’t just coat the pole your feeder is on with petroleum jelly, which will wash off in a heavy rain or freeze in the winter – combine the petroleum jelly with a baffle to make it difficult and annoying for the squirrels. Don’t just string a feeder on a wire between two distant trees – string the wire through record albums to make it harder for squirrels to walk across the wire."

Who’s Who [continued from page 2]

There are many “squirrel-proof” feeders available. They come in two basic types, those that attempt to exclude the squirrels by enclosing the feeder in a cage and those that shut the food supply off when the squirrel attempts to eat from the feeder. The feeders with cages around them vary widely in their ability to deter squirrels, based largely on how close the feeder is to the cage itself. The closer the cage is to the feeder, the easier it is for the squirrel to reach through and get seed. Some feeders have the cage right on the feeder. These feeders are only squirrel-resistant, not squirrel-proof. When purchasing caged feeders, metal or lexan tops and bottoms are vital. Stay away from those with a thin plastic body. They will wind up being chewed within hours.

The other design basically uses the squirrels’ weight against them. A trap door assembly closes off the seed ports when the much heavier squirrel attempts to feed from the feeder. These feeders must be made of metal and are usually quite effective. Look for ones that are spring-loaded as opposed to counterweighted. There are reports of ingenious squirrels “tag teaming” such feeders by having one stand on the counterweight while his partner eats his fill, and then they swap positions.

Another tactic to take is to use repellents, which emit an odor the squirrel does not like. Gardeners suggest mothballs and they work. Mammals don’t like to smell them but neither do people. The problem with mothballs, besides the potential health impacts, is you must use a lot of them in order to get the desired effect. Mothballs are flammable; they burn very well. And some types of mothballs are also potential carcinogens. Safer repellents can be found at local home improvement stores or on-line at sites like Improvements [www.improvementscatalog.com]

Finally, Bill Adler, Jr., author of Outwitting Squirrels has some words of encouragement, “… to outwit squirrels you have to be willing to spend time and effort. For nearly every strategy you come up with, over time, squirrels are going to undo that strategy. So you have to be willing to adapt. And most importantly, try to look at your backyard from the squirrel’s perspective. You have to be able to combine anti-squirrel techniques. That means, don’t just coat the pole your feeder is on with petroleum jelly, which will wash off in a heavy rain or freeze in the winter – combine the petroleum jelly with a baffle to make it difficult and annoying for the squirrels. Don’t just string a feeder on a wire between two distant trees – string the wire through record albums to make it harder for squirrels to walk across the wire."

Who’s Who [continued from page 2]

Some honorees have, alas, lost their place in the sun. A few years back, the AOU decided that the myrtle warbler of the East and the Audubon’s warbler of the West were races of the same species which they lumped under the name yellow-rumped warbler, leaving John James with only the Audubon’s shearer and oriole to carry his name. The Rivoli’s hummingbird has since been rechristened the magnificent hummingbird, and Weid’s crested flycatcher is more prosaically known today as the brown-crested flycatcher.

Sometimes the opposite holds true. In 1858, two color forms of the western grebe were described as separate species, the western and the Clark’s grebe. They were lumped together for years, but in the late 1980s were split again into two separate species because they do not interbreed.

Squirrel Trivia

• The word “squirrel” means “shadow tail” in Greek.
• The gray squirrel is the most common squirrel in North America. It’s habit of gathering and storing food for the winter has allowed the species to survive for more than 35 million years.
• The gray squirrels diet consists of nuts, seeds and fruit. It will eat bird eggs, bugs, and even an animal carcass if there is no other food source available.
• The average adult squirrel needs to eat about a pound of food a week to maintain an active life.
• Squirrels eyes are located high, and on each side of their head. This allows them a wide field of vision, without turning their head.
• A squirrel will break the shell of a nut with its teeth, then clean the nut by licking it or rubbing on its face before it is buried. This action applies a scent to the nut that helps the squirrel find it later, even under a foot of snow.
• The sweat glands of a tree squirrel are located on their feet, between the foot-pads and on their paws between the toes. When hot or excited a squirrel will leave wet tracks on a dry surface. This scent is also used to mark the trees in their territory.
• During winter storms, or severe cold, the squirrel may not leave the nest for days. But, the tree squirrel does not hibernate!
• The squirrel’s erratic path while crossing a street is an attempt to confuse the oncoming vehicle... thereby causing it to change direction. This is obviously the squirrels biggest, and often last mistake.
Small but Important Victories

Pocosin Lakes NWR

In another setback for the U.S. Navy’s ill-conceived plan to build a major jet landing field in the heart of the Atlantic migratory flyway in eastern North Carolina, Federal Judge Terrence Boyle issued a ruling supporting the preliminary injunction he issued in April. The injunction, which still stands, prohibits the Navy from taking any further action associated with building the landing field in the flight path of the hundreds of thousands of migratory birds flying into Pocosin Refuge each year.

Audubon North Carolina and our coalition partners working on this issue believe this latest development gives the Navy yet another opportunity to abandon the ill-conceived plans to build the OLFL in the heart of the eastern flyway near the Pocosin Lakes NWR, and instead, to begin looking diligently at numerous alternative sites in North Carolina. You’ll recall on April 20th, U.S. District Court Judge Terrence Boyle ordered the U.S. Navy to stop work on a planned jet landing field in the heart of the Atlantic migratory flyway, just a few miles from the Pocosin Lakes NWR in NC – a location that not only puts birds at risk, but the pilots themselves with the likelihood of collisions between jets and large flocks of tundra swans, snow geese and other birds that winter in the area.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The brightest spot this year was passage of an Audubon top priority measure that restores Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) protection to the law’s intended beneficiaries, America’s native migratory birds. The provision, known as the “Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004” was designed to strengthen the existing law by ensuring that invasive species that cause harm to native migratory birds would not be protected under the MBTA. A court ruling earlier this year put America’s migratory birds at risk from the very law designed to protect them. That decision, Hill v. Norton, turned the MBTA on its end by extending the law’s protection to destructive invasive species such as the European Starling, English Sparrow, and Mute Swan, all of which cause significant ecological damage and out-compete America’s native birds for precious remaining habitat.

The provision passed by Congress this year closes the loophole created by this decision, ensuring legal protection is not extended to the human-introduced invasive species decimating some of America’s most endangered birds.

Arctic NWR Safe for 2004

While it’s clear the 2005 fight to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge may be the biggest one yet, in 2004, Congress was unable to muster enough support to even bring up for a vote legislation to open the Arctic NWR to oil and gas drilling. This was quite a victory, as special interests had their election-year arsenal of political power at the ready. It just could not compete with the power of constituents -- their calls, letters and visits with their lawmakers. We’ll be counting on this support again in 2005!

Victory for the Red Knot

In March, 2004 the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s (ASMFC) Horseshoe Crab Management Board agreed to adopt new conservation measures for the horseshoe crab - an "ancient living fossil" whose population has been declining due to over-fishing.

Voting 12-3, the Board passed the Audubon-supported measure that restricts the harvest of horseshoe crabs, prohibits harvest and landing crabs between May 1-June 7, and encourages bait-saving techniques.

The new restrictions go into effect in NJ, DE, and MD. Additionally, NY is adopting similar measures.

These actions go a very long way to protect the horseshoe crab and the migratory shorebirds that depend on them, particularly the Red Knot that has seen a significant decline in recent years. The Red Knot travels more than 18,000 miles each year, often as many as 2,500 miles non-stop from Brazil to the Arctic. The Delaware Bay is their last stop on route to the Arctic. Red Knots have to double their weight in order to survive the migration. More than 95% of their food during this time is Horseshoe Crab eggs.

This significant victory is the culmination of years of work to protect the horseshoe crab by the NAS, Audubon state offices in NY and MD, NJ Audubon, DE Audubon, VA Audubon Council, and our partner organizations in bird conservation. We can achieve a lot when we all work together!

Invasive Species

This year, the U.S. Congress also passed measures aimed at fighting non-native, invasive species. Invasive species have infested more than 100 million acres of the American landscape, and continue to spread across more than 14 million acres each year, an area equal to a strip of land seven miles wide stretching from coast to coast. Scientists, academics, government experts, and industry leaders are recognizing invasive species as one of the most serious environmental threats of the 21st century.

Congress also passed Audubon-backed funding for invasive species eradication work. In addition, scientists at Blackwater NWR announced they have successfully eradicated the invasive nutria, an aggressive beaver-like rodent that feeds on wetland plants, from the refuge, in effect saving the wetlands and Audubon WatchList birds like the elusive Black Rail! Winning the battle again! the nutria on Blackwater Refuge demonstrates how we can save America’s threatened bird and wildlife habitat from invasive species.
Bird Names

[continued from page 6]

concerning species status of now just over 2,000 birds in North and Central America from the North Pole to the boundary of Panama and Colombia, including the adjacent islands under the jurisdiction of the included nations; the Hawaiian Islands; Clipperton Island; Bermuda; The West Indies, including the Bahamas Islands, the Greater Antilles, Leeward and Windward Islands in the Lesser Antilles (ending with Grenada); and Swan, Providencia, and San Andrés Islands in the Gulf of Mexico. And every year they make changes. Most do not impact the average bird watcher as dramatically as the towhee split. Most changes have to do with spelling, taxonomical order and/or more unusual species not seen in backyard or on local greenways.

Why do they make these changes? For a bonified answer to this we probably need to ask Rob Bierregaard since he is a member of this august organization. But here’s my take on the situation, which is certainly not scientific. Scientists like librarians [my chosen profession] think they can neatly categorize life, the universe and everything. We like to organize things so they can be easily identified and/or located. Unfortunately, life, the universe and everything are not all that accommodating and refuse to fit into our pigeonholes. And like someone rearranging furniture in a room we are never satisfied with how it looks and are always tweaking it.

Then you can add to the mix two basic philosophies of how things should be organized. There are those who believe in broad generalizations better known as lumpers. They favor having one species and then referring to variations within the species as ‘sub-species’ or races. And then there are those who like to specialize, known as splitters, and prefer to designate the sub-species and races as species. There seems to be a pattern or cycle to which philosophy dominates. A good example of this cycle is back in the late 70s/early 80s the Bullock’s and Baltimore Orioles where lumped into one species the North Oriole. In the mid to late 90s the birds where split back into their original species. Right now we seem to be in a ‘splitting’ phase. The most current split, which will impact many bird watchers, is the creation of a ‘new’ species called the Cackling Goose, which has been split from the Canada Goose. Now, in the winter you are really going to have to look at all those Canada Geese because there may very well be another species hiding in the flock.

But probably the two most important reasons for all the changes and rearranging is job security for the ornithologists and driving the compulsive lister crazy. It does indeed keep birding challenging. Take a look at the entry for Fox or Song Sparrow in your field guide or in specialized sparrow identification book. Can you imagine how challenging it would be to distinguish between all those subspecies/races if the AOU decides to split those? If you can’t, you better start trying because that’s the rumor that’s going around!!!

Local Membership

Join now and your membership will be effective until June 2005.

Because of changes in National Audubon membership structure, Mecklenburg Audubon now must offer a local Chapter Membership to cover the cost of the newsletter, web site and cost of meetings.

Name

Address [Street, City, ST, and Zip]

Phone

E-mail


___ Please, save trees and send me[us] the newsletter electronically.

___ [i]we] would be willing to lead a field trip.

___ [i]we] would be interested in participating in a work day at one of the local preserves.

___ [i]we] would be willing to do a program.

Return to: Lucy Quintilliano, Treasurer, Mecklenburg Audubon Society, P. O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222
What’s Inside?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who’s Who of Bird Names</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s in a Name?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stumping Squirrels</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Victories</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activities Calendar

1/2  - Pee Dee NWR Christmas Count
1/6  - Potluck/Members ‘Slides’ Night
1/22 - Huntington Beach St. Park, SC [All day Field Trip]
1/28-30 - Carolina Bird Club Winter Weekend - Atlantic Beach
2/3  - Backyard Habitat [Monthly Meeting]
2/5  - Evergreen Preserve [1/2 day Field Trip]
2/18-21 - Great Backyard Bird Count
2/19  - Cowan’s Ford Nature Preserve [1/2 day Field Trip]

For additional activities and information go to http://meckbirds.org