Bienvenidos a Peru

For those of us who are tied to home, family and work here is an opportunity to vicariously travel to an exotic place. Relive with Ron and Anne Clark a birding adventure of a lifetime – the jungles of Peru. Float up the Tambopata River; learn what a moray really is; visit the Maras salt mines and the floating islands of Lake Titicaca. And of course experience Machu Picchu the ancient Inca ‘village’ built in 1400’s and uncovered in the 1920s. Critter encounters include capybara, the world’s largest rodent at 100 pounds, dusky titi and red howler monkeys, leaf-cutter ants, and piranhas. Of course there will also be birds – Andean condor, giant hummingbirds, penguins caracaras and much more. Ron will most certainly regale us with fascinating true stories of their daring adventures.

So join the group for this virtual field trip to South America on Thursday, May 6th at 7:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall of the Seventh Day Adventist Church (920 Sharon Amity). Snacks begins around 7:15 PM. Don’t worry, no one will be checking your passport!

Annual Picnic

Thursday, June 3rd
Latta Park Shelter
6 PM til Dark

If you are not aware of it, the Starbucks at Cotswold Shopping Center provides coffee for our monthly meetings. So the next time you in the neighborhood and need a cup of joe, stop in and thank them.
**Field Trips**

All Mecklenburg Audubon Field Trips are free and open to the public. Directions for all trips can be found on the Mecklenburg Audubon web site - meckbirds.org/trips.html. 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 they don't know you are coming, they might leave without you!!

**Latta Park Walks**

Latta Park in Dilworth is a real gem during spring migration. It is possible to have a 15 warbler day, with surprises like Wilson’s or Nashville. Add to this 4 or 5 thrushes, 3 or 4 vireos, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, both orioles and many others, and it’s hard to stay away. We will have many trips to this birdy park in April and May. You will find birders there almost every day from mid-April to mid-May. We will be leading ‘official’ walks which will meet at 8:30 AM on the dates listed below. The meeting spot will be at the parking lot on East Park Ave. between Winthrop Ave. and Springfield Ave. There is a map on the MAS web site under “local birding spots”.

- **Sunday, April 25th** - Contact: Ron Clark (waxwing@bellsouth.net)
- **Thursday, April 29th** - Contact: Tom Sanders (tsanders1993@msn.com)
- **Sunday, May 2nd** - Contact: Dennis Lankford (harecubed2@carolina.rr.com)
- **Saturday, May 8th** - Contact: Judy Walker (birdwalker@mac.com)
- **Tuesday, May 11th** - Contact: Dave Lovett (birdsalot@webtv.net)

**Tuesday, April 27th - Six-Mile Creek Greenway**

½ Day (Easy*) • Contact: Ron Clark (waxwing@bellsouth.net)

We will be looking for Kentucky and Swainson’s Warblers, along with several others. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot on Marvin Rd. Take Hwy 521 south through Ballantyne. Go through the light at Providence Rd West. Take the next left onto Marvin Rd. After going through the first light, the parking lot will be on your right, about one mile.

**Tuesday, May 4th - Anne Springs Greenway**

½ Day (Easy) • Contact: Dave Lovett (birdsalot@webtv.net)

Join Dave as we walk these wooded, slightly hilly trails just south of Charlotte. There is a $2 entrance fee. We will meet at the main entrance to the greenway at 8:30 AM. Take a left onto Carowinds Blvd off I-77. Follow Hwy 21 for about 3 miles and turn left into the greenway parking area.

**Thursday, May 6th - Landsford Canal State Park**

Full Day (Moderate) • Contact: Ron Clark (waxwing@bellsouth.net)

We’ll walk the wooded trails, about 1.5 miles, along the Catawba River, and explore neighboring fields. This is a nesting area for Prothonotary Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher and Bald Eagle. We’ll meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot of Blooms at the corner of Regent Parkway and US 21. (Take a left at the Carowinds exit. Go one mile and park in the Bloom’s lot on the left, out near the street.)

**Sunday, May 9th - Latta Prairie**

1/2 Day (Moderate) • Contact: Ron Clark (waxwing@bellsouth.net)

We will be looking for open field and woods birds. This is a great area for indigo bunting, summer tanager, prairie warbler and yellow-breasted chat, among others. We’ll meet at 8:00 AM at the Nature Center in Latta Nature Preserve. Take I-77 north to Sunset Rd. Exit 16-B. Follow it to Beatties Ford Rd and take a right. At about five miles you will turn left on Sample Rd, at the beautiful rock walls. As soon as you go through the gate into the preserve, the parking lot is on the right.

**Tuesday, May 11th - Boyce Park**

1/2 Day (Easy) • Contact: Dave Lovett (birdsalot@webtv.net)

Dave will take us through this mostly wooded park on Sardis Rd. in southeast Charlotte. We’ll meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot of the park.

**Tuesday, May 25th - Little Sugar Creek Greenway**

1/2 Day (Easy) • Dean and Vivian Sprehe (vsprehe@carolina.rr.com)

We will wander down the Huntingtowne Farms section of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. This late season walk always produces some nice surprises. Meet Vivian & Dean at 8:30 AM in the greenway parking lot off Huntingtowne Farms Lane.

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**What is the gizz of a bird?**

How is it experienced birds can ID a bird with just a quick look as it dives into a bush or under less than ideal lighting? If you have ever asked one of them this question they probably replied ‘Well, it was the gizz of the bird’. So what is the gizz of a bird and how can you acquire this valuable information?

Not to worry, we have the perfect workshop for you. On **Saturday, May 15th**, Simon Thompson, of Venture Tours, will guide us through the intricacies of ‘bird gizzes’. Simon is a birder extraordinaire and fabulous teacher with wit and humor. Don’t miss this opportunity to learn from world renown birder.

The workshop will take place at Latta Park from 8 AM to 3 PM. Bring a lunch and drinks. Cost: $35 (maxim number of participants 15).
Birds on the List: Painted Bunting

Male Painted Buntings are the most spectacularly colored of all North American songbirds, with a gaudy combination of red, blue, and green feathers. This species has two distinct breeding populations in North America, but overall, it has shown a significant decline across its entire range during the past 35 years. The exact causes for Painted Bunting’s decline are not known, but they are believed to include habitat loss, cowbird parasitism, and trapping for the pet trade on its wintering grounds.

**Identification:** An adult male Painted Bunting is arguably the most distinctive songbird in North America, with the combination of a deep blue head, red underparts, a green back, and a red rump. While not as brightly colored as males, female Painted Buntings are also distinctive. The female has an overall greenish plumage which is more darkly colored above than below.

**Distribution and Population Trends:** Painted Bunting has two distinct breeding populations: one found along the Atlantic Coast from North Carolina south to central Florida; and another that stretches across much of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, southward into northern Mexico. The Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) Program has identified a number of sites that provide breeding habitat for Painted Bunting, including North Carolina’s Bald Head/Smith Island IBA, which supports 35-40 breeding pairs, and Florida’s Fort George and Talbot Islands IBA, where 78 singing males were detected and over 100 birds were banded in 2000. The eastern population of Painted Bunting winters in southern Florida and probably in the northwestern Caribbean, while the western population winters in southern Mexico and Central America. Breeding Bird Survey data from 1966 to 2000 show a significant decline of 2.7% annually for Painted Bunting across its entire range during the past 35 years. The exact causes for Painted Bunting’s decline is not known, it is most likely the result of loss of habitat. The eastern population, with its very limited coastal range, is especially susceptible to habitat degradation and destruction. The western population also faces the threat of habitat loss, especially on its molting grounds in the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Another threat to the eastern population of Painted Bunting is cowbird parasitism, to which they are particularly vulnerable. Brown-headed Cowbirds have only recently reached the southeastern range of the Painted Bunting. In this area, where the buntings have no adaptations to recognize or respond to the cowbirds, parasitism rates are as high as 80%. In the 1990s, Shiny Cowbirds began expanding their range from South America and the Caribbean into the southeastern United States. So far, there are no records of this species parasitizing Painted Buntings, but it may just be a matter of time. Finally, because of their spectacular appearance, male Painted Buntings are popular as cage birds and in Mexico thousands are taken annually for export to bird dealers in Europe.

**Conservation:** In November 2001, Audubon formally requested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) assess the status of the Painted Bunting together with the Mexican Government and incorporate the protection of this species into the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Audubon also urged the USFWS to recommend to Mexico that the Painted Bunting be removed from local trade.

**Ecology:** Painted Bunting favors somewhat open areas with dense brush at all seasons. Its diet consists mostly of seeds and insects, with insects predominating in late summer. Its diet consists mostly of seeds and insects, with insects predominating in late summer. It requires a stopover molting area which has a mild climate and plenty of food.

**Threats:** Although the exact cause of Painted Bunting’s decline is not known, it is most likely the result of loss of habitat. The eastern population, with its very limited coastal range, is especially susceptible to habitat degradation and destruction. The western population also faces the threat of habitat loss, especially on its molting grounds in the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Another threat to the eastern population of Painted Bunting is cowbird parasitism, to which they are particularly vulnerable. Brown-headed Cowbirds have only recently reached the southeastern range of the Painted Bunting. In this area, where the buntings have no adaptations to recognize or respond to the cowbirds, parasitism rates are as high as 80%. In the 1990s, Shiny Cowbirds began expanding their range from South America and the Caribbean into the southeastern United States. So far, there are no records of this species parasitizing Painted Buntings, but it may just be a matter of time. Finally, because of their spectacular appearance, male Painted Buntings are popular as cage birds and in Mexico thousands are taken annually for export to bird dealers in Europe.

**What Can You Do?** Volunteers are crucial to the success of programs that monitor the long-term status of wintering populations of Painted Bunting and other bird species. Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is one of the longest-running citizen-science monitoring programs in the world and has helped to follow changes in the numbers and distribution of Painted Bunting. To learn more about the CBC and how you can participate, visit: http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

**References**


The Cerulean Warbler is inextricably connected to American energy policies. Eighty percent breed in the Appalachian Mountains, where mining and land reclamation are important issues. And ceruleans winter on the eastern slopes of the Andes in northern South America, migrating through the Gulf Coast where wind farms are becoming an issue.

These beautiful birds are canopy dwellers preferring large, dense forests with a structurally diverse canopy, especially stands with super-dominant canopy trees. They’re among the rarest of Neotropical migrant songbirds, listed on the Partners in Flight watch list and as a focal species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate that their population declined at an average annual rate of 2.8 percent between 1966 and 2008, a 70 percent loss since 1966.

Ken Rosenberg, director of Conservation Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is working with a wide variety of partners to conserve this vulnerable bird. From 1995–2000, the Lab’s Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project used data from citizen science projects like e-Bird to map the current breeding range. On the breeding grounds, researchers have been striving for “no net loss,” identifying the most critical breeding sites and focusing on improving logging and mining practices, reclamation, and mitigation.

Researchers at the University of Tennessee estimated in 2006 that surface mining could displace 23 percent of the Cerulean Warblers in Tennessee’s Cumberland Mountains, one remaining stronghold. Mountaintop removal mining slices the tops from ridges, where the warblers prefer to nest, and dumps the rubble in nearby valleys. In September 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency withheld 79 mountaintop-mining permits for review, concluding that these projects would likely impact water quality, requiring review under the Clean Water Act. This action was not taken to help Cerulean Warblers, but will benefit them in the short run, and more acceptable practices for mining and reclamation will likely help the warblers in the long term as well. Reclamation practices and mitigation can also help us achieve “no net loss.”

Improving Cerulean Warbler survival rates during migration and on their wintering grounds may have a bigger effect on their population than focusing strictly on their breeding range, because core populations have a low annual survival rate and most mortality seems to occur away from their breeding grounds. They migrate along the Gulf of Mexico, where wind farms may have a serious effect.

The Cerulean Warbler Conservation Initiative, “El Grupo Ceruleo,” brings together diverse partners including the Cornell Lab, USFWS, U.S. Forest Service, Pro Aves Colombia, American Bird Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy, focused on research to better define the current range and identify important areas for wintering Cerulean Warblers. Already the American Bird Conservancy and ProAves have purchased 500 acres of rural land in the heart of the species’ wintering range. This Cerulean Warbler Reserve is the first protected area in Latin America to be designated specifically for a migrant bird, and is recognized by the Alliance for Zero Extinction because at least six very rare and critically threatened bird species are protected within it. Cerulean Warbler conservation has raised awareness of other conservation issues in Colombia as well, and the bird may serve as a “flagship species” promoting biodiversity in the Andes.

Ken Rosenberg says, “This 9-gram bird is helping to put an international spotlight on local conservation issues of global importance, from northern hardwood forests and the Appalachian Mountains through the Gulf of Mexico to the Andes.”

MAS Board Nominees

The following MAS members have been nominated for a 3 year term on the MAS Board of Directors:

- Rob Bierregaard
- Sally Miller
- Lauren Schexnider
- Carol Tomko

Thanks for being willing to serve our chapter.
In Ways of the Bird Sarita Van Vleck takes the reader on a journey through the birth and life of the bird. The book starts out with the spring migration then takes the reader through mating, nest building, egg laying and hatching and on to the growth of the young bird. It ends with the fall migration. It truly takes one on a journey through the year in the life of a bird. The journey is not limited to a single species but includes many species and interesting facts about that species. The reader will not only have a good read but will learn many interesting facts to enable them to become a knowledgeable bird watcher and observer.

Birds spend the majority of their time responding to weather. In spring they move from their winter home to their summer home, stopping along the way to rest and feed. Once at their summer home they get busy mating, nest building and raising their young before the onset of colder temperature. The fall migration is a bit more leisurely as they have accomplished their reproductive mission. Once at their wintering grounds they will rest and feed to prepare for the upcoming return to their mating ground. Most of this is instinctive for the bird. As Van Vleck explains it is not all instinct but hormonal as well.

Ways of the Bird - A naturalist’s guide to bird behavior, by Sarita Van Vleck (Lyons Press, 1993)

Reviewed by Jill Palmer

Ways of the Bird is filled with scientific facts and observational information on the behavior of birds. If you’ve ever wondered how the egg is formed and how the bird hatches from the egg this book explains that process in detail. For instance a bird who lays eggs on the ground will produce eggs that have the appearance of a natural object found on the ground such as a stone or a leaf. A bird who lays eggs in a precarious location will lay a larger clutch. A bird such as a Canadian Goose does not need to be concerned about the color of the eggs, the number of eggs laid and location of the nest because she is able to hold her own against predators. Some birds that do not migrate and therefore have longer to raise their young. These birds can produce a larger clutch. This is just one of the topics covered in this fascinating book.

It’s Renewal Time!!!

Join now and your membership will be effective through June 2011.

Name

Address [Street, City, ST, and Zip]

Phone

E-mail

- Individual Membership [$10]
- Family Membership [$15]
- Please, save trees and send me/us the newsletter electronically.
- Please, add me to Meckbirds, the local listserv about birds and the environment.
- I/we would be willing to lead a field trip.
- I/we would be willing to do a program.
- I/we would be interested in participating in a work day.

Return to:
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