Audubon News

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Coming Events
01/02 Francis Beatty Park
01/03 Wing Haven Lecture Series
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01/19-20 Huntington Beach SP
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01/26 McDowell Prairie
01/26 Wing Haven Lecture Series

Who’s New?
William Anderson
Deborah Bell
Bob Bonkowski
Jim Daily
Carolyn Hicks
Tamie Lesesne
Wayne Marsden
Randy Moon
Josh Partridge
Deborah Sutton
Leann Swieczkowski
Joe Towe

Food! Fun! and Fotos!
Thursday, January 3rd 6:30 PM | Tyvola Senior Center
(2225 Tyvola Rd., Charlotte, NC)

Come, extend the holiday cheer into the New Year at Mecklenburg Audubon’s annual Potluck and Photo Share meeting. Bring a dish to share and some photos and stories of your own as we line up a photo tour of the past year’s birding adventures!

We will start setting up around 6:00 PM with the intentions of eating by 6:30 PM. Please bring a dish that will feed 8-10 people. Also bring your own plate, cup and flatware. The club will provide ice as well as Birds & Beans Bird-Friendly coffee & other beverages.

After dinner we will once again regale ourselves with photographs and videos taken by the best photographers around – our members!!! It’s your chance to share with everyone special moments you’ve encountered while traveling or simply looking out your back window. So gather about 10-15 of your favorite bird and/or nature photos or a video and/or two on a thumb drive. Please, label the drive, so we can get it back to you. Also, it would be very helpful if the picture files had ‘real’ names, not IMG_... If you want them a specific order, start the name of the file with a number, i.e. 01robin, 02bluejay, 03woodpecker, etc.

This is a great time to get to know new members and welcome them to all Mecklenburg Audubon Society has to offer. Aim to get there a little early so we can be set to eat at 6:30pm!
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 website - meckbirds.org/trips/trips.html. Please remember to contact the trip leaders 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!

Wednesday, January 2nd • Colonel Francis Beatty Park
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

What better way to celebrate the new year than a morning of birding. It will help you get over your holiday food hangover. We’ll be looking for sparrows and ducks as well as our regulars. Meet in the parking lot by the baseball diamonds at 8:30 PM. Most of the trails are dirt and there may be a little bit of uneven ground. There are facilities at the park.

Saturday, January 5th • Pee Dee NWR CBC
Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

There is nothing quite like knowing you are the only one wandering the paths of a wildlife refuge. That’s what it is like at the Pee Dee Count. We have the refuge to ourselves and it’s a wonderful opportunity to see a wide variety of birds and hopefully other animals in a truly wild environment. Habitats include open fields, mixed woodlands and small lakes and ponds. Red-headed woodpeckers and ducks abound and if we are lucky a few Tundra Swans might grace the landscape.

For those who would like to car pool, we will meet at 5:45 AM at the McDonal’d’s at the Windsor Square Shopping Center on Independence. Let Judy know if you want to car pool. Otherwise plan to be at the refuge’s new office at 7:15 AM, which is on the wildlife drive adjacent to Sullivan’s Pond. From the main entrance off of Rt. 52 drive straight past the bathrooms onto wildlife drive. It’s about 1/4 mile down the road.

We will be out in the field all day so remember to dress warmly as things can get pretty cold out in the fields. Waterproof shoes would also be helpful but not necessary. There will be a hot lunch to warm our inners and energize us for an afternoon of more birding. If you plan to attend contact Judy Walker.

Please Note: This count may have to be canceled due to the government shutdown. Check the website [meckbird.org] to the date and/or monitor the Meckbirds discussion group to further information.

Tuesday, Jan. 8th: Wing Haven (Senior MAS members Only)
10-11:15 AM • Easy • Contact: Patty Masten [pmasten31@gmail.com]

Do you love nature and birds? Whether you are a novice or bird expert, you are sure to find delight in this special bird walk experience led by Mecklenburg Audubon Society volunteers. MAS has partnered with Wing Haven to offer these special, guided bird walks for Mecklenburg Audubon members. Wing Haven has many benches to sit and observe the birds, brick pathways to stroll and seek, as well as wooded areas to explore. A number of the pathways are ADA compliant and conducive to walkers and wheelchairs. The entire property is about 3 acres. Bring your binoculars and meet/pay at 10:00 AM at the main Garden Gate! The cost is $5/person - seniors only! To register, call 703.331.0664 or register online.

Wednesday, Jan. 16th: Four-mile Creek Greenway
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

Winter migrants should be settled into this productive greenway, which has a variety of habitats that always provide good birds regardless of season. We’ll walk 2.5 - 3 miles on paved, flat walkway. There is a bathroom at the parking lot. Meet at the Johnson Rd. parking lot at 8:30 AM.

Physical Difficulty Key

Easy - Trails are level to slight grades usually paved; .5-3 miles walking
Moderate - Trails can be uneven with some hills; 2-4 miles walking.
Strenuous - Trails vary greatly; 4+ miles of walking.
* Trails are handicapped accessible.

Northern Shoveler (female) ©Jeff Lemons

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker © Tyler Vaughan
Field Trips

Saturday/Sunday, Jan. 19/20th: Huntington Beach State Park
Full Day • Moderate • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

Our winter excursion to Huntington Beach State Park in South Carolina is an annual favorite offering some different bird species than our fall trip. Waterfowl - both fresh-water and saltwater - have arrived in good numbers including loons, grebes, and ducks. Gannets are numerous offshore along with shorebirds along the quiet beaches.

We will meet at 8 AM in the causeway parking lot. Be sure to dress warmly as the winds off the ocean can be chilling and bring a lunch for a midday break. For those staying the weekend, Saturday evening we gather at a local restaurant for dinner to decide on where we will bird Sunday morning for half a day before heading home.

Wednesday, Jan. 23rd: West Branch Grnwy./Nature Preserve
½ Day • Moderate • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

We will be looking for arriving winter migrants in this under birded nature preserve. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot at the corner of Shearer Rd. & June Washam Rd. In the nature preserve we will walk about two miles on a trail that is a narrow, hilly, uneven dirt path. There are not facilities.

Saturday, Jan. 26th: McDowell Prairie/Copperhead Island
½ Day • Moderate • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

We will be looking for winter migrants including waterfowl at Copperhead Island. We will walk 2-3 miles on trails that can be uneven at times. There are no facilities. Brief directions: Turn right on Shopton Road off Hwy 49. In 0.7 miles, turn left on Four Horse Road. Follow it about 3/4 mile to the green gate on the right. We will meet at 8:30 AM.

Saturday, Feb. 2nd: Latta Plantation Nature Preserve
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

We’ll first walk out to the prairie to see what winter sparrows might be lurking out there. Then we will check out the lake for waterfowl. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot of the Nature Center, just inside the main gate. The 2 mile prairie walk is on a gravel road which can be steep and uneven at times. There are bathrooms available at the nature center and lake parking lot.

Wednesday, Feb. 13th: Four-mile Creek Greenway
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

Winter migrants should be settled into this productive greenway, which has a variety of habitats that always provide good birds regardless of season. We’ll walk 2.5 - 3 miles on paved, flat walkway. There is a bathroom at the parking lot. Meet at the Johnson Rd. parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, Feb. 16th: McDowell Prairie/Copperhead Island
½ Day • Moderate • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

We will be looking for winter migrants including waterfowl at Copperhead Island. We will be walk 2-3 miles on trails that can be uneven at times. There are no facilities. Brief directions: Turn right on Shopton Road off Hwy 49. In 0.7 miles, turn left on Four Horse Road. Follow it about 3/4 mile to the green gate on the right. We will meet at 8:30 AM.
WHY BIRD-FRIENDLY PLANTS?

It’s January. I know it’s cold and rainy but it’s time to start thinking about your garden or as a bird watcher your backyard habitat. Before we know it, our resident birds will be pairing up to raise young and the migrants from the south will be appearing in need of sustenance. That’s where your backyard becomes important as we learned from Dr. Gagne at our December meeting. Native plants that specifically benefit birds as well as benefitting our environment and our local economy should be the foundation of our backyard habitat. Bird-friendly native plants are a winning choice because they are:

**EASY** - Bird-friendly native plants are easy to grow in North Carolina’s climate. This means less maintenance and plant care once they are established in your garden.

**PERFORM WELL** - Since these plants are native to North Carolina, after the first year these selections often grow with little coddling. Plant it and forget it.

**EARTH-FRIENDLY** - Native plants endure North Carolina’s pests, heat, cold, natural rainfall and other plant maladies. Less pesticides and herbicides means a healthier environment for everyone.

**BEAUTIFUL** - Native plants are gorgeous. If you haven’t seen an American Beautyberry with fruit or a Coral Honeysuckle in bloom, we suggest you take a moment and do an image search. These bird-friendly native plants are great additions to your garden over time. We’re not recommending a total plant makeover, but just adding a few of these plants to your yard can make a world of difference for birds.

**FOOD FOR BIRDS** - You will be helping birds raise their chicks, and who isn’t happy about that? Birds need native plants to feed their chicks and to stay fed all winter. In the spring, birds pick off caterpillars to feed their babies. In the fall, the seeds and fruits from bird-friendly native plants are excellent sources of energy for the winter.

Now that you know why, you may still have some questions. All native plants are not created equal. They, like the birds, have specific needs to grow well. What flourishes at the coast or in the mountains may not grow well in our area. Also, like humans, different species of birds like different types of food. Variety in this case is more than the spice of life, it is essential. So, what should you plant?

Fear not, Audubon has created several resources to help you decide what to plant. Audubon North Carolina has recently released a list of 700 (okay, 692) recommended bird-friendly native plants to serve as a guide for native plant enthusiasts across North Carolina. The list includes every North Carolina species that appears in Dr. Larry Mellichamp’s “Native Plants of the Southeast: A Comprehensive Guide to the Best 460 Species for the Garden,” as well as all North Carolina Botanical Garden “Wildflower of the Year” plants! The list offers a single source for the wildlife benefits of each species, plus everything you need to know to choose a spot where the plant will thrive.

**What the List IS**

- Plants native to North Carolina (according to Weakley 2015: Flora of the Southern and Mid-Atlantic States)
- Plants that can be cultivated in North Carolina
- Plants that benefit birds or other wildlife, especially pollinators, directly
- Plants that vary in availability from widely available at retail nurseries to available only as pass-alongs from gardeners

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**What the List is NOT.** This is not a comprehensive list of all native plants in North Carolina. The absence of a plant on the list does not mean it isn’t native to our state, nor does it mean the plant does not benefit birds or other wildlife (though we’ve made every effort to include plants with a documented benefit to wildlife, especially birds and other pollinators).

You can access the list, which is an Excel spreadsheet, from the Audubon North Carolina website. The download link can be found on their [700 Bird-Friendly Native Plants for NC](http://nc.audubon.org/700) page. You will need to scroll down a bit to find the link.

If you are not comfortable using the spreadsheet, National Audubon has created a searchable database at their [native plant data base](https://www.audubon.org/native-plants). All you need to do is type in your zip code and it will provide you with a list of about 140 native plant species (flowers, shrubs, grass and trees) that grow well in our area. It includes information about size, growing requirements and what bird species it will attract. You can even create your own personal list of the plants you want to buy.

Under the Local Resources tab, you will find a list of local retailers that sell native plants as well as several online retailers. Mecklenburg Audubon and Audubon North Carolina are working with additional retailers to encourage them to stock more native plants. So, keep an eye on this list as we hope it will grow like the plants in your yard.

So now armed with these excellent resources you can begin to create a backyard buffet for birds, bees and other wildlife. Then all you need to do is sit back, relax & enjoy your piece of wild America.

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**Native Plant of the Month**

**Switchgrass (Panicum virgatum)**

It turns out that prairie and grassland birds are some of the most imperiled species due to grassland loss. Switchgrass clumps allow ground nesting birds to weave around the mounds eluding predators, unlike the continuous even cover of lawn grasses.

The seeds of Switchgrass are eaten by songbirds, rails, teal and geese and the foliage is a host to the Tawny Edged Skipper butterfly.

**Growing Grasses**

Switchgrass can be found in marshes, pinelands and open ground in a full range of moist to dry soil conditions. It thrives in full sun and grows 4-8 feet tall with green to bluish leaves. Once established Switchgrass can be a sturdy barrier to erosion in tricky locations. Switchgrass is easy to grow and not fussy, tolerating almost anything but standing water.

**Landscape Uses**

Grasses offer some of the best winter structure of the native plant palate. According to Carol Otteson in The Native Plant Primer, “Outstanding as a winter ground cover, Switchgrass is beautiful in a border, where its floppiness works to advantage; it weaves itself in among other ornamentals.” The natural movement of Switchgrass in the wind is lovely to see.

Switchgrass flowers emerge as maroon, turn to tan and are a delicate haze over the plant. These can be planted in multiple clumps as a border or grouping, or it can be interspersed among perennial flowers blending texture and serving as a natural back drop for the colors in the border.

**Bird Friendly Native Plant of the Month is a joint effort of the NC Native Plant Society and Audubon North Carolina.**

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**Bird Friendly Trick**

A good winter project is to rescue trees from climbing English ivy by snipping vines at the base, and then pulling the vines down as they die and release their hold on the tree. This saves you from using a mosquito service to spray the mosquitoes hiding in ivy covered trees all summer. Less spraying means more caterpillars as food for baby birds.
The key to survival for a bird in winter is the same as for every animal that must endure cold weather. It needs to maintain an adequate body temperature by getting enough food each day and by protecting itself against the cold at night. It also must remain alert to avoid becoming food for another animal that is also trying to survive. To do this they have developed several survival strategies:

**MIGRATION:**
When food supplies are inadequate, birds are forced to migrate to locations where food is available.

**DIET CHANGES:**
Birds must eat richer food in winter to boost their metabolism. Woodpeckers, which are primarily insect eaters, will adapt their winter diets to include beef suet and seeds when available at feeding stations.

**EAT MORE:**
They eat, and eat, and eat, and eat. Much like we do over the holidays. However, because they have such high metabolisms to maintain a high body temperature (between 105-107° F) they burn most of their food up very quickly in cold weather. Many birds eat 1/3 to 1/2 of their weight a day in high-energy foods such as sunflower seeds and suet. Since food is scarcer in the winter, they spend most of their day eating!

**CACHING/HOARDING:**
When an abundant food source such as your feed is discovered, birds will eat their fill and then take more for hoarding. Jays are notorious for caching seeds and nuts, but other birds such as chickadees, nuthatches, and raptors do it as well.

**FLOCKING:**
Various species of winter songbirds often gather into mixed flocks when foraging for food. A larger number of birds find more food and they enjoy better protection from predators than do individual birds.

**FLUFFING:**
When the cold becomes a major obstacle to survival, nearly all species of birds fluff their feathers for better insulation which prevents the loss of body heat.

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**Winterizing for Birds**
Fall and winter don’t mean your garden has to go on hiatus. Since some songbirds will also use roost boxes to stay warm in the winter, you can keep your yard bustling all year long by providing a cozy abode for these feathered friends. These birds include ones that nest in tree cavities or birdhouses in spring—such as bluebirds, chickadees, titmice, screech owls and some woodpeckers.

Providing shelter is one of the key elements to ensuring your yard is a welcoming space for birds. Here are 4 tips for luring birds in—and helping them out!

1. **Try a prefabricated box.** Look for boxes where the entrance holes are near the bottom instead of in the middle or near the top. The idea is that hot air rises, so a low entrance hole keeps warm air from leaking out.

2. **Leave nest boxes up all winter.** Some evidence suggests roosting birds prefer boxes mounted 10 feet high or more in winter—possibly because birds feel safer up high.

3. **Winterize your birdhouse.** If reusing a spring nestbox that has large ventilation holes (which keep the summer sun from overheating the interior), consider blocking them to keep out the draft. Don’t seal the box up too tight though, since most birds like to check out a roost box before calling it home.

4. **Protect the box from predators.** Since most bird predators can climb trees and wooden posts, opt for a metal pole to mount the box instead.

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**Birdie, It’s Cold Outside!!!**

*The Audubon Society*

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**Audubon News**

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The routine abundance of gulls makes a convenient excuse for ignoring them. No other group of birds presents so many subtle identification problems or such an array of overlapping plumages. There are more plumage variations within most gull species than there are between species. The first-winter herring, for instance, looks more like the first-winter versions of western, lesser blacked-backed, California, Thayer’s and several others than it does an adult herring.

Gull sizes and silhouettes, are only moderately useful as guides to identification. The general progression is from a muted (often brown) juvenal plumage through a series of increasingly less motley intermediate plumages to the cleaner, crisper colors of the adult plumages.

**JUVENAL:** The juvenal plumage is worn by all gulls from the time they leave their nest until late summer or early fall. Generally, it is the least important plumage to study, since most gulls molt their juvenal plumage before migrating. You will see juvenal-plumaged gulls regularly only if the species nests in your area. [Such as the laughing gull along the Carolina coast.]

**FIRST WINTER:** The first-winter plumage is very important to learn and is the subadult plumage most often illustrated in the field guides. It is acquired in late summer or early fall of the gull’s year of birth, and worn until the following spring. First-winter gulls are almost always more numerous than gulls in other non-adult plumages and frequently outnumber adults. In fact, if a gull occurs only as an autumn or winter stray in your area, knowing the first-winter plumage is more important than knowing the adult’s. Vagrant gulls are most likely to be ‘lost’ first-winter wanderers.

**FIRST SUMMER:** The term ‘first summer’ may seem confusing, since the plumage of a gull’s initial summer of life is its juvenal plumage. A gull in first-summer plumages is in its second year of life. In most three-year and four-year gulls, first-summer plumage is hard to distinguish from first-winter plumage.

**SECOND WINTER/SECOND SUMMER:** Since two-year gulls achieve the Cir adult-winter plumage in their second winter and breeding plumage in their second summer the terms ‘second winter,’ ‘second summer,’ are used only with reference to three- and four-year gulls. As three-year gulls move into their second-winter plumages, they gain more adultlike wings. Four-year gulls in second-summer plumages often show a telltale mark. Most of the bird is obviously subadult: the wings are smudgy or spotted; the tail is banded; the bill lacks the adult’s red spot. But the back (or ‘saddle’) is the color of the adult’s back.

**THIRD WINTER AND THIRD SUMMER:** These terms are used with reference only to four-year gulls. All smaller gulls have reached adult plumage by their third year. Four-year gulls in their third-year plumages resemble adults except at each end – the tail and the tip of the bill. The tails generally still show bands or smudges of darkness, and the bills often retain some dark color and lack the adult’s red spot. The wings also tend to be less cleanly marked than the wings of full adults.

**ADULT WINTER:** To separate adult-winter plumage from breeding plumage, study the heads. The hooded gulls [Bonaparte’s and laughing] and the kittiwakes have ear patches or partial hoods in adult winter plumage. Most other gulls in adult-winter plumage have streaky or spotted heads.

**ADULT BREEDING:** This plumage is achieved by two-year gulls in their fifth plumage, as they are nearing two years of age; by three-year gulls in their seventh plumage, as they are nearing three years of age; and by four-year gulls in their ninth plumage, as they near four years of age. All gulls have easily recognized breeding plumages. One simple and excellent double-check for adult gulls at all seasons

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**Gulls, Gulls and More Gulls!!!**

Sorting out the plumages is essential, and this is one part of birding that seems to get harder with experience.

The first thing to realize about gull plumages is that no general field guide illustrates them all. All gulls have five to nine distinct plumages, not counting periods of transition or racial or individual variations.

The second thing to realize about gull plumages is that there’s no avoiding the lingo. Anyone interested in mastering the plumages is that there’s no avoiding the variations.

Sorting gull plumages begins with a straightforward principle: the number of plumages increases with the size of the bird. Small gulls, for example Bonaparte’s, are two-year gulls and have five plumages. Midsized gull, for example laughing and ring-billed, are three-year gulls and have seven plumages. Large gulls, for example herring and greater blackbacked, are four-year gulls and have nine plumages. There are no ‘one-year’ gulls or ‘five-year’ gulls.
Many of you may have received new optics for Christmas, so this is a follow-up to a question asked at the December equipment festival – what is the best way to clean your binoculars. These words of wisdom come from Bill Thompson III, editor of Bird Watcher’s Digest and lifelong bird watcher.

**Optics Cleaning Kit should have:**

1. Soft hair-bristle brush for whisking away dust, bread, crumbs, sand, and any other abrasive particles that might damage lens coatings or surfaces when you are wiping the lenses with a cloth.

2. Soft cleaning cloth, preferably one designed specifically for cleaning coated glass surfaces. Lens tissues will work, but they don’t seem to get things as clean as a soft, cloth.

3. Small bottle of lens cleaning fluid. The fluid should also be designed for use on coated lens surfaces – **no Windex**.

Most optics manufacturers sell cleaning kits with their birding optics. These kits are also available from your eye doctor, though a brush may not be included.

**Now how to clean them:**

1. Hold the binoculars upright and, brushing from underneath, use the soft hair-bristle brush to whisk off any particulate matter. Brushing from below allows you to use our friend gravity to your advantage.

2. Inspect the brushed-off lenses and repeat the brushing until all crumbs & dust are removed.

3. Spray a light coating of lens cleaner on your cleaning cloth and apply to the lens with a light circular motion.

4. In cases of extreme grunge, spray the cleaner directly onto the lens and let it soak for a few seconds to loosen up anything adhered to the glass surface. Make sure your cleaning solution is intended for use with coated optics. You may need to repeat the fluid-cloth step to remove all the streaking.

5. As a last step, a quick fogging breath onto the lens and a few soft swipes with the cleaning cloth will remove any streaking or residue from the cleaning solutions.

6. To check out your work, tilt the binoculars so the light reflects off the surface. Any remaining streaks will be easy to spot and attack.

Now go find some birds and enjoy your clearer, brighter, greatly improved outlook.

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**Christmas Bird Counts**

December is always a crazy month with holiday activities and Christmas Bird Counts. We still have one more to go - Pee Dee NWR on Jan. 5th, assuming the refuge will be open. The Lake Norman as always topped the chart in numbers with 101 species. Best bird of the day was a Glaucous Gull in among thousands of ring-billed gulls at the roost on the lake. Charlotte count was a bit more subdued with only 89 species. Seem like the ducks are avoiding the city this year. But we still had some good birds - black & white and orange crowned warbler, ravens in uptown, and orioles. Thanks to all who participated.
UNDERSTANDING BIRDS OF PREY
Thursday, January 3, 2019 • 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Speaker: Stephen Hughes

More than 150 species of bird, notably numerous varieties of songbirds, have been sighted at Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary. Wildlife educator and artist, Stephen Hughes will cover the topic of birds of prey. Raptors fit very well into the garden as they are a part of the animal habitat that directly affects the gardens.

GROW A LIVING BIRD FEEDER
Thursday, February 28, 2019 • 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Speaker: Carol Buie-Jackson

Carol Buie-Jackson, owner of Wildology at Waverly and Bird House on the Greenway and certified Nature Nerd will discuss and demonstrate how to create a bird sanctuary in your own yard using native plants and other natural elements.

BIRDS AND BIRDING IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
Thursday, March 21, 2019 • 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Speaker: Taylor Piephoff

Taylor Piephoff has been birding in Mecklenburg and surrounding counties for over 40 years. In that time, there have been significant changes in bird populations, diversity, and available habitat. Taylor will discuss the current state of the birds and birding in Mecklenburg with a historical perspective and an eye to the future. Hint: It's not all bad.

Here are two other learning opportunities for you and the entire family.

ASC CONNECT WITH CULTURE DAY
Saturday, January 26, 2019 • 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

This is a great opportunity to bring a neighbor, friend or family member who has never experienced Wing Haven for a FREE cultural experience! Enjoy free garden admission from 10 am - 5 pm compliments of the Arts & Science Council.

In addition to free admission to the garden, Wing Haven is partnering with three organizations to provide more FREE activities on this day:

- Art-Kiddo will provide a pop-up art program for children under 10 in the SEED Wildlife Garden.
- The Light Factory will offer a Cyanotype workshop for both adults and children, as well as an informal wildlife photography tutorial for adults.
- Adults and children of all ages will have a chance to learn all about birding with our friends from Mecklenburg Audubon Society who will offer leisurely bird walks throughout the day.

Check out the full agenda (https://bit.ly/2KISl6j )

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
Friday, February 15, 2019 8:00 AM through Monday, February 18, 2019 5:00 PM

Every bird counts! It’s time for the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Quietly stroll through the gardens or find a spot to sit and watch, counting birds and recording what you observe, which helps scientists in their study of birds. Volunteers from Wing Haven, as well as the Mecklenburg Audubon Society, will be on hand providing guided walks, sharing educational information, and enjoying the count alongside you or your group. Hot chocolate will be served. Check out the details (http://bit.ly/2TfbDmN)

Finally, since Mecklenburg Audubon is co-sponsoring the ASC event and Great Backyard Bird Count activities at Wing Haven, we need YOUR help. Please consider volunteering for one of both of these events. Both events look like a lot of fun. Use the links below to sign-up.

Great Backyard Bird Count (http://bit.ly/2EQtFm)
10 COMMANDMENTS OF BIRDING

1. Thou shall have no other interest before birding. If thou doesth, thou shall not discuss it with other birders.

2. Thou shall not take unto thee any graven image of the birds that are in heaven above without giving photo credit to the photographer. Thou shall not capture and cage the wild birds, nor shall thou visit birds in zoos (unless the birds are endangered and part of a breeding release program), nor shall thou respect and cherish any introduced species.

3. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: not when thou just missed seeing that rare bird, nor when the potential life bird doth not sit still for an identification, nor when thou droppeth thy binoculars in the middle of the lake.

4. Remember all thy birding days and keep them special. Six days shall thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is to renew thy spirit with the avian flock. Work is the curse of the birding classes.

5. Honor those who introduced thee to birding and taught thee about birds that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. If thou should dishonor those experts, thy days may be short. Honor those who own the private property where birds congregate that they may allow thee to come back the next time.

6. Thou shall not kill any bird (nor any bird hunters - no matter how strong the provocation). Thou shall labor to protect and keep them for all the days of thy life (well, maybe not the hunters...).

7. Thou shall not take anything that belongs to another birder without asking: not her place in the hide, nor his field guide, nor her birding partner, nor their lunch.

8. Thou shall not steal a bird’s eggs or, more importantly, a bird’s habitat if thou wish to see the bird long on this earth.

9. Thou shall not bear false witness about birds thou hast identified or heard, nor shall thou exaggerate or brag about birds thou hast seen. Thy word is thy bond, especially on Birding Big Days.

10. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s life list but must create thine own. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s birding scope, nor his identification skills, nor his bird photography ability, nor his ability to travel to see more birds than thou, nor any other thing that is thy birder neighbor’s.

Remember these commandments, and keep them holy, in the name of the Father (John James Audubon), and the Son (Roger Tory Peterson) and the Holy Ghost (Charles Sibley).

(Adapted from Tina’s Ten Commandments of Birding)
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Welcome to Subirdia: Sharing Our Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife


Even as growing cities and towns pave acres of landscape, some bird species have adapted and thrived. How has this come about?

Welcome to Subirdia presents a surprising discovery: the suburbs of many large cities support incredible biological diversity. Populations and communities of a great variety of birds, as well as other creatures, are adapting to the conditions of our increasingly developed world. In this fascinating and optimistic book, John Marzluff reveals how our own actions affect the birds and animals that live in our cities and towns, and he provides ten specific strategies everyone can use to make human environments friendlier for our natural neighbors.

Over many years of research and fieldwork, Marzluff and student assistants have closely followed the lives of thousands of tagged birds seeking food, mates, and shelter in cities and surrounding areas. From tiny Pacific wrens to grand pileated woodpeckers, diverse species now compatibly share human surroundings. By practicing careful stewardship with the biological riches in our cities and towns, Marzluff explains, we can foster a new relationship between humans and other living creatures—one that honors and enhances our mutual destiny.