**Audubon News**

**Mecklenburg Audubon Society | P. O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222 | meckbirds.org**

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### Who’s New?

- Donna Bolls
- Dee Chinault
- Tom Cox
- Ed Norris
- Timothy Thornton

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**Thursday, Sept. 5th • 7:15 PM**

Visual imagery is a fundamental way that people communicate with one another. Photos are an increasingly important part of that visual communication, now that so many people have a camera with them nearly all the time, in the form of a cell phone. And with an abundance of photos, social media platforms have developed to allow people to share those photos. As a lifelong photographer, Joe Poston is thrilled with the improvements in photographic equipment and the new ways we have to share images. In this talk, he will share some of his personal journey as a photographer, and his efforts to share images that tell stories about wildlife and habitats. He’ll also explain some of what he’s learned about photography (and life) along the way. He hopes the talk will facilitate a conversation in which we all share ideas about how to capture better photos of natural subjects.

Joe Poston is a professor of Biology at Catawba College in Salisbury, where he has taught for nearly 20 years. His specialties include bird behavior and conservation biology. He is a member of the Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and chairman of the NC Scientific Council on Birds. He has four children, two of which have fledged the nest. In addition to photography, he enjoys cooking, camping and hiking, which he usually does with his kids and girlfriend.

So let’s all quietly flock to Tyvola Senior Center (2225 Tyvola Rd.) on Thursday, September 5th at 7:15 PM for a great program to start off our MAS season. Bring your own stories and ideas to share (camo is optional dress). Refreshments will start at 6:45 PM.

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**SEE BIRDS. SHARE BIRDS. SAVE BIRDS.**
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!!

Tuesday, September 3rd - Col. Francis Beatty Park
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

There have been several good sightings from this park in the southeastern part of the county. Dennis Kent birds there regularly and thinks it’s great. So we will start the fall off by wandering its paths to see what might be found. Considering the temperatures lately don’t forget to bring water and sunscreen. 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.

Wednesday, September 11th - McAlpine Creek Park/Greenway
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

McAlpine Creek Park and Greenway have a variety of habitat: fishing pond, open grassy areas, edges, woods, creeks and even a beaver pond. Over the years it has produced some pretty amazing birds, including this past May two Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. The walk will be on wide dirt/gravel paths. Depending on what trails we take it will be predominately on flat terrain. The hill trail near the beaver pond is steep. There are facilities in the parking lot area. We will meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot off of Monroe Rd.

Saturday, September 14th - Ribbon Walk Nature Preserve
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

Fall migration has begun and this is a good spot to look for early migrants. This 187-acre preserve lies just 6.5 miles northeast of uptown Charlotte. An American beech (Fagus grandifolia) grove in the northern portion of the preserve has been designated a Mecklenburg County Treasure Tree site because of the number of large, old trees and its overall natural integrity. We will walk 2-3 miles on dirt trails that can be steep in places and muddy after a rain. We will meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot on Hoyt Hinson Rd., which is off Nevin Rd. There is a port-a-john at the entrance to the preserve.

Thursday, September 19th - Four-mile Creek Greenway
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

This greenway with its variety of habitats always provides 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 in the Johnson Rd. parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Friday, September 20th - Chimney Swift Night Out
Evening • Easy • Contact: Steve Coggin [scoggin@catawba.edu]

Several thousand Chimney Swifts roost in an old smoke stack on the campus of East Rowan High School (175 St Lukes Church Rd, Salisbury, NC 28146) in Salisbury, NC. The swifts begin to congregate over the smoke stack as the sun goes down. This congregation becomes a chattering, swirling vortex at sunset as the swifts fly at full-speed into the stack. The show is over by 30 minutes after sunset. There are no restrooms available at the school. Meet in the parking lot behind the school at 7:00 pm. We should be done by 8:00 pm.

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.
Field Trips

Saturday, Sept. 21st - Beginner Bird Walk
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Marcia Howden [howden32@aol.com]

The Latta Plantation Prairie is a great place to begin learning about birds and birding. Although folks of all levels are welcome, we will concentrate on helping folk new to birding learn the basics of using binoculars, spotting a bird, and identification. This will be a hilly, two-mile walk on dirt and gravel roads. We’ll have power line right-of-way, woods and prairie/field to find birds in. Fall migration could produce a variety of migrants. **We’ll start at 8:30 AM in the parking lot to the right just inside the gate of Latta Nature Preserve.** There are bathrooms at the Nature Center.

Sunday, September 22nd - Hawk Watch (BRP MP 235)
Full Day • Easy • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

We are going to head up to the Blue Ridge Parkway to a well-established hawk watch, Mahogany Rock Overlook at milepost 235. We will plan on arriving around 8:30 AM at the overlook. Since the hawks probably won’t start moving until around 10 AM, we will walk an adjacent trail looking for migrating warblers. Then we will gather on the lawn at the overlook around 10 AM and start scanning the sky for hawks. Bring something to sit on (lawn chair, blanket, etc.), lunch, snacks, and water. There are no facilities at the overlook except bushes. Doughton Park, which does have facilities, is at milepost 240.

If you would like to car pool, meet at 6:15 AM at the Bojangles on Sam Furr Rd. in Huntersville (9145 Sam Furr Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078). Please let Judy know if you are planning on carpooling. Otherwise, plan on being at the overlook by 8:30 AM for the warbler walk or 10 AM for Hawk Watching, but still let Judy know you will be joining the group.

Saturday, September 28th - Six-mile Creek Greenway
1/2 Day • Easy • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

This greenway, in the southern part of the county on the South Carolina border near the Union County line, may be short (1 mile in length), but it has produced some interesting birds over the years. It has some interesting habitat that attracts migrating birds. We will also take a look at the wetland across Marvin Rd. No facilities. **Meet in the parking lot at 8:30 AM.**

Tuesday, October 1st - Clark’s Creek Nature Preserve
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]

The 109-acres of this preserve in northeastern part of the county is primarily grassy/brushy fields (old agriculture fields), edges and forest, which provide great habitat for a variety of birds including meadowlarks. We will be walking about 1.5 miles on mostly flat, smooth, dirt trails. It can be a bit muddy after a rain. **Meet in the parking lot on Hucks Rd. at 8:00 AM.** There is a port-a-john at the parking area.

Saturday, October 5th - RibbonWalk Nature Preserve
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Ron Clark [waxwing@bellsouth.net]

Fall migration has begun and this is a good spot to look for early migrants. This 187-acre preserve lies just 6.5 miles northeast of uptown Charlotte. An American beech (Fagus grandifolia) grove in the northern portion of the preserve has been designated a Mecklenburg County Treasure Tree site because of the number of large, old trees and its overall natural integrity. We will walk 2-3 miles on dirt trails that can be steep in places and muddy after a rain. **Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot.**

“You could do worse than to spend your days staring at blue jays.” — Julie Zickefoose
Field Trips

Sunday, October 13th
The Big Sit
Cowan’s Ford Refuge
All Day • Easy
This is a fun-filled day of birding with minimal walking. It takes place in the viewing stand at Cowan’s Ford Refuge. It will start before daybreak and end around 5, or whenever the last folks leave. You can come for an hour or all day. Bring a chair, snacks and your binoculars. This is a great way to meet folks, and one of the few outings where talking is okay. We will have grill for some hot dogs around noon. Sign-up isn’t necessary, just come and enjoy.

Tuesday, Oct. 8th - Wing Haven (Senior MAS members Only)
Mid-morning • 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. The cost is $5/person - seniors only! To register, call 703.331.0664 or register online. Remember to bring your binoculars!

Saturday, October 12th - Beginner Bird Walk
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Marcia Howden [howden32@aol.com]
The Latta Plantation Prairie is a great place to begin learning about birds and birding. Although folks of all levels are welcome, we will concentrate on helping folk new to birding learn the basics of using binoculars, spotting a bird, and identification. This will be a hilly, two-mile walk on dirt and gravel roads. We’ll have power line right-of-way, woods and prairie/field to find birds in. Fall migration could produce a variety of migrants. We’ll start at 8:30 AM in the parking lot to the right just inside the gate of Latta Nature Preserve. There are bathrooms at the Nature Center.

Wed., October 16th - West Branch Grnwy/Nature Preserve
1/2 Day • Moderate • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]
We will be looking for late neotropic and early winter migrants in this under birded nature preserve. We’ll walk about a ½ mile on the greenway and then in the nature preserve we will walk about two miles (round trip) on a trail that is narrow, hilly, uneven dirt path. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot at the corner of Shearer Rd. & June Washam Rd. There are no facilities.

Sat/Sun, October 19/20 - Huntington Beach State Park, SC
Weekend • Strenuous • Contact: Judy Walker [birdwalker@me.com]
This is our fall sojourn to a South Carolina birding hot spot. Fall migrants – hawks and warblers – will still be moving through, wintering shorebirds will have settled in and a few ducks may also have begun arriving. This is probably the best time of the year to see Peregrine Falcons and Merlin, and I am sure we will be delighted with spectacular views of thousands of tree swallows.

We will meet in the parking lot on the east side of the causeway at 7:30 AM. It can get pretty hot so remember a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water. We will eat lunch in the park so you will also need to bring food.

Since many participants stay for the weekend, we usually go out to dinner on Saturday night. At dinner we will plan where we will go on Sunday.

Audubon News
That was the Year that Was

Recap of the 2018-19 MAS Season

The MAS 2018-19 season was a great year. We have had some great accomplishments - Birds of the Central Carolinas Book, 30 Prothonotary Warbler boxes put up by Patty Masten and Cabarrus County Boy Scouts, the erection of the Children's platform at Wing Haven, Wing Haven Camp scholarships, Druid Hills festival, participation in numerous other nature festivals, great bird walks thanks to our volunteer leaders, continued great support by our members for Birds and Beans and wonderful meetings with great and interesting speakers. This would not happen without your support and the MAS Board thanks you.

Audubon North Carolina announced that MAS will be the host for the North Carolina Audubon Summit Meeting in April 2020. We are committed to showing to our other North Carolina birding colleagues the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Charlotte region. I hope all of you will consider volunteering to help us achieve that objective.

Please join me in thanking the board members who are rotating off the board this year - Bill Blakesley, Drew Skinner and Noreen George. These folks have given a lot of time and personal sacrifice to this organization and we really appreciate all they have done.

On a final note our President Jim Guyton is retiring. Jim has done an incredible job moving this organization to a higher level of achievement and accomplishment. He will still be with us as a strong contributing member and for that we are grateful. I hope you all share with me the sentiment that Jim soars with the eagles and we will miss his leadership and sage advice.

The 2019-20 MAS Board looks forward to working hard to promote the mission of our chapter and we are excited about the coming year. Especially working with you, the best members any chapter could have.

Thanks for your support. - Rich McCracken, Member-at-large

Our New Dynamic Team

The MAS Board takes great pleasure in announcing the chapters new leadership. Malia Kline will replace Jim Guyton as President and Christine McCluskey will be taking over the Vice-president spot. In addition to changes at the top, our newest members will be assuming some important positions on the board. Steve Coggin will be Field Trip Coordinator. Let him know if you have any suggestions of new birding venues and/or if you would be interested in heading up one of our walks. Chris Bolling will be taking on the role of Secretary. Learn more about Chris elsewhere in the newsletter. Jenny Swofford will be our apprentice treasure, learning all the ins and outs of the chapter’s financials from Jack Meckler. She’ll also be teaming up with Christine and Judy to increase our social media presence. In addition, Larry Leamy will be resurrecting our Education outreach. A complete list of all board members, their responsibilities and contact information is on the last page of the newsletter. Take some time to thank these folks for taking on the challenge of running the chapter.
As the heat subsides both birds and birders are more active. If you are new to birdwatching identifying the birds you see can be challenging. Here are important tips on how to meet that challenge for both neophyte and experienced birder.

**Ask the Right Questions**

Because birds are living creatures adapted to specific life styles they exhibit a wide range of characteristics that aid in identification. Since people are very visual creatures most try to identify birds by visual characteristics such as color alone which can lead to incorrect identification. However, if you are willing to spend a little time studying, learning to identify and enjoy the birds around you is simply a matter of asking the right questions. If you can answer these basic questions about a bird, you should be able to identify it correctly. The questions are basic and may sound a little familiar.

**What does the bird look like?**

Most people will focus in on the color of a bird but this can be misleading. Lighting and the time of year can greatly change the color of a bird. An Indigo Bunting appears completely black if it is sitting in the shade. But when it darts out into the sunlight for a tasty morsel it will instantly and magically turn a bright indigo blue like a neon sign. Hummingbirds are the same way. You can’t see the color on the male if the light isn't right. Then there is the Goldfinch which is bright yellow in the spring and summer but the rest of the year is a drab green. So you can’t rely solely on color.

**Look at the bird as a whole & ask:**

- **How big is it?** Relate the size to something you already know. It’s a good idea to memorize three or four birds of different sizes such as a sparrow, robin, crow and/or turkey. Then you can note how the size of the bird compares to them.

- **What shape is it?** Is it tall and skinny, short and plump, etc.? Often a bird’s silhouette is all you can see. Fortunately, that’s the only clue necessary to identify some birds like a dove – tiny head on a very large plump body. Learning the overall shape of birds is important. Knowing the shape should help you narrow down your possibilities.

Then look more closely at things like the beak, tail, wings, color, etc.

**Where is the bird located?**

As you spend more time observing birds you will discover many of them seem to look alike. A sparrow has a certain look about it – small and brown – but several finches, wrens and warblers are also small and brown. Now what? Stop and take a look around you. What type of habitat are you standing in? Are you mowing the lawn, hiking a mountain trail, wading at the beach? Even during migration birds prefer certain habitats and seldom deviate from them. You are not going to find a Great Blue Heron in the desert or a Roadrunner in a forest. Knowing what birds will be in what habitat will also help you eliminate species. So do your homework.

**What is the bird doing?**

Is it soaring, hovering, or gliding? Is it wading in the water or perched high in a tree? Even something as subtle as the bobbing of the tail could be a determining factor between one bird and another.

**What does the bird sound like?**

You can tell birds apart by their voices just like you can your friends. In fact some birds can only be identified by their voice. Birds such as the Whip-poor-will are seldom if ever seen but is very often heard. Other birds like some flycatchers look identical and can only be identified by their voice. Learn the songs and calls of the common birds around you first. Take them one at a time. This will help you avoid spending a lot of time ‘chasing’ a song thinking it is a new bird. Songs and calls are also the first indication there are birds in the area.

All these questions may seem a little daunting but they really aren’t. If you start with what you know and eliminate those species it can’t possibly be, you have a better chance of correctly identifying a bird. But don’t stop there. BIRD WATCHING does include being able to identify the bird, but the active word in the phrase is WATCHING. That’s when the fun really begins!
So, You Have Your List of Native Plants. Now What?

Okay, so you’ve taken the first step and learned which plants are native to your area by using Audubon’s native plants database. Next you just have to narrow down your options and puzzle together the perfect backyard masterpiece. Don’t worry—you won’t have to go it alone. Audubon is here to help with some guidelines for choosing the plants that will max out your garden’s bird-friendliness. Print out your Audubon list of recommended plants, grab a notebook, and follow these easy steps below.

Get to Know Your Space

Not all the plants on your list will thrive—or fit—in your yard. But by taking a closer look at your yard’s environment, you can choose a mix that will stay healthy and cater to a variety of native bird needs for years. Head out to your yard and answer these questions:

1. Plants are usually labeled as growing best in full-sun, partial shade, or full shade. How much of the planting area is covered in shade? Is it shaded all-day, only sometimes, or never at all?
2. How damp is the soil? Do you have to water frequently to keep grass alive? Does the soil remain wet for long periods of time?
3. What is your soil type? Is it light and full of sand or heavy with clay? Is it almost black, like peaty soil, or is it very smooth, like silt soil? (If you’re not sure, don’t worry. Many plants do well in a variety of soils, and a local nursery may be able to advise on this.)

Pick Your Plants

Now it’s time to decide what you will plant and where. If you have space for just a couple pots or plantings, this may be simple. If you have more room, think about creating a habitat to provide food and shelter for both resident and migrating birds throughout the year.

Take a look at your options. Do the plants on your list provide nectar, fruit, or nuts at different times of the year? Are there shrubs or trees where birds can nest, as well as annuals, perennials, and groundcover? (Learn more strategies for creating a bird-friendly yard here. Or if you are creating a container garden on a balcony or patio, get some tips here.) Take a look at your plant list and see what plants will best provide for your birds and fit the conditions of your space.

Plan Your Garden

Now it’s time to start planning your garden. Head back outside and draw up your plot on paper, using circles to represent individual plants. Imagine what your garden will look like and see what will best fit in your space. Remember that plants grow! It’s important to consider your surroundings. Native plants have a tendency to spread, often rapidly, so your garden may affect your living space or neighbor’s yard. On your map, cross out the areas where you want to walk or do activities.

As for the beds themselves, try not to overcrowd the plants, and if you’re choosing any perennials—ones that come back each year on their own—“plant in masses” of three - five plants or more to make for a more attractive look and create a more successful habitat (pollinators prefer to feed from clumps of the same flower). Aim for a range of plant heights, colors, and textures; diversity is key. Usually it works best to keep larger plants in the back of a border or plot, and smaller plants in front.

Decide When to Plant

When you are happy with your layout, choose the best time to plant. Avoid the hottest days of summer since they can be a challenge for young plants. Nurseries offer a wide selection of flowering plants in spring, though perennials may be discounted in the fall, which is when trees and shrubs do particularly well. Fall/winter planting is good in the South. That’s also when wildflower seeds are likely to be less expensive.

Call the Nursery Ahead of Time

Check out Audubon NC native plants retailers list [http://bit.ly/2MyFuHB] to see which nurseries near you are recommended. If you don’t have any recommended nurseries nearby, other local nurseries may be able to help. Additionally, because nurseries aren’t always knowledgeable about native plants (especially the big box stores), try asking your local nature center or native plant society about the bird-friendly plants that grow best in your area or neighborhood.

Before going over, give the nursery a ring and find out:

1. Do they have the plants you’re looking for? If not now, when might they have them available?
2. If they don’t have the exact plant you’re looking for, they may offer cultivars of the type you want. While

A note about “big box” stores:

While places like Lowe’s or Home Depot might offer some native options, they are less likely to offer truly local native species and it may be more difficult to determine whether plants have been treated with pesticides.
the original species is always best, cultivars, or versions bred for a couple specific traits, can sometimes be a fine substitute. It’s best to avoid hybrids with non-native species.

3. Are any of the plants treated with systemic pesticides like neonicotinoids? Systemic treatments dissolve in water and get absorbed into the plant itself, instead of just coating the plant’s surface. Such chemicals can be harmful to both insects and birds, so they should be avoided.

If the nursery offers the pesticide-free plants you’re looking for, head on over.

**Once You’re at the Nursery**

Start looking for the plants you want to include in your yard. If you find other options from your list and realize you want to change up your plan a little, that’s okay. You might end up making a few trips to and from the nursery, bringing things home, and seeing where they fit to build the right assortment of plant diversity.

**Next step: Start Planting!**

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**Grow These Native Plants So Your Backyard Birds Can Have a Feast**

**Birds:** Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lark Sparrow

*Attract Them With:* Blackberries (Rubus sp.) and wild grasses (Andropogon, Bouteloua, Panicum, and Sorghastrum spp.)

**Birds:** Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Western Tanager

*Attract Them With:* Sunflowers (Helianthus sp.), elderberries (Sambucus sp.), and serviceberries (Amelanchier sp.)

**Birds:** American Crow, Fish Crow, Northwestern Crow, Blue Jay, California Scrub-Jay, Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay, Florida Scrub-Jay

*Attract Them With:* Oaks (Quercus sp.) and beeches (Fagus sp.)

**Birds:** Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker

*Attract Them With:* Pines (Pinus sp.), hickories (Carya sp.), oaks (Quercus sp.), and cherries (Prunus sp.)

**Birds:** Black-capped Chickadee, Carolina Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Juniper Titmouse, Oak Titmouse

*Attract Them With:* Birches (Betula sp.) and sumacs (Rhus sp.)

**Birds:** House Finch, Purple Finch, Cassin’s Finch, American Goldfinch, Lesser Goldfinch, Pine Siskin

*Attract Them With:* Composite flowers (Asteraceae family), spruces (Abies sp.), hemlocks (Tsuga sp.), and pines (Pinus sp.)

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**Native Plant Resources**

- [Bird-Friendly Native Plants](http://bit.ly/31Ux5lk)
- [How to Make Your Yard Bird-Friendly](http://bit.ly/2Nq7wEL)
- [Brighten Up Your Balcony or Patio with a DIY Native-Plant Garden](http://bit.ly/2ZmvEu)
- [Bird-Friendly Plants FAQ](http://bit.ly/2L1ehu0)
- [North Carolina Native Plant Society](https://www.ncwildflower.org)
- [Welcome to the PLANTS Database](http://bit.ly/2zhrmtt)
- [Plants Database](http://bit.ly/2Zmd9tV)
Meet Your Board Member: Chris Bolling

We are pleased to have Chris Bolling join the MAS Board as the Secretary. Chris is from Jacksonville Florida. Growing up he was always had a love of nature including birds but was particularly interesting in herpetology. Chris moved to Charlotte in 1990 and around 5 years ago decided he needed to get out more in nature and become involved in conservation. Chris also took a 13-week Master Naturalist course through Clemson and he volunteered at the Catawba Land Conservatory and Friends of NC Plant Conservation. He helped them do a variety of things including getting rid of invasive plants on various properties, helping fire-line prep for controlled burns, property monitoring and monitoring various native plants. He recently got into birding and started attending MAS walks and meetings and has been enchanted ever since. Chris enjoys all birds especially owls and frequents the McMullen Greenway.

Digital Birding Tools: Birdseye App

By Judy Walker

Over the last six months or so I shared this app with a number of people and their reaction was an overwhelming WOW. At its core, BirdsEye is an app that will help you find out what birds are being seen near you during a given time frame. It draws its data from eBird and you can sync it with your eBird account if you want to, but you don’t have to have an eBird account to use the app. I’ve been using this app for years. It helped me find my life Red-whiskered Bulba in southern California. I didn’t even know they were in California. When I was in Quito, Ecuador by myself for a couple of days it helped me identify my first 10 international birds all by myself!

Since the best way to tell someone about an app is to show it to them, I’ve created a short video (about 15 mins.) explaining how the app works. It’s not professional by any means. More like I’m there with you showing you how to use it. Here’s where you can find my BirdsEye video (http://bit.ly/2P4yx2P). If you have any questions don’t hesitate to contact me. I hope you find BirdsEye as useful as I have.

Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. Oh My!

In an effort to connect with more folks, especially those energetic millennials, the MAS board has decided to beef up our social media presence. Christine McCluskey, Jenny Swofford and Judy Walker are teaming up to tackle the challenge. Our first priority has been to revitalize our Facebook presence. You can now find us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/MeckBirds/. This fall we will start experimenting with Instagram and Twitter. Judy will also be redesigning our website to be more mobile compatible. You will see a brief survey asking for feedback about the website soon. If you have any suggestions on ways we can improve our communications and/or expertise in these areas, we would love to hear from you.
Mecklenburg Audubon Society Photo Contest

Unless you migrated out of the area yourself this spring, you’ve undoubtedly heard the news that MAS will be hosting the Audubon North Carolina Summit 2020 in Charlotte. Our theme is “Birding Like Royalty” in the Queen City. The dates are April 17-19, 2020, and the host hotel is the Hilton Charlotte University Place. Online registration begins in January.

When we were brainstorming ideas for how to get everyone excited about being part of the Summit and showing off our great city, MAS Vice President Richard “Rich” McCracken said, “Let’s have a photo contest.” That’s how the Mecklenburg Audubon Society Photo Contest got the name “Rich Rewards. The prize is also rich and royal! One contestant will win two free Summit registrations valued at around $200! The winning photographer’s pics will be used in our Summit promotional materials along with a prominent photo credit.

HOW TO ENTER

Step 1: Go take photos of one or both of these two iconic Charlotte statues related to birds and flight. Statue #1 is the beautiful mirrored Firebird that’s perched in front of the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art on Tryon Street Uptown. Rich is leading an excursion there during the Summit. Statue #2 is the cool, wind-blown Queen Charlotte bronze sculpture at the CLT airport. We picked it because it’s located where gigantic silver birds land on their daily migrations.

Have fun, be artistic, get creative. You could even use royal props that support our theme. It’s OK to use filters, color enhancements, Photoshop®, etc. We’re not purists, except when it comes to identifying birds, right?

Step 2: Email jpeg files with one or two of your best photos of the Firebird and/or one or two of the Queen Charlotte sculpture to meckaudubon@gmail.com. Please put MAS photo contest in the Subject line.

DEADLINE

Submissions are due by September 15, 2019 with judging shortly thereafter. Good luck in the Mecklenburg Audubon Society “Rich Rewards” Photo Contest!

Helpful hint: “Parking in the hourly deck at the CLT airport is free for the first hour. The Queen Charlotte sculpture is located in the Queen’s Courtyard between the two daily decks.

Migration Facts You Might Not Know

1. True or False? Migratory birds tend to have longer, more pointed wings than those of nonmigratory birds.
2. Which species has the longest known migration of any bird in the world? a) Blackpoll warbler b) Spotted sandpiper c) Swainson’s hawk d) Arctic tern
3. The English word migration is derived from the Latin word migratus, meaning: a) To fly b) To change c) To molt d) To reproduce
4. What do migrating birds use for navigation? a) Sun b) Stars c) Natural landforms d) All of the above
5. Before migrating, many birds enter a state of hyperphagia. What does this mean? a) They grow extra feathers b) They spend more time sleeping c) They grow extra wings d) They increase their body weight
6. Migration is dangerous, and many birds don’t survive the journey. Which of the following is a common cause of death to migrating birds? a) Harsh weather b) Predation c) Window collisions d) All of the above
7. Where do North American barn swallows spend the winter? a) Africa b) Europe c) South America d) North American barn swallows are not migratory
8. True or False? Backyard feeders interfere with birds’ migratory instincts.

The Answers

1: True. 2: d) Arctic tern. 3: b) To change. 4: d) All of the above. 5: d) All of the above. 6: d) All of the above. 7: c) South America. 8: False

For an explanation of the answers and other interesting quizzes go to Bird Watcher’s Digest Quizzes page (http://bit.ly/2ZlIfh6)
New Law Prioritizes State’s Native Plants

A new law recently signed by Gov. Roy Cooper requires state transportation officials to give priority to native plant species for roadside landscaping. Sponsored by Southport Sen. Bill Rabon, the measure was praised by environmental groups as a way to help boost wildlife populations and encourage pollinators, such as bees and butterflies.

SB 606 - which passed both houses of the legislature unanimously - requires the state to use more native species, a movement that the Audubon Society has pushed for years.

“The new law will also help grow demand for native plants, increasing their availability at local nurseries,” said Audubon N.C. spokesman Ben Graham in an email.

Support in the legislature is further evidence of growing momentum for bird-friendly native plants across North Carolina, driven by Audubon’s advocacy. In Matthews, Audubon members organized earlier this year to help pass an ordinance that added native plants and removed invasive species from the town’s list of acceptable plants for developers.

UNCC Botanical Gardens

This fall the Botanical Gardens (a.k.a. McMillan Greenhouse) at UNC Charlotte will be offering two workshops that may be of interest - Wildlife Gardening: Songbirds and Terrestrials [http://bit.ly/2UfcENi] and Bird Identification [http://bit.ly/2UfcENi]. Both workshops are part of the Gardens’ Native Plant Certification program but you do not need to be enrolled in the program to take the courses.

For more information about the workshops and the certification program visit the Botanical Gardens website [http://bit.ly/2zhFfYK]
As the MAS activities gear up for the fall, here’s a reminder that it’s time to **Renew your membership**. Don’t worry if you recently joined you are good until June 2020. But the rest of us have to dig into our piggy banks to find some funds to renew our memberships for another year.

Local membership dues help cover administration costs such as the website, programs, printing display materials and much more. In contrast, all of the money we raise through coffee sales, raffles, auctions, etc. is used for conservation and education efforts.

Take a few minutes to fill out the form below and send it to our treasurer. Or go to the website (meckbirds.org/membership.html) and pay with a credit or debit card.

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**Mecklenburg Audubon Society**

Renew now and your membership will be effective until June 2020.

*Local Membership covers the cost of the newsletter, web site, meetings and other administrative commitments.*

Renewal  New Member

- Individual Membership [$10]
- Family Membership [$15]
- Additional Donation $ _____

Name: ___________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________

Phone: _____  E-mail: _________________________________

**Return to:** Treasurer, Mecklenburg Audubon Society, P. O. Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222

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**MAS Executive Board**

- President: Malia Kline [maliakline@gmail.com]
- Vice President: Christine McCluskey [chrismcbirder@yahoo.com]
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