



## Special Event

### The Carolina Bird Club Spring Meeting

As you know, the Carolina Bird Club will be in Southern Pines for the 2008 spring meeting May 2-4. The meeting headquarters is at the Days Inn. Field trips will feature some of the most popular destinations like Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve, Sandhills Game Lands, Hobby Field (Scissor-tailed Flycatchers), as well as Nature Conservancy's Long Valley Farm, Woodlake, and the privately owned Raft Swamp Farm. Our Friday evening speaker will be Jeff Marcus, a biologist with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Saturday evening the buffet dinner (\$25.95) will be followed by the Annual Meeting, and then a program by biologist and internationally renowned local photographer, Todd Pusser.

Go to [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org) for all the meeting details.

If you are interested in joining the Carolina Bird Club for the evening activities or the buffet, and are not a CBC member, let Susan Campbell know. *As host of the event, SNHS members are welcome to attend.*

**HELP IS STILL NEEDED** to stuff meeting packets Tuesday night, April 29 and to man an information table at the Day's Inn during the weekend. If you can help, contact Susan Campbell at 910-949-3207. **Refreshments are needed for our special welcome event at Weymouth Woods on Friday, May 2, from 4:30–6:00 p.m. If you wish to help by providing hors d'oeuvres, please contact Carol Bowman as soon as possible at 910-295-0842.**

### 2008 Meetings

#### Monday, April 28

Jeff Marcus – Bachman's Sparrow. Learn more about the "Pine Woods Sparrow." Jeff will highlight the research being done in the Sandhills Gamelands.

#### Monday, May 19

Bruce Sorrie – Photographic Tour. This will be a tour of Bruce's 40-plus years of taking pictures from all over the world.

- Monday, June 23** Jeff Beane - Bog Turtles. Discover the natural history of our smallest turtle. This rare, diminutive turtle is about four inches long and inhabits spring-fed wetlands in our Mountains and western Piedmont.
- Monday, July 28** Pot Luck and Show & Tell. Bring your favorite dish to share for a social hour. Also bring a photo, natural history quiz, etc. to share with the group.
- Monday, August 25** TBD
- Monday, September 29** TBD
- Monday, October 27** Mark Johns - Partners in Flight. Mark will give us an overview and update of this multi-agency international partnership. This organization plays a crucial role in research and education of neotropical migrants.

Meeting Times: 7:00 p.m. - Fellowship and Socializing 7:30 p.m. - Meeting and Program  
 Program Location: Weymouth Woods Visitors' Center Auditorium.  
 Phone 910-692-2167 for directions.

\*\*\*We normally meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month.\*\*\*

### Upcoming Field Trips

***IMPORTANT: Call the field trip leader to register for a trip. Please call at least one day before the trip to ensure that the trip is still on schedule.***

**May 9** 8 p.m. **Stargazing 101** - Learn basic astronomy, to locate and identify stars and constellations. Meet at Weymouth Woods parking area. Leader: Scott Hartley – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

**May 10** 6 a.m. **Eno River State Park** – Birds, bugs, and plants will occupy our time at this diverse state park. Our first stop will be at the Few's Ford Access for a hike along the river. We will stay at this location until lunch, and then go to the Pump Station Access, which has a rich slope full of wildflowers and unusual plants. Eno River is about two hours one-way. Bring lunch, sunscreen, bug spray. Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot. We will leave promptly at 6 a.m. Leader: Scott Hartley – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

**May 31** 6 a.m. **Lansford Canal State Park** – We will go to Catawba, SC to see the Rocky Shoals spider lilies and a possible eagle nesting. The lilies predictably bloom from mid-May to mid-June and create a spectacular sight on the Catawba River. Lansford Canal is approximately two-and-one-half hours one-way. Bring lunch, sunscreen, and bug spray. Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot. We will leave promptly at 6 a.m. Leader: Carol Bowman – 910-690-9388.

**June 7** 7 a.m. **Howell Woods** - Howell Woods is a well known area for breeding neotropical migrants, including Kentucky Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, and probably Mississippi Kites. Meet at Weymouth Woods. Howell Woods is about one-and-a-half hours one-way. Bring some water and a picnic lunch, as there are few places to eat in the vicinity. Leader: Contact Patrick Shaffner - 910- 692-4981 home, 910-635-2099 cell.

**June 26** 6 a.m. **14th Annual Pettigrew State Park Butterfly Count** – Conducted like a bird count. The data are sent to the North American Butterfly Association. Pettigrew State Park is about three-and-one-half hours one-way. While it's a long day trip, the diversity and especially the numbers of butterflies can be impressive. We often record several hundred Zebra Swallowtails, Red Admirals, and American Ladies. Bears and Canebrake Rattlers are often seen, and Red Wolf is possible. Bring food, water, sunscreen, bug spray. Return by 9 p.m. Leader: Scott Hartley - 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

**July 26** 7 a.m. **Canoe Trip on the PeeDee River** - A great chance to explore the sparsely developed Grassy Island section of the slow moving PeeDee River. We should see a good variety of breeding birds, turtles, herps, bugs, and plants. Bring sunscreen and be prepared for some paddling! Meet at the Food King parking lot on Hwy 220 in Ellerbe at 7:00 a.m. This is about 45 minutes from Southern Pines. **Water levels are not dependable, so we may make some last-minute adjustments to take advantage of water levels, heat, rain, etc.** Leader: Terry Sharpe – 910-652-6403 or 910-206-0602.

If you have other field trip ideas or would be willing to lead one, please contact Scott Hartley at 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

## Trip Reports

### **Pungo January 19, 2008**

Eighteen SNHS members made the 3.5-hour trek east to Pungo National Wildlife Refuge about 20 miles southeast of Plymouth, NC. With temps in the mid 60s, it felt more like March than mid-January. In fact, Tag Alder was in bloom and maple was getting close. The roads were a bit muddy from the previous day's rain, which made getting through one spot a little exciting. Our first stop was at the observation tower on the south side of the lake. The majority of the waterfowl was tucked way up in the west corner of the lake and was too far away even with scopes. A handful of duck species were visible from the tower, including American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail, and Ruddy Duck.

We had permission to walk into a closed area near the west end of the lake and headed there. On the walk out to the lake edge we added a few land birds, and several Wood Ducks flushed out of the canal as we walked out. Bruce also found a leaf of a Swamp Cottonwood, though we couldn't locate the tree. We saw several piles of fairly fresh bear scat. At this point I knew I was with folks who truly like every aspect of nature. We examined the contents of the bear scat and tried to identify the different seeds. Before the day was done, nearly everyone would stop and pick at a pile of bear scat. Besides corn, the most dominant identifiable item, we think they had been feeding on Tupelo Gum, *Smilax*, and possibly bay berries. At the lake's edge we were able to look back into the western side of the lake and see probably all of the estimated 85,000 Snow Geese. Large groups of Snow Geese would flush when a Bald Eagle would fly over, and the sight and sound were truly amazing. As far as eagles go, any time we stopped during the day you couldn't look up and not see one. Earlier in the week I had been at Pungo very early in the a.m. and we were able to count at least 35 eagles that were perched in trees on the north side of the lake. They are feeding on dead and injured waterfowl. We got good looks at more waterfowl, Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, Ringed-neck Ducks, Shovelers, Gadwall, and a big flock of Ring-billed Gulls resting on the lake.

Other highlights included my favorite bird--a Merlin that Bruce Sorrie spotted feeding on what appeared to be a Red-winged Blackbird. We all got good looks at it through scopes. Next, a bittern that flushed out of a canal as we were watching huge flocks of blackbirds. Northern Harriers and Red-tailed Hawks were constantly spooking these birds. The fluid, synchronized movements and flashing epaulets of the male Red-wing Blackbirds were mesmerizing. We ended up on the north side of the lake, where we got stunning looks at eagles and saw lots of bear sign, but sadly, no bears. Our total for birds was 61. We had Nutria and deer, one group saw otters, and lots of sliders/cooters were seen. Good wildlife, good company, and a long but very good day. (Scott Hartley)

## **Stargazing 101            January 12, 2008**

The weather was great for our second attempt at stargazing. About 16 members came and we talked about what stars actually are, their brightness, magnitude, light-years, and other basic astronomy terms. Next we learned to orient ourselves by locating the North Star, locating and naming the brightest star in each of about 12 constellations, and learning how to connect or trace out the patterns/pictures they make in the sky. This is challenging and takes practice. Orion, the hunter--with his shield held out in front, the three stars of his belt, and the sword hanging from his belt--is fairly easy. Seeing Andromeda, the "chained lady," is harder. We were able to see the Andromeda Nebula and Orion Nebula with binoculars. The Andromeda Nebula, at 2.7 million light-years, (a light-year is the distance light travels in a year--about 6 trillion miles--you do the math; I don't have enough fingers and toes!), is the most distant space object that the human eye can see without binoculars or scopes. You need a very dark sky to see it with the naked eye. Thanks to everyone who came out. (Scott Hartley)

## **Wildflower Walk at Methodist College, Fayetteville            12 April 2008**

The weather gods favored us and held off drenching thunderstorms until just after we completed our trek. About a dozen folks participated on a warm and breezy day to these woods along the Cape Fear River.

We were treated to a fine show, although too late for Trout Lilies and most violets. Spring Beauty, Violet Wood-sorrel, Wild Geranium, False Garlic, Wild Ginger, Starry Chickweed, Licorice-root (*Osmorhiza*), Britton's Violet (rare in NC), Painted Buckeye, and others gave us plenty to look at and photograph. By all accounts, the favorites were Atamasco Lily and Gray's Sedge (*Carex grayi*); there were hundreds of the lilies in full bloom and more on the way, while we walked through knee-high swaths of the sedge.

The setting energized us as well: tall (120') bottomland hardwoods and mesic mixed hardwoods of Tulip-poplar, beech, Hackberry, Shumard Oak, White Oak, Ironwood, sycamore, Florida Maple, Boxelder, etc. These trees were farther advanced in leafing out than I had expected--I'd say a week ahead of similar forests on the Pee Dee. Massive grape vines, plus Crossvine, Trumpet-creeper, and Poison Ivy climbed up out of sight. We saw many mature trees, none bigger than a Shumard Oak 5 feet dbh! These hardwoods are very impressive, and an amazing contrast to our fire-driven Longleaf Pine/oak/Wiregrass woodlands. To boot, we had an impressive lesson in geology, what with the dramatic topography, clay soils, and a double waterfall at a tributary creek.



©Bruce Sorrie

Birds were relatively vocal, but not cooperative. We heard Pileated and Red-bellied woodpeckers, Prothonotary and other warblers, Ovenbird, Red-eyed and White-eyed vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Summer Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, etc. Cope's Gray Treefrog was the only herpster. Zebra, Tiger, and Spicebush swallowtails, Green Tiger Beetle, and a natural hive of Honey Bees in a Black Walnut tree were among the insects present. And who can forget the "kitty barf fungus"? (Bruce Sorrie)

## From the President's Desk: Brady Beck

When I sat down to write this portion of the newsletter, I had just seen a weekend full of presentations by professional photographers at the annual meeting of the Carolina Nature Photographer's Association. Their slide shows of natural wonders took us around the world. There were Cheetahs in the Masai Mara of Africa, Grizzly bears and Bald Eagles in Alaska, White-tailed Deer in Cades Cove, and tropical butterflies from the Far East. You don't, however, have to travel to faraway lands to marvel at nature's bounty. We live in a region that is full of amazing critters and plants - you may just have to look a little harder to see some of them.

Spring has arrived in the Sandhills. Bird's-foot Violet and Dwarf Iris are blooming. Dragonfly and butterfly species too numerous to name are beginning their brief but colorful lives as adults. Spring Peepers and Eastern Spadefoot Toads have come out of hiding only to disappear as quickly as they appeared. And the migratory songbirds are finally back in town to do what birds (and bees) do. The point of this rambling is that we are lucky to have so many knowledgeable Society members to teach us about those communities. Try to take advantage of the field trip opportunities that have been presented and let us (the Board) know of others we may have missed or you would like us to repeat. If you can't make the field trips, Weymouth Woods puts on some sort of educational program every Sunday afternoon throughout the spring and summer. In other words...."Explore the natural world of the Sandhills and beyond..."

### Photography Spotlight



©Frank Rípp Northern Cardinal



©Jeff Beane Spotted Salamander



©Leo MAGIERA Carolina Chickadee

## **Spring Bird Count**

The Spring Bird Count is Sunday, April 27, 2008. This will be a particularly important count, since it will also act as scouting for the CBC meeting field trips the following weekend. If you are interested in participating in the count, please contact Susan Campbell at 910-949-3207.

## **Interesting Birds:**

Susan Campbell spotted a White Ibis near the main gate at Woodlake. Despite the best efforts of several Woodlakers, it was not seen again.

Linda Jones spotted three Caspian Terns at Woodlake. They were mixed in with numerous Ring-billed Gulls, and stayed for two days.

Up to six Common Loons, a Horned Grebe and some 50 Double Crested Cormorants passed through Whispering Pines in early April.

## **Bird Feeding Station**

If you haven't been to Weymouth lately, be sure to check out the new bird feeding station behind the park office. The feeding station has a natural sapling that was cut and put in the ground. Hanging from it are a thistle feeder, mixed seed feeder, and suet feeder. A platform feeder and bird bath sit nearby. Two natural snags with holes drilled into them to hold suet are also planted in the ground. And, of course, there is a hummingbird feeder.

Park visitors are really enjoying the feeders. Most of the birds have become pretty used to people around the feeders, thus allowing visitors to eat lunch at a picnic table within a few feet of them. Within the last two weeks, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers have been regular visitors to the suet snags, allowing several birders who were looking for them to get excellent looks at them. Pileated Woodpeckers are also visiting the snags, but are wary.

Besides providing great views of birds, the feeding station gives us the opportunity to do bird banding programs for the public. This will allow us to reach more school groups and general public who don't have time or can't make the walk down to Pine Island Banding Station. Susan Campbell and Michael McCloy set up nets around the feeders and put in a couple of net lanes below the office last week. They caught a good diversity and number of birds, including Pine Siskins, American Goldfinches, Prairie Warbler, and Pine Warbler.

I would like to thank all the folks who donated their time, bird food, and feeders. Brady Beck provided the snags and Susan Campbell coordinated and set up the station. Many members have donated seed and suet--thanks to you all. Susan Campbell donated the caged suet feeder. Wild Birds donated a thistle feeder, caged seed feeder, and bird seed. Birdie's on Broad Street donated a seed feeder, a bird bath and bird seed. These two businesses also sell our merchandise and promote the SNHS and Weymouth Woods. Be sure to visit their stores. They have some excellent products. Without their donations we would not have gotten the station up so quickly.

Ranger Billy Hartness is keeping a list of birds seen at the feeder. Let him know if you see a new species.

#### Birds Seen At the Feeding Station:

Mourning Dove	American Goldfinch
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Pine Siskin
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Dark-eyed Junco
Downy Woodpecker	Fox Sparrow
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Flicker	Eastern Towhee
Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
American Crow	Pine Warbler
Tufted Titmouse	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Carolina Chickadee	Eastern Bluebird
White-breasted Nuthatch	Carolina Wren
Brown-headed Nuthatch	

#### **Nightjar Survey**

The following is from an email to Susan Campbell from Mike Wilson of the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA:

The Center for Conservation Biology constructed the Nightjar Survey Network in 2007 to begin the process of collecting data on the population distribution and population trends of nightjars across broad regions of the United States. The Network was initially introduced into the Southeast and is being expanded in 2008 to provide coverage throughout the contiguous United States.

We had good participation from people in North and South Carolina last year and hope for many return participants and the recruitment of many new people into the program.

The Nightjar Survey Network relies on volunteer participation by conservation-minded citizens, biologists, and other like-minded groups to adopt and conduct survey routes. Nightjar Surveys are easy to perform and will not take more than two hours to complete. Volunteers conduct roadside counts at night, during specific time windows when the moon is > 50 % illuminated, by driving and stopping at 10 points along a predetermined 9-mile route. At each point, the observer counts all nightjars seen or heard by species during a 6-minute period. No artificial broadcasts of the species' calls are used. Please visit the United States Nightjar Survey Website for more details including location of routes, instructions, and results; [www.ccb-wm.org/nightjars.htm](http://www.ccb-wm.org/nightjars.htm).

Volunteer participation is important to provide information on nightjars in the Carolinas and the broader region. Please consider adopting a route.

I have also posted a 2-page flyer on the website that can be downloaded and printed for distribution at bird-club meetings, wildlife product retailers, and other places. Any assistance in advertising this project is greatly appreciated.

Volunteers interested in conducting routes in western North Carolina (i.e., the area west of I-77) should contact Christine Kelly of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, who is coordinating

survey efforts in that specific region. Her email: [kellych@earthlink.net](mailto:kellych@earthlink.net). You may contact Mike Wilson at e-mail: [mdwils@wm.edu](mailto:mdwils@wm.edu).

**Club Donation.** The SNHS has donated \$100.00 to purchase plants for a project headed by Ranger Billy Hartness as described below:

I am currently seeking my Environmental Education Certification. One of the requirements is an action partnership that involves completing a project utilizing different aspects of the community such as clubs, organizations, schools, and volunteers. For my project I am planting a native plant area in front of the office at Weymouth Woods to assist our educational programs. I have worked with a student from Sandhills Community College to design the layout and all I need now is plants and volunteers to plant the plants when we get them. I need to complete this project by the end of May.

We have an Eagle Scout who is in the process of completing a short section of trail that starts in front of the office and goes west on the Pine Barrens Trail to the Red-cockaded Woodpecker cluster. This trail surface will be accessible to folks in wheelchairs. We are also developing an audio program for people with vision problems to use on the trail.

The native plant area in front of the office will be the anchor point for this trail and will be used in interpretive programs. It will also allow people with mobility problems to see plants that might not be seen from the trail. It is our plan to eventually have the whole front area of the office planted with native plants.

We need help in obtaining plants. We will transplant/rescue plants over time to plant in this area. We would like to buy as many as we can to hopefully have some in bloom. If you would be interested in donating money or labor, or buying plants, please contact Scott Hartley at 910-692-2167.

Plant List:

Wax Myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera.</i>
Yaupon	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>
Fire Pink	<i>Silene virginica</i>
Lupine	<i>Lupinus diffusus</i>
Indigo	<i>Baptisia cinerea</i> or <i>B. tinctoria</i>
Yucca	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>
New Jersey Tea	<i>Ceanothus</i>
Sweet Pepper Bush	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>
Coral Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>
Dwarf Crested Iris	<i>Iris cristata</i>
Purple-disk Sunflower	<i>Helianthus</i> sp.
Wiregrass	<i>Aristida stricta</i>
Butterfly Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Eastern Silvery Aster	<i>Symphotrichum concolor</i>
Bushy Aster	<i>Aster dumosus</i>
Blue Ridge Gayfeather	<i>Liatris regimontis</i>
Sweet Goldenrod	<i>Solidago odora</i>
Tall Ironweed	<i>Vernonia angustifolia</i>
Rose Meadow-beauty	<i>Rhexia alifanus</i>
Splitbeard Bluestem	<i>Andropogon ternarius</i>

## Sandhills Weed Management Website

Scott Hartley advises that this newly launched website has good information and photos of invasive plants, control efforts in the Sandhills, and a list of native plants suitable for landscaping in the Sandhills. <http://www.sandhillswma.org/aboutus.html>

## Birdie's on Broad Street is Desperately Seeking . . .

Someone with skills in wood-working or building to help with a display for the shop to promote the merchandise of SNHS. I will supply the materials and the design if someone could build it. If you are handy, have tools, and are willing to donate your skill, I would appreciate hearing from you. I'm sure we can improve the display of the merchandise of SNHS and promote the Society more effectively. I am proud to carry the items in the shop and do my best to introduce SNHS to my customers. I just need a little help . . .

Contact: Donna Hefton at Birdie's on Broad Street - 695-4264

**General Reminder – 2008 Dues.** For those who have not paid 2008 dues yet, please mail your check for \$5 per person, payable to Sandhills Natural History Society, to Carol Bowman, Treasurer, at:

Sandhills Natural History Society  
P.O. Box 1472  
Southern Pines, NC 28388-1472

Please include your address, telephone number, and e-mail address with your payment.

**Reminder!** Recycle your nature, birding, or gardening magazines at each monthly meeting. There will be a table where you can drop off or pick up magazines of interest to our group.

**TEES AND LANDS' END CAPS** – SNHS merchandise can be purchased at Birdie's on Broad, 220 NW Broad Street, Southern Pines, and at Wild Birds Unlimited, near Harris Teeter, Route 1, Aberdeen. SNHS members enjoy a 10% discount at Birdie's and a 5% discount at WBU. Thanks to Birdie's owner, Donna Hefton, and WBU's owner, Bill Kastern, for supporting our club! Contact Kerry at 910-528-6958 if you have any questions.

\$10	T-shirts
\$17	Baseball Caps (with embroidered logo)
\$14	Baseball Caps (with plain logo)
\$12	Mugs
\$ 3	Stickers

## SNHS Board of Directors 2008:

<b>President</b>	Brady Beck	<a href="mailto:beck.kb@gmail.com">beck.kb@gmail.com</a>
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	David McCloy	<a href="mailto:david.mccloy@ncmail.net">david.mccloy@ncmail.net</a>
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C/o Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve  
1024 N. Fort Bragg Road  
Southern Pines, NC 28387

**ATTENTION!!!**

**If you have email and are experiencing trouble receiving all the newsletters and announcements via email, please contact Chris Norkus immediately.**

**If you do not have email, please read this:**

Our field trips often have schedule changes and we send out email updates to the membership. We suggest you ask a friend who receives these emails to keep you informed. You can also periodically call the field trip leader to get the latest updates.

