



### Winter / Spring 2007 Meetings

Monday, Jan 22:	Todd Pusser – Antarctica.
Monday February 26:	Karen Beck –Urban Wildlife.
Monday, March 26:	Bruce Sorrie – Peru.
Monday, April 21:	Saturday Open House Weymouth Woods—Sandhills Celebration.
Monday, May 28:	Steve Hall—Jewels of the Night—Moths

Meeting Times: 7:00pm—Socializing, 7:30 pm—Program.

Location: North Building, Penick Village (E. Rhode Island Ave. Extension, Southern Pines.)

Phone 692-0300 for directions.

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

*“Hopefully, we will meet at Weymouth Woods in February,” Scott.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Upcoming Field Trips

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

**Feb 17, 18, 19 Huntington Beach, SC -- 3 days/2 nights** – Itinerary to be decided after CBC January trip so there is no overlap. Probably heading to points further south to and beyond Charleston. Contact Cassie at [cwillis740@aol.com](mailto:cwillis740@aol.com) or 693 1221.

**March 7 Paint Hill, Aberdeen**—Meet at Weymouth Woods at 2 pm. We will carpool the two miles to Paint Hill to look for blooming pixie moss and possibly brown elfins. This will be an easy 1-2 mile hike. Contact Scott at 692-2167 or 944-9337.

**March 31 Spring Odonates**—Meet at the Weymouth Woods at 2 pm. Spring damselflies and dragonflies will be our main target but count on being distracted by butterflies, plants and birds. Bring binoculars, water, insect/tick repellent. Contact Scott at 692-2167 or 944-9337.

**April 7 Yucca Giant Skipper Foray**—Meet at Weymouth Woods at 10 am. We will carpool to Scott’s house to view and count yucca skippers. This large butterfly’s only host plant is yuccas. They have an interesting life cycle. Bring Lunch and binoculars/cameras. Contact Scott at 692-2167 or 944-9337.

**May 26 Blue Ridge Parkway Birds, Blooms and Bugs** – A long all day trip hitting many spots on the parkway from Deep Gap to Linville Falls. Bring everything you need for your personal comfort. We will take several short walks. Meet at Wal-mart at 6 am. Plan on returning by 9 pm-ish.

**June 9 Weymouth Woods 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Count** – Meet at Weymouth at 9 am. Be prepared for walking of trail and encountering ticks, snakes and poisonous plants. The hazards are worth the chance to see several types of hairstreaks and other butterflies as well as odonates, beetles etc. Contact Scott at 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9332 for more information.

### **Handing over the Baton: Susan Campbell**

The time has come for me to step down as President of the Society. I have proudly served for the past two years as our fledgling organization has taken shape. It has been quite a thrill to see so many capable and enthusiastic people come together and make the Sandhills Natural History Society the educational, informative and, most importantly, fun group that it is. This is the dream a few of us had when we proposed rebirth of the old Moore County Bird Club. I had no idea then how quickly we could make the notion of a new society a reality. It sure has been a tremendous success--and an organization that is bound to continue and grow in the years to come. At our next meeting, on January 22th, David McCloy will officially begin his term. I wish him, as well as the rest of the Board, the best as they guide our society into the future.

### **From the President's Desk: David McCloy**

I am honored and humbled that the membership of the Sandhills Natural History Society (SNHS) elected me President for 2007. There are so many talented and knowledgeable individuals in this organization some of which are experts in their branch of natural history. I hope that many others will join us as members during 2007.

I would like to reprint the Mission Statement of the SNHS so that we are all aware of our goals for 2007:

- To promote, share knowledge, and involve members and the general public in learning about the fauna and flora of the Sandhills of North Carolina through field trips, meeting, newsletters, and special projects.
- To encourage involvement at the community level in being good stewards of our Sandhills.
- To work with local agencies and groups when appropriate to achieve this mission.

The yellow-bellied sapsucker was my first observed bird for 2007. I hope that it is a sign of the many birds that I will see this year. Likewise, I anticipate that the meetings and field trips listed in this newsletter are only a part of the activities, learning, and interactions that SNHS participants will enjoy this coming year.

This year we will be treated to several monthly meeting presentations that will reflect unique experiences. Other presentations will reflect the fauna and flora that can be observed for that month. When possible, field trips will correlate with presentations. If you wish the SNHS to sponsor a monthly meeting presentation or a field trip for a specific topic of natural history please contact David McCloy at 910-692-5094 or [dmcclroy@mindspring.com](mailto:dmcclroy@mindspring.com).

Some individuals are already organizing field trips on their own with other SNHS members. The monthly meetings are a great opportunity to network. The SNHS encourages these trips and hopes that many trip leaders will emerge for SNHS-sponsored activities.

Funds are currently being raised by the Sandhills Area Land Trust to purchase Hobby Field and save it from development. During the summer scissor-tailed flycatchers and grasshopper sparrows nest and fledge their young there. Please contact Katie Walsh at 910-638-8042 if you wish to assist with the purchase.

### **Christmas Bird Count by Susan Campbell**

December 17th was a beautiful day to be out counting birds. 38 people covered 15 separate areas and 6 feeding stations during the course of the day. We managed to locate 103 different species within our count circle. Highlights of the day included 15 Evening Grosbeaks, a Spotted Sandpiper (both Woodlake), 1 Baltimore Oriole (Southern Pines), 6 Palm Warblers (northern section of area), a Lapland Longspur (Ft. Bragg), White-crowned Sparrow (Whispering Pines) as well as high counts of both Fish Crows (6) and Black Vultures (12). Many thanks to Scott Hartley who hosted our lunchtime countdown and picnic at his home. A wonderful time was had by all!

### **Field Trip Report: Soil Identification by David McCloy**

Soils are a basis for the study of plant and animal communities. On Saturday morning, November 11, 2006, Jeff Beane, Brady & Karen Beck, Bruce Sorrie, David & Michael McCloy, and Ranger Kim evaluated soils as an ecological component at the Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve (WWSNP). The first stop (near the Pine

Island Trail) was a dug exposure of a soil profile on a sideslope. Consideration was given to various soil properties as well as to different landscape positions. The remainder of the field trip was spent observing (by means of a soil auger) the five soil series that are mapped at WWSNP. We saw the Ailey, Bibb, Candor, Gilead, and Vaucluse soil series, discussed their classification, and learned how to distinguish among them. In addition, birds and plants were observed as illustrated by a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Northern Flicker near the soil profile and Winterberry along a stream.

### **Field Trip Report: Coastal South Carolina** by Michael McCloy

Cassie Willis, Carol Bowman, and David and Michael McCloy teamed up for an extended weekend of birding along the South Carolina coast from October 20-22, 2006. Our first stop was Huntington Beach State Park, a well-known birding locale just south of Myrtle Beach on Highway 17. Along the causeway, we were immediately greeted by a very photogenic flock of around 125 Wood Storks, mostly juveniles, and several American Alligators. Some other birds seen along the causeway included Osprey, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Blue-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, and Little Blue Heron. We then proceeded to hike out to the jetty, where we were disappointed to find no more than several Willets and Ruddy Turnstones.

That evening we stopped at a local birding hotspot in Mount Pleasant, known as the Pitt Street Causeway or Pitt Street Bridge. We ended up stopping there three times over the course of the weekend, and turned up numerous Clapper Rails, Seaside Sparrows, Great Egrets, and a Cooper's Hawk, along with the ever-present Laughing Gull, Brown Pelican, etc. At high tide, a flock of shorebirds flew in to a nearby sandbar, and included numerous Short-billed Dowitchers, Semipalmated Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, American Oystercatchers, and Marbled Godwits. We also had the opportunity to witness several Black-crowned Night-herons fly over the marsh over the course of our three visits.

On Saturday, October 21, we decided to take the ferry out to Bull Island, a popular birding spot that is part of the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. The two knowledgeable tour guides in charge of the ferry accompanied us for several hours in the morning, showing us some of the island's birding hotspots. While we were with them, we were lucky enough to find a beautiful Roseate Spoonbill sitting in the top of a dead tree in full view not 30 feet from us. We marveled at this spectacular sight for approximately half an hour before we moved on. Several ponds on the island held large flocks of shorebirds, waders, and ducks, including Short-billed Dowitcher, Lesser and a single Greater Yellowlegs, Little Blue and Tricolored Herons, American Black Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and oddly enough, a very early Redhead. American Alligators were also abundant on the island; we even saw several babies!

Sunday was spent at Caw Caw Interpretive Center, an educational facility that has several flooded impoundments providing great habitat for sparrows, wrens, ducks, and waders. Some interesting birds seen at Caw Caw included Winter Wren, Osprey, Wood Stork, Anhinga, and several large mixed flocks of wintering passerines, among many others.

Our grand total for the weekend was 98 species of birds with insect life being relatively slow. Herp life was slow as well, with a Rat Snake and probable Black Racer being the only creatures of interest.

### **Todd Pusser wins Major Photography Award**

Todd Pusser, local photographer and friend of the Societ, was recently awarded a First Prize in the Professional Underwater category of the 2006 National Wildlife Photography Awards competition. His photograph of a manatee silhouetted against the surface, along with the other winning shots, is now on display at The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Congratulations Todd!

### **Wildlife Habitat Workshop**

A workshop on native trees and shrubs for landscaping in the Sandhills will be presented by Tracy Rush, Senior Biologist at Dr J.H. Carter III & Associates, Inc. Sponsored by the Pinehurst Conservation Commission and the Greenway Wildlife Habitat Committee, the workshop will be held on Saturday, March, 3 at 10:30am – noon at the Pinehurst Village Assembly Hall.



c/o Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve  
1024 N. Fort Bragg Road  
Southern Pines, NC 28387

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR WITH THE FIELD TRIP DATES

***IMPORTANT CHANGE: CALL THE FIELD TRIP LEADER TO REGISTER FOR A FIELD TRIP. CALL AT LEAST ONE DAY BEFORE TRIP TO ENSURE THAT TRIP IS STILL ON SCHEDULE AND FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.***

**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.

**ANNUAL DUES**

We are collecting 2007 dues for membership. They are \$5 per person, payable to SNHS. Send c/o Beth Carpenter, 565 Orchard Road, Southern Pines, NC 28387. Please include with your payment your address, telephone number, and, as noted above, your e-mail address.