



### 2010 Meetings

- Monday, February 22      Alaska and Shorebirds - Terry Sharpe will give a presentation on his trip to Alaska and the work he did with shorebirds.
- Monday, March 22        The Nature Conservancy in Africa - Ryan Elting recently returned from four months in Zambia, on a fellowship through The Nature Conservancy, working with the Wildlife Conservation Society's Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) program. COMACO trains rural Zambians in Conservation Farming. Ryan will give us more specific information on COMACO and show us his images of Zambia.
- Monday, April 26        Sandhill Cranes - Bill Newton visited Bosque del Apache NWR this past fall to view the spectacle of several thousand Sandhill Cranes and other wildlife. Bill is an excellent photographer and will share his images with us and tell us more about this amazing place.
- Monday, May 24         Potluck - Bring your favorite dish and a natural history item or no more than five photos to share.
- Monday, June 22         Crab Pots - Derelict or unattended crab pots are a huge problem on our coast, trapping animals that then become bait to attract more. These derelict crab pots kill thousands of animals. Andy Wood, NC Audubon, will focus on this problem, especially as it affects the salt marsh Diamondback Terrapin.

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

**February 6**

**7:00 a.m. Morrow Mountain State Park.** Join Cassie Willis and Carol Bowman for a trip to Morrow Mountain State Park near Albemarle, a pleasant hour's drive from Southern Pines. Although it is probably too early in the year for the spring warblers migrating through, one never knows what you can encounter there—Carol Bowman and Linda Jones had a pair of Evening Grosbeaks near the Park Office in September—unusual for the area. We hope to see waders, gulls, and lingering waterfowl; perhaps Bald Eagles and Osprey, both in residence; as well as a good variety of winter birds in the forest. The habitat is diverse—we will encounter oak and mixed hardwoods and pine and floodplain forest.

We will walk the Fall Mountain Trail to the foot of the dam, and return (total 2 miles). Much of this trail is lakeside—and where Cassie has spotted otters playing in the past. We will also check three other areas in the park. Terrain is hilly—wear hiking boots and bring a lunch to be enjoyed at the wonderful picnic area at the top of the mountain. We will probably walk a total of 2.5 to 3 miles.

Meet at the Olmsted Village parking lot, at the side lot to the right of Lowe's Food Store. We will leave promptly at 7:00 a.m. We should be back by mid-afternoon. To sign up, email Cassie at [cwillis740@aol.com](mailto:cwillis740@aol.com).

Please note that this trip will be repeated in warmer months, mixing a bird walk with a paddle trip on the lake, among the islands in the Yadkin River, between the dam and the boat ramp.

**February 25–27**

**Coastal South Carolina.** Back by popular demand! Join Cassie Willis, Carol Bowman, and Linda Jones for another three-day birding trip to coastal South Carolina. The 2006 trip focused on the coast from Huntington Beach State Park to the areas just south of Charleston. This trip will touch on a few of those highlights, but focus mainly on the area from Charleston to Savannah, winding up at the Savannah NWR. On a trip like this we can easily rack up over a hundred species encountered in mixed habitats.

The itinerary and accommodation information, as well as a target bird list, will be refined closer to the time, based on sightings reported by local birders in those areas. To sign up, or for more information, email Cassie Willis at [cwillis740@aol.com](mailto:cwillis740@aol.com).

**March 13**

**7:30 a.m. Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park.** The SNHS will travel to Scotland Neck for a full day trip to Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park—the world's largest collection of endangered waterfowl in the world. Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park and Eco-Center is dedicated to educating people about the importance of conservation and research, focusing on breeding waterfowl and wetland habitats.



Mandarin Ducks

©Cassie Willis

The Park consists of a series of natural walk-through outdoor aviaries for viewing over a thousand birds from six continents. Birders and photographers are given unobstructed views of species they typically see only at a great distance, or only if they have the opportunity to travel the world birding. We will have the opportunity to see species from North and South America, Eurasia, Australia, and Africa.

This is also a wonderful place for members interested in bird photography. At the Carolina Bird Club Winter meeting in 2009, several of us had the opportunity to visit Sylvan Heights as one of the field trips offered during that meeting. We are looking forward to a return trip to view and photograph waterfowl that are very often so far away that we can't easily observe field mark details. For more information about the park, go to [www.shwparl.com](http://www.shwparl.com).

We have arranged a special guided tour of the park which takes approximately an hour and a half. Following the tour, we will enjoy a bag lunch in the picnic area. Individual admission tickets are \$7 per person, \$5 for 62 years old or older. Meet at the Harris Teeter parking lot. We will drive en caravan, leaving the area at promptly at 7:30 a.m. Expect to return late that afternoon, between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Wear comfortable shoes, appropriate clothing, and bring lunch. Scotland Neck is approx. 3 hours drive time, each way. Please email Cassie Willis at [cwillis740@aol.com](mailto:cwillis740@aol.com) or Linda Jones at [candljones@msn.com](mailto:candljones@msn.com) to sign up for this trip.

## March 27

**Palustris Festival** – The 2010 Palustris Festival is a new community event that will celebrate the arts in and around Moore County. The inaugural Festival will be presented on March 25–28 and showcase to local residents and visitors what makes Moore County unique and special. On Saturday, Weymouth Woods will sponsor an all-day event starting at 8 a.m. The agenda is not yet finalized, but will include a bird walk, wildflower hike, talks, several hikes to the oldest known Longleaf Pine in the world (~462 years old), and a birthday cake in the tree's honor. Contact park staff for a schedule of events. Visit <http://www.palustrisfestival.com/tion> for more information.

## April 17

**8:00 a.m. Pee Dee Gabbro Slopes** - Bruce Sorrie will lead a trip to look for wildflowers along the rich slopes and floodplain by the Pee Dee River in Richmond County. It lies just north of the US 74 bridge. We will meet at the Town & Country shopping area behind the

Japanese restaurant to carpool. We will leave promptly at 8:00 a.m. Contact Bruce at [bruce.sorrie@ncdenr.gov](mailto:bruce.sorrie@ncdenr.gov) for details.

**May 8**

**6:00 a.m. Eno River State Park.** Join us for a day of birding, bugging, and botanizing. This is wonderful time to visit the park. Spring migration can be great and a good variety of neotropical migrants breed there. We will visit the Few's Ford Access first for a fairly easy two-mile hike along the Eno looking for birds, plants, and other wildlife. We will have lunch at the picnic area and then visit the Pump Station Access. This area is rich in wildflowers and many should be in bloom. Bring lunch and bug spray. Meet at Weymouth Woods at 6:00 a.m. for the 1.5 hour drive. Contact Scott at [picoides@windstream.net](mailto:picoides@windstream.net) for more information.

**May 13–27**

**Scotland.** Cassie Willis will lead the first SNHS international field trip—a two-week natural history tour of the Northwest Highlands of Scotland. This trip was announced earlier to the SNHS in very detailed form. Because of complicated logistics, the trip will have a strictly limited number of participants, and presently, the trip is full. If you wish to be placed on a waiting list, please contact Cassie at [cwillis740@aol.com](mailto:cwillis740@aol.com).

**June 11-13**

**Joyce Kilmer & Synchronous Fireflies.** See one of the last remaining stands of old growth cove hardwoods in the eastern US, (hopefully) the only species of fireflies that flash synchronously, breeding warblers and other tropical breeders, wildflowers, salamanders, and much more on a weekend trip to North Carolina's far southwestern Mountains. We will probably stay in the Robbinsville, NC area and visit Joyce Kilmer and Great Smoky Mountains National Park on Saturday. Saturday night we will spend a few hours at Joyce Kilmer to look for the fireflies. Sunday we will explore the parkway north to Asheville for high elevation birds, plants, etc. Expect some moderate hiking on Saturday. Contact Scott Hartley at 910-638-5225 or 910-692-2167 or [picocoides@windstream.net](mailto:picocoides@windstream.net) for more information and to sign up for this weekend trip.

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

### **Trip Leaders Needed**

I receive a lot of trip ideas from members; what I need are members to lead these trips. You don't have to be an expert to lead a trip. You just need to be willing to schedule, meet, and do the logistics. I know many of you are much better at this than I am! So please consider leading one of the following:

Falls Lake-Triangle Lakes for waterfowl  
Uwharrie National Forest  
Canoe/Kayak – Black River/Lumber River, etc.  
Bay Lakes  
Bog Turtle search

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

## Trip Reports

### **Long Valley Farm                      5 December** **Leader: Scott Hartley**

Five dedicated SNHS members went for a very wet bird walk on this trip to The Nature Conservancy's Long Valley Farm Preserve in Spring Lake. This 1,400 acre tract will be transferred to NC State Parks and will not be open to the public for some time due to safety issues. But **we** will be able to continue to bird here since we know people!

Sparrows ruled the day. The fields in the front of the property were, and still are, loaded with these little brown jobs. We got good, wet looks at lots of sparrows—White-throated, Song, Swamp, Chipping, and Savannah—and had lots of opportunity to study them. Thanks to Dave's sharp eyes we did have one interesting sparrow which may have been a Henslow's. I spent about 15 minutes tramping through head-high, wet weeds, flushing it and watching it dive back into the weeds without any of us getting a good look. We ended up with about 30 species.

### **Woodlake                                      12 December** **Leader: Linda Jones**

Four folks braved the cold weather for the annual "pre-winter count" bird outing at Woodlake. The water level in the lake was way down, but we still saw a good assortment of waterfowl. Here's the list—in order of sighting:

Brown Thrasher, Mute Swan, Northern Cardinal, American Crow, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Bluebird, Hooded Merganser, European Starling, Canada Goose, Northern Mockingbird, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Carolina Chickadee, Bald Eagle (1 adult, 1 juvie), Bufflehead, Ring-billed Gull, Killdeer, Fish Crow, Pied-billed Grebe, American Robin, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue Jay, House Finch, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Carolina Wren, Bonaparte's Gull, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Eastern Phoebe, White-throated Sparrow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pileated Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, Downy Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper, Pine Warbler, and American Goldfinch.

## Photography Spotlight



**White tailed deer touching noses**

**©Brady Beck**

David Kilpatrick has been searching for Great Horned Owls in the Doral Woods area of Pinehurst. He has seen one adult on several occasions. He has found evidence of them in the form of pellets. In this photo of one, you can clearly see that it is a skull complete with front teeth along with fur and other small bones.



**Owl pellet**

**©David Kilpatrick**

## Of This and That

### Spring Bird Count

The annual Spring Bird Count will be held on Sunday, April 25. Teams of volunteers will be covering our traditional circle, which is 15 miles in diameter and centered in Lakeview. We are scheduled to count all day, but most of the teams will be focusing their efforts in the morning. As always, we welcome new participants. If you would like to help count, even if it is only for a few hours, please let Susan Campbell know. She can be reached via email ([susan@caves.com](mailto:susan@caves.com)) or phone (910-949-3207).

### The Carolina Bird Club

The Carolina Bird Club (CBC) recently adopted a slogan—"Birding for Fun, as Art and Science"—created by our own David McCloy!! If you aren't familiar with the CBC, check out their website at [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org). The Club meets three times a year: winter, spring, and fall. The purpose of these meetings is "BIRDING FOR FUN!" with very little time devoted to meetings, but lots of well-organized birding at the best places in North and South Carolina. The Club also offers "bonus" trips—this year to the Texas Coast, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands in Virginia, and Southeastern Arizona. By the time you read this newsletter, the winter meeting in Atlantic Beach, NC will be in full swing (January 29–31), but the dates and locations for spring and fall CBC meetings this year are:

April 30-May 2, 2010          Winston-Salem, NC

Sept. 24-26, 2010          Aiken, SC

These meetings are timed to take advantage of spring and fall bird migration. The winter meeting is usually at the coast to take advantage of the great numbers of wintering shorebirds, ducks, and geese. You can read accounts of recent meetings, the field trips, and numbers of species seen during the 3 days on the website. If this gets your adrenalin flowing and you want to add to your life list or simply bird with some of the best birders in the Carolinas, JOIN THE CAROLINA BIRD CLUB!! There is always a group from our area going to these meetings. We generally carpool, share hotel rooms, and have a great time birding and meeting new friends. You can print a membership brochure from the website or contact me at the next SNHS meeting for a brochure or to answer any questions about the CBC. Carol Bowman, Treasurer, Carolina Bird Club

### Wild Birds Unlimited

Be sure to stop by and meet Jonathon and Rebecca Davis, the new owners of Wild Birds Unlimited. Thankfully, we can continue to enjoy WBU's quality products. Let's show our support for the new owners!

### A Birding Chuckle

A friend sent me a newspaper clipping from the *Vineyard Gazette* in Martha's Vineyard. It included an article entitled "A Brief Guide to Basic Birding." Here are some paragraphs I thought worth sharing:

Birders can be separated into two main categories:

Twitchers are birders, often independently wealthy or retired, who obsessively pursue new and rare ticks. A tick is any new species sighted, the term originating from the idea of “ticking” an item off a list. Many twitchers will cross the country overnight and brave ghastly conditions on a basis of rumor alone for the chance at a new tick.

Dudes, on the other hand, are causal birders, reserving their birding for sunny days and pleasant climates, less concerned with collecting massive lists and rarities than with the quietude and simplicity of observing nature. Most birders fall somewhere between the two extremes, occasionally going from dude to twitcher and back depending on the season.

A Vis Mig describes a rare or non-native tick in an unlikely place, most likely on its way somewhere else. These and other rare ticks, depending on the birder, fall into three categories: A Lifer is a species that the birder has never before seen anywhere in the world. A Megatrick is a superlative tick, a bird of great rarity, beauty or size. And a Crippler, the birder’s Holy Grail, is a Megatrick of such staggering visual impact and meaning that the birder is left emotionally crippled, and should be observed for signs of shock or mania in the hours and days following.

(Linda Jones)

## **Carolina Herp Atlas**

Have you ever seen an eastern Kingsnake in your backyard or found a Fowler’s Toad on your porch and wondered if wildlife biologists needed to know about it? These observations are important, and now there is a place to submit your observations that can help with the conservation of amphibians and reptiles in the Carolinas: The Carolina Herp Atlas (CHA). The CHA, developed by the Davidson College Herpetology Laboratory and Davidson College Information Technology Services, is an online database that uses observations by citizen scientists to track reptile and amphibian distributions in North and South Carolina. Funded by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the CHA also allows users a simple way to maintain a personal database of the reptiles and amphibians they observe. County-level distribution maps can be viewed by anyone who visits the website. Wildlife biologists and herpetologists can use these data to understand activity periods, habitat relationships, distribution, conservation status, and other facets of amphibian and reptile ecology in North Carolina.

How does the CHA work? Before you can submit records, you must first register and set up a “My Herps” account. Once you register, you are able to add records and keep track of your observations. Each observation should include: 1) state and county, 2) genus and species, 3) date, 4) location, 5) geographic coordinates (using our GeoLocator), 6) remarks, and 7) a digital photo for verification of the species identification. The GeoLocator allows the user to pinpoint the exact location of their herp observation.

Since March 2007, the CHA has collected over 15,000 reptile and amphibian observations in the Carolinas from 700 registered users. Please submit your reptile and amphibian observations to the Carolina Herp Atlas at [www.carolinaherparlas.org](http://www.carolinaherparlas.org). Contact Steven Price at [sjprice@davidson.edu](mailto:sjprice@ davidson.edu) with any questions you might have.

## **Roadkill Cooking Makes Comeback**

More than a decade ago, our own Thomas Squier wrote “The Wild and Free Cookbook,” a guide to turning living off the land into gourmet meals. In the last few months, royalty checks have greatly increased, and Thomas thinks the economic downturn is forcing some to take a second look at his book. When people find out they can eat stuff that’s in their yard—they don’t have to buy it in the store—they are interested. The cookbook features recipes for armadillo sausage, cattail muffins, and a chapter dedicated to roadkill, which Thomas says is perfectly okay to eat as long as it’s fresh. You can eat squirrels, rabbits, snakes, or deer. He says “Now, if I see a deer on the side of the road, by the time I come back, it’s gone and someone already has it.”

No, he's not crazy! He may be the most qualified expert on the subject of wilderness survival and natural eating. His Cherokee grandfather, who was like a root doctor, prepared him for his connection with nature. He joined the military in 1976 and joined the Special Forces. He became the Army subject expert on survival. In 1981 he helped develop the SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) School at Camp McCall. Thomas has four college degrees, including a doctorate in natural medicine. In 2002, he was awarded the Order of the Longleaf Pine, North Carolina's highest civilian honor. You can find his book at Amazon.com!

**Donations:** The following have made donations to SNHS:

PL & CL Linskens

James Cheshire

Carol McKenzie in memory of Billy G. McKenzie

Bill & Jeanie Eastman in memory of Sandy Ogden

K2 Solutions in memory of Sandy Ogden

Eugenie Frick in memory of Sandy Ogden

Mary-Ellen & Joe Raulerson in memory of Sandy Ogden

### **Interesting Sightings:**

Coyotes are in our area: You may have seen the article in the *Pilot* about coyotes in the area. David Kilpatrick saw one up close!

On January 15, while playing the 16<sup>th</sup> hole on Course No. 6, a course that lies on the northern edge of Pinehurst, I saw something interesting. As we prepared to hit our shots I glanced at the green, and to my surprise, there stood a coyote just on the edge of the putting surface. It was clearly watching us. I had my binoculars, so I got a very good look at a beautiful animal—full, rich coat; fairly husky rather than the lean animal expected; and very brazen. It was an ideal photo opportunity, but, alas, no gear.

The first player hit his shot, and when it landed on the green the coyote charged onto the green, grabbed the ball, and began to play with it like a cat with a mouse. The animal did this with three of the four shots our group hit. We drove to the green and the animal retreated to the left of the green about 30 yards, lay down, and alertly watched us complete play. If we approached even slightly, it would retreat towards the woods you see to the north.

**Reminder** – Thanks to all who have already paid their dues. If you haven't paid yet, please mail your check for \$5.00, 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. Dues are \$5.00 per person, per year. The dues year is from January 1 through December 31.

**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 our monthly meetings. Contact David Kilpatrick at 910-295-5224 or at [snhslogo@mac.com](mailto:snhslogo@mac.com) if you have any questions.

\$10 T-shirts

\$12 Mugs

\$17 Baseball Caps (with embroidered logo)

\$ 3 Stickers

\$14 Baseball Caps (with plain logo)

**SNHS Board of Directors 2010:**

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

**ATTENTION!!!**

**If you have e-mail and are experiencing trouble receiving all the newsletters and announcements via e-mail, please contact Chris Norkus immediately. [info@sandhillsnature.org](mailto:info@sandhillsnature.org)**

**If you do not have e-mail, please read this:**

Our field trips often have schedule changes and we send out e-mail 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.