

SANDHILLS NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

July 2005 – VOL. XI NO.4

Upcoming Programs and Speakers: the Fourth Tuesday of Each Month

July 26, 7 p.m.: Red Wolves. Dr. Karen Beck will take a closer look at the restoration of this native predator in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Karen received her DVM in 1996 from NC State and PhD from NC State. Karen has worked with the red wolf project since 1999 as a member of the recovery implementation team.

August 23, 7 p.m.: Social/Natural History Mystery—Pot Luck Social. Bring a favorite dish and a puzzler to share with the group.

September 27, 7 p.m.: Jewels of The Night. Join us to learn about moths. Scott Hartley and hopefully Steve Hall will use lights, beer bait and a wine line to attract moths and other night flying insects. Note there will be no wine or beer for attendees!

October 25, 7 p.m.: Special Event - Ghost Stories. Join us for cider/cookies and some fine storytelling/ghost stories. If you have a good story to tell contact us so we can start a speaker list.

November 22, 7 p.m.: Snakes. Dave Woodward will update on his research on northern pine, southern hognose and coachwhip snakes in the Sandhills. Live snakes will be displayed.

December 27, 7 p.m.: Pot Luck Social. Bring a favorite dish and an item or brief topic to share with the group.

January 24, 2006!, 7 p.m.: Hawaiian Birds. Join Kerry Brust and Jessie Schillaci for a program on the the birdlife of this tropical paradise. DRESS IN YOUR BRIGHTEST TROPICAL CLOTHING. If we can't be there we can pretend right?

From the President's Desk: Susan Campbell

The 'Birding North Carolina' book is finally available after over two years of work. For information see the Carolina Bird Club (CBC) web site URL listed below.

This project of the Carolina Bird Club and NC Partners in Flight (edited by Marshall Brooks of NC Wesleyan College and Mark Johns of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission) has been more than two years in the making and proceeds will go into a special account of the CBC to help benefit bird conservation projects in NC. Please forward this email to others you feel would be interested. Thanks!

For information see the Carolina Bird Club web site:

<http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/>

Saturday, July 30th 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Big Bloomers Flower Farm (Sanford)—"Hummingbird Celebration" Come learn about hummingbirds in North Carolina and ways to attract them to your yard. There will be several banding demonstrations as well. A wide variety of hummingbird perennials propagated at the farm will be displayed and for sale. For more information, contact Susan at (910) 949-3207 or susan@ncaves.com.

Saturday, August 20th 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden (Belmont)—"Bugs, Birds and Butterflies." Susan will be part of an educational day that focuses on winged creatures. There will be presentations and hands on activities for the entire family. For more information, go to <http://www.dsbgo.org/>

Mann's Harbor Purple Martin Roost and Festival

Are the Outer Banks in your vacation plans this summer? If so, you should make a detour to check out the impressive purple martin roost located at the Mann's Harbor (Umstead) Bridge in Dare County. Each morning and night from late June through August, more than 100,000 martins gather at dawn and dusk at this pre-migratory roost under Manns Harbor Bridge located between Manns Harbor and Roanoke Island. This roost is so impressive that it can be seen on Doppler radar!

Sadly, there are no shortage of martins lost to collisions with vehicles as motorists cross the bridge. Fencing has been erected on bridges elsewhere in the United States which support similar roosts and have proven successful in reducing mortality. To help raise money and awareness for the plight of this roost, the first annual purple martin festival will be held next month, August 6th, at the Roanoke Island Festival Park in Manteo.

For more information regarding the purple martin festival, visit the following link:
http://www.purplemartinroost.com/roost_fest.htm

Fortunately, other opportunities exist to view the roost if you can't make the festival. Guided tours will occur throughout July and mid-August. Check the following link:
http://www.purplemartinroost.com/join_us.htm

Travel "down east" for a unique and fascinating birding spectacle!
Kerry Brust

E-Mail Addresses, Please

We need e-mail addresses for everyone. Please send an e-mail to cbowman6@nc.rr.com with the subject "Address" and include your e-mail address in the body of the note. We would like to send the newsletter electronically to as many members as we can to reduce postage costs. Thanks for your help!

Annual Dues

Dues 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. If your mailing label shows a "0", you haven't paid for this year. If it shows "1" or "2", you've paid for one or two persons for the year.

Interesting Books

Under a Wild Sky, by William Souder. *John James Audubon and the making of The Birds of America*. \$15 paperback

To See Every Bird on Earth, by Dan Koeppel. *A Father, A Son & a Lifelong Obsession* \$24.95 hardcover

Robbing the Bees, by Holley Bishop. *A Biography of Honey*. \$24.00 hardcover

The Grail Bird, by Tim Gallagher. *Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker*. \$25.00 hardcover

Discovering the Forest, by Charlotte Gantz. *Sandhills Forest Life in North and South Carolina*. \$13.95 paperback

Weymouth Woods Butterfly Count

The 9th annual butterfly count AT Weymouth Woods was held on June 11 with 6 participants, including SHNHS members Bob Perkins, Carol Bowman, and Harry LeGrand. We did pretty well at Weymouth in the morning but had no one looking after lunch, so we missed getting some bugs that we know were flying somewhere in our count circle. We ended up with 28 species. The number of individuals were down but we did find Edward's, King's, Striped, Coral, and Banded Hairstreaks which were the target species. Edward's and King's are rare species and the count is held to monitor their numbers. I plan to hold a informal count in September for Meske's skipper another rare bug of the Sandhills. I'll announce a date and time later.

From Discovering The Forest by Charlotte Gantz

"Some people who go into the woods except to see animals fighting or catching prey, females nursing their young... The truth is, our woods are quiet places, but take a little time and pertinence, and you will discover an absorbing world, full of myriad small happenings."

This really describes I think one of the goals of the SHNHS to get folks aware of the natural world around them. An excellent way to start this awareness, especially for newcomers, is to get a copy of Charlotte's book. Charlotte writes of all the "many myriad small happenings" she has patiently observed in her many years of volunteering at Weymouth Woods and visiting other Sandhills locales. Her book takes you through a year of Sandhills natural history month by month.

The Country Bookstore in Southern Pines has copies available and I think the author would be more than happy to sign your copy at the next SHNHS meeting.

Scott Hartley

The Grail Bird, by Tim Gallagher.

If you have any interest in the hunt for rare birds, this book is a must read. The author, a writer/editor on the staff at the famed Cornell lab, was intimately involved in the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

In it, you'll get a dose of what convincing unbelieving birding experts involved. You'll also get an eye-witness view of the river swamps in which the big woodpeckers live.

I spent five years in southwest Arkansas during the nineteen-sixties. While I never visited the area of the White River where the bird was found, I've been in similar places and can attest to the wildness that the author describes.

My copy is circulating among club members in Southern Pines. Call Scott Hartley or Libba Watson if you are interested in getting on the list of readers.

Bob Perkins

To See Every Bird on Earth, by Dan Koepfel

If you are interested in life-changing obsessions, Koepfel's book is worth reading. It is not purely about birds. It is a biographical and autobiographical sketch of the author, his father, and the "Big Lister" syndrome. Caution: this is a bittersweet account. I'm reading it now and will bring it to the July meeting if anyone wants to borrow it.

Bob Perkins

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

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR WITH THESE ACTIVITIES

FIELD TRIPS

IMPORTANT: CALL WEYMOUTH WOODS (692-2167) TO REGISTER FOR TRIP. CALL WEYMOUTH AT LEAST ONE DAY BEFORE TRIP TO ENSURE THAT TRIP IS STILL ON SCHEDULE AND FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

Saturday July 23: Dragons & Damsels. Take a closer look at dragon flies and damselflies, learn to identify some of the more common species. Meet at Lake Aberdeen Park on the west side of 15-501 in Aberdeen at 9am. We will also explore the upper end of Lake Aberdeen looking at flowers, butterflies and carnivorous plants. We will spend an hour or so along the edge of the lake near the parking lot looking at and catching dragonflies and damselflies. The hike will last about an hour to two hours depending on what we see and find. The hike will require getting wet/muddy feet and braving biting insects. Be prepared. Will end by noon.

September 10, dusk—Swift Night Out. We will divide into groups and count swifts as they come into roost at Southern Pines Elementary. The data we collect will be part of a national effort to monitor the decline of this species in the east. Meet at Weymouth to carpool to the school. CALL FOR MEETING TIME.

Stargazing 101—Date&Time To Be Announced. Join us as we venture to a dark area in the Sandhills Gamelands to learn how to find constellations. Details in next newsletter.