



Special Event

Mark your calendars! The Carolina Bird Club will be returning to the Sandhills for their 2008 Spring Meeting to be held May 2–4, 2008. Headquarters will be at the Days Inn on Route 1 in Southern Pines. SNHS is providing meeting support. We will be assisting with speakers, hospitality, field trip planning, door prizes and even production of a meeting t-shirt. The committee has already begun planning field trips and other weekend events, but **it's not too late if you want to be involved.** So if you would like to lend a hand either before or during the meeting, please contact Susan Campbell at susan@ncaves.com or 910 949-3207. Not only are we still seeking trip leaders, we will need a few folks to stuff meeting packets a few days prior to the meeting, to man an information table at the hotel during the weekend, and donate refreshments for our special welcome event at Weymouth Woods.

2007/2008 Meetings

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| Monday, October 22 | Beth Evans – Bats and Bat Research at Ft. Bragg. Beth will discuss the methods used to survey for bats and the species they have found so far.
<i>POT LUCK DINNER starts at 6:30 p.m. Bring a dish to share.</i> |
| Monday, November 26 | Dave Davenport – Galapagos Islands. Dave will give us an in-depth look at this amazing place and the many endemic animals found there. |
| Monday, January 28 | Gary Perlmutter – Lichens. This program will focus on lichen ecology, identification and species of lichen found in our area. |
| Monday, February 26 | Mike Dunn – Yellowstone. Take a closer look at Yellowstone through the eyes of educator and nature photographer, Mike Dunn. Mike has been leading summer and winter educator workshops to Yellowstone for over 12 years. |
| Monday, March 24 | Jeff Marcus – Bachman Sparrow. Learn more about the "Pine Woods Sparrow". Jeff will highlight the research being done in the Sandhills Gamelands. |
| Monday, April 28 | Jeff Beane - Bog Turtles. Discover the natural history of our smallest turtle. This rare diminutive turtle is about 4 inches long and inhabits damp bogs and grassy pastures in our mountains and western piedmont. |

Meeting Times: 7:00 p.m. - Fellowship & 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 4th 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.*

October 26 **Stargazing 101** – Meet at the Weymouth Center Parking Area at 7:30 p.m. The program will be held in the Boyd Meadow. We will focus on learning how to locate and identify the most visible constellations as well as some myths and legends concerning them. Bring a chair or blanket, and dress for the weather. Binoculars will aid in viewing a couple of objects but are not necessary. Contact Scott Hartley for more information – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

Rain Date: November 1, 7:30 p.m.

November 17 **Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge** – Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot at 6:30 a.m. for a half-day trip to Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge in Anson County. We will spend most of the time looking for birds, such as wintering passerines, early wintering waterfowl, raptors, and resident species, among others. We will sort through flocks of sparrows for uncommon species such as fox sparrow, as well as scour the woodlands for easily missed wintering birds such as brown creeper. Bring water, binoculars, and possibly bug spray, and whatever else is needed for personal comfort. Leader: Michael McCloy- 910-692-5094

December 8 **Woodlake Bird Walk** – Meet at Weymouth Woods at 7 a.m. to carpool to Woodlake. We will spend a half day looking for winter waterfowl, eagles and land birds. Contact Scott Hartley for more information – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

January 12 **Stargazing 101** – Meet at the Weymouth Center Parking Area at 7 p.m. The program will be held in the Boyd Meadow. We will focus on learning how to locate and identify the most visible constellations as well as some myths and legends concerning them. Bring a chair or blanket, and dress for the weather. Binoculars will aid in viewing a couple of objects but are not necessary. Contact Scott Hartley for more information – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

January 19 **Pungo** - Meet at 6 a.m. at Wal-Mart for a long all day trip to the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Pungo usually has the largest wintering flocks of snow geese and tundra swans on the east coast with flocks of over 40,000 snow geese and several thousand tundra swans. We should see a good variety of ducks, raptors and land

birds. Bear, red wolf and other mammals are always possible. Bring lunch. Restrooms may not be available. We will stop for fast food on the return trip. Return to Southern Pines by 9:30 p.m.ish. The estimated driving time is 3 ½ hours each way. Contact Scott Hartley for more information – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

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

Cape Fear Kites and Beyond July 21

A group of ten or so drowsy SNHS members left Wally World bright and early for a day of chasing kites and other feathered critters through the Coastal Plain of NC. First stop was the Oakland Plantation sod farm in where killdeer were the most popular species seen. We also saw a small flock of wild turkey crossing the road in roughly the same place as last year. The group did get close looks at both male and female Eastern Pondhawk dragonflies.

Next we headed to Lock and Dam #2 On the Cape Fear River. No kites were seen this year, but there is always next year!

Our third stop took us to Sunset Beach in search of wood storks. As soon as the group parked, there were numerous large black and white birds in the trees around the Twin Lakes. The group got good looks at Wood Storks, Common Moorhen, Great Egrets, and a few alligators. All that was missing from the previous year's trip was the Roseate Spoonbill.

Lake Waccamaw State Park was our last stop on the whirlwind tour of the coastal plain. We had hoped to catch the tail end of Susan Campbell's hummingbird banding demo, but just missed her. It was pretty quiet birdwise, so we walked a half mile to see the native venus fly traps. It was a warm walk, but worth the trip. A few folks stayed behind, after most of the group left for home, to look in the canals around the Lake for basking alligators. We got several good looks and photo opportunities of the reptiles.

All told we saw or heard 61 species of birds, several dragonfly species and four living reptiles. (Brady Beck)

Stedman Sod Farm – Mud, Sweat, and Killdeers August 25

The Sandhills Natural History Society, represented by Carol Bowman, David and Michael McCloy, Vim van Eck and me, went to the Stedman Sod Farm in Stedman, NC to look for shorebirds. Unfortunately, after a record drought, there was no water in the fields, so we saw no shorebirds but the Killdeer. However, I did see my first Horned Lark in the field before the bridge, and later, we saw 12 more in the field further back in the property. Its yellowish throat and face markings stood out so clearly, but no one saw any horns. We also had good sightings of the American Kestrel, first of an adult male perched on a bush in the distance, then a female on the wire. Both male and female Blue Grosbeaks were flitting about and singing in the field next to the road. We saw a huge murder of Fish Crows, about sixty strong, which flew to the tops of the trees at the edge of the field. A Red-bellied Woodpecker could be heard a couple of times coming from that same patch of woods, and we

also heard a Great Crested Flycatcher. A Carolina Wren was alternating between call and song in the same field as the Grosbeaks, only much closer, and later that day a White-eyed Vireo sounded off. And, of course, there were the Mourning Doves and Killdeers, both flying overhead and perching on the ground. But there were no raptor sightings (other than the Kestrel) until the inevitable Turkey Vulture.

In the butterfly department, we fared much better. There were multiple sightings of the Sleepy Orange, the Cloudless Sulphur, the Palamedes Swallowtail, enormous Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, the Monarch, the Red Admiral, the Viceroy, and one lone Variegated Fritillary. The first Sleepy Orange we saw was perched on a blade of grass, from which Michael was able to pluck him. Michael put him on his finger so we could get a good look at the inner wings. We figured he was sluggish from having just emerged from the chrysalis. There were also quite a few dragonflies, the most prevalent among them the Common Whitetail, and we saw at least three pairs of dragonflies mating in midair. There were also lots of Eastern Amberwings and a few eastern Pondhawks. Michael picked up a mud turtle hanging out in the muck at the bottom of a ditch. Unfortunately, I don't know my wildflowers as well as I know my birds, but the standout flowers that day were the pink, white, and yellow rhexia, and orange milkwort. (Patrick Shaffner)

Swift Night Out - September 8

On September 8, Scott Hartley led a group of almost forty naturalists and birdwatchers to Aberdeen Elementary School in order to watch a great spectacle of nature-migrating Chimney Swifts coming in to roost. We arrived at the school in the evening about a half hour before dusk, only to witness still, clear, bird-free skies. Before long though, a few swifts began to trickle in and circle above the school's chimney. In the next thirty or so minutes we all were privileged to observe hundreds of swifts come in and join the already-circling birds above the chimney. Then, uncertainly at first, a few swifts began to drop into the chimney, doing a full body twist in order to enter feet-first, to make roosting on the completely vertical surface easier. Following the lead of those few brave souls, the remainder of the circling flock dove into the chimney, scrambling for the best positions left in the roost. Final estimates for the number of birds varied widely, but a number around 2000 was agreed upon for the official consensus. I would love to see these guys emerging from the roost in the morning- it must be just as spectacular! (Michael McCloy)

Calloway Tract – September 15

On the morning of September 15, several members of the SNHS attended the dedication ceremony of the Calloway Tract by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC recently purchased this 5000+ acre tract from the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for four million dollars. NCDOT purchased this tract several years ago as part of a mitigation agreement to allow for substitution of this tract for a natural area near Fayetteville on which NCDOT was to build a highway. The owner of the Calloway Tract prior to NCDOT farmed much of it for pine straw. This owner in turn purchased the Calloway Tract from the Calloway family.

TNC provided for a sightseeing tour of the Calloway Tract. Seating was over straw bales in a pick-up truck and a tractor-pulled hay wagon. Much of the tract was in even-aged longleaf pine. Previous herbicide use to control under-story growth for pine straw farming led to the present scarcity of under-story plant species except for wiregrass. Bird species observed were sparse as well. These species included Red-shouldered Hawk, Turkey Vulture, American Crow, Fish Crow, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. There was also an interesting geologic observation. Concentrations of sandstone boulders provided evidence of the Orangeburg Scarp which separates the coastal plain-derived Cape Fear Formation from the overlying piedmont-derived Middendorf Formation.

The Calloway Tract and nearby Raft Swamp Farms have the potential for a greater observation of fauna and flora during future SNHS fieldtrips. (David McCloy)

Pilot Mountain State Park – September 22

On Sept. 22, nine SNHS members carpoled to Pilot Mountain State Park, NC to observe the annual count of southbound migrating raptors. We arrived early to walk the Big Pinnacle trail to look for migrating warblers where we saw seven species including Blackburnian and Bay-breasted. From the trail we also were able to compare soaring Ravens overhead with Turkey and Black Vultures. We then spent several hours on Little Pinnacle Overlook where the raptor count is conducted by the Forsyth Audubon Society. Migrating raptors follow mountain ridges and rivers on their migration and at Pilot Mountain they can be observed flying overhead and occasionally at eye level between Little and Big Pinnacle Overlooks. The official days' count was 66 raptors, a slow day that began with fog. However our group was treated to sightings of 11 raptor species as they winged their way toward their wintering grounds. While on the pinnacle we also observed Red-Spotted Purple and Monarch butterflies on their migration and Chimney Swifts passing so close we could hear the "rush" of their wings! (Carol Bowman)

Pinehurst Greenway – October 6

The trip was led by Carol Bowman on a section of the Pinehurst Greenway Trail. Seven of us started at the parking lot of the fitness center and walked eastward to US 15-501 and back, taking a couple of side trails en route. The trail winds through a fair bit of longleaf pine, crosses several stream-heads, and along backyard shrub thickets. One of the thickets had lots of wax myrtles which attracted a bunch of Cardinals and Robins. A couple of bird feeders were also busy with Chickadees, Titmice, House Finches, and Nuthatches.

After a slow start, bird activity was generally good. Brown thrashers and Towhees were common in shrubby stream-heads and eventually gave us good looks. We noted few signs of migration. For example, no White-throated Sparrows, no Juncos, no Kinglets, but we did have close looks at two Redstarts. One or two Red-breasted Nuthatches were heard briefly. The most unusual bird was an immature Red-tailed Hawk which hunted out in the open near a parking deck. Twice it sailed down and pounced in the grass but missed its prey (presumably mice or voles). This same bird later allowed even closer approach as it perched in a tree; see photo at the SNHS website.

Botanically, we got to see three kinds of pines (loblolly, longleaf, and pond) and a number of shrub species, including a possum haw heavily laden with ripening fruit. Goldenrods and several asters bloomed in stream-head openings, but this year's extreme drought has put a strain on plants and we saw very few wildflowers in the uplands. (Bruce Sorrie)

From the President's Desk: David McCloy

Fall elections for SNHS officers are upon us! At its October meeting, the SNHS Board noted that according to our By-Laws the two-year terms of Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer expire at the end of 2007. These offices are due for election at this November monthly meeting (Annual Meeting). Kerry Brust, Carol Bowman, and Beth Carpenter have served ably, efficiently, and effectively the past two years in these respective positions and are eligible for re-election if they so desire.

The respective offices of President and Member-at-Large are currently held by David McCloy and Brady Beck. They are finishing the first year of a two-year term that expires at the end of 2008.

Other members of the Board are appointed by the five elected officers. These other Board members volunteer and serve at their own willingness in their stated functions. Currently these other Board members and their functions are: Jeff Beane, newsletter proof-reading; Susan Campbell, past President; Scott Hartley and Jeff Bean, programs and field trips; Linda Jones, newsletter; Michael McCloy, webpage photography editor; Susan Miller, webpage construction; and Chris Norkus, membership records.

A Nominating Committee to provide a candidate for each of the offices of Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer will be introduced to the SNHS membership at the October 22 meeting. Please submit to this committee any names that you would like to see nominated (including your own). On or before November 16 the Nominating Committee will recommend candidates to the SNHS membership. At the November 26 meeting the SNHS members present will vote for the above three elective offices. All other previously submitted names will be considered for vote as well.

Please be ready to vote on November 26. SNHS can be strong and vibrant only because of the interest and support from its members.

Of This and That.....

The annual Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 16, 2007. Parties will cover the count circle by car, boat and on foot to record the wintering bird population. We also need people who live within the count area to count birds at their feeders. Anyone interested in volunteering a few hours should contact Susan Campbell, Southern Pines CBC coordinator, at either 910-949-3207 or susan@ncaves.com. No experience is necessary! We always need a few more sets of eyes and ears for our count.

Peregrine Falcon sighted! Scott Hartley saw a Peregrine Falcon soaring over the Weymouth Park office on October 10th.

Red-breasted Nuthatches have been sighted in a number of locations across the Sandhills. Pine Siskins and Purple Finches have been seen around the state already. Indications are that this may be a very good winter for encountering these irruptive species typically seen much farther to the north in North Carolina. So stock up your sunflower and thistle feeders and keep a close eye out!

Chincoteague NWR. Linda Jones visited Chincoteague in late September and reports that most of the 2600 acres of shallow freshwater moist soil that hosts thousands of wintering brant, geese and ducks are completely dry – cracked earth dry! At one location refuge personnel were trucking in water for the famous Chincoteague ponies.

Birding's Most Sedentary Event – Bird Watcher's Digest "Big Sit." SNHS will participate in this event next year! Check out the website at www.birdwatchersdigest.com. Recommend a Big Sit location to a Board Member.

Take a Walk on the Wild Side at The Wings Over Water Festival. The 11th annual WOW Festival will be held on North Carolina's Outer Banks November 6–11, 2007. Several SNHS members help organize this event and will lead field trips and workshops throughout the week. For more information see www.wingsoverwater.org.

General Reminder. Send your annual membership dues (\$5 per person, payable to SNHS) to Beth Carpenter, Treasurer, P.O. Box 1472, Southern Pines, NC 28388-1472. Include your address, telephone number, and e-mail address with your payment.

LAST CALL! The Sandhills Area Land Trust is still raising funds for the purchase of Hobby Field to save it from development. Again this summer, scissor-tailed flycatchers and grasshopper sparrows nested and fledged their young there. Please contact Katie Walsh at 910-638-8042 if you wish to assist with the purchase.

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. Contact Carol Bowman at 910-295-0842.

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 2007:

President	David McCloy	david.mccloy@ncmail.net
Member-at Large	Brady Beck	beck.kb@gmail.com
Vice President	Kerry Brust	kbrust@sandhillsecological.org
Secretary	Carol Bowman	cbowman6@nc.rr.com
Treasurer	Beth Carpenter	bcarp0720@nc.rr.com
Membership	Chris Norkus	ccnorkus56@earthlink.net
Newsletter	Linda Jones	candljones@msn.com
Website	Susan Miller	slm@cheslar.com
Field Trips	Scott Hartley	scott.hartley@ncmail.net
	Jeff Beane	jeff.beane@ncmail.net



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

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.