



Mandarin Ducks
Asia

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center
Photo © 2006 by Louise Brown

The Piedmont Birder

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center

Field Trip 10/28/06 *By Louise Brown*

The Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center (SHWC), located in Scotland Neck, NC, began out of Mike Lubbock's passion for waterfowl. He has dedicated his life to breeding endangered species on the verge of extinction. One, the Laysan Duck, endemic to a single island in the Hawaiian archipelago, was reduced in the 1930s to a population of a single female and her clutch of eggs, and another, the White-winged Wood Duck of Sumatra, has a similarly fragile native population. Begun exclusively as a breeding facility, the SHWC recently became open to the public and displays many of the 178 species (not all waterfowl) of birds from all over the world. Most of them are outside in large aviaries, where visitors are able to view birds at fairly close range without intervening fences. The first display, seen outside the main building, is an International pool, mingling remarkable specimens from all over the world. The Asian White-headed Duck, the African White-backed Duck, and the North American Wood Duck all dabble or dive quite happily together. (Would that humans could!!) The other aviaries group species by continent.

Dan Chambers led the field trip to the SHWC, attended by ten PBC members. We arrived at 10:00 a.m. and were so astounded by everything we saw that the promised 1.5-hour guided tour turned into a 3-hour plus tour, including a visit to the breeding areas **not** open to the public. We stayed till closing time at 5:00, taking many photos and learning about creatures we had not even imagined to exist before. Stunningly beautiful birds included the Mandarin Duck, the Russian Baikal Teal, Andean Goose, and Plumed Whistling Duck.

See Sylvan, cont.' on p. 3

Thanksgiving in South Carolina

Field Trip 11/23-26/2006

By Carolyn Allen

The Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge provided plenty of excitement and challenges. A dozen good people braved drenching rain on Wednesday, early morning chill on Thanksgiving Day and delightful weather for the Bull Island trip on Friday. Whatever the weather, we were all rewarded with marvelous bird sightings! Some of the best birding was found at Patriots Point and the Pickett Bridge Recreation Area. That cold morning we sighted three Horned Grebes, a Clapper Rail (chased out of the grass by a raccoon,) a Hermit Thrush, Loggerhead Shrike, and several varieties of sparrows and woodpeckers. We also added several sparrows, Marbled Godwits, Willets, yellowlegs, waxwings, Laughing, Ring-billed, and Herring Gulls, other shorebirds, and three Wood Storks.

On Friday we had a fine adventure to Bull Island. Twelve of us gathered early for the ferry ride to the Island where we were welcomed by a Bald Eagle. The island includes acres of marsh, brackish streams and fresh water ponds. Most of us hiked straight across the island to the oceanfront; there were gannets and Black Scoters offshore and we watched an encounter between a dolphin and a loon. Along the trail, an American Bittern was spotted as well as a Northern Harrier diving on a Red-tailed Hawk! Part of the group hiked on the "long route" to Jack's Creek at the north end of the Island. Others took the "short route" to Lower and Upper Summerhouse Ponds, where we found several shorebirds, six species of ducks, numbers of wading birds, and another Wood Stork.

Saturday a.m. we went North on US 17 to the Seewee Visitor Center. Exhibits, including two resident red wolves, and a trail gave us another look at terrain and habitat. We drove a short distance to the I'on* Swamp Road.

See T-day, cont.' on p. 4

** see "I'on" bottom of p. 3*

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Newsletter of the

Piedmont Bird Club

PO Box 38833

Greensboro, NC 27438-8833

piedmontbirdclub.org

Editor: Louise Brown

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3. White Street Landfill *FT

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4. Pine Island *FT

5. Welcome

5. Salem Lake *FT

5. Membership Form

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*Field Trip

The next deadline for newsletter items
is **Apr. 15, 2007**

Contact Louise Brown: 685-5043;

piedmontbirder@triad.rr.com.

OFFICERS FOR 2006-2007

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From the PRESIDENT'S PERCH

By Dan Chambers

As this is the first newsletter of the 2007 year, Happy New Year! I wish peace and prosperity to all our members and their families. As we continue to get new members, I hope that they will bring their fresh ideas and energy to our organization by joining one or more committees or taking a position on our Executive Board.

In December, we honored Susan Weimer at our Holiday Dinner by thanking her for her many years of service as our Treasurer with a Certificate of Appreciation. She continues to serve as the History and Archives Chair. I would also like to thank Irene and Joseph Ade for their many years of serving as Social Committee Chair and member. The Holiday Dinner was great and we thank them for making our social events special. We will miss their leadership.

Since October, our members have enjoyed field trips to the Bog Garden, South Carolina coast, Birkhead Mountains, Piedmont Environmental Center, White Street Landfill, the Outer Banks and Salem Lake. Thanks to all the trip leaders for their time. I hope you will take advantage of the field trips offered in the future.

We had a wonderful program on the use of technology by Melissa Whitmire in birding with one of the largest audiences I've seen. She did a great job in sharing her knowledge with our club. As this newsletter goes to print we will have heard from Dave Davenport about his Eco-Quest Tours. Some of our members are going next summer to Peru on one of these tours.

Thanks to those who participated in the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). PBC has been participating in the CBC since 1942. This and other citizen science projects are so important to the conservation of birds and our environment. Another opportunity to help is The Great Backyard Bird Count, February 16-19. Please contact me for more information or go to this web site:

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

Please participate in one or more of the many citizen science projects available to you. You can make a difference and help scientists who would never be able to gather the data that tens of thousands of citizens can. Will you help with bird conservation?



Birkhead Mountains Wilderness Area

Field Trip 12/3/06

By Dan Chambers

On a bright Sunday morning we met at the Kathleen Clay Edwards Family Branch Library to carpool to the Asheboro area. We rendezvoused with some more birders at the Food Lion on NC 49 South in Asheboro. From there we traveled southwest to one of the Birkhead Mountains Wilderness Trails off Lassiter Mill Road, known as the Thornburg Trail. This area of the state is known as the Uwharrie Lakes Region.

There were 15 of us at the trailhead that begins at the old Thornburg Farm. In 1993, the United States Forest Service purchased this land and in 1996 volunteers built the trail. There is hope of restoring the farm to its 1820s condition for historical exhibition.

The group walked the trail through the farm and into the woods to the junction of the Robbins Branch Trail and back. With side trips into and around fields, we walked about 3.75 miles. We saw or heard 30 species of birds on our walk. There were no rare birds spotted, but we had good looks at some of the ones we did see. All participants seemed to enjoy themselves on this beautiful day.

A word of caution, hunting is allowed in this area during the various hunting seasons. Currently, there is no hunting allowed on Sundays.

There are more trails to bird in the area. See the North Carolina Outdoors Web site for more details:

<http://www.northcarolinaoutdoors.com/places/piedmont/birkhead.html>



Dan Chambers presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Susan Weimer 12/5/06

Photo by Emily Tyler

Piedmont Environmental Center

Field Trip 10/9/06

By Dan Chambers

It was a cold morning when nine members met at the Piedmont Environmental Center (PEC), at 1220 Penny Road in High Point. These were brave souls to face the low temperatures on what became an uncommonly cold day. After meeting in the parking lot, the group headed out to bird two of the PEC trails in the South Preserve. We started first in a clockwise direction on the Bill Faver Lakeshore Trail. Gregg Morris had been told by Tom Sheppard of a Barred Owl that had been heard along the Wildflower Trail. We listened and watched, but were unsuccessful in hearing or seeing the owl. We continued to bird the Bill Faver Trail as it goes along the shore of High Point City Lake. We then took the Raccoon Run loop before returning to finish the Bill Faver Trail and coming back to the parking lot.

We walked about 2.5 miles and saw or heard 31 common species for this time of year. Even though it was cold at the start, I think most participants warmed up as we hiked the trails. It was another wonderful day outside enjoying the birds, open space, fresh air and sunshine.

For more information about the Piedmont Environmental Center's programs and other trails go to: <http://www.piedmontenvironmental.com/>



Pink-eared Duck
Australia

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center

Photo © 2006 by Louise Brown

White Street Landfill

Field Trip 1/6/07

By Louise Brown & Carolyn Allen

Unseasonably warm weather made for a nice trip, led by Carolyn Allen. A sizable crowd of 25 PBC members and guests attended. Since this facility is no longer used for dumping household trash, the bird populations frequenting it have changed; the huge numbers of gulls and vultures have considerably dwindled. Established in the 1940's and covering over 90 acres in all, there are large tracts where household garbage has been dumped for many years, and covered over with earth and now are quiet grassy hills. Areas of woods, streams and wetlands provide peaceful and diverse habitats.

A few ducks and water birds were on some of the ponds and streams. We saw a Pied-billed Grebe, a Great Blue Heron, Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks and Buffleheads. Raptors included Turkey and Black Vultures, and hawks. A pair of Red-tails has a nest in a back area of the landfill. A Sharp-shin swooped down and apparently nabbed a Mourning Dove for its lunch. Two American Kestrels worked a grassy hill, hunting for mice and insects. The Kestrel has a particular movement, called "kiting," where it "treads air" with its wings to remain stationary as it looks for prey in the grasses below. We were excited to see a couple of Common Ravens, not particularly common in Guilford County.

There was an interesting collection of sparrows: Field, Savannah, Fox, Song, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned. The Savannahs were on the side of a hill (as well as some Meadowlarks!), and the Swamp Sparrow was in a wetland area. Three White-crowned Sparrows were the first ones seen there, according to Carolyn Allen, who birds the area regularly during the Audubon Christmas and Spring Counts. The White-crowned Sparrow has become rare in Guilford County as the area becomes more and more developed, so we are grateful to George Wheaton who spotted the bird! We saw 39 species in all.



Laysan Duck

Hawaiian archipelago

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center

Photo © 2006 by Louise Brown

Bog Garden

Field Trip 11/11/06

By Louise Brown

Nineteen members of the PBC gathered at the Bog Garden to enjoy the 39 species of birds and waterfowl observed there. The onset of winter has attracted avian visitors who breed up north or in the mountains. Sightings included Northern Shovelers, shoveling, about 20 Ring-necked Ducks, a few Ruddy Ducks, and a Belted Kingfisher belting out its rattling call. Other winter birds were a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, greeting us with its mewling cries as we arrived, Fish Crow, Winter Wren, Golden- and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos. A Red-tailed Hawk soared overhead.

Some of us went to Buffalo Lake afterwards and saw a Pied-billed Grebe, about 50 American Coots, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers.



Sylvan, cont.' from p. 1

Some were extremely odd-looking, including a relative of our Ruddy Duck, the White-headed Duck, with its bizarrely swollen bill, and the Spur-winged Goose and the oddest of all being the Masked Lapwing, a plover similar to a killdeer with what appears to be a bright yellow rubber mask of an old man covering its entire face and bill. There were many very handsome birds – the Red-breasted Goose, the Indian Spot-billed Duck, the White-cheeked Pintail – and many, many others. Much more information can be found on the SHWC web site: <http://www.sylvan-heights.org/>

Some of us spent the night in a hotel in Scotland Neck, not wanting to drive three hours back that evening. We spent part of the morning birding some fields in the area, where we saw a few local flickers, coots, and such, but definitely not as exotic as the many foreign species seen the day before.



Masked Lapwing

Australia

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center

Photo © 2006 by Louise Brown



Masked Duck

Photo © 2006 by Julien McCarthy

Masked Duck

By Julien McCarthy

In the last week of December, this female Masked Duck and her mate were wintering at the wetlands at the Vierra, Florida water recycling facility. According to Sibley's field guide, she is unpredictably seen in Texas and Florida but is more "at home" in Mexico.

Judith and I happened upon her at a time when Jeff Phippen, a Duke University ecologist and butterfly/bird expert, was there from the west coast of Florida while on Christmas vacation. Jeff knows several PBC members so we had a wonderful interaction with him and several other Carolinians there.

The Merritt Island and Canaveral National Seashore refuge complex and the surrounding area are winter havens worth experiencing. We have seen many birds and mammals up close from cars, bicycles and kayaks as well as on foot. There is something there for everyone.



Andean Goose

South America

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center

Photo © 2006 by Louise Brown

*"T'on"

According to the story we were told quite a few years ago, "T'on" is the Southern pronunciation of "iron". [This may well be folklore.] Presumably this was because of the water. Tannin giving it a tea color may have been a factor. During our first field trip in that area [maybe 25 years ago] we were taken to a spring where you could taste the water. That flavor as we both remember it was distinctly of sulfur. - Carolyn Allen

FROM THE PBC ARCHIVES

By Susan Weimer, *History and Archives Chair*

Excerpt from a presentation to Piedmont Bird Club of Greensboro, North Carolina, February 17, 1983, entitled "The Birds and I" by Etta Schiffman:

TITMOUSE AND FUR COLLAR

In my backyard on Washington Street was a beautiful Winged Elm tree, with wide spreading, graceful branches. Under the tree was a shallow pool where lived gold fish, and other water creatures, including, for a while, a frog.

For some reason, my brother who had made the pool had placed a stepladder at one end of the pool while he was working on a project of his.

It was late spring and I had already had my winter coat with its soft fur collar, cleaned and put away, when a cold snap made me wear it several times again. Rather than having it cleaned again, I just aired it by hooking the coat hanger to the top of the stepladder and then stood beside it watching and enjoying what was going on in the pool.

A tufted titmouse lit on a branch of the elm tree, right at my shoulder, eyed me and started fussing, probably calling me names in bird language. "What do you want?" I asked him in people language. You know, he told me – by tweaking off a beak full of fur from the coat collar. He flew off with it and came back for more. I couldn't let him de-fur my coat so I took it in the house and substituted an old fur neckpiece I cared nothing about. The titmouse came back, started to get a beak full but turned up his nose (beak) at the stiff hairs of the neckpiece, and flew off. I suppose he did not come back. I didn't wait to see.

EAGLE UPDATE

Jan. 8, 2007

The Bald Eagle pair is back on territory and is apparently intending to use the same nest at the edge of Lake Brandt again this year. Last year, the first egg was laid between the 21st and 24th of January.

-Lynn Moseley



Bald Eagle Family on Lake Brandt

April, 2006

Photo © 2006 by Lou Skrabec



1589-134 Skeet Club Road
High Point, NC 27265
841-2572

433 Pisgah Church Road
Greensboro, NC 27455
282-4458

PBC members get a 10% discount on all regularly priced items in the store - mention your membership **BEFORE** you make a purchase!

Pine Island

TGPAS/PBS Joint Field Trip

January 13-15, 2007

by Gregg Morris

Our party of four reveled in the unseasonal weather at the Outer Banks. On Saturday, at Bodie Island Lighthouse, there were lots of Tundra Swans on the pond, along with several American Avocets and many ducks, including Green-winged Teal and American Widgeon. Tree Swallows patrolled overhead. A Bald Eagle kept watch from it nest tree, and a Common Loon and several Red-breasted Grebes provided close-up looks on the sound.

Pine Island, an Audubon sanctuary in the Duck/Sanderling area, was first on Sunday morning's agenda. From there we went south to Pea Island. A Tri-colored, an immature Little Blue, and Great Blue Herons were seen. We had rafts of American Coots, Greater and Lesser Scaups, a moderate supply of Northern Shovelers, Ring-necked and Ruddy Ducks, and a few Buffleheads and Redheads. There were lots of Tundra Swans and several Great and Snowy Egrets. There was also a huge Snapping Turtle in the little pond by the boardwalk. Next, we visited Cape Hatteras, where we saw several Willets and a rare, for January, Whimbrel, more Red-brested Grebes and some Northern Gannets.

Monday morning, on the way home, we decided to visit Alligator River NWR. There were more swans, about half the Northern Pintails in the world, two more Bald Eagles, several Northern Harriers, a Wilson's Snipe, a Red-tailed Hawk, Pileated (several), Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers and, the bird of the trip, an immature, light-morph Swainson's Hawk. Thanks for the tip, Lynn.

In total, we counted 69 species, including all of the most common January gulls and terns, and many "backyard" birds. Good trip.



American Oystercatcher

Mt. Pleasant, SC,

PBC Thanksgiving trip in 2006

Photo © by Emily Tyler

**WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS!**

We look forward to sharing our upcoming activities with these newest new members! Unless otherwise indicated, all states are NC, all cities are Greensboro, all area codes are 336.

NEW MEMBERS

DeCasper, Helen S.

O'Beirne, Blake

Pretzsch, David, Nell, & Eric

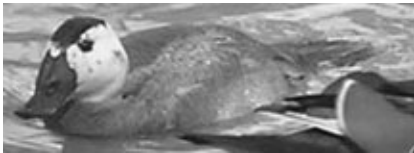
Soule, Fred & Sue

Stell, Linda

Salem Lake

Jan. 20, 2007

Dan Chambers led a field trip to Salem Lake, in Winston-Salem, on a sunny but chilly and breezy day, Jan. 20. The birds were not plentiful, but we were excited to see several American Black Ducks, which are not very common. Other water birds were Gadwall, American Coots, a single Bufflehead, a fair number of Pied-billed Grebes, Great Blue Herons and a Kingfisher.



**White-headed Duck
Mid East, Europe**

Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center
Photo © 2006 by Louise Brown

Calendar, cont.' from p. 6

Saturday, March 10

Adopt-a-Park: Members will improve the environment by picking up trash at Greensboro Country Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot that can be reached by turning onto Orman Road from Lawndale, then turning left at the intersection. (Rain date Mar. 11, 2:30 p.m.) Leader: Cal Weimer. 288-2160

Thursday, March 15, 7:00 p.m.

MEETING: North Carolina's Important Bird Areas (IBA). Walker Golder, Deputy Director of Audubon NC. The IBA program is a global initiative with the goal of identifying places that are critical to protecting bird populations and diversity. It is implemented in the US by the National Audubon Society, and in each state by Audubon's state offices. Audubon NC has already identified and mapped 92 sites and approximately 4.5 million acres of habitats critical to NC's birds. Walker Golder will discuss the status of the NC IBA program and challenges for the future.

Bird of the Season: Golden-winged Warbler - Mary Catherine Puppo

Saturday, March 17

Field Trip: We will visit the Whitacre's farm in the Bunch Rd. area of Guilford Co. for an easy walk to look for late winter birds. If time allows, we also may visit lakes to look for waterfowl. Leaders: Carolyn and Don Allen. 288-3045, tex-allennc@aol.com

Saturday, March 24

Field Trip: Waterfowl on the Greensboro Lakes, Part #2. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Contact the leader for location. Ducks, geese, grebes, mergansers, and gulls are our target birds on this tour of the lake overlooks. Dress warmly, the wind off the lakes can be chilling. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. This is a joint trip with T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon. Leader: Henry Link. 273-4672, linkh@bellsouth.net



Friday, April 6-Sunday, April 8

Field Trip: (This trip has changed from what was originally planned) **Huntington Beach State Park**, Georgetown, SC and Environs:

The Club will travel to Coastal SC to visit one of our favorite birding locations. Our last trip, Easter 2006, yielded 140 species during the three-day weekend. Participants often stay at nearby Brookwood Inn or Litchfield Inn where we will meet Friday morning to go birding. Contact the leaders for an itinerary or other lodging suggestions. Leaders: Emily Tyler (375-5770), Julien McCarthy and Judith Pate (656-4774)

Saturday, April 14

Earth Day Celebration at Kathleen Clay Edwards Family Library in Price Park. Check e-mail and our Web Site for further details of this Education Committee event closer to the date.

Thursday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.

MEETING: Endemic Birds of the Galapagos Islands, Lynn Moseley. In June 2005, Lynn led two trips to the Galapagos Islands, lived on a boat in the Pacific for 3 weeks, and visited habitats ranging from underwater to the rim of an active volcano. Her presentation will feature those birds found nowhere else on earth – the endemic species of the Galapagos which have contributed so much to our understanding of evolution by natural selection and the formation of new species.

Saturday, April 21

Field Trip: The Summit Conference Center. We will walk the wooded trails down to the lake and then along the boardwalk to the Haw River, which is a small stream at this site. Contact the trip leader for directions. Leader: Emily Tyler. 375-5770, ettyler@triad.rr.com

Saturday, April 28

Field Trip: Randolph Co. for migrants and breeding birds. We will travel about 45 minutes south to the rural Randolph Co. home of member Jane Lewis to explore the forests and fields. This is a joint field trip with T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon. Leaders: Jane & Mark Lewis. 381-1696, jane_lewis@vfc.com

PIEDMONT BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Individual (\$15.00)___ Family (\$20.00)___ New___ Renewal___

Our fiscal year is from June 1st to May 31st. Mail payment to:

PIEDMONT BIRD CLUB - PO Box 38833 - Greensboro, NC 27438-8833

Calendar

Reminder: If you are interested in going on a field trip, always contact the trip leader prior to the trip. That way you will be informed of last minute changes or cancellations, or the leader may need to modify plans according to the number of attendees.



Programs (unless otherwise noted) are at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, October -- April, at the **Kathleen Clay Edwards Family Branch Library**, 1420 Price Park Road, Greensboro



Saturday, February 10

Field Trip: Waterfowl on the Greensboro Lakes, Part #1. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Contact the leader for location. Ducks, geese, grebes, mergansers, and gulls are our target birds on this tour of the lake overlooks. Dress warmly and bring a thermos of something hot; the wind off the lakes can be chilling. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. No walking. This is a joint field trip with T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon. Leader: Henry Link. 273-4672, linkh@bellsouth.net

Thursday, February 15, 7:00 p.m.

MEETING: Functions of the Division of Birds of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences. Becky Browning. The Division of Birds at the NC Museum houses preserved specimens of rare, endangered and even some extinct species of birds, as well as a general collection of birds from North Carolina and the world. The collection is used by scientists from around the globe. In addition, the staff of the Division is actively engaged in research projects focusing on species such as Swainson's Warbler and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Becky, a former Guilford College student, will describe the many functions of the Museum.

Bird of the Season: Long-tailed Duck – Dennis Burnette

Friday, February 16- Monday, February 18

Great Backyard Bird Count. Join in this important bird conservation effort of data collection. See <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> or contact Dan Chambers. Instructus@aol.com

Saturday, February 24

Field Trip: Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.

This Important Birding Area is over 3,900 acres in size. We will look for winter sparrows, waterfowl and nesting Bald Eagles. This is a joint field trip with T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon. Leader: Dan Chambers. Instructus@aol.com

Saturday, March 3

Field Trip: A&T Farm. Meet at 8 a.m. Easy hike around a farm pond and along the edge of wet woodland. This is our best site for Wilson's Snipe. Wear water-resistant shoes, dress in layers. Leader: Emily Tyler. 375-5770, ettyler@triad.rr.com

-see Calendar, con't on p. 5



Piedmont Bird Club

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