



American Avocet



The Piedmont Birder



Sacred Ibis
Threskiornis aethiopicus
East Africa

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Newsletter of the
Piedmont Bird Club
PO Box 38833
Greensboro, NC 27438-8833
<http://www.greensboro.com/birdclub>
Editor: Louise Brown

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The next deadline for newsletter items is Oct. 15, 2002. I would like to include a phone number and/or e-mail address for leaders and coordinators of any events. Please let me know if you do not want these published in the newsletter or on the website.

Call Louise Brown at 274-3691 or E-mail at piedmontbirder@aol.com.

PHOTOS OR OTHER IMAGES WELCOME!



The Butterfly Counters
Photo by Lynn Moseley

Butterfly Walk and Count 8/27/02

The bird club teamed up with the Butterfly Club to participate in a Butterfly count at Hagan-Stone Park and surrounding areas. This count produced low numbers of butterflies, despite the good weather and availability of nectar sources. However, the effects of the severe drought in this area on the butterfly population were not quite as bad as anticipated, possibly due to a few recent rains over a two week period in some parts of Guilford county prior to count day. Our 2002 total of 26 species was 87% of the average total of 30 species, while the 2002 total of 165 individual butterflies represented 79% of an average total of 212 individuals.

We were pleased to see a good number of Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, a normally common species that has been scarce in the county until the last few days. There was a remarkable number of fresh butterflies, suggesting that a large number were newly-emerged. Nearly all of the Fiery Skippers were very orange, and the single American Lady was very bright. On the other hand, sulphurs of all species were few or completely missing from the count. We recorded a single Monarch laying an egg on common milkweed. Except for two Red-spotted Purples, woodland species were nonexistent on this count.

We saw a number of birds as well. Indigo Buntings love the same open fields as the butterflies. It was a lovely day and you can see we were having fun!

See the species list on page 2.

-Dennis Burnette, Louise Brown

DROUGHT & SHORE-BIRDS

The drought conditions have been greatly affecting the food supplies of wildlife as well as our watering habits. Various members, including myself, have noticed species eating unusual foods and showing up at feeders where they normally have not before.

While the drying up of the local lakes is devastating for our water supply, it has attracted a large variety of interesting birds, and club members have had a lot of fun spotting different species. I include excerpts from items in my E-mailbox:

On 8/10, from Elizabeth Link:

The drought has created extensive mudflats in Lake Townsend. In addition to Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets and Killdeer, there are lots of Least, Pectoral, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, Semi-palmated Plovers, along with a few Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, a couple of Semi-palmated Sandpipers, and a White-rumped Sandpiper. The White-rumped Sandpiper has been seen 3 times this week. We have been going to the place where Church Street crosses Lake Townsend above Air Harbor Road and below Plainfield Road.

On 8/13, from Carolyn Allen:

We arrived there late this afternoon. We immediately saw two black winged white birds which proved to be American avocets, still showing some color of breeding plumage. I'm not sure how often avocets show up here, but we enjoyed them immensely. The other birds remain: pectoral and least sandpipers, semipalm plovers, killdeer, one lesser yellowlegs, great blues, egrets and Canada geese in abundance.

Officers

President: Emily Tyler

Vice President: Phil Crisp

Recording

Secretary: Carol Pellettier

Corresponding

Secretary: Barbara Jones

Treasurer: Susan Weimer

Members-at-Large: Bob Pellettier

Jean Murphy

From the President's Perch

by Emily Tyler

Summer is usually a time when the birding activity slows down in the Piedmont except to enjoy our backyard birds and their young, as they learn to do all the necessary things to survive. But not this summer! Who would have guessed there would be such benefits for birders resulting from the "exceptional" drought we are experiencing? The second week of August has provided amazing sightings on the mudflats and small pools of water remaining in the outer reaches of Lake Townsend. The many shorebirds on the mudflats offered one of the best opportunities I have had to observe and study species which are similar in size and appearance. For example, there were both Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs appearing in the scope at the same time, as well as Least and Semi-palmated Sandpipers and one White-rumped Sandpiper, which closely resemble each other. Distinguishing these birds from one another was greatly enhanced by the expert assistance of Henry and Elizabeth Link with their high-powered scopes. By the third week of the month, the numbers and variety of shorebirds had diminished considerably. For a more complete list of the birds that were seen, look elsewhere in this newsletter ("*Drought and Shorebirds*", p. 1).

If the wide array of shorebirds weren't enough to boost any birder's enthusiasm, imagine our excitement when a Sacred Ibis, native to East Africa, appeared on August 15. It was seen by several birders throughout the next day in a small pool of water, right next to where Church Street crosses Lake Townsend, usually keeping company with Great Egrets or Canada Geese. There were no reports of the bird being sighted on the 17th by either local or out-of-town birders who showed up as the word of this exotic bird spread. It is hoped the bird is still around and that it will appear again. Although no band was seen on the ibis, it is thought to be an escapee from a zoo or other facility.

-Perch, continued, p. 3

-Drought, continued from p. 1

On 8/15, Emily Tyler reported:

The following new species were seen on the Lake Townsend mudflats near Church Street on the evening of 8/14, by Henry and Elizabeth Link, Judie Underkoffler and me: one each of Stilt Sandpiper, Sanderling, Short-billed Dowitcher

Thanks to Henry's new scope we did see the White-rumped Sandpiper.

Dennis Burnette reported:

Late this afternoon, 8/16/02, Ian Dunn and I spotted what may be a Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) at Lake Townsend. The bird was approximately the size of the Canada Geese, with a black decurved bill, black head and neck, white body, and black "rump." It was clearly not a Wood Stork. If it is a Black-headed Ibis, it is native to Asia so is likely to have escaped from captivity nearby. Even though it is an exotic species, however, it is quite a spectacular bird to see flying freely in the Piedmont of North Carolina.

On 8/18 Dennis reported:

The exotic ibis that I reported two days ago is still being found at Lake Townsend. Herb Hendrickson has seen it well and determined that it is a Sacred Ibis from Africa, one of three closely related species that include the Black-headed of Asia and an Australian ibis.

On 8/20/2002 Ken Reininger of the NC Zoo sent this information:

There are 30 accredited zoos that have Sacred Ibis in their collections and report their inventories to the national database. However none of these zoos with Sacred Ibis are anywhere near Greensboro. The closest ones are in Pennsylvania, Ohio or Alabama. It doesn't seem real likely it came from captivity - at least not a zoo.

-Louise Brown



White-rumped Sandpiper

Many Thanks to
SHARON GALLIMORE
 For all her hard work folding, addressing, stamping and mailing the newsletter each issue!

Louise Brown



Hackberry Emperor
 Photo by Lynn Moseley

Butterfly Count Species List

- Black Swallowtail - 4
- Eastern Tiger Swallowtail - 36 (including 10 black females)
- Spicebush Swallowtail - 5
- Cabbage White - 6
- Orange Sulphur - 3
- Cloudless Sulphur - 2
- Sleepy Orange - 7
- Eastern Tailed Blue - 8
- Spring (Summer) Azure - 1
- American Snout - 1
- Variiegated Fritillary - 1
- Pearl Crescent - 7
- American Lady - 1
- Common Buckeye - 10
- Red-spotted Purple - 2 (+ 1 larva & 1 egg)
- Hackberry Emperor - 2
- Monarch - 1 (+ 1 egg)
- Silver-spotted Skipper - 33
- Horace's Duskywing - 1
- [Erynnis sp. - 1]
- Common Checkered-Skipper - 4
- Common Sootywing - 1
- Least Skipper - 2
- Fiery Skipper - 6
- Crossline Skipper - 2
- Sachem - 17
- Zabulon Skipper - 1



Spicebush Swallowtail
 Photo by Lynn Moseley

-Calendar, *CONT.*

• **Saturday, October 26**

Field Trip: Fall Leaves and Birds.

A day trip to the Blue Ridge Parkway to see song birds as well as the last of the glorious autumn colors. Bring a picnic lunch and a jacket. Easy walking. This will be a joint trip with the Pearson Audubon chapter. Leader: Dennis Burnette

Saturday, November 2

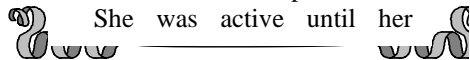
Adopt-a-Park, 9:00 a.m. (Rain date

Sunday, Nov. 3 2:00 p.m.) The club will pick up litter and do maintenance on bluebird boxes at Greensboro Country Park on Lawndale Drive. Bring binoculars for birding as we work. Coordinator: Cal Weimer



**ROSE FREEDMAN
SMOOT**

We recently learned that this long-time member had passed away August 20, 2001. Jean McCoy fondly remembers field trips the club took to her farm on Horsepen Creek Road, and that she participated in bird counts for years. Jane Kirkman Smith wrote, "I especially remember how many times we all enjoyed the American goldfinches that swarmed around outside her screened porch."



She was active until her



We now have the West Nile Virus in The Piedmont!

Report unusual ("drunken") behaviors/dead birds (esp. crows, blue jays, raptors) to the Hot Line: 1-877-790-1747 (NC Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources, Pest Management.)

There is an informative website: www.aphis.usda.gov and an e-mail address: ncwnv@ncmail.net. The elderly, immunosuppressed, and chronically ill are most susceptible.

-Perch, continued from p. 2

Piedmont Birder Club Members are generally notified of these unusual sightings by e-mail. If your e-mail address is not in the Yearbook, please notify Louise Brown if you wish to be added to this list. If you don't have e-mail and want to be notified, contact someone who has e-mail and request that you be called when these notices are sent around.

I have been asked by the proprietors of the birding stores (**The Wild Bird House** and **Wild Birds Unlimited**) to remind you to mention your membership **prior** to when they start ringing up your purchase. This way you will get the 10% discount without announcing this to non-PBC members in the store who might be inclined to take advantage of the situation.



THE WILD BIRD HOUSE

3612 Spring Garden St.
Greensboro, NC 27407
Phone 336-294-7833

has generously offered members of PBC a 10% discount on bird seed and on anything in the store (except items already discounted.)



**WILD BIRDS
UNLIMITED**

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!

From time to time members have donated photos of birds or club events for use in the newsletter or website. I surely would appreciate a few more!

-Louise Brown

**GET READY FOR THE
FALL PICNIC!**

Our first meeting for the fall is at Hagan Stone Park, Shelter #5, Sat., Sept 14, 5:30 PM for bird walk, 6:00 for dinner. We get to catch up on what folks have been doing all summer, eat some good food, and get back in the swing of things. It is a covered dish dinner- bring something good to eat. The club will provide cold beverages, plates, and utensils.

Coordinator: Irene Ade, 656-9974.



If you know anyone in the club who is sick or just under the weather, please contact our corresponding secretary, Barbara Jones @ 855-1936 or Helen Black @ 299-6220. They will send a card on behalf of all of us at PBC.

**IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE IT ALREADY,
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
NOW FOR
THE 2002-2003 SEASON!!**

Check out our web site!

It has some previous field trip reports, links to other sites of interest to birders and also our Calendar of Events.
<http://www.greensboro.com/birdclub>

PIEDMONT BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Date _____
Name(s) _____
Telephone _____
Address _____

E-mail _____
Individual ___ Family ___
New ___ Renewal _____

Note: One year's dues are payable from May through April, \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families.

Mail Payment to: PBC, Box 38833, Greensboro, 27438-8833

Calendar

Reminder: If you are interested in going on a field trip, always contact the Leader prior to the trip. If the Leader receives no calls, the trip may be cancelled.

• **Saturday, August 25**

Field Trip: Winston-Salem Wastewater Treatment Facility. This is our annual trip to one of the best sites in the Triad for migrating shorebirds. It might be a bit smelly, but it's always fun! Bring binoculars. Little walking.

Leader: Dennis Burnette. Phone: 299-4342 E-mail: burnetted@aol.com

• **Saturday, Sept. 14**

Fall Picnic : Hagan-Stone Park. 5:30 PM. Our first meeting of the Club's year, this is a lot of fun with food, too! The new yearbooks will be distributed at this meeting. Details announced later. Coordinator: Irene Ade. Phone: 656-9974.

• **Saturday, September 21 (Last weekend of summer!)**

Field Trip: Hawkwatching, Part I. We will join other birders from around the region at Mahogany Rock Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway in an area well-known for migrating hawks. It is about a 2 hour drive from Guilford Co. Some people will choose to do this as a day trip, while others will spend the night in Sparta and do more birding along the Parkway on Sunday. Leaders: Carolyn and Don Allen.

• **Friday-Sunday, Sep. 27 - 29**

Carolina Bird Club Fall Meeting. Three days of field trips and evening programs in Litchfield, SC near Myrtle Beach. Information: Dennis Burnette.

• **Saturday, September 28**

Field Trip: Hawkwatching, Part II. We will visit Pilot Mountain State Park, just 45 minutes away and the best spot in the Piedmont to observe Fall hawk migration, and also look for migrating warblers on nearby trails. This is reportedly the Saturday nearest the average peak of hawk migration. Leader: Phil Crisp.

Field Trip: Triad Park. 8:00 a.m. We have been invited by Forsyth Audubon to join them on this field trip to the Triad's newest park on the Guilford and Forsyth county line. Call for directions. Leader: Dennis Burnette

• **Thursday, October 17, 7:30 p.m.**

MEETING: These Lands. Palmer Smith McIntyre, executive director of the Piedmont Land Conservancy, will present a slide show highlighting the conservancy's work in nine Piedmont North Carolina counties to preserve natural and scenic lands, farms and green space with the goal of enriching the quality of life for us and for future generations.

Bird of the Season: Woodpeckers: Pileated (Phillip Kellam)

-continued on p. 3



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