



# Audubon NORTH CAROLINA

## Audubon gets a little help from friends

**N**ever underestimate the inspirational power of birds. For centuries birds have been muses for artists, poets, and musicians. And for Audubon North Carolina board member Lena Gallitano, birds inspired her to turn a personal challenge into a creative fundraiser for North Carolina's birdlife.

A North Carolina native who lives in Raleigh, Lena is involved with a number of civic and environmental organizations. An avid birder, she is an active member of Wake Audubon Society and in 2006 she received the N.C. Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Volunteer of the Year award for helping develop the N.C. Birding Trail.

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**Lena Gallitano at the start of her 500-mile Bike for Birds fundraiser.**





#### Audubon North Carolina

With a century of conservation history in North Carolina, Audubon strives to conserve and restore the habitats we share with all wildlife, focusing on the needs of birds. Audubon North Carolina achieves its mission through a blend of science-based research and conservation, education and outreach, and advocacy.

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#### [FROM THE DIRECTOR]

HEATHER STARCK  
*Executive Director*  
Audubon North Carolina



## The power of one person

I truly believe that one person can change the world. Here at Audubon, we are humbled every day by the individuals that work tirelessly on behalf of North Carolina's birdlife. Through their personal contributions, their creative fundraising ideas, and their own sweat and labor they help us accomplish great things. You will read some inspiring stories in this newsletter about some of these individuals, including Lena Gallitano, who completed a 500-mile bike ride as a fundraiser for bird conservation, and the members of the Cape Fear Garden Club, who have taken the birds of the Lower Cape Fear River under their wings.

All of these people have one thing in common: they are inspired to action because they recognize how much birds enhance our daily lives with their beauty, strength, and persistence to survive against all odds. As well, they know that birds have the same basic needs as people: we all need food, water, and shelter. They know that our actions not only benefit birds; they benefit people, other wildlife, and our state overall. When birds prosper, people prosper.

While Audubon is facing the challenges of a difficult economy and declines in available state conservation funding, we are also inspired to think strategically and creatively to insure we are "pulling the right levers" and accomplishing the most important priorities with the resources we have. Our conservation goals are complex, as they must be designed to safeguard both the bird populations that live year-round in North Carolina, as well as those migratory bird species that live here part of the year and travel beyond our borders at other times. Audubon North Carolina is working on a hemispheric level on behalf of birds – and making a difference. (Visit [ncaudubon.org](http://ncaudubon.org) to read our annual report and learn more about our accomplishments from this fiscal year.)

But we face these challenges with the support of these amazing individuals: our loyal donors and partners. I promise you this: Audubon will continue to make a tremendous difference in safeguarding the habitats that we share with birds. With over 100 years of conservation success on a national level, you can be confident that Audubon will not let you down.

I am personally inspired by the stories of the individuals featured in this newsletter and as a result, I am making my largest ever contribution to Audubon this year. I hope our work, longevity, credibility, and these stories may inspire you to do the same. Never underestimate the inspirational power of birds and the capacity that we each have to make the world a better place.

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We are sad to report the loss of Diane Manning, a dear friend of Audubon North Carolina, who died on October 19, 2011 in Chapel Hill. Diane and her husband Phil, a member of Audubon North Carolina's board of trustees, have been long time active supporters of Audubon. Diane was an award-winning painter, nature lover, and a bright soul. She will be sorely missed. The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Audubon North Carolina, 400 Silver Cedar Court, Suite 240, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, or to UNC Hospice, P.O. Box 1077, Pittsboro, NC 27312.



**B**irds and wildlife on Lea-Hutaff Island, one of North Carolina's last undeveloped barrier islands, are receiving help from concerned young environmentalists across the country, thanks to the National Audubon Society's Pennies for the Planet education and action campaign. Pennies for the Planet will provide vital support to Audubon North Carolina coastal biologists as they protect and monitor the birds, turtles, and other wildlife that inhabit the island and encourage island visitors to share the beach with wildlife.

Located between Figure Eight and Topsail Islands in Pender County, Lea-Hutaff was formed from two islands that joined after the closure of Old Topsail Inlet. Only accessible by boat, this Important Bird Area is a haven for birds such as Wilson's Plover, American Oystercatcher, and Black Skimmer, and represents the southernmost regular breeding site for Piping Plover, a federally threatened bird named for its melodic call. The marshes are home to Clapper Rails, rare Saltmarsh Sparrows, wading birds, and waterfowl. Migrating and wintering shorebirds numbering in the thousands flock here during migration. The island is a popular destination for beachgoers who enjoy walking, swimming, and fishing.

Audubon North Carolina, the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, and the State of North Carolina have worked together to protect the

island for close to a decade. Thanks to a generous donation from Fred and Alice Stanback, in 2010 Audubon North Carolina purchased a 35.7-acre tract on the island that nearly doubled the acreage already protected.

Pennies for the Planet is a powerful tool for motivating young people to learn about and become engaged in protecting biodiversity. Helping to protect Lea-Hutaff Island is just one of three ways the initiative is supporting conservation programs this year. Alaska's Arctic Ocean and Sabal Palm Forest in Texas will also receive critical funding and enhanced awareness through the program. Each of the three projects will receive equal funding from the monies that children raise across the country.

Since receiving support from Audubon and Toyota's TogetherGreen initiative, Pennies for the Planet has raised more than \$90,000.

The Pennies for the Planet campaign is made possible by support from TogetherGreen, an Audubon/Toyota alliance.

**Pennies for the Planet materials, including a full color poster and educator's guide, and a participation form with incentives and awards are available for download from [www.penniesfortheplanet.org](http://www.penniesfortheplanet.org) for classroom or at-home use.**

If you have any questions, please contact Andy Wood, Education Director, at [awood@audubon.org](mailto:awood@audubon.org) or 910.686.7527.

## Audubon North Carolina Chapters

### Audubon Society of Forsyth County

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[www.forsythaudubon.org](http://www.forsythaudubon.org)

### Cape Fear Audubon Society

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### Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society

PO Box 18711, Asheville, NC 28814-0711

President: Len Pardue

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### Great Smoky Mountains Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1262

Maggie Valley, NC 28751

President: Christine Gibson

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### High Country Audubon Society

PO Box 3746, Boone, NC 28607

President: Anita Clemmer

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[www.highcountryaudubon.org](http://www.highcountryaudubon.org)

### Highlands Plateau Audubon Society

PO Box 833, Highlands, NC 28741

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### Mecklenburg Audubon Society

PO Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222

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### New Hope Audubon Society

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[www.newhopeaudubon.org](http://www.newhopeaudubon.org)

### T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society

PO Box 10157, Greensboro, NC 27404

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### Wake Audubon Society

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A self-professed amateur cyclist, Lena decided to test her pedaling mettle by participating in Cycle North Carolina's Fall Bike Ride in October 2011, a 500-mile ride from Elkin in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to Corolla on the northern Outer Banks. Last spring when Lena began training for the ride in earnest she discovered that in addition to inner motivation, she was getting a little help from some old friends.



**Lena Gallitano  
at the finish  
line in Corolla.**

"When I was training on Raleigh's greenways this spring, I did a lot of birding by ear," says Lena. "This made me wonder if there was a way I could turn this challenging adventure into something even more worthwhile. The birds made my training rides more pleasurable and I've been a member of Audubon for many years so that's when it clicked: I could make the ride a fundraiser for Audubon North Carolina called Bike for Birds. This would be my chance to help the birds living across the state who have enriched my life since childhood."

Soon after announcing the Bike for Birds fundraiser, Audubon North Carolina board member Bon Parker made a challenge pledge: she would match every \$20 donation with a \$20 donation, up to \$1,000. Then another sponsor made a gift: Starck Van Lines donated \$3,000 to the effort.

Fortunately for Lena and the 950 people who registered for the ride, the early October weather was lovely and rain-free. As she cycled through the backroads of the state, Lena stopped periodically to call Audubon North Carolina and provide updates on her progress to post on [ncaudubonblog.org](http://ncaudubonblog.org). Here's her first blog entry from Monday, October 3:

*This is a really fun ride and everyone's enjoying themselves – smiles all around. On Sunday, our first day, we rode 69 miles. We started at 7:15, and it was cold, and the wind blew pretty hard all day. Temperatures started out in the 40s and ended up in the 60s. It was hard to hear birds because of the wind, but I did manage to hear 15 species. When I saw some vultures circling overhead I kind of wondered if they were waiting for me as I struggled up a hill!*

*Today we biked by several Audubon Important Bird Areas and sites on the N.C. Birding Trail, including Pilot Mountain and Hanging Rock State Parks. We got into Eden about 4:15, where we had a great visit to a vineyard, and then a nice dinner in town. It's been a delightful day.*

500 miles later, on Saturday, October 8, Lena and the other riders cycled through the small town of Corolla, just down the road from the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Sanctuary and Audubon Center at Pine Island. Tired but elated, Lena celebrated her successful ride by going birding at Pine Island on Sunday. "I was delighted to see a large flock of Tree Swallows swirling through the air and then dropping to the ground to forage in the grass, along with several American Pipits enjoying the plentiful mosquito population," she reported. "Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal had arrived and were feeding in the impoundments and a Great Egret elegantly perched on a post overseeing the scene."

As of November 1, Bike for Birds had raised \$8,028 for bird conservation in North Carolina. Many thanks to Lena for all her hard work on behalf of the state's winged residents and visitors.



**Emily Beddoes of  
Cape Fear Garden  
Club planting  
vegetation on  
Battery Island.**

## Creative ways to support Audubon North Carolina

*The Bike for Birds event is a great example of the kind of creative fundraising opportunities that anyone can initiate to support Audubon North Carolina. These pages feature profiles of the different types of supporters who make Audubon North Carolina's conservation work possible.*

## Business Sponsors

**Theo Davis Printing** was Audubon North Carolina's first business sponsor.

*We believe in the mission of Audubon North Carolina. Everyone I know enjoys birds, even if they are not ardent birders. My brother, Ricky Davis, has been a birder since age six. He was hooked by my dad's nephew, Jack Potter, who was a co-owner of Theo Davis Printing. Ricky is one of the authors of Birds of North Carolina. As you can see, it's in the family.*

*Times are tough for businesses throughout North Carolina and the United States; however, we've been able to provide a sponsorship that allows Audubon North Carolina to better communicate with their membership and enhance their image to those inside and outside the state. – Mike Davis, CEO of Theo Davis Printing*

Partnering with Audubon North Carolina is a natural fit for **EcoQuest Travel**.

*Anything I can do to help further conservation both within North Carolina and across the globe – I am going to do it. North Carolina is my home base and my home state and this is a mutually beneficial partnership.*

*I lead trips that benefit Audubon NC priority projects, such as our 2011 trip to Nicaragua. That is the direct way, but there is an indirect way. I'll be putting Audubon trips on my new website along with a resource page about our partnership and a link to ANC's website to support their ongoing conservation efforts. – Dave Davenport, President, EcoQuest Travel*



**Cape Fear Garden Club members removing trash from Battery Island.**

### Individual Supporters

Lee Armstrong and Mike Lumpkin, T. Gilbert Pearson Society members since 2003, made the commitment of giving at least \$1,000 annually to Audubon North Carolina. As they have attended Audubon events and seen firsthand the impact Audubon is having on bird conservation, they have increased their engagement by joining a committee and making plans to host a house party in the spring.

*We support Audubon because of our love of birds and our desire to protect their environment and, by association, our own. We support Audubon North Carolina with both our volunteer time and monetary donations, hoping that we can help “the bird people” make a difference. Everyone can help in some way, whether it is*

*introducing a friend to the joys of birding or donating to help with a particular project or learning about what Audubon is doing and sharing that information with others. I’m always interested in how many people who don’t consider themselves birders feed birds in their backyards. For those who are already part of the Audubon North Carolina family, a great way to participate is by keeping up through the website and email, particularly action alerts, when your voice can be heard with a simple click on the keyboard! – Lee Armstrong and Mike Lumpkin*

### Civic Groups

For more than a decade springtime visitors to southeastern North Carolina have been able to experience Audubon’s Cape Fear River Sanctuaries in a most unique way – from the deck of a 75’, two-story, shallow-draft boat. The **Cape Fear Garden Club**, North Carolina’s oldest and largest garden club, sponsors a cruise every May to see the great pelican, wading bird, and tern colonies on Audubon-managed islands along the lower Cape Fear River. The journey is narrated by bird expert Dr. James F. Parnell along with Andy Wood and Walker Golder with Audubon North Carolina. All of the proceeds from the cruise support Audubon’s waterbird conservation program on the river.

The Cape Fear Garden Club does much more to support Audubon. With shovels and trash bags in hand, volunteers from the club plant native trees on Battery Island to provide nesting habitat for herons, egrets, and ibis. They also remove unsightly and harmful trash from the islands twice a year to clean up the lower Cape Fear River and keep the islands safe for birds. The garden club has received state and national awards for its efforts, which are critical to the success of nesting birds in coastal North Carolina. Audubon North Carolina greatly appreciates all that the club does on behalf of North Carolina’s birdlife.

**See the back cover for information on the 2012 Bird Islands Cruise.**

### Make an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift to Audubon

- Who qualifies? Individuals who are age 70½ or older at the time of the contribution.
- How much can I transfer? \$100,000 before December 31, 2011.
- From what accounts can I make transfers? Transfers must come from your IRA directly to Audubon.
- Can I use the rollover to support a particular purpose at Audubon? Yes, please direct your gift to Audubon North Carolina.

Please contact us when you direct the rollover so we can look for the check from your plan provider.

For more information, contact Karen Fernandez at [kfernandez@audubon.org](mailto:kfernandez@audubon.org) or 919-929-3899.

### Join the T. Gilbert Pearson Society

The T. Gilbert Pearson Society is our most dedicated and loyal group of supporters. Members of the Society have made a commitment to give at least \$1,000 annually to Audubon North Carolina. Pearson members know that our work to protect North Carolina’s birds and wildlife is not designed to benefit only birders and wildlife watchers. Thriving populations of birds and wildlife indicate a healthy environment. A healthy environment attracts people to live, work, and raise families in the state.

Visit [www.ncaudubon.org](http://www.ncaudubon.org) and click on the Donate Now button. Scroll down to the Pearson Society and click the blue Donate Now button there. Or, sign up to make a monthly pledge of \$85 by scrolling to Monthly Giving and clicking on the Donate Now button.

If you have an interest in hosting an event or fundraiser to support Audubon, your help is needed now more than ever in this challenging economy. Contact our Director of Development, Karen Fernandez, at [kfernandez@audubon.org](mailto:kfernandez@audubon.org) to discuss your ideas!





## coastal update



### Audubon Sanctuaries

2011 was a banner nesting season for Audubon North Carolina's coastal sanctuaries, 19 islands that provide a refuge for more than a third of the state's nesting waterbirds and shorebirds, some 25,000 pairs of breeding birds representing 24 species. The sanctuaries are home to 104 pairs of American Oystercatchers (28% of North Carolina's breeding population), more than 700 pairs of Least Terns, 5,678 pairs of Royal Terns, and more than 1,000 pairs of Sandwich Terns.

- Approximately 75 pairs of American Oystercatchers nested on islands in the Lower Cape Fear River, one of the greatest concentrations of this species in North Carolina. Audubon manages these islands in cooperation with the State of North Carolina and the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Brown Pelican numbers on Audubon sanctuaries increased 14% to 2,071 pairs since the last state population survey in 2007.
- With the support of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, Audubon biologists managed a nesting area at Masonboro

Inlet that provided excellent habitat for 118 Black Skimmer and 305 Least Tern nests, an increase of 45% and 280%, respectively, since last year. At least 55 Least Terns nested at Mason Inlet Waterbird Management Area, a site on the north end of Wrightsville that Audubon manages in partnership with New Hanover County and the Town of Wrightsville Beach. These Least Tern colonies represented over 12% of the state nesting population.

### Waterbird census

In 2011 Audubon North Carolina's coastal staff participated in the waterbird census, an effort to assess the status of the state's entire coastal waterbird population. In May and June biologists from Audubon, state agencies, and federal agencies visited every waterbird nesting site to count every nest of every species. The census is no small task. The last coast wide census, conducted in 2007, documented nearly 65,000 nests of 22 species.

The census provides an accurate estimate of North Carolina's waterbird population and, over time, enables biologists to determine population trends. The data is incorporated

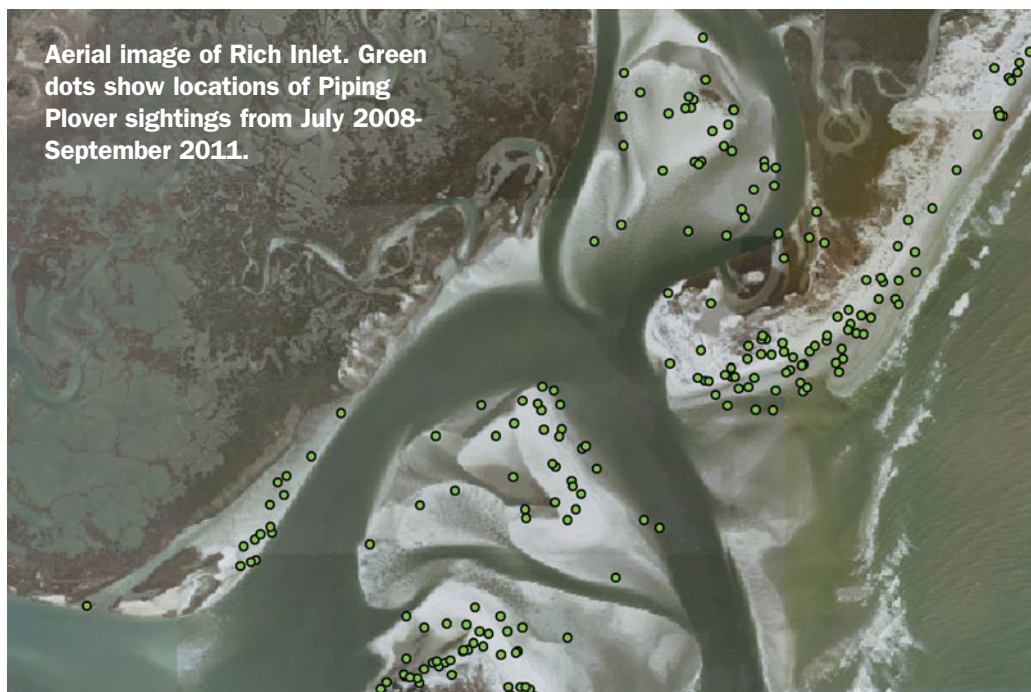
into similar efforts along the Atlantic coast to assess the status of waterbirds throughout the Atlantic Flyway. Biologists use the study results to track movements of bird populations within the state, evaluate the condition of nesting sites and the quality of habitats, and provide regulatory agencies with the data they need to make informed decisions.

Results from this year's census will appear in a future newsletter article.

### TogetherGreen grant will benefit Brown Pelicans

Audubon North Carolina and the N.C. Coastal Federation (NCCF) were delighted to receive a \$45,000 grant from TogetherGreen, an Audubon/Toyota Alliance, to help restore nesting habitat for Brown Pelicans on Audubon's Beacon Island Sanctuary.

An Important Bird Area, Beacon Island is one of nine nesting sites for Brown Pelicans in North Carolina. In 2011, the island supported 423 nesting pairs of pelicans or 9% of the state population. This 7.5-acre natural estuarine island is located in



Aerial image of Rich Inlet. Green dots show locations of Piping Plover sightings from July 2008-September 2011.

southeastern Pamlico Sound, near Ocracoke Island. The island's shoreline has eroded significantly and more of this valuable habitat continues to be lost each year.

Audubon North Carolina and its partners will use inventive coastal restoration techniques to create a series of living shorelines along the eastern portion of the island that will slow erosion and rebuild land in the face of climate change and sea level rise.

"This TogetherGreen grant not only gives us the ability to help buffer the Brown Pelicans' nesting area from increased erosion," said Dr. Lexia Weaver of NCCF, who will be leading the restoration work, "it also provides us with a way to prevent sedimentation of the shallow waters in Pamlico Sound, which provide valuable habitat for many fish, crabs, oysters and many other aquatic species. We're grateful for the opportunity to implement this project."

Biologists will partner with the local Ocracoke Island fishing community to build up the eroding shoreline using bags filled with recycled oyster shells and planting native marsh grasses. During the tourist season, tour boat operators will partner with the environmental organizations to engage

and inform local visitors of the critical role the island plays for Brown Pelicans. As well, residents and visitors of Ocracoke Island, including students at the Ocracoke School, will participate in this community project.

### Shorebird surveys at inlets

North Carolina's 20 inlets are critical for birds throughout the year, providing wintering, nesting, and foraging habitat.

Both sides of inlets provide the sparsely-vegetated habitat that terns, skimmers, and shorebirds require for nesting. The importance of inlets to nesting birds has been well documented but few studies have assessed the seasonal distribution and abundance of birds at inlets in North Carolina.

Since 2008, Audubon biologists have censused birds at four inlets. Katie Bullard has been conducting a weekly census of all the shorebirds and waterbirds at Rich, Topsail, Mason, and Masonboro Inlets. As well, biologist Lindsay Addison mapped the locations of Piping Plovers at Rich Inlet (including South Huttaff, Rich Inlet shoals, and North Figure Eight Island) from 2008 to present and the map above clearly indicates

the importance of the entire matrix of habitats associated with the inlet.

So far this year, Audubon biologists have documented 10 banded Piping Plovers at Rich Inlet. Most of the banded plovers are from the critically endangered Great Lakes population and these sightings provide vital information about these birds.

This data is important not only because it greatly adds to the knowledge of the importance of inlets to birds, but because it is the only data available that clearly indicates the importance of Rich Inlet to Piping Plovers. One of North Carolina's most stable inlets, Rich Inlet will likely be the site of the first proposed terminal groin under the new law that lifted the 25-year ban on such structures in North Carolina. Terminal groins, channelization of inlets, sand mining, and other inlet engineering projects pose a grave threat to the many birds that depend on these important habitats. (See related article on page 11.)





## pine island update



### Experience Pine Island

**A**s Audubon North Carolina makes plans to allow more public access to the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Sanctuary and Audubon Center at Pine Island we have started to offer educational programs and experiences. During the summer of 2011 more than 1,000 people attended programs in kayaking, nature photography, and birding. We will continue to expand our programs over the next year, including new programs this winter and spring. Our new website ([pineisland.audubon.org](http://pineisland.audubon.org)) will launch by the end of the year and will feature information about the sanctuary and our programs.

### Botany Blitzes successful

**A**udubon staff and volunteers continue to conduct biological surveys at Pine Island in order to provide baseline data for our conservation initiatives. The "Botany Blitz" is generating a comprehensive plant inventory. With the help of Dr. Alexander Krings of N.C. State University, the Northeast Coast Chapter of the N.C. Native Plant Society, and other volunteers, Pine Island has hosted two collection sessions and will continue the project over the next few seasons. We will also conduct various bird surveys in the future.

### Wintering waterfowl arrive

**T**he ducks are back! Ducks and geese began to arrive at the sanctuary at the end of August. Hundreds of ducks are currently using the waterfowl management areas of Pine Island and this number will continue to grow into the thousands throughout the fall.

**If you'd like to get more involved with Pine Island as a supporter or volunteer, visit [pineisland.audubon.org](http://pineisland.audubon.org) or call or email Mark Buckler, Director, at [mbuckler@audubon.org](mailto:mbuckler@audubon.org) or 252.453.0603.**



**Lili Duriaux-Chavarria banding a Wood Thrush in Nicaragua that was recovered in Pennsylvania several months later.**



## mountain update

### Land management efforts move into high gear

**A**s we mentioned in the spring newsletter, Audubon North Carolina is focusing much of its efforts in the mountains on reaching out to land managers and landowners to create and maintain habitat for birds in priority IBAs and for priority forest dwelling species such as the Golden-winged Warbler. Staff is providing bird-focused management guidance to partner agencies, meeting with landowners, and providing a variety of web-based resources to help landowners and managers more easily access information that will benefit birds. Future goals include securing management plans, easements, and even acquisitions so that Audubon North Carolina can have a bigger impact across the region and the Atlantic Flyway. Stay tuned!

### Treasure Highlands website

**T**he Treasure Highlands partnership reached a milestone this summer with the launch of a website at [treasurehighlands.org](http://treasurehighlands.org) that features volunteer opportunities, resources

for homeowners, partner links, a slideshow of common birds of the Highlands Plateau IBA, and a variety of other features. Many thanks to Volunteer of the Year Doris Ratchford for making the website a reality.

The partnership also developed a new way to engage children and adults in an active citizen science portal known as the **K to Gray Challenge**. The partners are working with Summit Charter School in Cashiers and Highlands Elementary School to help children mentor their parents in exploring their own backyards and sharing data through the website. Follow the links on the Treasure Highlands website to K to Gray to learn more.

Another addition to the website (also available in print in the Highlands and Cashiers communities) is a booklet titled "Helping the Birds of the Highlands Plateau," which features tips for landowners to make their backyards more bird friendly for priority species in this IBA. This project was funded by an Urban Forestry Grant from the North Carolina Forest Service. Thanks to all of the partners who are making this project a reality.

### Banded bird symbolizes connection between countries

**A**udubon North Carolina staff learned recently that a Wood Thrush banded by partners George and Lili Duriaux-Chavarria at El Jaguar Reserve in Nicaragua on Valentine's Day 2011 was recovered in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on its breeding grounds. Sadly, the bird was killed after flying into a window. Fortunately, the bird was photographed when it was banded at El Jaguar, making the connection that much more poignant.

When Lili heard about the recovery she wrote: "Oh, I thought that the bird had been captured, now I realize it is dead. What a pity! What a chance, isn't it? To have the pictures?" This story reaffirms Audubon's commitment to understand and promote the connections created by migratory birds that we "share" with other countries like Nicaragua. El Jaguar has been a long time partner in Nicaragua, helping with Cerulean warbler surveys and Golden-winged Warbler conservation and monitoring. El Jaguar was featured in the May/June 2011 issue of *Audubon* magazine.

# 950 people sign the Good Egg pledge

A pilot social marketing project bodes well for generating public support for birds like Least Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers that nest on North Carolina beaches. During the summer of 2011, Audubon North Carolina kicked off the Good Egg/Share the Beach initiative, which is aimed at raising awareness about the simple steps we can all take to protect migratory waterbirds.

From April through August, thousands of waterbirds travel to North Carolina beaches to lay their eggs on the bare sand at popular vacation spots such as Wrightsville Beach and Lea-Hutaff Island in southeastern North Carolina. These scrappy survivors face many threats, including severe weather, predators, and human disturbance. When a person or dog enters a nesting area adult birds become alarmed and fly off their nests, exposing their chicks and eggs to predators and extreme temperatures.

During nesting season, Audubon biologists temporarily post ropes and signs around nesting areas at Audubon-managed



sites to discourage people from entering the sites. Despite these efforts, people and dogs occasionally enter nesting enclosures, threatening the vulnerable nesting birds, eggs, and hatchlings.

“We believe that people who walk into bird-nesting areas at the beach have no intention of harming birds or wildlife,” said Ida Phillips, Communications Director at Audubon North Carolina. “Over the years, our conversations with beachgoers made us realize that many people are simply unaware that some bird species nest on the beach.”

To confirm this assumption, in November 2009 Audubon North Carolina hired a marketing firm to conduct a random survey of 600 residents of Pender, New Hanover, and

Brunswick counties to assess their awareness and attitudes about beach-nesting birds and conservation. Only 44% of those surveyed knew that some birds nest on the beach while 46% of respondents said that birds nest in trees or away from the beach.

Based on this survey and other research, Audubon North Carolina staff decided to reach out to beachgoers during the nesting and tourism season (which overlap). The Splinter Group, a Carrboro-based marketing agency, designed a “Good egg” public awareness campaign with some of the elements of a pledge drive.

Volunteer coordinator Marlene Eader and biological technician Brinkley Hutchings recruited and trained twenty volunteers to assist

*continued on next page*





## Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Decades of unregulated beach driving have pushed the birds at Cape Hatteras National Seashore — a globally significant Important Bird Area — to the brink. Populations of waterbirds that nest on the Seashore's beaches, like Least Terns and Black Skimmers, plummeted 84% from 1997 to 2007. Rare sea turtles were also suffering alarming declines. In the fall of 2007 Audubon and other conservation groups successfully pushed for a temporary science-based management plan, which, in just four years, has enabled these birds and turtles to make a comeback.

In 2011 nesting birds and sea turtles continued their recovery under science-based protection guidelines developed by Audubon and partners. Nesting terns, skimmers, plovers, and oystercatchers continued their success. During the 2011 nesting season biologists counted 147 sea turtle nests on the seashore, approaching the all-time record of 153 nests set in 2010.

In July 2011 the National Park Service proposed new, permanent regulations for off-road vehicle use on the Seashore's beaches that jeopardize much-needed wildlife protections and put the future for birds like the Piping Plover, Least Tern, Black Skimmer, and other shorebird species in doubt. The proposed regulation will control what happens at Cape Hatteras for decades and set a precedent for other national parks. As written, the regulation does not mandate specific, science-based protections for wildlife and it provides only a few areas for families to safely enjoy vehicle-free beaches.

Audubon and its partner organizations coordinated a citizen response to the proposed regulation and also submitted detailed comments to the National Park Service. Audubon is working to insure that the Park Service will revise the plan so that it guarantees adequate space and protections for wildlife, while still allowing responsible beach driving in some areas so that all visitors can fully enjoy this national treasure. The National Park Service will release the final off-road vehicle regulation for the Seashore before the end of the year.

Visit [www.preservehatteras.org](http://www.preservehatteras.org) and [www.nps.gov/caha/](http://www.nps.gov/caha/) to read about Audubon's efforts to maintain a balance between recreation and wildlife on the seashore.

## Coastal engineering

Despite a hard fight by conservation groups, Senate Bill 110 passed the N.C. General Assembly during the 2011 legislative session, toppling a ban on hardened structures on North Carolina beaches. The bill will allow up to four terminal groins to be built at inlets along the coast “under certain conditions.” Audubon North Carolina signed onto a letter with 32 other environmental groups urging Governor Beverly Perdue to veto the jetty bill, but the governor did not veto the bill. Terminal groins cause increased erosion, destroy habitat for birds, harm other wildlife, and will permanently scar North Carolina's beautiful coastline. Audubon North Carolina will continue to work with communities to monitor this issue.

## Become an Audubon activist

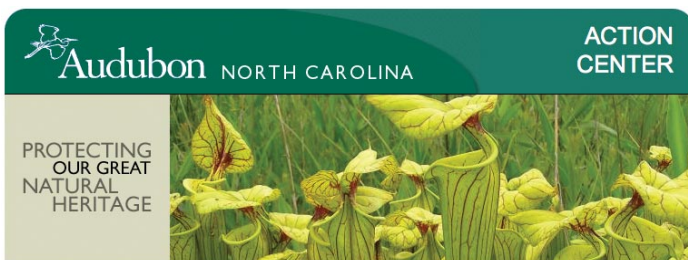
If you want to stay informed about the latest policy news, or receive our monthly e-newsletter, please sign up for our online action center by going to [ncaudubon.org](http://ncaudubon.org) and clicking on Take Action in the top right corner.

### *Good Egg, continued*

with the project. During two busy weekends in June and July 2011, the volunteers helped Audubon North Carolina staff talk to beachgoers at Wrightsville Beach and ask them to sign a pledge to “Be a good egg” and share the beach with nesting birds. Beachgoers who signed the pledge were given “Good Egg” magnets, t-shirts, bumper stickers, and bags in exchange, helping advertise the project to other beachgoers. At the time, hundreds of Least Terns and Black Skimmers were nesting at the south end of Wrightsville at Masonboro Inlet and Audubon staff stationed with spotting scopes helped beachgoers get close-up looks at the bird colony.

People can also take the Good Egg pledge online at [goodeggnc.org](http://goodeggnc.org), a website created by web designer Kyle Smalling. To date, 950 people have signed the pledge, either through the pledge drive at the beach or through the website. Stay tuned for news about how Audubon North Carolina will expand the project in the future.

Audubon North Carolina is grateful to Audubon/Toyota's TogetherGreen Innovation Grants program for funding the project, and thanks International Paper Foundation, Cape Fear Audubon Society, the Town of Wrightsville Beach, and New Hanover County for their support.



# Wings of Support

*Audubon North Carolina is deeply grateful to all the individuals, agencies, organizations, and foundations that supported our work this fiscal year, from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011. Thank you for your commitment to protecting birds and their habitats in North Carolina.*

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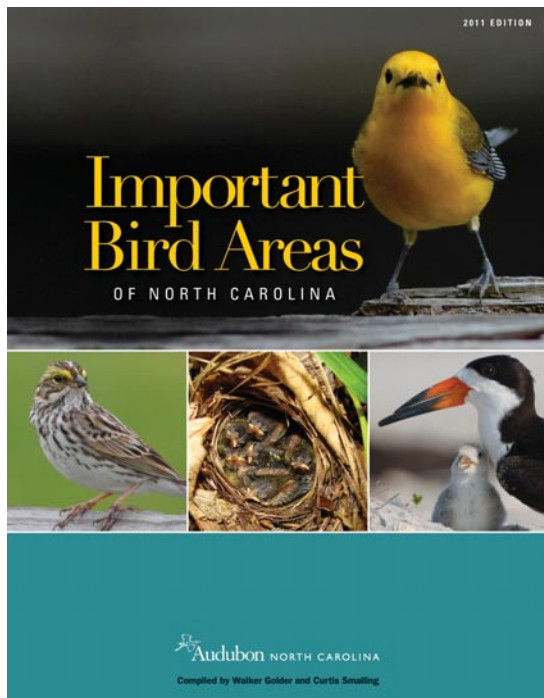
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# Latest edition of *Important Bird Areas of North Carolina* published



Audubon North Carolina has released a new edition of *Important Bird Areas of North Carolina*, a full-color publication (available online at [ncaudubonblog.org](http://ncaudubonblog.org)) with detailed descriptions of North Carolina's most critical bird habitats. The book features 96 sites comprising nearly 4.9 million acres. Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, are places that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds at some time during their annual cycle, including breeding, migration, and wintering periods. Well-known North Carolina IBAs include iconic landmarks such as Grandfather Mountain and Cape Lookout National Seashore. Nearly all of the state's IBAs include a state, federal, or nongovernmental conservation lands component, but many also contain a high percentage of privately owned and managed land.

"The IBA program is a wonderful tool for highlighting North Carolina's ecologically significant habitats and locations," said Curtis Smalling, IBA Coordinator and Mountain Program Manager for Audubon North Carolina. "IBAs provide so much more than just prime bird habitat. These special landscapes also provide clean drinking water, healthy populations of other species, and in many cases,

special opportunities for people to connect to nature through recreation, education, and engagement."

To date, 21 North Carolina IBAs have been approved by BirdLife International as globally significant, including the Amphibolite Mountains, which provide habitat for Golden-winged Warblers; the Sandhills, which sustain Red-cockaded Woodpeckers; and Lea-Hutaff Island, which is inhabited by Piping Plovers.

Each IBA account in the book includes a detailed site description, a map (except for sensitive waterbird islands that are not open to the public), and a table showing key bird species and abundance. The state's IBAs vary in size from just a few acres, as in the case of several small waterbird nesting islands on the coast, to coastal plain sites covering more than 300,000 acres.

Audubon North Carolina is distributing the publication in book and CD form to North Carolina land conservation agencies so they can utilize the information as they set priorities for public and private land conservation projects. The IBA program is not a regulatory initiative and places no restriction on land use or activities. Audubon staff works with managers of IBAs to support bird and habitat monitoring, habitat management, and education and advocacy efforts focused on birds. Virtually every conservation planning entity in the state recognizes IBAs as priority sites for long-term protection.

Hundreds of dedicated volunteer birders and Audubon chapter members assisted with gathering data for the new edition, by surveying Important Bird Areas, conducting species specific surveys and research, and participating in longstanding censuses like the Christmas Bird Count. Whether they are recording Cerulean Warbler songs to map territories, using playback to survey for Golden-winged Warblers, canoeing the quiet waters of the Lumber River, building observation platforms, or leading field trips, volunteers and agency staff across the state lead the way in working to conserve and share these Important Bird Areas.

IBA data is constantly updated and can be found at [ncaudubonblog.org](http://ncaudubonblog.org) and on the U.S. IBA website at [audubon.org/bird/iba](http://audubon.org/bird/iba).

The IBA program was created in Europe in 1981 as a program of BirdLife International. The National Audubon Society, as the U.S. partner of BirdLife International, launched the U.S. IBA program in 1995.



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## Audubon NC recognizes partners at annual meeting

At the 2011 Annual Meeting in Blowing Rock, Audubon North Carolina recognized several key partners with awards.

> Volunteer of the Year **Doris Ratchford** has made incredible contributions to Audubon's work. She has been instrumental in developing the Treasure Highlands website, updating the national IBA database for [ncaudubonblog.org](http://ncaudubonblog.org), and assisting High Country Audubon Society in a variety of capacities, including web design.

> **Bob Cherry** was named Honorary Warden in recognition of his tireless efforts to protect the birds and other natural resources of the Blue Ridge Parkway. He has worked with Audubon and other partners on Yellow-bellied Sapsucker research and a host of monitoring projects.

> Audubon awarded the **Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation** with the Bird Lore Bird Education Award. For many decades the Stewardship Foundation (formerly known as Grandfather Mountain, Inc.) has shared the wonders of Grandfather Mountain with hundreds of thousands of visitors. The staff demonstrates great professionalism and enthusiasm whether they are conducting programs for school children or conducting research on the flora and fauna of this IBA.

## Curtis Smalling named TogetherGreen Fellow

Curtis Smalling, Coordinator of the N.C. IBA Program and Mountain Program Manager, was named a TogetherGreen Fellow for 2011 (former staffer Angela Mangiameli and Education Director Andy Wood have also received Fellows awards). The award is given to 40 conservation professionals across the country annually and has a project-focused approach. Curtis will use his fellowship to provide guidance and decision-making resources to landowners and managers in priority IBAs for priority species, with an emphasis on involving Audubon chapters in this process.

This fall, Curtis participated in an intensive week of training at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia where he met the other fellows. "I am amazed, inspired, and energized by the other fellows and their projects," he reports. "It was a transformative week, and I know I met folks who I will be connected to for the rest of my career. The National Audubon staff, Toyota partners, and everyone involved in the program is just top notch and I look forward to learning about everyone's successful projects next year."

## We've moved to a new nest!

Please note that the main office of Audubon North Carolina has moved to a new location in Chapel Hill. Our new address is below; the phone and fax numbers remain the same.

Audubon North Carolina  
400 Silver Cedar Court, Suite 240  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
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Check out the blog at  
[www.ncaudubonblog.org](http://www.ncaudubonblog.org)

## PHOTO CREDITS

- Cover: Lena Gallitano by Ida Phillips
- p. 3: Black Skimmers by Walker Golder
- p. 4: Emily Beddoes by Lindsay Addison
- p. 6: Great Egret chicks and Katie Bullard by Lindsay Addison; Brown Pelicans by Walker Golder
- p. 7: Piping Plover by Walker Golder
- p. 8: Pine Island scenics, Spotted Sandpiper, and Northern Pintail by Mark Buckler
- p. 9: Lili Duriaux-Chavaria by Georges Duriaux; Curtis Smalling and students by Julia Roberts
- p. 10: Good Egg photos by Ida Phillips



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## audubon events

[VISIT [NCAUDUBON.ORG](http://NCAUDUBON.ORG) FOR MORE EVENT INFORMATION]

### Christmas Bird Count

**December 14, 2011 - January 5, 2012**

Tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in the annual Christmas Bird Count, which has become a family tradition and an invaluable citizen science project. The long term perspective made possible by the Christmas Bird Count is vital for conservationists. For more information, visit [christmasbirdcount.org](http://christmasbirdcount.org). For information about North Carolina counts, visit the Carolina Bird Club website at [carolinabirdclub.org](http://carolinabirdclub.org).

### Great Backyard Bird Count

**February 17-20, 2012**

This citizen science event is hosted by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count. Enter your results at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org), where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent.

### Bird Islands Cruise

**May 6, 2012**

The Cape Fear Garden Club sponsors this cruise out of Carolina Beach to see the pelican, wading bird, and tern colonies on Audubon-managed islands along the lower Cape Fear River.

Time: 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Price: \$35 adults, \$25 children 12 and under

Tickets available February 1.

To buy tickets, mail a check payable to "Cape Fear Garden Club" to Lower Cape Fear Cruise, c/o Stewart, 5084 Edinboro Lane, Wilmington, NC 28409. For more information, visit [www.capefeargardenclub.org](http://www.capefeargardenclub.org)

### Audubon North Carolina 2012 Annual Meeting

**Stay tuned!**

We are finalizing details for the annual meeting, which will be hosted by Cape Fear Audubon Society. We will mail a postcard to supporters this winter with more information and post updates on [www.ncaudubon.org](http://www.ncaudubon.org).

*We welcome your feedback! Contact Ida Phillips, Director of Communications, at [iphillips@audubon.org](mailto:iphillips@audubon.org) or 919.929.3899.*