



Audubon NORTH CAROLINA



Bettering the world through birding

Whether you're a casual backyard birdwatcher, or a serious twitcher (birder) who will risk life and limb chasing an elusive bird, you can contribute to the wealth of information that "citizen scientists" provide to organizations like National Audubon Society. Since the first Christmas Bird Count in 1900, Audubon has built a reputation as an organization that effectively utilizes an army of volunteer birders throughout the United States. Through large-scale, long-term projects like the Christmas Bird Count and the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), volunteer birders have compiled much of the vital information about the distribution and abundance of almost every land-based bird species in the United States.

In addition to these long standing efforts, more recent projects of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology such as the Great Backyard Bird Count and eBird (see sidebar) are helping build large scale, robust datasets that are revealing new insights about birds and their behavior. For example, the 2009 Audubon Birds and Climate Change report demonstrated how several species in the United States are making a noticeable shift northward because of climate change (see <http://birdsandclimate.audubon.org>.)

In one of the best uses of eBird data to date, in 2010 Cornell researchers released seasonal distribution maps that show the abundance of birds across the United States as the seasons change. These maps utilize a number of data sources, primarily eBird records submitted by volunteers. Among

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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.

www.ncaudubon.org

Main Office

123 Kingston Drive, Suite 206

Chapel Hill, NC 27514-1651

919.929.3899

919.929.4599 Fax

Heather Starck, Executive Director

hstarck@audubon.org

Anne G. Brown, Executive Assistant

agbrown@audubon.org

Karen Fernandez, Director of Development

kfernandez@audubon.org

Ida Phillips, Director of Communications

iphillips@audubon.org

Margaret Scott, Office Manager

msscott@audubon.org

Coastal Office & Sanctuaries

7741 Market Street, Unit D

Wilmington, NC 28411-9444

910.686.7527

910.686.7587 Fax

Lindsay Addison, Coastal Biologist

laddison@audubon.org

Katie Bullard, Biological Technician

kbullard@audubon.org

Walker Golder, Deputy Director

wgolder@audubon.org

Andy Wood, Education Director

awood@audubon.org

Mountain Office

667 George Moretz Lane

Boone, NC 28607

828.265.0198

Curtis Smalling, Coordinator NC IBA

Program & Mountain Program Manager

csmalling@audubon.org

Pine Island Sanctuary

Donal C. O'Brien, Jr.

Audubon Sanctuary and

Center at Pine Island

300 Audubon Drive

Corolla, NC, 28607

252.453.0603

252.453.0603 fax

Mark Buckler, Director

mbuckler@audubon.org

Chandler Sawyer

Habitat and Resource Manager

csawyer@audubon.org

heather starck joins Audubon North Carolina as Executive Director



Audubon North Carolina is delighted to inform our supporters that Heather Starck joined our organization as Executive Director on March 14. Heather came to North Carolina from Columbus, Ohio, where she had been the Director of National Audubon Society's Grange Insurance Audubon Center since 2004. Heather replaced former executive director Chris Canfield, who became National Audubon Society's Vice President for Gulf of Mexico Conservation and Restoration in September 2010.

"I am delighted that Heather has joined Audubon North Carolina as Executive Director," said Joe Bearden, Chairman of Audubon NC's Board of Trustees. "Her experiences will serve her well in this key leadership position and I look forward to

seeing her commitment to birds, conservation, and Audubon in action."

Reflecting on her move to North Carolina, Heather said: "My journey in the conservation field has been a great preparation to lead Audubon North Carolina. As state director I will combine my passion for bird conservation and engaging people with my experience as a leader and with fundraising. I am honored to join such an amazing team of people and continue my career with Audubon."

Heather led all efforts to create the new Grange Insurance Audubon Center, including developing the vision and business plan, completing a \$14.5M capital campaign, managing design and construction of a LEED Gold certified 18,000-square-foot center, and assembling a talented staff that is winning awards for innovation in program design. All of the Center's programs are directly working to meet conservation outcomes from the conservation plan developed for the Scioto River-Greenlawn Important Bird Area.

Heather played a prominent role in the Columbus community, serving on Mayor Coleman's Green Team and Young Professionals Commission, completing a fellowship for Emerging Women Leaders of Columbus, and serving on a variety of task forces and host committees. New Audubon President and CEO, David Yarnold, selected Heather to serve on a steering committee of 12 people to draft a new strategic plan for the organization.

Heather started her career with National Audubon Society in 2000 when she managed the Everglades Education Center for Audubon of Florida. Working with students from the urban core of Miami, Heather and her team led field study programs in Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge, Everglades National Park, Biscayne Bay National Park, and John Pennekamp State Park.

She spent several years working on marine biology initiatives, including stints at the Miami Seaquarium and the Mote Marine Laboratory, where she worked on shark tagging studies and dolphin surveys. Heather also spent two years managing the Monteverde Butterfly Garden in Costa Rica. Heather received her Bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. She is based at Audubon North Carolina's headquarters in Chapel Hill.

With a grassroots presence extending from Highlands to the Cape Fear region, North Carolina

chapters are involved in all sorts of conservation activities, from on-the-ground bird surveys to battling threats to North Carolina's wild places.

We urge all Audubon NC members to become even more involved with their local chapter. You can start by checking out their websites (listed in the sidebar to the right) and signing up for an upcoming field trip, bird survey, or event. We think you will enjoy making a deeper connection to Audubon's community of conservation-minded people.

Thank you to all of our chapters for everything you do for North Carolina's birds, wildlife, and people.

Chapter highlights: 2009-2010

- Number of chapters in North Carolina: 10
- Number of Audubon members in NC chapters: 8,134
- Number of chapter volunteers in 2009-2010: 713
- Total volunteer hours in 2009-2010: 11,227
- Number of field trips offered in 2009-2010: 235
- Audubon Society of Forsyth County organized several Citizen Science events, including Christmas Bird Counts, a Hawkwatch, and Breeding Bird Surveys.
- Cape Fear Audubon Society launched a bird-friendly habitat program.
- Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society organized several spring bird counts in Buncombe County and continues to manage the Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary.
- Great Smoky Mountains Audubon Society formed as a new Audubon chapter.
- High Country Audubon Society continues to grow as a new chapter and is organizing and hosting the 2011 Audubon NC annual meeting from May 20-22.

- Highlands Plateau Audubon Society hosted a very successful Audubon NC Annual Meeting that had great attendance from members all over the state.
- Mecklenburg Audubon Society organized the first Catawba River Hawkwatch and restarted spring bird counts.
- New Hope Audubon Society collaborated with several partners to build a Bald Eagle observation platform at Jordan Lake, an Important Bird Area.
- T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society organized a day long bioblitz at Price Park in Greensboro.
- Wake Audubon Society started a Junior Naturalist program that's introducing a younger audience to Audubon and has become a model for other chapters.

Great Smoky Mountains Audubon Society

Congratulations to our newest (and tenth!) chapter in North Carolina – the Great Smoky Mountains Audubon Society (GSMAS). The National Audubon Society announced on March 1, 2011, that GSMAS had qualified for Provisional Status. For most purposes, provisional status is equivalent to permanent status.

The mission of GSMAS is to promote an awareness and appreciation of nature and to encourage responsible environmental stewardship through education, protection, conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Based in Maggie Valley, the chapter has already been active in the N.C. Birding Trail, hawk watching, and other projects.

GSMAS meets the second Tuesday of the month from April through October. For more information or to become a GSMAS member contact info@gsmas.com or go to the website at gsmas.com.

Audubon North Carolina Chapters

Audubon Society of Forsyth County

PO Box 15111
Winston Salem, NC 27103
President: Ron Morris
ronmorris@triad.rr.com
www.forsythaudubon.org

Cape Fear Audubon Society

PO Box 414, Wilmington, NC 28402
President: Charley Winterbauer
cewinterbauer@yahoo.com
www.capefearaudubon.org

Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society

PO Box 18711, Asheville, NC 28814-0711
President: Charlotte Goedsche
goedsche@mindspring.com
<http://emasnc.org/>

Great Smoky Mountains Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1262
Maggie Valley, NC 28751
President: Christine Gibson
cbgibson7@gmail.com
<http://gsmas.com>

High Country Audubon Society

PO Box 3746, Boone, NC 28607
President: Anita Clemmer
anclemmer@att.net
www.highcountryaudubon.org

Highlands Plateau Audubon Society

PO Box 833, Highlands, NC 28741
President: Don Shure
djshure@bellsouth.net
www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org

Mecklenburg Audubon Society

PO Box 221093, Charlotte, NC 28222
President: Rob Bierregaard
rbierreg@uncc.edu
www.meckbirds.org

New Hope Audubon Society

PO Box 2693, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
President: Norm Budnitz
nbudnitz@gmail.com
www.newhopeaudubon.org

T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society

PO Box 10157, Greensboro, NC 27404
www.tgpearsonaudubon.org

Wake Audubon Society

PO Box 12452, Raleigh, NC 27605
President: Gerry Luginbuhl
gerry_luginbuhl@ncsu.edu
www.wakeaudubon.org



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other things, the maps dramatically illustrate how highly migratory species travel into and out of the United States. They also demonstrate how detection rates change through the annual cycle of resident species such as Northern Cardinal or Brown-headed Nuthatch. Audubon staff are now talking to eBird researchers about how to use this information to delineate the best places for woodland species along the Atlantic Flyway in the eastern United States. For more information and to view the dynamic maps visit www.ebird.org.

Audubon North Carolina is using this type of citizen science data to make the case for IBA designation, global prioritization, and to update the Important Bird Areas of North Carolina publication that will be released in the near future. The N.C. Natural Heritage Program also uses the data collected by Audubon citizen scientists to inform the North Carolina Comprehensive Conservation Plan (available at www.onencnaturally.org).

Some bird species are distributed in such a way that makes it impossible to estimate the health of their populations. In these cases, Audubon biologists use specialized surveys to provide more specific information on high priority species and those that are harder to detect. In North Carolina, volunteers with the Adopt an IBA (Important Bird Area) program have helped with surveys for Nightjars, Golden-winged Warblers, Painted Buntings, Peregrine Falcons, Chimney Swifts, migrant shorebirds, Cerulean Warblers, and American Oystercatchers. As well, nine of Audubon's North Carolina chapters have adopted Important Bird Areas and provide invaluable information that supplements data gathered by Audubon's field staff.

Just a few citizen science stories illustrate how volunteers make a tremendous contribution to bird conservation in North Carolina.

The Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society (EMAS) has adopted the Bull Creek IBA, a site on the Blue Ridge Parkway that supports one of North Carolina's most significant populations of the Cerulean Warbler. This Audubon WatchList species forages and nests higher in the canopy than many other warbler species and has declined by 3.2% per year since nationwide Breeding Bird Surveys began in 1966. Chapter president Charlotte Goedsche began monitoring Cerulean Warblers at the IBA in 2000. In 2005, she began recording male Cerulean's songs in order to distinguish between individuals and map each male's territory. Her work has shown that the Bull Creek population appears to be stable or increasing at 18-20 pairs.

EMAS has also expanded its commitment to Ceruleans to the species' wintering range. Cerulean Warblers winter on the eastern slope of the Andes where they inhabit remnants of native forest and shade-grown coffee plantations. Research in South America shows that 60-90% of

the habitat on the species' wintering grounds has been destroyed. In its 2010 Birdathon, EMAS raised \$3,744 that was used to purchase approximately 37 acres at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve/Corridor in Colombia, South America. ProAves Colombia owns and operates this reserve at the core of the Cerulean's wintering range. The chapter plans to devote future Birdathon funds to Cerulean Warbler conservation on the wintering grounds. To learn more about the Birdathon, visit <http://emasnc.org>.

In 2004, Wake Audubon Society adopted the Lumber River IBA. This project has attracted some of Wake Audubon's best birders — but the chapter invites birders of all skill levels to participate. “Our commitment to studying this site will continue for years to come, and we are excited to see what the data show as our volunteers hike, paddle, and bushwhack deeper into the swampy lands surrounding



the site,” says the chapter website (www.wakeaudubon.org). So far volunteers have documented more than 120 species of birds in the IBA, including more than 70 species found there during the breeding season. Northern Parula, Prothonotary Warbler, and Yellow-throated Warbler are well represented at high densities along the Lumber, as well as other species typical of this habitat type.

For more than 35 years, members of Audubon Society of Forsyth County have been observing the fall migration of Broad-winged Hawks and other raptors from

Little Pinnacle at Pilot Mountain State Park (an IBA) in Surry County. Pilot Mountain is a key corridor for migrating raptors, with between 1,500 to 10,000 raptors seen there annually. Broad-winged Hawk is the most abundant species during the watch, followed by Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Osprey, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. Pilot Mountain is one of about 200 sites that submit data to the Hawk Migration Association of North America, which tracks raptor numbers from Canada to Veracruz, Mexico. Visit www.forsythaudubon.org/HawkWatch/HawkWatch.html for more information.

It's not surprising that these types of citizen science endeavors not only benefit birds, but also have a lasting positive effect on the person peering through the binoculars. “When people get out there and help monitor birds they start to have a real sense of responsibility for the birds they



encounter,” says Curtis Smalling, Coordinator, NC IBA program. “Nothing provides a stronger connection for people than knowing how their local bird communities are doing. That is true for the increases and range expansions as much as for the declines and disappearances of some of our favorite species from our neighborhoods and natural areas. All birders look for ‘old friends’ to return each spring and they get discouraged if they don't see them, and reassured if they do. That immediate personal experience often spurs people to take action for conservation.”

Upcoming volunteer opportunities

- Audubon biologists are looking for volunteers to help survey Red-headed Woodpeckers in several IBAs, including Jordan Lake, Upper Pee Dee, Falls Lake, and Upper Neuse River. These surveys will help Audubon nominate IBAs for global status for this species.
- We are also looking for volunteer birders to help survey Golden-winged Warblers in the mountains.

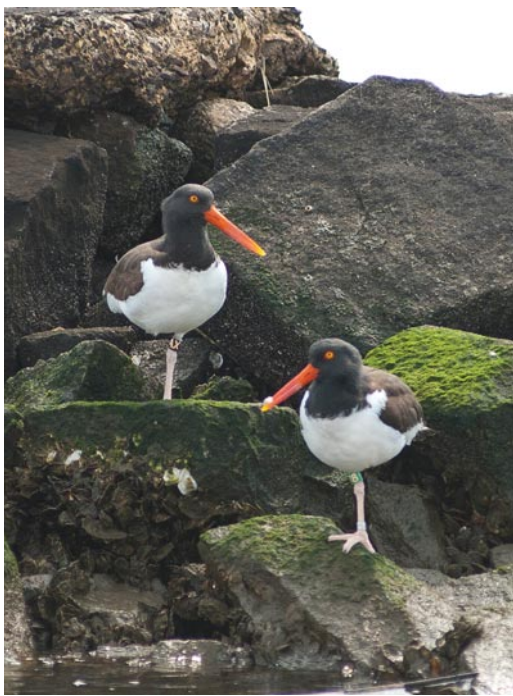
For more information, contact Curtis Smalling at csmalling@audubon.org or 828.265.0198.

eBird...the greatest thing since...binoculars?

If you haven't checked out eBird, take a look. A real-time, online bird checklist program, eBird has revolutionized the way the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird is amassing one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence. eBird is useful not only to bird watchers but to scientists and conservationists all over the world. You can access your own bird records on eBird at any time, allowing you to look at your observations in new ways and to answer your questions about what birds you saw and when and where you saw them. Visit www.ebird.org.

Great Backyard Bird Count

An estimated 60,000 bird watchers of all ages took part in the 2011 count held February 18-21. Participants identified 596 species and filed 11.4 million individual bird observations. As always, North Carolina birders had a great showing: the state came in fourth for number of checklists submitted and Charlotte came in second among cities submitting the most checklists. Their reports provide useful information to scientists tracking changes in the numbers and movements of birds from year to year, just as winter is about to melt into spring. Learn more at www.birdcount.org.



coastal update

North Carolina's winter Oystercatchers

On a cold, windy day in February, Audubon Biologists Lindsay Addison and Katie Bullard peered through binoculars at a flock of American Oystercatchers resting calmly on “the rocks” in the lower Cape Fear River. Among this group of seventeen adults and three juveniles were two banded birds; one was a North Carolina bird signified by a green band and the other was a Massachusetts bird with a black band. The letter and number code on the bands identify the individual and this information will help determine where and when these birds were banded. Banded birds provide an important piece of information that will help Audubon biologists better understand American Oystercatcher survival, migration, winter habitats, and demographics.

For the past two years, Audubon has worked in cooperation with N.C. State University, U.S. Geological Survey, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and other state and federal partners on a comprehensive study of American Oystercatchers in North Carolina. The goal of the study is to better understand

this interesting shorebird along the entire coast throughout the year.

The winter component of the study is revealing interesting results. So far, the study has shown that the lower Cape Fear River supports the state's largest wintering population with 277 oystercatchers, followed by Back Sound between Morehead City and Cape Lookout (212), Masonboro Sound (126), and Audubon's Sanctuaries near Ocracoke (69). Biologists have located primary high tide roost sites where oystercatchers gather to rest, digest, and conserve energy while foraging habitats are inundated, as well as secondary high tide roost sites, which are used during high winds and storms. We have also determined that nearly one-third of oystercatchers banded in North Carolina remain in the state during the winter; most of the others winter from South Carolina to the Gulf Coast of Florida. Not too surprisingly, American Oystercatchers from northern states stop here during migration or spend the winter in North Carolina. Lastly, and unlike during the breeding season, human disturbance during the winter is low at the key wintering sites.

The results from this study will shape the future conservation of this species.

Piping Plovers connect North Carolina to The Bahamas

The Bahamas has long been recognized as an important wintering area for many birds that breed in the United States and Canada. Only recently have biologists discovered that it is an important wintering area for Piping Plovers.

For a two week period every five years, biologists, birders, and other interested volunteers search throughout the species' winter range and document every Piping Plover they find as part of the International Piping Plover Census. In 2001, 35 Piping Plovers were documented in The Bahamas. In 2006, with a more intense effort and broader coverage, participants found 417 Piping Plovers. The results indicated that the Bahamas ranked third behind Texas and Florida in the number of wintering Piping Plovers. But even with the widespread International Census effort, less than 50% of the known breeding population is documented on the known wintering range. The whereabouts of at least some of the remaining 50% of the population not recorded during the winter census has



remained a mystery, but the answer could lie in the islands of The Bahamas.

Re-sightings of Piping Plovers banded in the Bahamas have shown that most of the plovers are from the Atlantic Coast population, including North Carolina. In early 2011, Audubon biologists Lindsay Addison and Katie Bullard documented two banded Piping Plovers on the Lea-Hutaff Island IBA that wintered on Andros Island in The Bahamas. Other individuals banded in The Bahamas have been observed on Cape Lookout National Seashore.

To learn more about the distribution and abundance of Piping Plovers in the Bahamas, biologists from the United States, Canada, and The Bahamas, including representatives from National Audubon Society, Bahamas National Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Canadian Wildlife Service, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Coastal Bird Conservation Program, and others from North Carolina, South Carolina, and New Jersey teamed up to expand the census coverage in 2011. Matt Jeffery, Audubon's International Alliances Program, and Walker Golder, Deputy Director of Audubon North Carolina, represented National Audubon Society.

This expanded effort documented more than 1,000 Piping Plovers wintering in The Bahamas (preliminary data from U.S. Geological Survey), including two new sites that meet the threshold for globally-significant Important Bird Area status. All of the 2011 data from the winter census has not yet been released, but it appears that The Bahamas supports one of the largest known concentrations of wintering Piping Plovers. Given the data from banding studies, it is also clear that most of the Piping Plovers wintering in the Bahamas are from the Atlantic Coast breeding population, including Piping Plovers that use North Carolina habitats as migration stopover sites and breeding sites.

Piping Plovers spend over half of their annual cycle away from their breeding sites. The habitats they depend on during migration and winter are just as important as breeding habitats; they must have both. Piping Plovers will benefit from this new information and those that occur along the North Carolina coast will benefit as well.

— Walker Golder, Deputy Director

Fifth graders give beach-nesting birds a helping hand

With guidance from school counselor Cissie Brooks, a group of fifth graders from Wrightsville Beach

Elementary School have been immersed in a creative conservation project this year. As part of a unit on coastal birds, the students designed compelling artwork to post on signs marking Audubon's coastal bird sanctuaries. On March 23, more than 50 students and parents traveled to Mason Inlet Waterbird Management Area to post signs adorned with their great artwork. Birds like Least Terns and Black Skimmers nest in this Audubon-managed sanctuary at the north end of Wrightsville Beach in the spring and summer.

Many thanks to all the students, parents, and Cissie Brooks for their commitment to North Carolina's birdlife. And many thanks to Toyota's TogetherGreen Fellowship Award program and the International Paper Foundation for their support of this project.

Fire is an important management tool in coastal marsh habitats; burning increases plant production and prohibits the invasion of woody species into the marsh ecosystem. Audubon staff conducts prescribed burns as a management tool in the 2,000+ acres of marsh at the Pine Island Sanctuary and Audubon Center. Several of the large marsh islands on the south end of the sanctuary will be burned this year and the remaining marsh will be burned on a rotational basis as deemed necessary by the manager.

Chandler Sawyer, Resource and Habitat Manager, ignites the marsh as part of a prescribed burn plan at Pine Island. (far right)



pine island update



Register now for a summer field trip at Pine Island

This summer we are delighted to offer a variety of field trips at the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Audubon Sanctuary and Center at Pine Island. Located on the northern Outer Banks, this 2,600-acre wildlife oasis offers people the opportunity to view birds and wildlife and escape the summer crowds of the Outer Banks. Pine Island's diverse landscape protects marshes along Currituck Sound, bottomland areas, and upland maritime forest. The sanctuary is home to 159 species of birds that inhabit the waters, marshes, and surrounding woodlands, from Brown Pelicans to Prairie Warblers, depending on the season. The trips are open to anyone and everyone so please spread the word! And, the field trips are likely to fill up fast, so please register soon.

Summer birding and nature walks

**Every Tuesday from
June through September
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.
Fee: \$10**

Take a casual walk around the Audubon Sanctuary in search of some of the Sanctuary's birds while also learning about the natural and cultural history of Pine Island. We will explore the maritime forest and marsh trails to look for warblers, sparrows, ospreys, and other nesting species. Beginners and experienced birders are welcome on this informal walk. Please bring sunscreen, water, comfortable walking shoes, and insect repellent. Bring binoculars and/or cameras if you like.

Please register for the above programs in advance by calling the Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary at 252-453-0603 or emailing mbuckler@audubon.org. You can pay with cash or check at the time of the program. All trips meet at the Pine Island Sanctuary and Audubon Center, 300 Audubon Drive, Corolla, North Carolina.

Nature digital photography basics

**Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Time: Every Thursday from June through
August
Fee: \$20**

Join Center Director and nature photographer Mark Buckler on a photography workshop that will quickly improve your image-making skills. Although not necessary, you are welcome to bring your camera and if time permits you will receive some in-the-field instruction. This program is intended for novice photographers, but experienced photographers are also welcome. A presentation and slideshow of some of Mark's favorite photos will also serve as a learning opportunity.

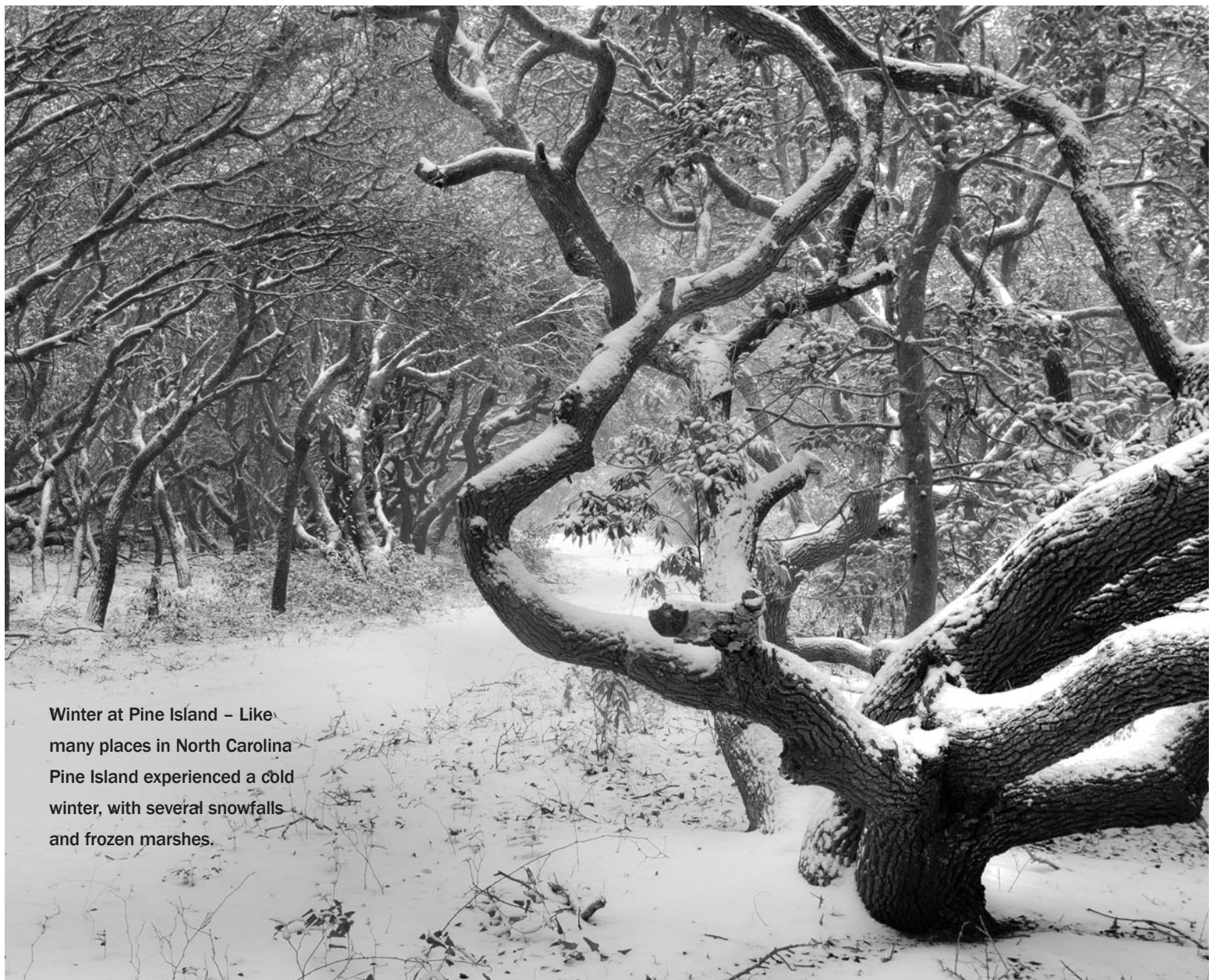
Kayaking Pine Island

**Various times from
May through Labor Day**

Tour some of Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary's 2,000+ acres of marsh via kayak. Learn the natural history of Currituck Sound as well as some local history. Miles of secluded water trails make this arguably the most intricate marsh maze on the Outer Banks. One of the unique features of this tour is the solitude you will experience. Kayaks are provided for this special trip and no kayaking experience is necessary. More information is available at www.outerbankskayaktours.com/kayak-tours.htm.

Please call Coastal Kayak at 252-261-6262 or 252-441-3393 to make reservations or register online on their website at www.outerbankskayaktours.com.

Impoundment success - Locals reported that there were more ducks in the Currituck Sound region this winter than they had seen in decades. Pine Island held large numbers of Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Black Ducks, and Mallards in the half dozen impoundments that are managed on the property.



Winter at Pine Island – Like many places in North Carolina Pine Island experienced a cold winter, with several snowfalls and frozen marshes.



mountain update

Intern contributes to a variety of conservation projects

The mountain program was fortunate to work with intern Julia Roberts this year. A student at Watauga High School, Julia has helped with a variety of projects, including data entry, building a filter list for an eBird portal for Nicaragua, and helping with an analysis of Watchlist and other priority species in North Carolina. She is working on a capstone project with young students at Valle Crucis Elementary to get children outside. And she has worked on a project to make the new LEED-certified Watauga High School more bird-friendly by reducing window strikes (birds colliding with windows). It has been a great pleasure to work with Julia and she made valuable contributions to our work. Many thanks to Julia and her parents, Mike and Mary Louise Roberts.

Nicaragua in the news

Our partners in Nicaragua continue to do great work and research for the Golden-winged Warbler, Wood Thrush, and other species. We are working with Fauna and Flora International on the first meeting in Nicaragua for all of the managers

of their 33 Important Bird Areas (IBAs). In March, Audubon North Carolina chapter members took an extended trip to Nicaragua to see some of the sites where we are working in the country. Thanks to Dave Davenport of EcoQuest Travel for his support of this adventure. We recently completed an eBird filter for Nicaragua for the eBird office, making it possible for anyone working in or traveling to Nicaragua to enter their sightings into this online database.

The May/June 2011 issue of Audubon magazine features a great article about Golden-winged Warbler conservation in Nicaragua and North Carolina. Raleigh-based outdoor and nature writer T. Edward Nickens penned the piece, which features Curtis Smalling with Audubon NC.

Managing land for birds

Thanks to support from the Grace Jones Richardson Trust, the Mountain program has moved into the business of direct, on-the-ground conservation projects within some of our high priority IBAs. Working with private landowners and groups, ANC staff has consulted and written management guidance for more than 2,000 acres of land so far this year and expect to complete

management guidance or agreements on more than 14,000 acres by the end of 2011. The properties are as varied as state parks, community parks, private lands, farms, and developments. Using tools such as the Farm Bill Program and the Forest Stewardship program of the N.C. Division of Forest Resources, ANC staff is working hard to protect acres for birds in the mountains. In one project, ANC is working with the Blue Ridge Parkway on a native warm season grass conversion funded by private donors and the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation.

Treasure Highlands underway

In the last newsletter we announced that we had received an award from the National Science Foundation in support of our Treasure Highlands project. Thanks go to our own Andy Wood, Patrick Brannon, director of the Highlands Nature Center, Sonya Carpenter with the Highlands Biological Station, and Russ Regnery with the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society, who attended a three day workshop on citizen science at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia. Look for more updates in the fall newsletter.

– Curtis Smalling, Coordinator, NC IBA Program

Draw a line in the sand against hardened structures

North Carolina's pristine barrier islands are the envy of the nation. And now they are under direct attack by misguided legislation. If state legislators pass Senate Bill 110, it will undo a 26-year-old ban on hardened structures on our beaches. At press time, the bill had passed the N.C. Senate and was in the N.C. House. **Visit our Action Center at <http://nc.audubonaction.org> where you can contact your State Representative and tell them to oppose SB 110 and any rollbacks to our beach protection laws.**

Background

Terminal groins are small jetties built at inlets in a short-sighted effort to control erosion and protect private property. These structures trap sand on one side and deprive sand on the other. They cause increased erosion on downdrift beaches, harm wildlife, and will forever scar North Carolina's beautiful coastline.

North Carolina has had a ban on hardened structures along its beaches since 1985 for many good reasons:

- Hardened structures encourage development in highly hazardous locations, increasing risks and costs to all.
- Allowing the construction of terminal groins will create a domino effect, as additional groins will be demanded to offset the erosion caused by the first groin.
- Such structures hurt wildlife that depends on the natural movements of inlets to renew habitat and replenish food sources. They eliminate habitat for beach-nesting birds including Least Terns, Common Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers.
- Groins cost as much as \$10.8 million to build and \$2.25 million/ year to maintain. The cost of one groin could pay the salaries of 200 public school teachers. (From N.C. Coastal Federation)

Please visit our action center at <http://nc.audubonaction.org> and voice your opposition to Senate Bill 110.

Cape Hatteras update

As reported in the Fall/Winter Newsletter, 2010 was another record-breaking year for nesting sea turtles and bird species such as Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers at Cape Hatteras National Seashore under temporary rules for off-road vehicle (ORV) use.

At press time, the National Park Service was conducting an internal review of the final management plan for Cape Hatteras National Seashore, which will establish rules for managing beach driving within the seashore. When the plan is released, Audubon and our partner groups will evaluate the plan to ensure it balances the interests of all seashore users and fulfills the park service's responsibility to protect the seashore's natural resources, including rare sea turtles, birds, and their young. Once the Park Service publishes the plan in the Federal Register, a 60-day public comment period will open. **Stay tuned for an action alert about this issue in the coming months.**

Background

As a unit of the National Park Service, Cape Hatteras has been required for decades under federal law to establish a regulation for the use of ORVs. The Park Service is also required to protect park resources and wildlife "in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

The Park Service released a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on November 15, 2010. The preferred alternative within that document falls short of the U.S. Department of Interior's own scientists' recommendations regarding the measures needed to protect wildlife within the national park. The park service's preferred plan in the FEIS allows ORV use on the majority of the seashore. Twenty-eight of the seashore's 67 miles are set aside as year-round ORV routes, with only 26 miles designated as year-round vehicle-free areas for pedestrians, families, and wildlife. The remaining 13 miles of seashore are seasonally open to ORVs. The plan also proposes new parking facilities, ORV ramps, and water shuttles to increase visitor access.

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 action center by visiting <http://nc.audubonaction.org>.



Invest in Audubon North Carolina's future with a planned gift

Since moving from Ohio to North Carolina, Susan and David Baker have joined the T. Gilbert Pearson Society and have also named Audubon North Carolina as a beneficiary of their estate. We asked the Bakers to tell us a little bit of their story.

A few years ago, David, a retired college professor and university administrator, and I, a former college fundraiser, moved to North Carolina to begin a new chapter in our lives. We were attracted to the Raleigh area for its gentle climate, proximity to mountains and sea, and the amenities provided by major universities and a diverse economy.

We settled in a townhouse in Cary which backs up to a pond and is just a few minutes' walk from a larger lake and the American Tobacco Trail. We did not explicitly list "bird friendly habitat" as a necessary condition in our home search, but that notion became a part of what we would identify as intrinsically attractive. The first night in our new home a Barred Owl kept us awake for an hour. The next morning a hummingbird arrived on the deck looking insistently for food. The nectar feeder was filled and placed

Audubon invites friends who share a commitment to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats to consider making a personal investment in the future of our conservation and education programs through one of the following giving techniques:

- Make a current gift of cash, appreciated stocks, mutual funds, or real estate.
- Include a bequest to Audubon in your will.
- Name Audubon as a beneficiary of the assets remaining in your retirement plan at your passing.
- Make a current gift which will pay secure lifetime income to you (and to your family if you wish), and the remainder to Audubon.

To find out more, go to www.audubon.org or call Karen Fernandez, Director of Development at 919-929-3899 or email kfernandez@audubon.org.

long before I went to the grocery store to stock my own pantry! Since then we have been amused by herons and kingfishers swapping perch time on a single favored branch, bluebirds rummaging for breakfast in our gutters, and the jaw dropping times this winter when a mature bald eagle scoured our lake looking for a meal, not forty feet above our heads. In the four years since, more and more of the land has been cleared for housing but the wildlife has remained, continuing to amaze us with its adaptability.

In exploring more of our beautiful adopted state, the Mason Inlet habitat area has become a frequent destination for us. We have been astounded at the bird population there and sometimes disoriented by how much the shoreline and dunes shift at the command of Nature. The Mason Inlet project is just one of the many significant efforts Audubon North Carolina undertakes to protect wildlife, reverse habitat decline, and emphasize educational outreach.

David and I can and do make a small difference each day in our own back yard, and in our own lifestyle practices. We have always supported Audubon at least modestly, to make the gesture of participating in larger state, national, and global conservation and research efforts. The decision to support Audubon at a higher level and to include Audubon in our estate plans signifies our wish to help secure a strong future for these efforts, so that there is never a day when one birdsong, or many, disappear from our backyards and those of the world.



– Susan Baker



Many thanks

to Audubon North Carolina supporters

Audubon North Carolina thanks the International Paper Foundation and Toyota's TogetherGreen Fellowship program for supporting our work with students at Wrightsville Beach Elementary School who are learning to "share the beach" with beach nesting birds. The children created art that is being used on signs at enclosures where birds nest, helped remove invasive plants to restore habitat for these birds, and helped post the signs.

We also thank these foundations and government contributors:

- Educational Foundation of America for supporting our Important Bird Area program and for general operating support
- New Hanover County for supporting habitat management of Mason Inlet
- NOAA for our continued work on derelict crab pot data collection and removal
- Toyota's TogetherGreen Innovation Grant for supporting our social marketing initiative
- NCDENR Urban and Community Forestry Grant for supporting our private landowner forest education program in the mountain region
- NFWF Keystone Initiative Funding for supporting research on American Oystercatchers, a keystone species
- Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for providing funding for our Coastal Policy Initiatives through June 2010
- Moore Charitable Foundation for supporting 2010 and

2011 Coastal Policy Initiatives

- Theo Davis Printing for becoming a Corporate Sponsor of our full color newsletter

Donations help secure boats for mountain and coastal programs

Many thanks to Karen and Joe Bearden, Great Outdoor Provision Company, Raleigh, and Hurricane Kayaks for their work to secure a kayak for the IBA program. The boat will allow Mountain Program Manager Curtis Smalling to conduct bird surveys in previously inaccessible locations in Important Bird Areas like the New River.

Audubon North Carolina's coastal biologists rely on dependable boats to access the many island sanctuaries they protect and monitor throughout the year. Many thanks to the people listed below, who helped acquire a new 23' Jones Brothers Bateau boat for the coastal program.

Karen and Joe Bearden
Audrey Booth
Betty and Norm Camp
Kelly Davis
Linda and Larry Davis
Kerstin and Bob Doherty
John B. Ennis
Sheila and Alex Ewing
John O. Fussell III
Kathy Laguna and John Gerwin
Lonna Harkrader
Mary and Jonathan Howes

Jones Brothers Marine
Manufacturing, Inc.
Ernest C. Marshall
Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation
Ron Morris
Esther and Len Pardue
Bonnie Parker
Emma Seeley
Virginia Travis
Lindsay Veins
Barbara and Rick Yates

MIGRATIONS



A native of southwest Florida, **Coastal Biologist Lindsay Addison** grew up with access to the mangrove forests and barrier islands of the Ten Thousand Islands thanks to her biologist father and his boat. Lindsay studied biology and English at Stetson University as an undergraduate and earned a Master of Science degree from Florida Gulf Coast University. Her thesis research compared Least Tern reproductive success and nesting ecology on beach and rooftop colonies. While attending graduate school, Lindsay also taught undergraduate courses and monitored sea turtles. After graduating, Lindsay worked for several years at various avian research projects, most of which contributed to long-term demographic data sets. She has worked with Common and Roseate Terns in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts; monitored nesting wading birds in the Everglades; and banded passerines in northern

California. Most recently, Lindsay counted and banded migrating raptors for the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory and worked at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Florida where she monitored shorebirds, posted colonies, and partnered with the local Audubon Society chapter to start a colony stewardship program. Lindsay started with Audubon in January and is enjoying getting to know the North Carolina coast and its birds.

Biological Technician Katie Bullard is a North Carolina native who joined the staff of Audubon North Carolina in February. Katie attended Appalachian State University and earned a degree in Ecology and Environmental Biology, with a concentration in sustainable development. While completing her studies, Katie participated in her first research project with the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker in eastern North Carolina. After interning with the Soil and Water Conservation District of Wake County, Katie moved to South Florida to pursue her interests in marine mammal research. She assisted with a long-term study on anthropogenic effects of the Florida Keys tourism industry on the bottlenose dolphin. Most recently, she served as a research biologist for the manatee program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, where she participated in multiple research topics, rescue and protection efforts, carcass salvage, as well as managing the photo identification database. She also assisted with outreach programs for the Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program, and is looking forward to spreading the program in eastern North Carolina as well. Katie has always had a love for wildlife and the great outdoors, and is thrilled to be part of Audubon's mission. She enjoys paddleboarding, tending to her plant collection, and spending time with her fiancé and dogs.



Audubon North Carolina wishes former Biological Technician Nicole Loft all the best, as she has moved on to new endeavors. Nicole served in several capacities with the coastal office, including monitoring Lea-Hutaff Island and conducting bird surveys in the Waccamaw and Lumber River IBAs.

Audubon North Carolina Board of Trustees

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Wish List

To inquire about making an in-kind donation of any items on this list, please contact Karen Fernandez, Director of Development, at kfernandez@audubon.org or 919.929.3899.

Mountain Program

4 wheel drive SUV

Coastal Program

2WD or 4WD truck or SUV

Passenger vehicle

ATV or Side-by-Side

Binoculars

Spotting scope

Handheld GPS

Desktop computer (≥2009)

Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Sanctuary and Center at Pine Island

4 x 4 pickup truck

40-50 hp Tractor and implements

Mud motor and skiff

Gator-type vehicle (4x4)

3 inch water pumps

Kayak

Tool chest

Tools

Vacuum

Pressure washer

Air compressor

Chapel Hill office

Round table with chairs

All programs

Audubon North Carolina is interested in talking to any supporters who may be able to redeem air miles for a ticket to benefit the travel of an ANC staff member. For more information please contact Karen Fernandez, Director of Development, at kfernandez@audubon.org, or call 919.929.3899.

Get connected through our online community

Social media provides a great forum for connecting to like-minded people and your favorite organizations. Audubon NC offers a variety of social networking venues where you can join online conversations about birds, wildlife, and conservation issues in North Carolina.

To access any of these sites, just visit www.ncaudubon.org or www.ncaudubonblog.org and click on the social networking links on the left side of the home page.



Check out the blog at
www.ncaudubonblog.org



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Cover: Cerulean Warbler by Todd Arcos

p. 4: High Country Audubon volunteers by Curtis Smalling; Photos of Jordan Lake Eagle Platform by Linda Gaines; T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society courtesy of the chapter; Broad-winged Hawk by Hop Hopkins

p. 5: Hawk watchers by Phil Dickinson; Cerulean Warbler by Todd Arcos

p. 6: American Oystercatchers and Piping Plover by Walker Golder; Katie Bullard by Lindsay Addison

p. 7: Wrightsville Beach Elementary students by Cara Foucht; Sign and students by Ida Phillips

pp. 8-9: All photos by Mark Buckler

p. 10: Julia Roberts and Golden-winged Warbler by Curtis Smalling

p. 13: Mountain laurel by Ida Phillips

p. 14: Katie Bullard by Lindsay Addison



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123 Kingston Drive, Suite 206

Chapel Hill, NC 27514-1651

919.929.3899

www.ncaudubon.org

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audubon events

[VISIT NCAUDUBON.ORG FOR MORE EVENT INFORMATION]

Black River Nature Cruises

(All trips are on a Wednesday)

**May 25, June 8 & 22, July 13 & 27, August 10 & 24,
September 14 & 28, October 5 & 12**

9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Did you know that alligators, bobcats, black bears, river otters, rare birds and other wildlife, plus 1,700-year-old bald cypress trees, are just minutes away from downtown Wilmington? These are just a few of the surprising facts visitors learn as Audubon guide Andy Wood takes you on a Black River Nature Cruise aboard the 49-foot Capt. J.N. Maffitt. Tickets cost \$59 per person (\$40 for ages 12 and under) and prepaid reservations are required. You can register online or by phone. For reservations, call Cape Fear Riverboats at 800-676-0162 or 910-343-1611, or visit www.cfrboats.com.

Mason Inlet Field Trips

Every Friday from May through August

(check website for last date)

9 - 11 a.m.

Please join Audubon North Carolina naturalists on a free guided tour of Mason Inlet Waterbird Management Area, a fascinating sanctuary where you can get close-up looks at coastal birds like Least Terns and Black Skimmers that nest on the beach. Audubon naturalists provide insights on the birds and wildlife that inhabit the dynamic landscape of a barrier island beach. Mason Inlet is a site on the North Carolina Birding Trail. Registration is not required; just meet at the information kiosk located near the Shell Island Resort. More information at www.ncaudubon.org.

Pine Island Field Trips

We are delighted to offer a variety of field trips at the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Audubon Sanctuary and Center at Pine Island. Located on the northern Outer Banks, this 2,600-acre wildlife oasis offers people the opportunity to view birds and wildlife and escape the summer crowds. See page 8 for more details!

We welcome your feedback! Contact Ida Phillips, Director of Communications, at iphillips@audubon.org or 919.929.3899.