



Program

Friday, April 17 – Sunday April 19, 2020

Hilton Charlotte University Place

8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte NC 28262

Schedule Overview

Friday, April 17

- 1 – 4 PM** **Afternoon Workshops**
- 3 – 8 PM** **Registration Table Open – Harris Room**
- 5 – 7 PM** **Welcome Reception Hosted by Mecklenburg Audubon Society**
- Dinner on your own**

Saturday, April 18

Breakfast on your own

- 5 – 8 AM** **Registration Table Open – Harris Room**
- 6:45 – 8 AM** **Morning Field Trips Depart from Hotel**
- Boxed lunch will be provided**
- 12 – 6 PM** **Registration Table Open – Harris Room**
- 12:30 – 1:15 PM** **Afternoon Field Trips Depart from Hotel**
- 5 – 7 PM** **Reception Hosted by Audubon North Carolina**
- 7 – 9 PM** **Banquet and Keynote Address**

Sunday, April 19

Field Trip Participants: Breakfast on Your Own

- 6:30 – 7:45 AM** **Morning Field Trips Depart from Hotel**
- 7 – 8 AM** **Registration Table Open – Harris Room**
- 8:30 – 10 AM** **Breakfast with Audubon Leaders/How to Leave a Legacy for the Birds**
- 11:30 – 1 PM** **Registration Table Open – Harris Room**

Friday 4/17 Afternoon Workshops

Workshop 1: Become a Plants for Birds PRO in Your Community

1 – 4 PM | PRESENTER: John Rowden, Senior Director of Bird-Friendly Communities, National Audubon Society
Reedy Creek Nature Center & Nature Preserve

Native plants provide critical resources for birds, and Audubon chapters and centers across the country are leading the way in promoting native plants. We want to continue to expand the demand for native plants and believe that proclamations, resolutions, and ordinances (PROs!) that encourage or mandate the use of native plants can do just that, improving habitat for birds in communities nationwide. In this workshop, we will explore the recently created Municipal Engagement Toolkit, guiding participants through the steps to create their own local PROs, drawing from examples around the country. Participants will create an action plan for passing their own PROs that will make their community more bird-friendly.

Access - We will be in a nature classroom with bathrooms close at hand.

Google Map: <https://g.page/reedy-creek-nature-center?share>

Address: 2900 Rocky River Rd, Charlotte, NC 28215

Workshop 2: Fundamentals of Effective and Winning Advocacy Campaigns

1 – 4 PM | PRESENTERS: Erin Meade, Maddox Wolfe, National Audubon Society Campaigns Team
Hilton Charlotte University Place (Room TBA)

Looking to make a policy change in your community, but don't know where to begin? Political advocacy is a powerful tool to change the world. Learn how to be an effective advocate by finding your voice for birds and building your power. This intensive workshop will introduce Audubon members to campaign fundamentals, advocacy planning tools, and strategies that address policy challenges at the local, state, and federal level. You will learn how to become an effective advocate, develop a campaign plan, build a collaborative team, set goals, devise strategies, implement tactics,

empower yourself and others around you, and—most importantly—win! Presenters will share ways you can get involved immediately in Audubon’s clean-energy campaign in North Carolina.

Access – We will be in a meeting room at the hotel with bathrooms close at hand.

Google Map: <https://g.page/HiltonUniversityPlace?share>

Address: 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte NC 28262

Friday Evening Welcome Reception

5 – 7 PM | Hosted by Mecklenburg Audubon Society

FireWater Restaurant and Lounge (7-minute walk from hotel, along lake)

Join our hosts, Mecklenburg Audubon Society members, for a reception at the FireWater Restaurant and Lounge, a short walk from the Summit hotel. Enjoy light hors d’oeuvres, locally crafted beers and wine, and great conversations with new and old friends. Then head out with friends for dinner on your own at a restaurant, many within walking distance.

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/ATEPR5TJ4riPPiCJA>

Address: 8708 JW Clay Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28262

Friday night dinner is on your own.

Introduction to Birding in the Queen City

Mecklenburg Audubon’s Spring Bird Count and Audubon Christmas Bird Count data, both of which go back to the middle of the last century, indicate the Charlotte area has seen significant habitat changes over the years, especially in the last two decades as the human population has grown dramatically. It is true some bird species have seen significant declines, some gone completely, but all the changes have not been negative. Originally much of the area was open fields, farms or forests in private hands. It was difficult to access these areas to look for birds.

Today, most of that habitat is gone, but intertwined among the host of new developments are many miles of greenways, parks and nature preserves. Charlotte considers its crown of trees as indispensable, providing bridges/corridors between the different natural areas for wildlife including birds. There are currently 49 miles of officially developed greenways with more coming on board every year. Nature preserves protect the county’s biological resources and natural areas and consist of over 7,600 acres and 30 miles of natural trails.

Combined, the new system of greenways and nature preserves actually provide more access to habitat than was available 50 years ago. That is why the majority of the birding venues listed as field trips are either greenways or nature preserves. And the ones listed below are only a drop in the bucket. One could easily bird a different venue every weekend for a year and not repeat a location. These are some of our favorites

and easiest to get to from the Summit hotel, but they are by no means inclusive of what is available in the area. We hope you enjoy birding in the Queen City as much as we do!

– 2020 Summit Host Chapter, Mecklenburg Audubon Society

Saturday Morning 4/18 Field Trips

Trip 1: McDowell Prairie

Half Day AM | LEADER: Jeff Lemons

DEPART: 6:45 AM (40-minute drive from hotel via I-85 & I-485)

Located in the southwestern corner of the county near the NC/SC border, this prairie restoration area was established to protect the federally endangered Schweinitz's sunflower. In addition to protecting the sunflower, the prairie also provides excellent habitat for a variety of prairie/grassland bird species such the Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, and Blue Grosbeak.

Activity Level: Moderate - We will walk about 3 miles on unpaved and sometimes uneven trails through rolling hills. There are no facilities at the site.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2SO1iBs>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/pb8R6g9biiLeukkN6>

Address: 12600 Four Horse Rd, Charlotte, NC 28278

Trip 2: Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge/Rural Hill (Our IBA)

Half Day AM | LEADER: Taylor Piephoff

DEPART 7:00 AM (40-minute drive from hotel)

As part of the first designated Important Bird Area in North Carolina, this refuge has been maintained primarily for piedmont prairie species. Access is normally restricted to the road and viewing area. A Charlotte Mecklenburg Park and Recreation Natural Resources staff person will lead us on a more intimate tour of the property. Warblers and shorebirds can both be found on the refuge during spring migration. Bald Eagles and Osprey both breed on the property. It is one of the few remaining areas in the county to find Eastern meadowlarks, Bobwhite and Whip-poor-wills.

Afternoon Option: Those who sign up for the Behind the Scenes Tour of the Carolina Raptor Center (Trip #11), should bring a lunch and eat it at Latta Nature Preserve, where the Center located. This will avoid having to return to the hotel, only to drive back to the area.

Activity Level: Moderate - We will walk about 3 miles on unpaved and sometimes uneven trails through rolling hills. There are no facilities at the site.

eBird List with Photos: Cowan's Ford - <http://bit.ly/2rKNI6u>; Rural Hill - <http://bit.ly/2QE926e>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/4Zv4hCXimS4jpNz3A>

GPS: 35°22'17.2"N 80°58'28.0"W

Trip 3: Freedom Park

Half Day AM | LEADER: Jill Palmer

DEPART 7:00 AM (30-minute drive from hotel)

Just a few minutes from the center of Charlotte, Freedom Park is a modern, multi-use park that can provide a number of surprises during spring migration. A walk around the park will take us along Sugar Creek, around the lake into woods and then out into some open areas. During Charlotte's Spring Count, over 15 species of warblers have been recorded in the park including Hooded and Blue-winged warblers. It is one of the few places to still find Eastern Kingbirds in the heart of Charlotte.

Afternoon Option: Folks who sign up for the tour of Wing Haven and the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden in the afternoon (Trip #12) should bring a lunch to eat in the park or plan to eat in the neighborhood. East Blvd. has a multitude of eateries to enjoy before travelling about a mile to Wing Haven.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 2 miles on paved paths with some gentle hills. There are bathrooms at the park.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2sEYz2g>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/4hJrJkAp8Gw7s9c29>

Address: 1658 Sterling Rd, Charlotte, NC 28209 (This is the Discovery Place Nature parking area.)

Trip 4: Latta Prairie

Half Day AM | LEADER: Marcia Howden

DEPART 7:15 AM (25-minute drive from hotel)

This prairie was also created to protect the federally endangered Schweinitz's sunflower. As a piedmont prairie restoration area, it has provided excellent habitat for a variety of prairie/grassland bird species such the Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, and Blue Grosbeak. Other birds of interest in the area are Red-headed Woodpecker, Common Yellowthroat, Summer Tanager and Great Crested Flycatcher.

Afternoon Option: Those who sign up for the Behind the Scenes Tour of the Carolina Raptor Center (Trip #11) should bring a lunch and eat it in the preserve, where the Center located. This will avoid having to return to the hotel, only to drive back to the area.

Activity Level: Moderate - We will walk about 3 miles on unpaved and sometimes uneven trails up one long hill. There are no facilities at the site.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/39z1NoH>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/o9mbCXi3dBmRZo4s9>

Address: 6211 Sample Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078 (This is the Nature Center parking area.)

Trip 5: Clark's Creek Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Steve Coggin

DEPART 7:15 AM (10-minute drive from hotel)

Located about 10 minutes from the hotel, Clark's Creek Nature Preserve was originally agricultural land donated to the county for a preserve. Fields make up two-thirds of the preserve and are maintained for grassland species. The rest of the property is wooded with a small pond. The property is one of the few remaining spots in the county for Eastern Meadowlarks and Purple Martins. The fields are good for grassland species such as Indigo Bunting, Field and Chipping Sparrows, Common Yellowthroat and, during spring migration, Palm Warbler. It is also good for edge species like the White-eyed Vireo, Gray Catbird and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 1.5 miles on unpaved, grassy paths. There is a port-a-john in the parking area.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2rJqwp1>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/GNQnXioLAPiE291i8>

Address: 5542 Hucks Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

Trip 6: Latta Park (Dilworth)

Half Day | LEADER: Wayne Covington

DEPART 7:30 AM (20-minute drive from hotel)

Latta Park is a truly urban park. It is a small, 10-acre neighborhood park nestled in the heart of Dilworth. It is shaded by towering old trees and has a small stream running through it. These two characteristics seem to be a magnet for warblers and other neotropical migrants. As many as 32 species of warblers have been recorded in this community park surrounded by historic homes in Charlotte's original "Street Car Suburb." It is not unusual to have 13-15 species in one day. Additional migrants include Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush, both tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Great Crested Flycatcher. The park has its own resident Barred Owl and Red-shouldered Hawk families. Mecklenburg Audubon has been partnering with the community's local garden club to remove invasive plants and replace them with natives.

Afternoon Option: Folks who sign up for the tour of Wing Haven and the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden in the afternoon (Trip #12) should bring a lunch to eat in the park or plan to eat in the neighborhood. South End and East Blvd. have a multitude of eateries to enjoy before travelling the three miles to Wing Haven.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 1 mile on a combination of paved and natural paths. Depending on where the birds are, we may have to climb a bit of a hill. The most strenuous part of the walk will probably be "warbler neck" as the birds tend to be high in the trees. There is a bathroom in the park.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/lattapark>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/E8SJ93XUsedRP1WKA>

Address: 601 E Park Ave, Charlotte, NC 28203

Trip 7: Toby Creek/Kirk Farms Wetland

Half Day AM | LEADER: Chris Bolling

DEPART 7:30 AM (10-minute walk to train station)

Just across Rt. 29 from the hotel lies the University of North Carolina Charlotte with a variety of habitats that attract a diversity of bird species. Toby Creek Greenway runs through the heart of campus and connects to an interesting wetland. Spring migrants on campus include Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos, Wood Thrush, Northern Parula, and Great Crested Flycatcher. The wetland will have Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird and Common Yellowthroat.

To give you the real 'big city' experience, we will take the Lynx Blue Line (light rail) from the hotel to campus to connect to the greenway. We will need to leave promptly to catch the train.

Afternoon Option: Pair this with the afternoon trip to the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens (Trip #15) by bringing your lunch or eating at one of the fast food places available in the Student Union. Then walk over to the greenhouse and take the train back in the afternoon.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 2 miles on paved paths. There is a substantial hill to climb if you are going to go to join the Greenhouse group in the afternoon. There are facilities in the campus buildings.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2QrfOhl>

Trip 8: RibbonWalk Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Ron Clark

DEPART 7:45 AM (15-minute drive from hotel)

RibbonWalk Nature Preserve is a 188-acre urban forest that protects a diversity of forest and wetland habitats including a Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest and a mature American Beech grove. The preserve also includes two ponds and a wetland bog and is traversed by Irwin Creek. The diverse habitats within the preserve support a variety of plant and animal life. Irwin Creek Trail serves as a hot spot for bird migration in the spring and fall including Wood Thrush, Hooded, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green Warblers, both tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk about 3 miles over natural trails which can be uneven at times through rolling hills. There is a port-a-john in the parking area.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2NJx92V>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/ZWQjPgVwo5cT54Tr7>

Address: 4601 Nevin Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

GPS: 35.292427, -80.818734

Trip 9: Steven's Creek Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Don Seriff

DEPART: 7:45 AM (30-minute drive)

The Steven's Creek Nature Preserve is the county's newest nature preserve. It is a 230-acre Natural Heritage Site located in southeastern Mecklenburg County within the Town of Mint Hill, just north of the Matthews/Mint Hill boundary and inside the I-485 outer belt.

The Steven's Creek Natural Heritage Site is located along Steven's Creek, which forms the property's northern and eastern boundaries and drains into Goose Creek. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) considers Steven's Creek to be critical habitat for the federally endangered Carolina Heelsplitter. Steven's Creek provides habitat for one of only six known populations of this rare mussel. The Nature Preserve is also the home of Mecklenburg County's fourth and newest nature center. The 12,000 square-foot nature center, to be built on previously timbered land, will focus on stream ecology, with indoor and outdoor learning spaces for environmental education.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk about 3 miles on natural trails which may be uneven at times through rolling hills. There are facilities in the Nature Center.

eBird List with Photos:

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/Aici5MzHcoczz9eg8>

Address: 15700 Thompson Rd, Mint Hill, NC 28227

Trip 10: Prothonotary Nests Box Project – Cabarrus County

Half Day AM | LEADER: Patty Masten

DEPART 8:00 AM (15-minute drive from hotel)

Mecklenburg Audubon recently partnered with the Cabarrus County Parks to improve habitat for Prothonotary Warblers in the county. With the help of a Boy Scout working to become an Eagle Scout and two Girl Scouts doing a Gold Project, the club installed 30 prothonotary warbler nest boxes on a number of the county's greenways. This trip will visit several of these spots (two in the Concord Mills area and one on Moss Creek Greenway) to check the boxes as well as see what other species are in the area. Other species the group could encounter include nesting Great Blue Herons, Red-winged Blackbirds, Indigo Buntings, and Blue Grosbeaks.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 2 miles on mostly flat, paved paths. There are facilities at a couple of the sites.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2QrqBrL>

Saturday Afternoon 4/18 Field Trips

Trip 11: Behind the Scenes Tour of the Carolina Raptor Center

Half Day PM | LEADER: Patty Masten

DEPART: 12:30 PM (30-minute drive from hotel)

Limited to 20 people | Fee - \$14

The mission of this non-profit facility is to ignite imaginations and inspire engagement in the natural world through the exploration and rehabilitation of birds of prey. Meet owls, hawks and other raptors who have suffered injuries up close and personal and learn about how the Center helps raptors bounce back.

The logistics for this trip will be a bit different. Folks coming from the hotel will leave at 12:30 PM. Folks coming from the Cowan's Ford or Latta Prairie trip should meet at the

Center in Latta Preserve at 1 PM. Then half the group will tour the trails while the other half will go behind the scenes.

Activity Level: Easy – During the tour there will be a lot of standing but not much walking. The guided trail is about ½ mile in length on natural paths. There are facilities at the center.

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bonfaLJjsqCfbzS97>

Address: 6000 Sample Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078

Trip 12: Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary/Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden

Half Day PM | LEADER: Janet Palmer

DEPART 12:45 PM (30-minute drive from hotel)

Located in the heart of Charlotte, Wing Haven provides a natural oasis for reflection and study of its two public gardens. Wing Haven Gardens & Bird Sanctuary is rich in Southern horticulture and a habitat for birds and wildlife. The Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden is the site of a world-renowned garden writer's living laboratory.

Wing Haven is considered the birthplace of Mecklenburg Audubon. This 3-acre garden in the heart of Myers Park was created as a bird sanctuary by Eddie and Elizabeth Clarkson who were founding members of the Mecklenburg Bird Club, which became the Mecklenburg Audubon Society (MAS). MAS continues to partner with Wing Haven to provide educational opportunities for young and old alike.

Activity Level: Easy – Paths through the gardens are a mixture of natural and brick. You can expect to walk about 1 mile as you wander through the gardens. There are facilities in the garden.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/37c6cwF>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/iNnQf22VrpeBKddW7>

Address: 248 Ridgewood Ave, Charlotte, NC 28209

Trip 13: Artful Bird Appreciation

Half Day PM | Leader: Rich McCracken

DEPART: 1:00 PM (10-minute walk to train station)

Limit: 12

We'll travel via LYNX light rail to explore Uptown Charlotte, including the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, home of the famous mirrored FIREBIRD. Also, on our fluid itinerary could be stops at the Mint Museum Uptown, Romare Bearden Park/BB&T ballpark, a look at Wells Fargo's famed stagecoach, and a stop at Amelie's French Bakery & Café. OO-La-La!

Activity Level: Easy – Expect to walk about 1.5 miles overall on city sidewalks and in the museum. Facilities are readily available.

Trip 14: Butterfly Walk (Clark's Creek Nature Preserve)

Half Day PM | Leader: Taylor Piephoff

DEPART: 1:15 PM (10-minute drive)

We will return to this conveniently located nature preserve, only this time we will be looking for butterflies. Clark's Creek Nature Preserve was originally agricultural land donated to the county for a preserve. Fields make up two thirds of the preserve and are maintained for grassland species. The rest of the property is wooded with a small pond. Spring butterflies should be emerging to enjoy the wide variety of wildflowers found along the paths in the fields and woods.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 1.5 miles on unpaved, grassy paths. There is a port-a-john in the parking area.

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/GNQnXioLAPiE291i8>

Address: 5542 Hucks Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

Trip 12: UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens and Greenhouse

Half Day PM | Leader: Chris Bolling

DEPART: 1:15 PM (10-minute walk to train station)

A couple of gems for both birder and non-birder alike are nestled among the academic buildings on the UNC Charlotte campus. The UNCC Botanical Gardens is comprised of two gardens – The Susie Harwood Garden and Van Landingham Glen – and the McMillan Greenhouse. The glen is a woodland garden reminiscent of the Appalachian Mountains with hemlocks and rhododendrons. It also features wildflowers unlike any other Charlotte garden. These wildflowers are native spring ephemerals. In contrast the Susie Harwood Garden features native and non-native plants that grow well within the Carolina Piedmont to inspire your own garden at home. With new hardscaping and several different gardening styles, this garden offers a variety of approaches for a Carolina garden. The greenhouse has a variety of collections including carnivorous and bog plants, orchids, succulents, economic plants and even a dinosaur garden. We will tour the greenhouse first and then meander over to the gardens.

To give you a real 'big city' experience, we will take the Lynx Blue Line (light rail) from the hotel to campus and then walk to the greenhouse and gardens, about ½ mile.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk about 2.5 miles including the walk to the light rail. There are sidewalks to the Greenhouse and Gardens. But the trails in the garden are natural and can be uneven at times. Also the garden paths can be steep in areas. There are facilities available in the Greenhouse.

Address: 9090 Craver Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262 (on UNC Charlotte campus)

Saturday Evening Reception & Banquet

Reception

**6 – 7 PM | Hosted by Audubon North Carolina
University A & B, Hilton Charlotte University Place**

Flock together to chatter about the day's bird sightings and other adventures and enjoy tasty appetizers. There will be a cash bar with beer and wine.

Banquet and Keynote Address

**7 – 9 PM | Hosted by Audubon North Carolina
University A & B, Hilton Charlotte University Place**

A sit-down dinner will be followed by Audubon North Carolina's volunteer awards and a keynote address by Michael S. Regan, North Carolina Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality. Secretary Regan will mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and look forward to the next 50 years of protecting the environment for all North Carolinians.

Google Map: <https://g.page/HiltonUniversityPlace?share>

Address: 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte NC 28262

Sunday 4/19 Field Trips

Trip 16: Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge (https://www.fws.gov/refuge/pee_dee/)

Half Day | Leader: Judy Walker

DEPART 6:30 AM (70-minute drive from the hotel via I-485, Hwy. 74 Bypass (via the new Monroe Expressway toll road). Tolls: \$2.60 with NCQuickPass; \$4.01 without)

Heading east after the Summit? This National Wildlife Refuge would be a great way to end the weekend. The refuge is another Important Bird Area supported by Mecklenburg Audubon and is a favorite destination for birders in the Charlotte area. The refuge protects unique bottomland hardwood forest along Brown Creek, which is part of the first Soil Conservation District in America (1937). Originally established in 1963 to protect migratory James Bay Canada Geese, its wetlands, old fields and forests are now managed for a wide variety of migratory bird species. Swainson's and Kentucky Warblers nest on the refuge along with more commonly found Northern Parula, and Prothonotary, Yellow-throated, and Prairie Warblers. Tanagers, buntings and grosbeaks abound. Oh, and did we mention, Red-headed woodpeckers are everywhere! The refuge is also an excellent spot for butterflies and wildflowers in the spring.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk 3-4 miles mostly on flat natural paths or roads. There are bathrooms at the main entrance.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2rSRwCw>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/zECCE4mXogRMFzbV9>

Address: 5770 US Hwy 52 North, Wadesboro, NC 28170

Trip 17: Redlair Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Chris Bolling

DEPART: 7:00 AM (45 minute drive from Hotel)

Heading west after the Summit? This County Catawba Lands Conservancy property, closed to the public, is a gem hiding in Gaston County. Redlair consists of about 1,200 acres of preserved properties along the South Fork of the Catawba River in the Spencer Mountain area. Some of the properties are owned outright by the Catawba Lands Conservancy, some are owned by the NC Plant Conservation Program, and some are protected by conservation easements. This area is a true ecological gem on the banks of the South Fork River. Nestled within the valleys and hollows are hardwood forests that are over 100 years old, pristine creeks, the endangered Schweinitz's Sunflower and the largest concentration of bigleaf magnolias in North Carolina.

Since this a highly sensitive area not open to the public, directions will be distributed at the Summit to those who sign up for the trip.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk about 3 miles on natural trails which can be uneven at times though rolling hills. There are not facilities.

Trip 18: Catawba College Ecological Preserve/Elizabeth Stanback Wildlife Garden, Salisbury, NC

Half Day AM | LEADER: Steve Coggin

DEPART 7:15 AM (40-minute drive north on I-85 from the hotel.)

Heading north after the Summit? This 189-acre natural area has a creek, mature swamp forest, ponds and upland forest. The swamp has a healthy population of nesting Prothonotary Warblers. We can expect to see other summer resident and migratory warblers, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes and more.

Native North Carolina plants grow in the Elizabeth Stanback Wildlife Garden which surrounds the Center for the Environment facility on the Catawba College campus. Designed as a “naturalistic wildlife garden, it reflects the area’s native ecology and is home to more than 160 native plant species. It is different from many public gardens in that the covenants of environmental stewardship are practiced in its maintenance and perpetuation. Pests and disease are controlled by environmentally friendly alternatives. The use of native plants also promotes resource and environmental conservation through low maintenance and the elimination of resource-robbing lawn turf.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk about 3 miles on natural trails which can be uneven at times though rolling hills. There are not facilities.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/33VuXeu>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/yoLYKkEvt8EU5KS6>

Address: 2300 W Innes St, Salisbury, NC 28144

Trip 19: McAlpine Creek Park/Greenway

Half Day AM | LEADER: Wayne Covington

DEPART: 7:30 AM (30-minute drive from hotel)

This park anchors one of the first greenways established in the Charlotte area. Although a very active multi-use park, its variety of habitats (open fields, conifer and deciduous woods and a beaver pond) support a large number of bird species. During spring migration anything could show up. Hooded Warblers and waterthrush are regular occurrences. Wood ducks and Protonotary Warblers nest on the beaver pond. The greenway edges are great for Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Activity Level: Easy – We will walk about 2 miles on wide, flat, gravel paths. There are facilities in the parking area.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2KkcWii>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/K5AJKqgWbkDode5a8>

Address: 8711 Monroe Rd, Charlotte, NC 28212

Trip 20: RibbonWalk Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER Ron Clark

DEPART 7:45 AM (15-minute drive from hotel)

RibbonWalk Nature Preserve is a 188-acre urban forest that protects a diversity of forest and wetland habitats including a Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest and a mature American Beech grove. The preserve also includes two ponds and a wetland bog and is traversed by Irwin Creek. The diverse habitats within the preserve support a variety of plant and animal life. Irwin Creek Trail serves as a hot spot for bird migration in the spring and fall including Wood Thrush, Hooded, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green Warblers, both tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Activity Level: Moderate – We will walk about 3 miles over natural trails which can be uneven at times through rolling hills. There is a port-a-john in the parking area.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2NJx92V>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/ZWQjPgVwo5cT54Tr7>

Address: 4601 Nevin Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

GPS: 35.292427, -80.818734

Breakfast with Audubon Leaders/How to Leave a Legacy for the Birds

8:30 – 10 AM | PRESENTERS Andrew Hutson, Executive Director of Audubon North Carolina and Vice President of the National Audubon Society; Heather Hackett, Associate Director of Gift Planning, National Audubon Society

Want to learn how you can be a part of making sure Audubon North Carolina's work to protect birds and the places they need continues for generations to come? Do you know which assets are best to leave to heirs and which are best to donate? This helpful session on smart estate planning will include plenty of time for questions and discussions. You will hear about Audubon North Carolina's current work and vision for the future, and how planned gifts have made and will continue to make an impact on the birds we love.

Access – We will be in a meeting room at the hotel with bathrooms close at hand.

Google Map: <https://g.page/HiltonUniversityPlace?share>

Address: 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte NC 28262

Field Trips List

	Trip name	Leader	Sat.	Time	Sun.	Time
1	McDowell Prairie	Lemons	AM	6:45		
2	Cowan's Ford WR/ Rural Hill	Piephoff	AM	7:00		
3	Freedom Park	Jill Palmer	AM	7:00		
4	Latta Prairie	Howden	AM	7:15		
5	Clark's Creek NP	Coggin	AM	7:15		
6	Latta Park	Covington	AM	7:30		
7	Toby Creek/Kirk Farms	Bolling	AM	7:30		
8	RibbonWalk NP	Clark	AM	7:45		
9	Steven's Creek NP	Seriff/Wright	AM	7:45		
10	Prothonotary Box Trail	Masten	AM	8:00		
11	Behind the Scenes CRC	Masten	PM	12:30		
12	Wing Haven	Janet Palmer	PM	12:45		
13	Artful Bird Appreciation	McCracken	PM	1:00		
14	Butterfly Walk	Piephoff	PM	1:15		
15	UNC Charlotte Gardens	Bolling	PM	1:15		
16	Pee Dee NWR	Walker			AM	6:30
17	Redlair	Bolling			AM	7:00
18	Catawba Preserve	Coggin			AM	7:15
19	McAlpine	Covington			AM	7:30
20	RibbonWalk NP	Clark			AM	7:45

More to Do in Charlotte On Your Own

Flat Water Kayaking on the Catawba River

U.S. NATIONAL WHITEWATER CENTER (USNWC) (A 40-minute drive from the hotel)
<https://usnwc.org>

Paddle along the scenic Catawba River to enjoy one of the more relaxing sides of the USNWC. Flatwater kayaking allows guests to explore the region's natural environment, wildlife, and ecology, while tandem kayaking provides the opportunity to paddle down the river with a friend or family member in the boat.

No previous experience is required. All flatwater kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding gear (boat, PFD and paddle) is provided with pass purchase, and guests with their own gear are welcome to use the flatwater put-in. Adult Day Pass is \$59, Single activity pass (for just the kayaking for example) is \$25-\$30. Parking is \$6. They also have hiking trails.

NASCAR Hall of Fame

400 E M.L.K. Jr Blvd, Charlotte, NC (20-minute drive + parking or 45-minutes by light rail)
<http://www.nascarhall.com>

Conveniently located in Uptown Charlotte, North Carolina, the NASCAR Hall of Fame is an interactive entertainment attraction honoring the history and heritage of NASCAR. The high-tech venue, designed to educate and entertain race fans and non-fans alike, opened May 11, 2010, and includes artifacts, hands-on exhibits, a 278-person state-of-the-art theater, Hall of Honor, Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant, NASCAR Hall of Fame Gear Shop, NASCAR Productions-operated broadcast studio and an attached parking garage on Brevard Street. The 5-acre site also includes a privately developed 19-story office tower and 102,000-square-foot expansion to the Charlotte Convention Center, highlighted by a 40,000-square-foot ballroom. The NASCAR Hall of Fame is owned by the City of Charlotte, licensed by NASCAR and operated by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority. The goal of the facility is to honor NASCAR icons and create an enduring tribute to the drivers, crew members, team owners and others that have impacted the sport in the past, present and future.

Charlotte Motor Speedway

5555 Concord Pkwy S, Concord, NC (15-minute drive from hotel)
<https://www.charlottemotorspeedway.com>

Get a behind-the-scenes look at Charlotte Motor Speedway, The Dirt Track and zMAX Dragway! Learn the illustrious history of each track while taking in the sights and sounds of America's Home for Racing!

Charlotte Museum of History/Hezekiah Alexander Homesite

3500 Shamrock Dr., Charlotte, NC 28215 (15-minute drive from hotel)

<http://charlottemuseum.org>

The Charlotte Museum of History interprets and preserves Charlotte's unique history, enriching the community through shared understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The Museum is the steward of the ca. 1774 Hezekiah Alexander Home Site, a National Register of Historic Places site, and places an emphasis on the settlement of the Carolina Backcountry and the ideas and events that led to the American Revolution. The Alexander House is the last extant home of a framer of North Carolina's 1776 Constitution and Bill of Rights and the oldest surviving house in Mecklenburg County. In addition to the house, the Alexander home site contains a reproduction log kitchen, reconstructed two-story springhouse and log barn.

Historic Latta Plantation (Latta Plantation Nature Preserve)

5225 Sample Rd., Huntersville, NC (25-minute drive from hotel)

<https://www.lattaplantation.org>

Historic Latta Plantation is a circa 1800 cotton plantation and living history farm located within the 1,343-acre Latta Nature Preserve in Huntersville, NC. In addition to guided tours of the plantation home, 11 outbuildings give visitors a glimpse of life in North Carolina from 1800 to 1865 during self-guided grounds tours.

Guests can also enjoy handmade artisan goods, traditional toys and games, books, and more in the Visitor Center's Gift Shop. <https://www.lattaplantation.org>

Shop 'til You Drop

Concord Mills

8111 Concord Mills Boulevard, Concord, NC (10-minute drive from hotel)

<https://www.simon.com/mall/concord-mills>

As the largest outlet and value retail shopping destination in North Carolina, Concord Mills brings together more than 200 stores, plus great dining and family entertainment options. Popular retailers include Banana Republic Factory Store, Coach, LEGO Brand Retail Store, Michael Kors Outlet and the only Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World in the state. Shoppers can also discover quality dining and entertainment at AMC 24 Theatres, Dave & Buster's and The SPEEDPARK. Further enhancing its unparalleled shopping experience, Concord Mills is home to Sea Life Charlotte-Concord, a 26,000-square-foot indoor aquarium featuring more than 5,000 sea creatures and more than 20 spectacular displays of diverse marine life.

IKEA

8300 IKEA Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28262 (7-minute drive)

<https://goo.gl/maps/Eu9S7owLPUD4A8q49>

University City Wine Fest (April 18th!)

<https://www.universitycitywinefest.org/>

University City's scenic lake and charming boardwalk at the Shoppes at University Place is the location for the University City Wine Fest. More than 100 wines from over 25 wineries, craft beers and spirits from near and far will be available to sample while guests stroll the boardwalk, enjoy food, live music and interactive entertainment.

NoDa Arts District (20 minutes on Light Rail)

<https://www.charlottesgotalot.com/neighborhoods/noda>

NoDa, short for North Davidson, is the city's arts and entertainment district. It's known for its eclectic galleries and music venues, including the Neighborhood Theatre, host to big-name acts, and intimate spots like the Evening Muse. Artisan gift shops, jewelry stores and tattoo parlors dot North Davidson Street. Local eats include Southern fare, Cajun cuisine and pizza, and there are a number of hip dive bars.

Greenway Biking

University of North Carolina Charlotte Campus (10-minute bike ride from the hotel)

Just want to get out and move? The Toby Creek/Mallard Creek/Clark's Creek Greenway complex provides almost 21 miles of roundtrip pedaling pleasure. You can access the complex from the UNC Charlotte campus, where you'll encounter a few challenging hills. Once you're on the greenway, it will be smooth sailing.