



Audubon North Carolina 2022 Summit Program
Friday, April 22 – Sunday April 24, 2022
UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel
9041 Robert D. Snyder Road, Charlotte, NC 28262

Schedule Overview

Friday, April 22

Morning Workshops

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 8:30 AM | Coffee and Tea – Mallard Creek Room |
| 9 AM – 12 PM | Create Your Own Advocacy Plan – Mallard Creek Room |
| 10 AM – 12 PM | Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Cohort #1 – Sugar Creek Room |
| 12 – 1 PM | Buffet Lunch for Workshop Registrants – Crown Room |
| 1 – 3 PM | Afternoon Workshops |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birding 101 – Toby Creek Room• Lights Out and Bird-Friendly Buildings Led by Audubon on Campus Leaders (everyone is welcome!) – Mallard Creek Room |

3 – 8 PM **Registration/Info Table Open – Conference Center Registration**

4 PM **Hotel check-in time**

5 – 7 PM **Welcome Reception Hosted by Mecklenburg Audubon Society –
Armored Cow Brewing Co. 8821 JW Clay Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28262**

Dinner on Your Own

Saturday, April 23

6 AM **Coffee and Tea – Conference Center Registration**

mile of hotel)	Breakfast on your own (Starbucks, Dunkin', Panera within 1
6 – 8 AM	Registration/Info Table Open – Conference Center Registration
7 – 7:30 AM	Morning Field Trips Depart from Hotel (Drive yourself/carpool)
~11 AM	Field Trips Conclude
Lunch on your own	
12 – 6 PM	Registration/Info Table Open – Conference Center Registration
12:30 – 1:15 PM	Afternoon Field Trips Depart from Hotel
6 – 7 PM	Reception Hosted by Mecklenburg Audubon – Dubois Plaza
7 – 9 PM	Banquet, Keynote Address, and Awards – Dubois Plaza

Sunday, April 24

6 AM	Coffee and Tea – Conference Center Registration
mile of hotel)	Breakfast on your own (Starbucks, Dunkin', Panera within 1
6 – 8 AM	Registration/Info Table Open – Conference Center Registration
6:30 – 7:45 AM	Morning Field Trips Depart from Hotel (Drive yourself/carpool)
~11 AM	Field Trips Conclude
12 PM	Hotel check-out time
11 – 1 PM	Registration/Info Table Open – Conference Center Registration

Friday 4/22 Morning Workshops

Workshop 1: Create Your Own Advocacy Plan

**9 AM – 12 PM | COACHES: Ben Graham, Communications Manager, Audubon North Carolina; John Rowden, Senior Director of Bird-Friendly Communities, National Audubon Society
UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel – Mallard Creek Room**

Looking to make a bird-friendly policy change in your community, but don't know where to begin? Learn how to be an effective advocate by finding your voice for birds and building your power.

This session is designed for groups of volunteers looking to launch – or continue – a local effort to pass a bird-friendly proclamation, resolution, or ordinance (PROs) in your community. We want you to work with your chapter and/or advocacy committee to come to this workshop with a specific policy you want to pass, so we can develop an action plan, with specific campaign strategies and tactics.

You are still welcome to join if you don't have a specific policy ask in mind. Every participant will receive a printed copy of Audubon's newly updated Advocacy Manual.

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

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bVs87JioDnQDPH998>

Address: 9041 Robert D. Snyder Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262

Workshop 2: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning Community Cohort #1

10 AM – 12 PM | FACILITATORS: Sterling Freeman and Kathleen Crabbs, CounterPart Consulting

UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel – Sugar Creek Room

This session will be an opportunity for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee members of Blue Ridge, Forsyth, New Hope, and Wake Audubon to continue learning with our partner consultants Sterling Freeman and Kathleen Crabbs in person after meeting on Zoom throughout 2021. Andres Villalon and Nadia Rodriguez of the National Audubon Society EDI team will join us. If you're interested in this topic but not a member of those committees, please reach out to Kim Brand at kim.brand@audubon.org.

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

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bVs87JioDnQDPH998>

Address: 9041 Robert D. Snyder Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262

Friday 4/22 Afternoon Workshops

Workshop 3: Birding 101

1 – 3 PM | PRESENTER: Aimee Tomcho, Conservation Biologist, Audubon North Carolina

UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel – Toby Creek Room

Are you wondering how to get started watching birds, or how to take your backyard bird-feeder watching to a new level? Join longtime birder and ornithologist Aimee Tomcho for tips on how to begin watching our feathered friends more closely. All levels of birding experience are welcome – there's always more to learn about the habits of birds.

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

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bVs87JioDnQDPH998>

Address: 9041 Robert D. Snyder Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262

**Workshop 5: Lights Out and Bird-Friendly Buildings for Audubon Led by Campus Leaders (everyone is welcome!) 1 – 3 PM | LEADERS: Sarah Branagan, UNC Asheville Audubon; Megan Damico, UNC Greensboro Audubon Birding Conservationists; Hannah Partridge, UNC Charlotte Audubon; John Rowden, Senior Director of Bird-Friendly Communities, National Audubon Society
UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel Mallard Creek Room**

Audubon on Campus leaders in North Carolina are monitoring campus buildings for bird collisions and advocating for protections for migrating birds both on campus and at city councils. This session will be designed by and for Audubon campus leaders, but those looking to support local Audubon on Campus leaders are welcome to join and learn.

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

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bVs87JioDnQDPH998>

Address: 9041 Robert D. Snyder Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262

Friday 4/22 Evening Welcome Reception

5 – 7 PM | Hosted by Mecklenburg Audubon Society

Armored Cow Brewing Co. (4-minute drive/20-minute walk from hotel)

Join our hosts, Mecklenburg Audubon Society members, for a reception at the Armored Cow Brewing Company, a short drive or 20-minute walk from the Summit hotel. Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres, locally crafted beers and wine – or kombucha or a variety of non-alcoholic options – 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://q.page/armoredcowbrewingco?share>

Address: 8821 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!

– 2022 Summit Host Chapter, Mecklenburg Audubon Society

Saturday Morning 4/23 Field Trips

Trip 1: Chantilly Ecological Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Janet Palmer

MEET AT HOTEL: 7 AM (20-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE: 7:30 AM

This gem in the heart of Charlotte was created to solve issues caused by water drainage in the area. It officially opened as a park, greenway and sanctuary in the summer of 2018. As part of the Charlotte CBC we have been monitoring the area for almost 10 years, since the removal of the apartments that were constantly flooding. The sanctuary consists primarily of open fields and stream habitat which in the winter is a haven for sparrows of all kinds. It also includes a large pond and a small wetland. The tall, mature trees in the park area are home to several woodpeckers and nuthatches. The preserve always produces something interesting from bitterns hiding in the reeds to kestrels chasing Cooper's Hawks. We will walk about 1.5 miles on natural surface trails. We will park on Colonnade Dr. to avoid using neighborhood parking. There are no facilities.

Activity Level: Easy: Will walk about 1.5 miles on wide, flat natural paths. Can be handicapped accessible. There are no bathrooms.

eBird List with Photos: <https://bit.ly/3pTZvL8>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/TCxn5jrJBodyqKfw9>

Address: 3128 Colonnade Drive, Charlotte, NC 28205

Trip 2: Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge/Rural Hill (Mecklenburg Audubon Society's adopted Important Bird Area)

Half Day AM | LEADER: Taylor Piephoff

MEET AT HOTEL 7:00 AM (40-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE: 8:00 AM – Drive all the way down the dirt road to the viewing area – about 1.25 mile.

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 #10), 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 natural trails and dirt road. Terrain will be uneven and hilly in places. There are no facilities.

eBird List with Photos: Cowan's Ford - <http://bit.ly/2KiUqqA>

Rural Hill - <http://bit.ly/2O8HYea>

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

Address: 2329 Neck Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078

Trip 3: McDowell Prairie

Half Day AM | LEADER: Jeff Lemons

MEET AT HOTEL 7:00 AM (40-minute drive from hotel via I-85 & I-485)

MEET AT SITE: 7:50 AM

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/Strenuous: Will walk over 3 miles on natural trails which are uneven and narrow in places. It is not handicapped accessible. There is a port-a-john in the parking lot.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/36YT2mx>

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

Address: 12600 Four Horse Rd, Charlotte, NC 28278

Trip 4: Clark's Creek Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Chris Bolling

MEET AT HOTEL 7:15 AM (10-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE: 7:30 AM

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. Will walk about 2 miles on flat, natural trails. Trail is a little steep near the pond. It is not handicapped accessible. There is a port-a-john in the parking lot.

eBird List with Photos: <https://bit.ly/3eX7K2N>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/GNqnXioLAPiE291i8>

Address: 5542 Hucks Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

Trip 5: Freedom Park - CANCELLED

Half Day AM | LEADER: TBA

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.

Activity Level: Easy. Will walk about 2.5 miles on natural and paved paths with some gentle slopes in places but mostly flat. Greenway portion of the park is handicapped accessible. There are bathrooms.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2rJMw3b>

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

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

Trip 6: Latta Nature Preserve Prairie

Half Day AM | LEADER: Marcia Howden

MEET AT HOTEL 7:15 AM (25-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 7:45 AM – Meet in the parking lot next to the old nature center inside the second gate, not the Quest parking lot

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 #12) 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: Will walk about 3 miles on natural trails and dirt road. Terrain will be uneven and hilly in places. It is not handicapped accessible. There are facilities in the visitor center and other areas of the preserve.

eBird List with Photos: <http://bit.ly/2O7I4CN>

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

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

Trip 7: Latta Park (Dilworth)

Half Day | LEADER: Wayne Covington

MEET AT HOTEL 7:30 AM (20-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 8 AM – Park area is on E. Park Ave. between Winthrop & Springdale Aves.

Latta Park is a truly urban park. It is a small, 10-acre neighborhood park nestled in the heart of Dilworth just south of uptown. 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 native plant 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 south to the Genkins' garden. Or you could return to the park for afternoon birding, as the avian landscape continues to evolve through out the day. We will have a leader/guide there all day.

Activity Level: Easy. Will walk about 1.5 miles on natural and paved paths. The park is basically a little valley with a stream at its center. The slopes can be a bit steep in places but one doesn't have to traverse them to see birds. Some of the paths are handicapped accessible. There is a bathroom.

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

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

Address: 601 E Park Ave, Charlotte, NC 28203

Trip 8: RibbonWalk Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Steve Coggin

MEET AT HOTEL 7:30 AM (15-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 7:55 AM

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/Strenuous: Will walk over 3 miles on natural trails which are uneven and narrow in places. It is not handicapped accessible. There is a port-a-john in the parking lot.

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

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

Address: 4601 Nevin Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

Trip 9: Steven's Creek Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Matt Janson

MEET AT HOTEL: 7:30 AM (30-minute drive)

MEET AT SITE 8:10 AM

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 inside the I-485 beltway. 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: Will walk about 1.5 miles on a combination of natural and paved trails. The paved trails are flat and handicapped accessible. The natural trails are hilly. Bathrooms can be found in the visitor center.

eBird List with Photos: <https://bit.ly/34qLj40>

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

Address: 15700 Thompson Rd, Mint Hill, NC 28227

Saturday Afternoon 4/23 Field Trips

Trip 10: Tour of the Carolina Raptor Center

Half Day PM | LEADER: Judy Walker

MEET AT HOTEL: 12:30 PM (30-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 1:10 PM

Limited to 20 people

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: Will walk 1.5 miles on flat, natural paths. Mostly wheelchair accessible although the hospital is not. There are facilities at the center.

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

Address: 6000 Sample Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078

Trip 11: Latta Park (Dilworth)

Half Day | LEADER: Curtis Smalling

MEET AT HOTEL 1 PM (20-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 1:30 PM - AM – Meet in the parking lot next to the old nature center inside the second gate, not the Quest parking lot

Latta Park is a truly urban park. It is a small, 10-acre neighborhood park nestled in the heart of Dilworth just south of uptown. 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 birding is terrific in April, as the avian landscape continues to evolve throughout the day. We will have a leader/guide there all day.

Activity Level: Easy. Will walk about 1.5 miles on natural and paved paths. The park is basically a little valley with a stream at its center. The slopes can be a bit steep in places but one doesn't have to traverse them to see birds. Some of the paths are handicapped accessible. There is a bathroom.

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

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

Address: 601 E Park Ave, Charlotte, NC 28203

Trip 12: Native Plants Garden Tour

Half Day PM | LEADER: Steve Jenkins

MEET AT HOTEL 12:45 PM (45-minute drive from hotel)
MEET AT SITE 1:40 PM

The Genkin's yard is legendary for its landscaping with native plants. Margaret is a Master Gardener with a long list of workshops and presentation to her credit. She is a wealth of knowledge which she is eager to share with anyone who will listen. Steve has recently become an excellent bird photographer. Their yard attracts a variety of birds and other wildlife. Steve is particularly proud of the pair of Barred Owls who have taken up residence in the yard. If we're lucky they will put on a show for us. If there is time, we will swing by Wing Haven Gardens, birthplace of Mecklenburg Audubon, in Myers Park on the way back.

Activity Level: Easy: Will walk about 1 mile on flat, nature paths. There are facilities.

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/M26ZLNfbsyWVeJDK8>

Address: 6805 Honors Court Charlotte, 28210

Trip 13: Butterfly Walk (Clark's Creek Nature Preserve)

Half Day PM | Leader: Taylor Piephoff

MEET AT HOTEL: 1:15 PM (10-minute drive)

MEET AT SITE 1:35 PM

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. Will walk about 2 miles on flat, natural trails. Trail is a little steep near the pond. It is not handicapped accessible. There is a port-a-john in the parking lot.

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

Address: 5542 Hucks Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

Trip 14: UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens and Greenhouse

Half Day PM | Leader: Chris Bolling

MEET AT HOTEL: 1 PM (to take campus bus to greenhouse)

MEET AT SITE 1:30 PM

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 (<https://gardens.charlotte.edu>) 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: Easy: Will walk about 2 miles. The paths in the gardens are natural and are uneven, hilly in places. There is a steep grade from the gardens to the greenhouse. The greenhouse is wheelchair-accessible but the gardens are not. There are bathrooms in the greenhouse and elsewhere on campus.

eBird List with Photos: <https://bit.ly/32MY34C>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/mrfF5aMoyuKDrXPPA>

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

Saturday Evening 4/23 Reception & Banquet

Reception

6 – 7 PM | Hosted by Audubon North Carolina

UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel – Dubois Plaza

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

UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel – Dubois Plaza

A sit-down dinner will be followed by Audubon North Carolina’s volunteer awards and a keynote address by native Charlottean Senator DeAndrea Salvador. As a young senator representing district 39 in the Queen City, Sen. Salvador has already made her mark as a leader on climate, energy, and justice issues and played a key role in crafting and passing landmark bipartisan climate legislation last year.

Access – We will be on a ground level of the hotel with bathrooms close at hand.

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bVs87JioDnQDPH998>

Address: 9041 Robert D. Snyder Rd, Charlotte, NC 28262

Sunday 4/24 Field Trips

Trip 15: Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge (https://www.fws.gov/refuge/pee_dee/)

Half Day | Leader: Judy Walker

MEET AT HOTEL 6:30 AM (70-minute drive from the hotel via I-485, Hwy. 74 Bypass (via the new Monroe Expressway toll road). Tolls: \$2.54 with NCQuickPass; \$3.92 without)

MEET AT SITE 7:50 AM Will split into 2 groups at Pee Dee. We will meet at the bathrooms at the entrance to the refuge on Rt. 52. Google has a tendency to take folks to the center of the refuge about 3 miles away. The Google link below is correct.

Heading east after the Summit? This National Wildlife Refuge (https://www.fws.gov/refuge/pee_dee/) 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: Will walk about 4 miles on a combination of flat, paved and dirt roads. We will also drive several different areas on the refuge. There are facilities at the refuge office.

eBird List with Photos: <https://bit.ly/3HENY8t>

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

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

Trip 16: Redlair Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Chris Bolling

MEET AT HOTEL 7:00 AM (45-minute drive from Hotel)

MEET AT SITE 7:50 AM

Heading west after the Summit? This County Catawba Lands Conservancy property, closed to the public, is a gem hiding in Gaston County. Redlair (<https://catawbalands.org/the-story-of-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.

Activity Level: Moderate: Will walk about 3 miles on natural trails which are narrow and uneven in places. There are a few hilly spots. It is not wheelchair accessible. There are no facilities.

Address: 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.

Trip 17: Catawba College Ecological Preserve/Elizabeth Stanback Wildlife Garden, Salisbury, NC

Half Day AM | LEADER: Steve Coggin

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

MEET AT SITE 8:05 AM – Turn off Innes Street at the Robertson-College Community Center (Keppel Auditorium – Trustee Circle). Drive to the back of the building and park at the edge of the woods.

Heading north after the Summit? This 189-acre natural area has a creek, mature swamp forest, ponds and upland forest (<https://bit.ly/3pWUn91>). 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. Park behind the Robertson College Community Center (COVID test signs are a good landmark).

Activity Level: Moderate: Will walk about 3 miles on most flat, natural trails. There is one steep trail back up to the Center. It is not handicapped accessible. The Center is currently closed but there are bathrooms in a nearby building.

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

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/Bwiz5RSbvq2v6BWh8>

Address: 2300 W Innes St, Salisbury, NC 28144

Trip 18: McAlpine Creek Park/Greenway

Half Day AM | LEADER: Wayne Covington

MEET AT HOTEL 7:30 AM (30-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 8:05 AM

Want to see more of Charlotte? 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: Will walk about 1.5 on combination of flat paved and natural trails. It is wheelchair accessible. There are bathrooms 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 19: RibbonWalk Nature Preserve

Half Day AM | LEADER: Jeff Lemons

MEET AT HOTEL 7:45 AM (15-minute drive from hotel)

MEET AT SITE 8:10 AM

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/Strenuous: Will walk over 3 miles on natural trails which are uneven and narrow in places. It is not handicapped accessible. There is a port-a-john in the parking lot.

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

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

Address: 4601 Nevin Rd, Charlotte, NC 28269

More to Do in Charlotte On Your Own

Wing Haven Gardens – you get in free this weekend with your Summit nametag!

248 Ridgewood Ave, Charlotte, NC 28209

Wing Haven is closest to the native plants garden tour and Latta Park.

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.

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>

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.