Things We Can Do Now

By Jim Nesbit
CFAS President

I hope that this Skimmer finds you and your family safe and healthy. If you have lost a loved one or a family member, be sure to give yourself and your family love and support, and allow yourself time to heal and grieve. Remember, a good way to find healing is to go on a bird walk, maybe in the woods or on the beach, either by yourself or with a friend.

Your CFA Board has been busy working on “Things You Can Do” to help birds, our community and our environment become a healthier place for all. We will be sending an email to all our members, suggesting ways you can get involved with our committees on some of these ideas.

We hope you will be encouraged to join us or do some of these things on your own. Because you already care for birds, you are undoubtably doing many already.

By the way, I have discovered new areas to explore in Carolina Beach State Park. Check out hiking around the campground and some of their new trails.

Time to exhale and get back to normal (whatever that is). Be gentle on yourself and others.

Keep Soaring!

Red-bellied Woodpecker, Holly Shelter. (See p.6)
Logo Gets a Freshening:

We did want to keep the image of the Black Skimmer, our beloved signature-bird. But the time was right to update an emblem that has served us so long and so well.

Fortunately, Cordelia Norris stepped in to help. Cordelia is an award-winning graphic designer. Her Wilmington-based Luna Creative specializes in branding and other marketing services for non-profits whose missions mesh with her own. She is also a Cape Fear Audubon member, lifelong birder and dedicated conservationist. What a great combination, right?

Working with our communications committee and our board, Cordelia crafted an exciting new CFA logo that incorporates color, style, grace, and a greater flexibility for many uses in years to come.

And, there’s a bonus: She was kind enough to donate consultation and design services, no charge.

Oh, and she serves as a trained volunteer for the Wrightsville Beach Bird Steward program.

Check out the Luna Creative website:

https://lunacreates.com

Motus Moving Forward

By Marae Lindquist, Conservation Committee

Cape Fear Audubon is happy to report plans to place a Motus tower on Lea-Hutaff Island are making good progress. Motus towers allow scientists to track and monitor animal movements, in particular migration, to help conserve and understand species ecology. Our chapter is proud to participate in funding for the project. If you have questions or would like to help financially, please contact me.

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ONUTINGS

April 24th, 2021: CJ Downey organized and led our chapter’s first field trip after a year-long pandemic pause.

Greenfield Lake

By CJ Downey

It was a cool, overcast spring morning. The walk took place around the Greenfield Lake Amphitheatre, where we spotted 42 species of birds as well as other wildlife such as American alligators.

Some of the highlights included nesting pairs of Brown Thrashers, Green Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Kingbirds, Yellow-throated Warblers, Prothonotary Warblers, and a number of species identified by song, including Orchard Orioles and Chipping Sparrows.

We catered to beginning birders by going over the songs of common species such as Carolina Wrens, and sharing information about the plant life at the park.

Masks were still recommended outdoors when CJ Downey (right) led the Greenfield Lake outing.

There were 19 of us in all. Great turnout for a first post-pandemic outing.
Miles Buddy, UNCW student and Cape Fear Audubon board member, arranged this trip, which introduced a dozen birders to a 10-acre forested paradise inside the busy UNC Wilmington campus.

The preserve’s multiple trails pass through hardwood-community black gum and cypress, mixed hardwoods, and pines. There are bogs, a small pond, thickets of ferns and climbing vines, and even a constructed area with carnivorous plants. It adds up to plentiful food and cover for wildlife, including birds.

Photographer Jeff Hall found families of house finches feeding their fledglings. Of course he took pictures:

Photograph 1:

Photograph 2:

Photograph 3:

Photograph 4:
OUTINGS

Holly Shelter, May 8th
Near the NC Wildlife boat ramp on Shaw Highway

An easy ramble along a levee, with a blackwater swamp one side and the Northeast Cape Fear River on the other.

Nancy Buckingham reports:
Fifteen “fine feathered friends” flocked to this outing on a sunny Saturday morning. It was wonderful to have a mix of new and seasoned birders, and as usual, everyone helped each other out in hearing and/or seeing 27 species.

One highlight was the sight of 15 Anhingas flying in formation overhead. Another, Jeff Hall’s glimpse of a Northern Bobwhite dashing past with a troop of chicks. And of course Prothonotary Warblers flitted about like yellow jewels.

Many birds were seen carrying insects to fledglings.

A big thank-you to Diane Butzin, who completed a Birdability checklist for aspects of handicapped accessibility at the site. We will be doing these assessments at most of our upcoming bird outings. (See p. 7)

Also, thanks to Scott Stokley for entering the day's list on eBird.

www.capefearaudubon.org
Moores Creek National Battlefield
Saturday, June 5

This 87-acre preserve, near Currie on NC-210, commemorates a pivotal battle of the Revolutionary War.

Open year-round, the park draws history buffs, walkers, picnickers, and of course birders. Its longleaf pine savannah, open meadows and riparian woodlands harbor a wealth of birds. Altogether, we counted 27 species.

There were nine of us, including photographer Curtis Krueger. (See photos at left.)

We saw many Prothonotary Warblers along the boardwalk that spans the water. Parents stayed busy, bringing breakfast to fledgling chicks.

The boardwalk counts among many features that make Moores Creek a favorite for visitors with disabilities. (See page 7.)
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Birdability
Because birding is for everybody and every body!

Freya McGregor, OTR/L, CIG
Birdability Coordinator and Occupational Therapist

Our ZOOM webinar on April 27 featured Birdability outreach coordinator Freya McGregor, describing how this new non-profit works to welcome more folks to birding. Birdability focuses on improving site access for those with disabilities, injuries, low vision, age-related mobility limitations, or other health concerns. It’s part of Audubon’s strategic imperative toward Equity, Diversion and Inclusion.

If you missed it, you can view the recorded video here:
https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=484680932752912&ref=watch_permalink

Moores Creek National Battlefield (previous page) ranks high for Birdability, due to wheelchair-friendly surfaces, availability of benches and restrooms, visibility, and other factors.

This crowdsourced Birdability Map shows accessibility features of outdoor spaces around the world. Anyone can contribute a review. Recently added North Carolina assessments were written by Diane Butzin (Holly Shelter boat ramp) and Linda Thomas (Moores Creek).

Access the Birdability Map using this link:
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/819bf15a20164b4ba5196c04f58836b4

www.capefearaudubon.org
‘Disposable Diapers’  
Keep a Nest Tidy

We’ve watched nesting birds bring worms, caterpillars and insects to their hungry hatchlings.

The babies gobble them down. But then … WHAT?

Turns out, the chicks of many songbirds — perching birds — pass a disposable “fecal sac,” which parent birds then remove from the nest.

It’s an efficient adaptation ensuring nursery hygiene!

Here is the FECAL SAC story, from the Audubon website:

Backyard Broods of BLUEBIRDS!

In mid-May, Charles Holden sent us these shots of his homemade bluebird house. There are new hatchlings aboard.

1. Parent arrives
2. Ducks head inside
3. Emerges with …
   Could that be a FECAL SAC?

(Left) Bob Roush erected an old tobacco-barn birdhouse someone had discarded. Surprise! It became a bluebird nursery!

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher brings a yummy caterpillar to its young near the Holly Shelter boat ramp.

*Photo by Jeff Hall*
**The Skimmer** is the quarterly newsletter of Cape Fear Audubon (CFA), a regional chapter of the National Audubon Society.

*The MISSION* of Cape Fear Audubon is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems within our region, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's diversity.

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4. Field Trips  
5. Membership  
6. Program Planning

*VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!*

Interested in serving on our board, or one of our working committees? We're currently in need of a new Membership Coordinator. Contact us to find out how you can …

MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR BIRDS!

**WEBSITE:** [https://www.capefearaudubon.org](https://www.capefearaudubon.org)