**Brown-headed Nuthatches Need a Good Home!**

Nuthatch boxes are still available! They are nesting now. Audubon members who give a gift family membership get a free box. Non-members who join the family membership can also get a free box. With your help, 10,000 new Brown-headed Nuthatch homes will be placed across North Carolina in 2015. Brown-headed Nuthatches are losing the pinewoods and dead trees they need for food and nest cavities due to urbanization and deforestation. With one simple action, you can help reverse the decline of this year-round resident. All you have to do is put up a nuthatch box in your yard to provide a wonderful solution that will help this bird species thrive. Please contact Charley Winterbauer at cewinterbauer@bellsouth.net for more information and family gift application form.

Nuthatch box may be painted on outside for better endurance.

**New CFAS Affiliate Chapter at UNCW**

On March 18th, students established an affiliate chapter of the CFAS on the UNCW campus. Dr. James Rotenberg will serve as its faculty advisor and Johanna Colburn as a CFAS liaison. Students are laying the foundation to make this possible by selecting their inaugural executive board members and are creating their constitution. Members are also in the process of settling on a permanent name (Seahawk Audubon Affiliate is a possible choice). The CFAS membership fee will be waived for the officers for the first year. CFAS is excited to see the new chapter affiliate develop and wish them future success! For more information, contact Lillian Muecke at lcm3539@uncw.edu or Dr. James Rotenberg at rotenbergj@uncw.edu.
Volunteers Needed for Native Plant Awareness Day
Learn about native plants and what they can do for birds at the Native Plant Awareness Day on October 17th at the New Hanover County Arboretum. Co-sponsored by CFAS, The Arboretum, and the SE chapter of the Native Plant Society, this informative event will teach you how to garden with native plants while helping to sustain birds. The plants in your yard matters! As natural areas for birds continue to decline, so do the native plants and the important food sources they provide for birds. Numerous native plants will be for sale at the New Hanover County Arboretum, proving the perfect setting for this event. Volunteers are also needed at the event. Program details coming soon! Please contact Charley Winterbauer at cewinterbauer@bellsouth.net or Catherine Nesbit cnesbit@ec.rr.com for more information.

Cedar Waxwing on native plant, Black Cherry (Prunus serotina)

Waterford Environmental Committee Cypress Award for Habitat
The February edition of Waterways Magazine featured a great article highlighting the Cypress Award that CFAS is developing based on Audubon’s model for habitat. This award is a true outcome of CFAS’s Backyard Habitat program! The Cypress Award idea has been adapted, with Audubon’s permission, from the Cape Fear Audubon Society’s Bird Friendly Habitat award. The exquisite gardens pictured in the article belong to CFAS Environmental Committee member Kerrin Polaski. The Cypress Awards are intended to recognize residents who are working in their yards to make them beautiful, environmentally sound and wildlife-friendly. An added benefit to this award is to encourage residents to develop sustainable landscaping that costs less by using gardening practices that conserve water, use less fertilizer and are less time consuming. Link to article (on page 15):
Discover the Wonders of Birds Success at Town Creek Elementary

On January 16th, CFAS presented its Discover the Wonders of Birds (DTWOB) program around 80 fourth graders at Town Creek Elementary School in Winnabow. Brunswick County teacher Samesa Goodson facilitated the all-day event with CFAS. The event received extensive media coverage and included several Brunswick County officials.

CFAS President Charley Winterbauer believes the DTWOB program at Town Creek Elementary was one of the best DTWOB CFAS has ever facilitated and the venue was the most efficient way to present the program. The strategy of having students split into small groups of four to rotate through the learning centers was a super-efficient use of time and worked extremely well for the children. The small groups at each learning center resulted in students effectively interacting with each other as well as with the facilitator. “I was impressed with the level of comprehension that the fourth graders had to the concept of bird survival needs,” said Charley. “The majority of students knew that human survival needs – food, water and shelter – are the same as bird’s survival needs.” Charley hopes that CFAS can repeat this kind of DTWOB presentation as it was very rewarding to us as well as the kids.

Student quotes:
“I learned that birds can see very far. Also birds have different beak sizes, I also learned that birds eat different food - I had no idea!” - Madison Davis

“My favorite station was the owl pellets because I had fun and found a lot of bones.”
- Niquel Barnhill

“I learned that the Red Knot flies from the bottom of South America to Canada! That is a long way for them.” - Vicente Martinez-Long

“I learned that bird’s bones are hollow but that in a lot of ways their bones are similar to mine! I also learned about native plants and how important they are in the food chain for birds.” - Nicholas

“Another thing I learned was birds feathers don’t get wet that easy.” - Riley Rogers

The FREE DTWOB traveling education program can be presented at museums, schools, parks and other groups. For more information on the program, to become a volunteer or to schedule a booking, please contact Catherine Nesbit at cnesbit@ec.rr.com.
Board Member Spotlight:
CFAS would like to recognize and thank Debbie Downey for her outstanding service! Debbie has always been an advocate for the most vulnerable in our society. For many years her focus was advocating for children with special needs and when the opportunity arose to become involved with CFAS, she did not hesitate to step up. “The world needs everyone to protect and to advocate for what many take for granted,” said Debbie.

Birds have always been part of Debbie’s life. Her dad began raising and flying pigeons when he was 16 years old. Her first home was in the upstairs apartment of the brownstone her grandparents owned in Brooklyn, New York. As common in urban areas, her father’s pigeons and coops were on the roof and since the door to the roof was in Debbie’s bedroom, she was part of that world from day one. Debbie’s first close connection with birds was a parrot that she named Polly. Her father’s middle name was "Newton" so taught Polly to say "Oh Newton...We Love Fig Newtons" whenever her father walked into the room.

One of her family's favorite pastimes was to discover the new birds and flowers in the more than 13 different places they lived. She first moved to Wilmington in 1978 and later returned permanently in 1998. An Ivy League educated mom who followed her husband around the country, Debbie has three wonderful, talented and kind children (now adults). Debbie has three children: a daughter in Boston, a daughter and son-in-law in Raleigh and her son CJ who has been involved with CFA since he was in seventh grade. She has been lucky to have free accommodations to enjoy the mountains of North Carolina and Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Massachusetts Audubon Boston Nature Center and the extensive bird collection at the Peabody Museum at Harvard.

As for her favorite birds, Debbie usually tries to like the ones that no one else does like the house sparrows or the common everyday pigeons, but she finds the gracefulness of pelicans beautiful. Around her yard, the mockingbirds and Debbie have developed a working relationship. If they decide to put a nest in an inappropriate place, it will not stop her from carrying on her life as usual. She has been buzzed a few times, but she and the mockingbird work it out and they reward her with allowing her to watch the
fledglings take flight. Her resident hummingbird, "Hummer" pays no attention whatsoever to Debbie when she is working in the yard and will go to whatever flower intended, regardless if she is next to it. Every year there is at least one bird that feels the best new home is the wreath on her front door and no matter how often that door is used, they insist on raising a family. “It always is fun to hear the family through the door especially when the little ones start demanding to be fed,” said Debbie.

As a person who tries to live with no regrets, birding has created a unique one for Debbie. While at Cornell University, she never ventured out to the Veterinarian School/Farm area and if Cornell had an Ornithology Building at the time, she never ventured there either. Her bucket list contains a visit to Ithaca during the warm months. Although she missed these two opportunities, Ithaca holds a special place in her heart. Debbie was married there, her first daughter was born there, her late husband and his brother and wife and her nieces all attended Ithaca College. Also attending Ithiaca College was her next door neighbor Rod Serling (from the Twilight Zone). She thinks a visit back would be well warranted.

Debbie with Son CJ (CJ is also very active with CFAS)

**Did You Know?**

You all know about Poison Ivy being bad to come in contact with but did you know that it and Poison Oak are not all bad for some wildlife? In fact, it has a considerable benefit for songbirds. Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron radicans) is a high climbing vine while Poison Oak (Toxicodendron pubescens) is a low shrub and both are native to our region. Poison Ivy and Poison Oak fruits are consumed by approximately 60 songbirds during the winter months. Our Woodpeckers and our Woodpecker-like birds, the Northern Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker really like the fruits. Surprisingly, the White-tailed Deer has a moderate to high preference to forage on Poison Ivy. The Swamp Rabbit will also forage on Poison Ivy. Even bees will visit the flowers. So, if these plants are out of harm’s way for you, let these plants continue to thrive in their natural environment. As an aside, the fall colors of red and yellow are pleasing to see for us humans.
Plan Ahead for Upcoming Events!

April 8 - Airlie Bird Walk
8 to 9:30 a.m.
Jill Peleuses and Jennifer O’Keefe will lead this regular monthly bird walk held every second Wednesday of the month. Contact Jill Peleuses at wildbirdgardeninc@gmail.com for more information.

April 11 – Holly Shelter Gamelands Bird Walk
Dave Weesner, a seasoned veteran of leading bird walks for over 40 years, will lead our walk through the Holly Shelter Impoundments. Please meet at 6:30 am at the Boat Ramp off of Shaw Highway. We are meeting this early to increase the possibility of viewing American Bitterns, and perhaps a Nighthawk or two.

April 15 - Southport Bird Walk
8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Dave Weesner will lead the bird walk around the Southport area. The walk leaves from Wild Bird and Garden at 105 East Brown Street. Contact Dave Weesner at wildbirdgardeninc@gmail.com for more information.

April 19 – DTWOB at the NC Aquarium at Ft. Fisher
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
The migration learning center and migration game will be featured. Contact Catherine Nesbit cnesbit@ec.rr.com for more information.

April 22 - Your Green Future
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
CFAS will have a Table at “Your Green Future” hosted at University of North Carolina Wilmington. This event will be hosted on Earth Day, April 22nd from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the outdoor amphitheater area on the campus.

April 24 – DTWOB at Lincoln Elementary School
4:15 to 5:45 p.m.
Volunteers are needed for this afterschool program event in Leland! Contact Catherine Nesbit at cnesbit@ec.rr.com for more information.

April 25 – Holly Shelter Gamelands Bird Walk
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
This trip will be led by Bruce Smithson who is very familiar with the area and the event has always proven very worthwhile. Please be on time at 8:30 a.m. at the Holly Shelter Gamelands boating access off of Shaw Highway on the Northeast Cape Fear River. Contact Gretchen Schramm at gretchenschramm7@gmail.com for more information.
May 2 – Southport Nature Fest
10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Numerous fun events are planned for the event including a bird walk with Jill Peleuses from 7 to 9 a.m., followed by a talk with Lindsay Addison, a pancake breakfast and the Discover the Wonders of Birds program. More details to come. Contact Catherine Nesbit at cnesbit@ec.rr.com for more information.

May 4th CFAS Meeting/Presentation
To be announced. Check calendar

May 9 - Camp Lejeune Birding with John DeLuca
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
It is a special privilege to be able to bird the grounds of Camp Lejeune with John DeLuca. John is a knowledgeable biologist and enthusiastic birder who will take participants through a diversity of terrains on the thousands of acres that comprise the Camp. Due to restrictions, this trip is limited to 13 people, so sign up early as it always fills up quickly. As in the past, Gretchen will provide luncheon for those who wish to participate and asks for a nominal donation to help defray the cost. Please meet at Porter’s Neck Harris Teeter parking lot at 6 a.m. where participants will then carpool to Lejeune. Contact Gretchen Schramm at gretchenschramm7@gmail.com for more information.

May 13 - Airlie Bird Walk
8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Jill Peleuses and Jennifer O'Keefe will lead this walk through Airlie Gardens held every second Wednesday of the month. Contact Jill Peleuses at wildbirdgardeninc@gmail.com for more information.

May 20 - Southport Bird Walk
8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Dave Weesner will lead a walk around Southport every third Wednesday of the month. Walks leave from Wild Bird and Garden at 105 East Brown Street. Contact Dave Weesner at wildbirdgardeninc@gmail.com for more information.

Cape Fear Audubon link
www.capefearaudubon.org

Calendar Link:
Skimmer Editor: Johanna Colburn  jm8798@uncw.edu
Submit potential articles to Johanna for consideration.
Also, if you have a unique/interesting photograph of a local bird, please send it in for publication consideration.
Thank you,
Charley Winterbauer, President Cape Fear Audubon Society

Parting Shot

Feeding of last year’s baby Brown Headed Nuthatch by John Sutton.
John says he didn’t know where the nest was but the parent brought two of them to the feeder for several weeks until they were able to come on their own.