Town Creek Students Interviewed on WHQR

In January of this year, Cape Fear Audubon took the Discover the Wonder of Birds to Town Creek elementary school to Ms. Samesa Goodson’s 4th grade classes. Two of the students, pictured above, were among the 80+ students that did discover the wonder of birds by using the interactive displays.

With a planned up and coming Discover the Wonder of Birds scheduled for Oct 17, Trinity and Amir told of their favorite interactive display and encouraged kid of all ages to go and experience the Wonder displays. Now in 5th grade, they were interviewed on October 9th by Gina Gambony on WHQR and did a fantastic job of promoting Discover the Wonder of Birds. You can go to http://whqr.org/programs/midday-interview-gina-gambony and listen to the interview.

A day before the interview, Discover the Wonder of Birds made its 2nd visit to Town Creek Elementary school at Winnabow, in Brunswick County on October 8th. Over 80 4th grade students filed through the Library and spent time at each of the seven interactive displays that Cape Fear Audubon had set up.
Volunteers running the Town Creek School event from Cape Fear Audubon were top row, left to right, Robert Roush, Debbie Winterbauer, Big Bird, Charley Winterbauer, Jack Manock, Diane Butzin and Jim Nesbit. Seated are Catherine Nesbit and Mary Austin Smith.

This fall we trained 34 North Brunswick High School students to be facilitators at Discover the Wonders of Birds program. They will present the program to fourth graders at Jessie Mae Monroe Elementary School in Ash, N.C. November 13th.

In addition to presentations to elementary schools, this fall we have presented the program at Cape Fear Museum, Coastal Carolina Museum, and the New Hanover County Arboretum and Airlie Gardens.

We are always updating our learning centers for Discover the Wonders of Birds program. Presently, Debbie Downey, Catherine Nesbit and Johanna Coburn are developing a new center, Birds and Climate Change.

We have a very active Education Committee that steers the process for Discover the Wonders of Birds program. Members are Catherine Nesbit (chair), Bob Roush (volunteer coordinator), Johanna Colburn, Debbie Downey, Jack Manock, Jim Nesbit, Dave Weesner, and Charley Winterbauer. We meet quarterly.
Some images from Discover the Wonder of Birds at Town Creek

Debbie with students guessing when Feather is placed on hand from “Feathers” display.

Catherine and the “Birds from the Inside out”.

Diane showing a “Migration” route on globe

Charley and the “Survival Needs”.

In summary; it is very rewarding to see these kids, these sponge-like kids soak up the knowledge. Their feedback is very enlightening.
Looking for ...  

**VOLUNTEERS!**

Help others **Discover the Wonder of Birds**  
by volunteering as an Outreach Educator.  
Want to know more? Contact our  
Volunteer Coordinator today! Robert Roush  
rroush@ec.rr.com

Two New Cape Fear Audubon Board Members

Robert Roush  

Bob's lifelong interest in birds and wildlife began during a childhood spent largely outdoors, in Wyoming and Colorado. After serving as a Navy journalist, he earned a degree in social sciences at UC Berkeley. He worked through the eighties as a San Francisco TV producer, regularly appearing on-air with science and nature stories. "I did stuff on raccoons, striped bass, poison oak – all kinds of things," says Bob. "I wanted viewers to love nature as much as I did."
Environmental reporting inspired a career transition: making promotional videos for conservation groups. In 1989 he helped raise funds to buy the last privately owned islands in San Francisco Bay. "They’re now the Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge, home to the largest heron and egret rookery in the Bay Area," Bob says. "It's great to know I played a role in making it happen."

Since moving to North Carolina in 1991, Bob has worked in communications and marketing. He retired in 2008 as a public relations manager with the North Carolina Aquariums. He has been active with the Native Plant Society as well as Cape Fear Audubon. He immediately began helping with the Discover the Wonder of Birds program by taking charge of the volunteers. Keeping and having enough volunteers to conduct a DTWOB event is one of the hardest tasks with the program.

Johanna Colburn Hamilton

Johanna was recently voted onto the Cape Fear Audubon Board as the Programs/Publicity chairperson.

Growing up on Maryland’s Eastern Shore along the Chesapeake Bay, Colburn first fell in love with birds. With its diverse array of bird-watching sites and natural habitats, Colburn developed a passion for the environment. Prior to her being elected to Cape Fear Audubon’s Board of Directors, Colburn received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications with a minor in Studio Art from Salisbury University in 2003. She then worked for 10 years in public relations for the Maryland Office of Tourism and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development as a trusted communications team member across multiple sectors to generate business and promote the State’s vibrant cultural economies.

As the number of environmental challenges rose, Colburn became determined to meet the need for specialists trained to communicate science into information that is understandable, relevant and accessible for everyone, leading her to change career paths and enroll in the Master of Science in Coastal and Ocean Policy (MCOP) program at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) in August 2013. During that time, Colburn served as the Graduate Intern for Cape Fear Audubon from March 2014 to May 2015. She also served as MCOP’s first Graduate Association President and worked for the MCOP Director as his Graduate Teaching Assistant.
Upon completion of her Masters in May 2015, Colburn became involved full-time in Cape Fear Audubon. She is currently an adjunct professor at UNCW for the Recreation, Sport Leadership and Tourism Management program. In addition to her involvement in Cape Fear Audubon, Colburn is also active in the Junior League of Wilmington. She says, “I look forward to many more years serving Cape Fear Audubon”

**Departing Board Member**

![Nancy Buckingham showing youngster how to use binoculars](image)

Nancy Buckingham has departed Wilmington and our board to take a new job in Asheville, NC. We all wish her well at her new endeavor.

**New UNCW Audubon affiliate**

With Dr. Jamie Rotenberg serving as Faculty Advisor, Cape Fear Audubon helped establish an affiliate Audubon, the Seahawk Audubon. President is Dalton Jackson; VP is Evangelon Buckland, Media coordinator-Catlin Hall, Secretary- Lillian Mueke, and Treasurer-Ben Austin. They are an enthusiastic group of students and are in the process of recruiting student members.

CFAS will be helping them organizing campus bird walks and volunteering speakers for their meetings. Evangelon says, “We want the students to be aware of the situation with our birds, get involved and make our campus more bird friendly.” Dalton added, “We want to encourage students to go out into the woods to observe the birds.”
CJ Downey goes to Hog Island Maine

CJ Downey with Juanita Roushdy at Hog Island

CJ Downey was sponsored by CFAS and went to a Hog Island course (Audubon) this summer. Here are his comments on the Hog Island experience. Below is one day that CJ described.

Description: In the morning we did an exploratory cruise to get us familiar with the estuarine ecosystem and basic birds of the bays. The 2.5hr cruise yielded Black (Common) Guillemots, Black and White Winged Scotas, Mallards, Eiders, Laughing Gulls, Common Terns, Black Backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Loon “Great Northern Diver”, Great Blue Heron, Fish Eagles, and Osprey.

New Species from the cruise included the Black Guillemot which was also seen on the first day of the trip as we arrived on the island.

Ross Island: Later in the day we went to Ross Island to visit a Herring Gull and Black Backed Gull colony. On the island was some invasive Hogweed, Poison Hemlock that has a detrimental effect on the seabird habitat. This vegetation also allowed Common Yellowthroats, Song Sparrows, Yellow Warbler, and even a Savannah Sparrow to thrive on the island. We also came across Common Eiders and Cormorants that nested there and got to hold one of the Herring Gull chicks.

I found the following article fascinating and wanted folks to check it out. Charley

Reprinted from North Carolina Botanical Garden Newsletter

Invasive plants are not for the birds!
By Johnny Randall, NCBG Director of Conservation Programs

The connection between birds and fleshy fruits is a beautiful example of co evolution. Birds receive a nutritional "reward" for eating the fruit, and the plant benefits via seed dispersal. The co evolutionary relationship continues, as the seeds within fleshy fruit have a particularly hard seed coat that protects them through their journey in a bird's gut. This "pre-treatment" is often required for germination, and the seeds are ultimately deposited in their own nurturing plop of fertilizer. Note that dry fruits and seeds are digested by birds and are not typically dispersed except by adhesion to feet and feathers. Dry seeds and fruits, like those in the sunflower/composite family (Asteraceae) and bean/pea family (Fabaceae), are produced in ample quantities that can sustain "sharing" with birds and other critters, with plenty left for dispersal by wind, water, etc.

Birds are generalist feeders when it comes to fleshy fruit selection and will eat what fits in their beak, which
is another example of co-evolution through natural selection. And because birds are likely, or even more likely, to disperse an invasive plant than a native plant, the bird/plant mutualism has been spoiled.

Of the approximately 6,000 native plant species in the southeastern United States, about one-third have fleshy fruits and are bird-dispersed, whereas nearly one-half of the approximately 450 invasive plant species in this same region are bird-dispersed. Birds are therefore a primary vector for moving actual and potentially invasive plants from the cultivated landscape to natural areas. And once established in natural areas, the spread continues in leaps and bounds. This is why bird-dispersal is a primary risk assessment character for evaluating plant invasiveness potential.

Most of the seriously invasive and potentially invasive plants in our area have fleshy fruits and are bird-dispersed, such as English ivy, autumn olive, Chinese privet, Oriental bittersweet, porcelainberry, mahonia, multiflora rose, and Japanese honeysuckle. The scientific literature on invasive plants and bird-dispersal is moderate but growing, and almost all of the research warns of a serious and multi-layered phenomenon. First off, birds either do not discriminate between native and invasive plants or often prefer invasives over natives. One reason for this is that a large proportion of invasives are high in carbohydrates, whereas the natives are often higher in protein and lipids/fats. Birds are consequently choosing candy bars over cheeseburgers, which could affect bird nutrition, particularly during fall migration.

My own research on this subject confirms that invasive plant fruits are often preferred over natives. I showed that there is, for example, a strong preference for the invasive camphortree (Cinamomum camphora) and autumn olive (Elaeagnus umbellata) over the native red bay (Persea palustris) and downy arrow-wood (Viburnum rafinesqueanum) respectfully. This competition for reproduction via fleshy fruit dispersal is a particularly insidious negative invasive plant effect that is often overlooked.

Researchers have also shown that many invasive plants have fruits that persist longer on the plant than do native plant fruits into the fall and winter. The invasives are therefore available when our natives are not.

One particularly worrisome study showed that male cardinals that ingest the red fruits of the very invasive and widespread Amur honeysuckle become strikingly colored. Bright color typically signals superior health, and females tend to choose these individuals as mates. Ingestion of Amur honeysuckle causes less fit or even sickly males to be pumped up on these red pigments, compromising the benefits of selective mate choice.

Let’s summarize the cascade of negative effects wrought by bird-dispersed invasive plants. Invasive plants with fleshy fruits are spread far and wide by birds, which is enhanced in the winter. Bird nutrition is compromised when a carbohydrate-rich invasive is chosen over a protein or lipid rich native. Native plants can be outcompeted for reproduction by invasives. Lastly, overall bird population health could decline because females cannot distinguish between sickly and vigorous males when choosing a mate.

The lesson from this gloomy scenario is to plant native plants and remove the non-native plants that produce fleshy fruits! Note, too, that it is the foliage of native plants, not non-natives that support the caterpillars of our moths and butterflies. You can make a difference!

THE BIG EVENT-NATIVE PLANT FESTIVAL

A long time in the planning, it finally happened on Saturday October 17 at the Arboretum. First off, thanks go to all of the organizers, leading the way were Catherine Nesbit of Cape Fear Audubon and Sabrina Woofter of NC Cooperative Extension (Arboretum), followed closely by the Library folks, Justine Roach and Dorothy Hodder, Master Gardeners, Bonnie Cutler, Cape Fear Audubon members and Master Gardeners, Nathan and Carol Bales, Going Green Valerie Robertson, Master Gardener Jon Wooten, Cape Fear Garden Club Sherry O’Daniell, Susan Brown, NC Cooperative Extension, Cary Paynter, Lara Berkley, Co-chairs of the Native Plant Society, Charley Winterbauer from Cape Fear Audubon and thanks to the participants that had a table, those that helped with Discover the Wonder of Birds, the vendors, plus the speakers.

Sabrina Woofter created a polling of the folks entering the event and exiting the event to gauge the effect of the festival. She had people coming in rate themselves on a scale from 1 to 7 as being non-knowledgeable to being an expert. This survey was
repeated for the outgoing. A little over 140 in both directions were surveyed and the average entering was 3 and the average exiting as 4.4. The objective of the festival was met, the festival organizers made the participants more aware of Native Plants and native plants were purchased at the event.

Some Pictures
PARTING SHOT

White Mockingbird taken by Terri Morris on N Topsail Island