Thanks to our sponsors! Having a website is expensive and we are grateful to our Web Sponsors, Shelton Herb Farm, the Great Outdoor Provision Company and Wild Bird & Garden. Sponsors for our Bird-friendly Habitat Award Program are Growing Wild Nursery, Sandra Siemering, ceramic artist, Hobby Greenhouse Club and A Natural Approach Solutions. We greatly appreciate their support.

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Native Plants: Coral Honeysuckle
Vines add dimension to the garden and those that bloom in early spring are especially welcome. Coral Honeysuckle, one of our prettiest native vines, is an early bloomer, greeting returning hummingbirds with cascades of bright trumpet flowers.

Coral Honeysuckle, which continues blooming all summer, also provides nectar for bees and butterflies and is a larval plant for Spring Azure butterflies. And the beautiful red fruits attract birds.

Upcoming Activities
Details for these activities are on our website www.capefearaudubon.org

Monday, March 8, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Monthly meeting. Charlotte Glen, Horticulture Agent for the Pender County Cooperative Extension, will introduce us to gardening with the native plants of our region. Location: Halyburton Park Visitors Center, 4099 S. 17th St., Wilmington.

Tuesday, March 16, 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Birding at Greenfield Lake. Early spring migrants and resident wading birds.
Directions: Meet at main parking lot near concession stands and tennis court.

Saturday, March 20, 8 -11 a.m. Birding at Holly Shelter game land. Early spring migrants including warblers and vireos. Owls, Red-shouldered Hawks, wading birds and more. Spring wildflowers. Directions: Meet at boat ramp on Shaw Hwy (SR 1520) in Pender Co.

Who’s New
We extend a hearty welcome to new members:
Sam Cooper, Wilmington
Noreen Thompson, Sunset Beach
And as always, our thanks to our renewing members who keep us going!

Butterfly Curriculum Takes Off
CFAS’ Butterfly Curriculum for 4th graders was developed in partnership with Airlie Gardens. Each 4th grade classroom in New Hanover County has our butterfly curriculum included in their science kit. This curriculum includes our photographic field guide to five local species of butterflies so that children can identify common species on their field trip to Airlie’s new Butterfly House. Now this curriculum will reach children far beyond our area. The Butterfly Conservation Initiative of the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville is including a link to our online curriculum on their educator’s listserv.

eWhat? by Juanita Roushdy
When you’re out birding, do you jot down your sightings? If so, that’s the first step of a much larger picture. Countless notebooks and pieces of paper reside in countless drawers and closets. It’s time to bring them out and contribute to the larger picture by way of eBird, the data-collecting tool of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Monarch Butterfly by Chuck Carmack

CFAS volunteers help John Ennis lead Brunswick County Early College High School students on the Great Backyard Bird Count, an eBird project.

eBird is easy to use and will enrich your birding and data collection. Not only does it keep your personal life list but it also tracks your data by country, region,
state, county, and town. If you don’t remember the address or location, it will show you a live Google map of the area you visited and you can zoom in to the exact spot where you stood. It combines your data with those of other users to track birds across the nation and the world. Cornell and Audubon share this data for ongoing research, locally and world-wide. Now, that’s amazing.

eBird has evolved over the years. It now has a data import tool to help upload your electronic records. All you need is date, location and a species list. Here’s a primer on how to get started.

Go to www.ebird.org and use the tabs at the top to familiarize yourself with what’s offered. An interesting place to start is “View and Explore Data.” From this tab you’ll find maps showing a given bird’s geographic frequency and population density, birds per hour, arrival and departure times, and more - as much or as little information as you like.

Once you’ve explored the site, take the plunge, register and enter your data. To do so, click on “Submit Observations” and then enter your name and password. Do not be intimidated by the “Where did you bird” page that comes up. I like to use the “Find it on map” and then name the site.

From here on, the site is self-explanatory. When you hit the “submit” button at the end of your data entry, you have a chance to make corrections. You can edit or delete any entry at any time; data are automatically updated.

If you have questions, the staff at Cornell are friendly and quick to answer questions, so don’t hesitate to e-mail them.

Remember, your data, old and new, are valuable, especially with so much research going on about the abundance and movement of birds in this age of global warming. So start entering your data on eBird. Dive in – the water’s warm. Good Luck!

Swamp Blackbirds by John Ennis

Generally it has been fairly easy for me to find Rusty Blackbirds foraging on the ground to show others and for photo ops. I confess, however, to being a lazy in doing the book work. Photographing them is difficult, making procrastinating on the skull session that much easier. During the weekend of February 20, while I photographed the civil war battle
reenactment at Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson, Rusties took matters in their own wings and taught me a lesson...and made me do the required reading.

While observing the set-up for the reenactment, 50+ Rusties flew over me and perched high in a tree over the wooded wetlands. They were loud and quickly taught me lesson one: their “rusty hinge” call.

On Sunday, I had plenty of time to look for Rusties around the wetland. Their occasional calls led me to a foraging flock. Soon many departed for nearby oaks and the acorns underneath. I had great looks and photo ops, but every time I outflanked them to get the sun behind me, a family of humans with rugrats came down the path and flushed the birds.

I left having learned Rusty behavior patterns for this site where conditions have changed from the past few years. The swamp is no longer dry and many of the wax myrtles around the edge have been cut back. Soon I’ll return in the solitude of a weekday morning and put my newly acquired knowledge to use.

Read Me!
Brush up on your birds with Pete Dunne’s Essential Field Guide Companion. No one captures the essence of a bird in fewer words!

Parting Shot...

Cedar Waxwing drinking from a ditch in Dick Daniel’s yard. Dick Daniels, photographer

Comments and submissions welcome. Please send them to Cary Paynter, dmpaynter@earthlink.net