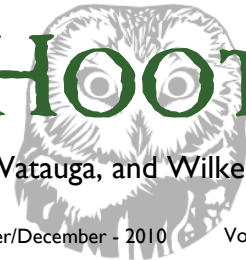


HIGH COUNTRY HOOTS

High Country Audubon Society - Serving Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga, and Wilkes Counties



November/December - 2010 Volume 2, Issue 5

ATTENTION: ALL AUDUBON MEMBERS IN AVERY, ALLEGHANY, ASHE AND WILKES COUNTIES

High Country Audubon Society is interested in involving more of its membership in Avery, Alleghany, Ashe and Wilkes counties in activities and meetings. We would like to utilize all five counties of the membership area, not just Watauga County.

We are inviting you to "host" a meeting by either providing a meeting space, program, or field trip area to visit. You can be a facilitator by just providing us with information or by hosting a monthly meeting or field trip. Examples of a place to meet could be the local library or community center.

Now that we have become a little more established as a chapter we would like to branch out and get to know our five county area better with your assistance and suggestions. We have plans to expand our education program by finding out about all the 4-H Clubs and Boy and Girl Scouts in the area and by attending events and setting up educational displays.

Our mission as Audubon members is

to educate our community about birds and conservation issues of all kinds. If you are a specialist in an area that relates to the environment, birding, spiders, bats, plants and gardening, or anything that relates to habitat or conservation, we invite you to join us in a more active way. If you are interested in this aspect of our mission, please contact the HCAS Education Chair Ros Pevsner at rospevsner@aol.com.

If you are interested in hosting a meeting or have suggestions as to how we can involve members in your area, send me an e-mail or go to our Yahoo listserv and post a message to the entire membership.

We would like for you to form a partnership with High Country Audubon and have a lot of fun!

Anita Clemmer
High Country Audubon Society President
anclemmer@att.net

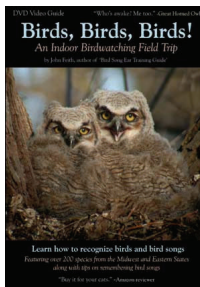
Birds, Birds, Birds!

The November Monthly Meeting will be November 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Watauga County Agricultural Conference Center.

The program will be "Birds, Birds, Birds! An Indoor Birdwatching Field Trip DVD and Bird Song Guide." The DVD is directed by John Feith and has received many favorable reviews.

"Birds, Birds, Birds!" is designed to help everyone improve their bird ID skills. It's a great tool for people who are just beginning to learn about birds

and a useful reference guide for experienced birdwatchers. None of the birds are identified immediately, allowing users to guess—just like out in the field.



Continued on Page 2

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November

10	Morganton Greenway Field Trip	8:30 a.m.
16	Monthly Meeting at Watauga County Ag. Conference Center	6:30 p.m.

December

NO MONTHLY MEETING		
14	Christmas Bird County begins and lasts through January 5, 2011.	

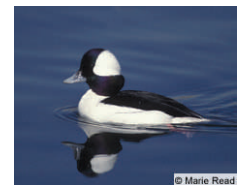
January

15	W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir Field Trip	TBD
18	Monthly Meeting at Watauga County Ag. Conference Center	6:30 p.m.

A \$5 donation is requested with field trip attendance. All events and meeting times are subject to change. For updated information please visit <http://highcountryaudubon.org>.

FUN FACTS

Bufflehead



- The smallest diving duck in North America, the Bufflehead breeds in ponds and small lakes in Canada, and winters in much of the United States. It nests in tree cavities as well as in nest boxes.
- The Bufflehead nests almost exclusively in holes excavated by Northern Flickers and, on occasion, by Pileated Woodpeckers.
- Unlike most ducks, the Bufflehead is mostly monogamous, often remaining with the same mate for several years.
- The bird lays eggs more slowly than most other ducks, commonly with intervals of two or three days between eggs.
- The Bufflehead's clutch size is 4-17 eggs. Egg Description: Cream-colored or buff; unmarked.
- In the early 20th century, shooting had reduced Bufflehead population numbers significantly, but between 1955 and 1992, surveys indicate that numbers more than doubled, despite large year-to-year fluctuations.

Info and picture found on <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.

BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS! CONT.

The DVD features 70 minutes of bird video and photos of birds, over 600 high-quality photographs of 218 different bird species, 17 quizzes to test bird ID skills, bird song mnemonics narration in quiz format, and a natural soundscape track.

During this quiet time of winter, many of us will find comfort in reading about birds and studying in preparation for the joyful songs of springtime that cannot arrive soon enough!

We hope to see you November 16. This will be our last monthly meeting of 2010!

NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP: MORGANTON GREENWAY

The November field trip for HCAS will be to the Morganton Greenway Wednesday, November 10. Those interested can meet at the Boone Mall at 7:30 a.m. (in front of Panera Bread) to carpool down the mountain. The group will meet up with Julia Mode and Janet Palmer to do some birding.

The Morganton Greenway System includes the Catawba River Greenway and the Freedom Trail Greenway and currently has five pedestrian access points with parking. In 2009, the Greenway System was included as part of the North Carolina Birding Trail.

History of Morganton's Greenway System

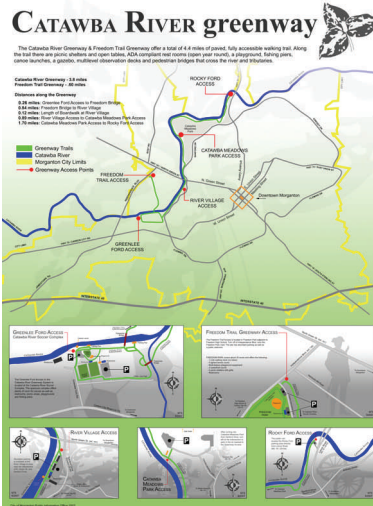
In the early 1990s, the City of Morganton acquired large amounts of property along one of western North Carolina's most cherished natural resources, the Catawba River, which meanders nearly eight miles through the corporate limits of the city. Through aggressive grant writing campaigns the city was able to acquire nearly six miles of river front in the



Morganton Greenway

Photo courtesy of

www.greaterhickorymetro.com



Maps of the Morganton Greenway System can be found on the City of Morganton's website. You can also download and print a Tree ID Guide from the website. The area boasts more than 30 different species of trees along the greenway.

Morganton was able to develop an extensive regional bikeway and pedestrian greenway system along its river front to provide recreation to its local citizens. The greenway soon attracted thousands of users per month from areas well outside the city of Morganton. It has become one of Morganton's calling cards. The Greenway System offers year-round biking, jogging, strolling and picnicking.

High Country Audubon Society Board

Anita Clemmer - President

Bob Cherry - Vice President, Conservation Chair, & Event Chair for Audubon North Carolina Annual Meeting

Brenda Combs - Secretary

Doris Ratchford - Treasurer

Jesse Pope - Field Trips & Social Events Chair

Janet Palmer - Membership Chair

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Bettie Bond

Martha Cutler

High Country Hoots is published six times a year by the High Country Audubon Society, a chapter of National Audubon. Local members receive the newsletter via electronic mail. It is also archived on <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/highcountryaudubon>.

HCAS Happenings

Weekday Birding

- Wednesday, January 12 - W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir

Brad Carey will lead the group at Kerr Scott starting at 9 a.m. As January 12 approaches, check the listserv for carpool options and details.



HCAS Member Photo



Richard Gray took this photo of a Sora at Appalachian State's farm in Valle Crucis. Richard stalked this bird for an hour and a half to capture the photo.



High Country
Audubon Society

PO Box 3746

Boone, NC 28607

<http://highcountryaudubon.org>

E-mail: highcountrybirder@yahoo.com

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: DECEMBER 14 - JANUARY 5

The 111th Christmas Bird Count runs from Tuesday, December 14, 2010 to Wednesday, January 5, 2011. Tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in this adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn.

For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to

experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the holiday season. Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data



Christmas Bird Count circles in the western hemisphere.

collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action. This year's count will help scientists understand the impact of the Gulf oil spill on vulnerable species.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition - and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

History of the Christmas Bird Count

Prior to the turn of the century people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about

declining bird populations.

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition - a "Christmas Bird Census" - that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

How Christmas Bird Count Helps Protect Species and Their Habitat

The data collected by observers

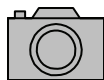
over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The long term perspective made possible by the Christmas Bird Count is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat - and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well. For example, local trends in bird populations can indicate habitat fragmentation or signal an immediate environmental threat, such as groundwater contamination or poisoning from improper use of pesticides.

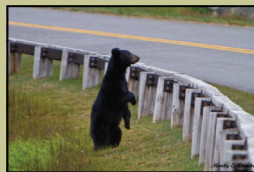
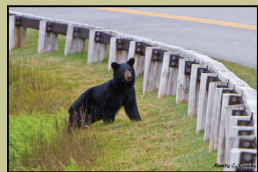


Frank Chapman

Excerpts and photos taken from <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. Annual summaries, FAQs and much more information can be found at this site.



HCAS Member Photo



Monty Combs took these pictures near Air Bellows Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway after an afternoon of hawk watching at Mahogany Rock. This was the first time Monty and his wife Brenda have seen a bear along the Parkway!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

An annual membership to the High Country Audubon Society is \$10 per person and due June 1 of each year. Membership and support gives you access to the group's listserv and the HCAS e-newsletter High Country Hoots. Mail check and information (name, address, telephone number, e-mail) to:

High Country Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Dues
PO Box 3746
Boone, NC 28607