

HIGH COUNTRY HOOTS

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

MONTHLY MEETINGS IN WINTER OFFER GREAT PROGRAMS

The January program, weather permitting, will feature "Opposable Chums, Guts and Glory at The World Series of Birding." The film features Pete Dunne, David Sibley and Kenn Kaufman and has won numerous awards and been shown on PBS.



Equal parts scavenger hunt, science expedition, and endurance test, The World Series of Birding is also a fundraiser, generating millions of dollars for conservation. The more bird species tallied, the more money raised.

W. KERR SCOTT DAM AND RESERVOIR FIELD TRIPS

Two January field trips are planned for the W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir. One will take place on Wednesday, January 12 and the other on Saturday, January 15.

The US Army Corps of Engineers built and manages this wonderful dam and reservoir and surrounding acreage, which has more than 150 different bird species. A bird list can be printed from www.saw.usace.army.mil/wkscott.

The W. Kerr Scott Lake Project was finished in 1962 and opened for public use the following year. The main purpose of the project was to stop the terrible flooding caused by the Yadkin

The competition takes place on a spring day every year by teams of birders from all over the world. The area birded is the state of New Jersey and the goal is to be the team with the most different species in the 24-hour time span.

Join us January 18 to see the film that "takes you along for the ride, with all of its competitiveness, camaraderie, and caffeine."

At the February Monthly Meeting, Janet Palmer will present on her favorite places to bird. After the presentation everyone will be invited to share their favorite local sites, exotic spots, and most unusual places that they've discovered. Please bring a list of places that you would like to bird in the future. The meeting will be February 15 and promises to make for an interesting and social evening!

and Pee-Dee Rivers like the ones that occurred in 1899, 1916, and 1940.

The field trip leader will be Natural Resource Specialist Brad Carey. The trip facilitators are Monty and Brenda Combs. Both planned field trips (January 12 and 15) will begin at the Visitor's Center at 9 a.m.

Carpooling is available for anyone who wants to ride down to Wilkes County together. Those interested in carpooling on January 12 should meet at the Food Lion just off Hwy 421 at 8 a.m. On January 15 the meeting spot is the New Market Cash Points area at 8 a.m.

January/February - 2011

Volume 2, Issue 6

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

12, 15	W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir Field Trip	9:00 a.m.
18	Monthly Meeting at Watauga County Ag. Conference Center	6:30 p.m.
28-30	Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting at Nags Head	

February

5	Chapter Day in Asheboro at NC Zoo	
13	Burke's Garden Field Trip (Backup date is February 20)	TBD
15	Monthly Meeting at Watauga County Ag. Conference Center	6:30 p.m.
18-21	Great Backyard Bird Count	

March

3, 5	New River State Park Field Trip	TBD
15	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

Rough-legged Hawk



- A hawk of the North, the Rough-legged Hawk breeds in Arctic tundra and taiga regions around the northern hemisphere. Both dark and light forms are common, with many birds intermediate between the extremes.
- The name "Rough-legged" Hawk refers to the feathered legs. The Rough-legged Hawk, the Ferruginous Hawk, and the Golden Eagle are the only American hawks to have legs feathered all the way to the toes.
- Nest description: Large bowl of sticks on cliff ledge. Lined with grasses, sedges, small twigs, and greenery. The nest sometimes contains the bones of caribou along with sticks.

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

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT: FEBRUARY 18-21, 2011

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds!

Participants can count birds anywhere for as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count website: <http://birdsource.org/gbbc>.

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see.

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

Scientists use the counts, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to give us an immense picture of our winter birds. Each year that these data are collected makes them more meaningful and allows scientists to investigate far-reaching questions. Make sure the birds from the NC High Country are well represented in the count!

Statistics from 2010

Total Checklists Submitted: 97,331

Total Species Observed: 602

Total Individual Birds Counted: 11,233,609



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

Rosalind Pevsner - Education Chair

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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

More details about this trip can be found on Page 1.



High Country
Audubon Society

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Boone, NC 28607

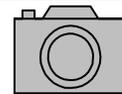
<http://highcountryaudubon.org>

E-mail: highcountrybirder@yahoo.com



HCAS Member Photos

By Doris Ratchford



Downy
Woodpecker



Pine Siskin



House
Finch



Purple Finch

BURKE'S GARDEN FIELD TRIP

Nestled atop Garden Mountain at an elevation of 3,000 feet, Burke's Garden is Virginia's highest valley and completely encircled by mountains. This area is an amazing birding spot



2010 Burke's Garden Trip
Photo by Monty Combs

and one that the HCAS has visited repeatedly in past winters in search of Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles, and Rough-legged Hawks. The group also spotted an American Kestrel and a Red-headed Woodpecker in 2009.

This year's trip to Burke's Garden will take place February 13, with February 20 serving as a backup date. Jesse Pope will be leading the group.

Geologically, this ovate 25,000-acre indentation is an anomaly. From the air, it looks like a giant bowl scooped from the

mountaintop - hence its nickname, God's Thumbprint. According to legend, James Burke, a member of a surveying party discarded some potato peels after cooking supper one night in 1748; and when the crew returned to the same camp the following year, they discovered that a fine crop of potatoes had sprouted from his leavings.



Photo by Brenda Combs

This spot in Tazewell County boasts an unusual landscape and great birding. The roads at Burke's Garden form a circle and there are a lot of open pastures with some woodland habitat.

Watch the listserv for details about carpooling for this trip or send an e-mail to Jesse Pope at highcountrybirder@yahoo.com for more details.

REMEMBERING SUE WELLS

High Country Audubon Society lost a wonderful friend November 21, 2010 with the passing of Sue Wells.

Wells was an instrumental member of the chapter and worked on the HCAS Board for as long as her health permitted.

She lost her battle with multiple myeloma at the age of 72 years old. Born in St. Cloud, Minnesota, she became a resident of Northbrook, Illinois in 1963, where with husband Ralph, she raised three children. She and her husband were currently living in Bradenton, Florida and Sugar Mountain, North Carolina.

All who knew Sue appreciated her as a woman of warm spirit and great wit who lived her life "looking for a string of small satisfactions, tossed like sequins on the fabric of everyday life," as her favorite quote so poignantly expressed.

She loved birds and Beethoven, gardens and dogs, Scrabble and

Spain, poems and odes, golf and grandchildren, family and French horns, motherhood, scholarship, friendship and being married to Ralph for 51 years.



In 1989, Sue was instrumental in creating the National Bird-Feeding Society and led the movement to help make backyard bird feeding the successful hobby it is today.

Sue and her husband were able to attend HCAS's last Annual Meeting. She was a valuable member of the chapter who will be greatly missed!

AUDUBON NC ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

The efforts of the Steering Committee for Audubon NC's Annual Meeting are right on schedule. High Country Audubon Society is hosting the meeting May 20-22, 2011 and it will be based at the Blowing Rock Conference Center.

Recently, the draft for the webpage and registration form have been submitted to Audubon North Carolina by Brenda Combs and the Registration Committee. The "Save the Date" postcard material has already been sent to ANC and you will be receiving that in the mail soon. The Steering Committee has been working with the Blowing Rock Conference Center and Audubon North Carolina to create an

event that folks will enjoy and remember! This is our time to showcase the NC High Country and its wonderful birding opportunities!

The agenda for the weekend has been set to include speakers, field trips, and a reception with entertainment. There will be a silent auction Friday afternoon and evening thanks to Landis Wofford.

Please let Bob Cherry know if you wish to help out with the meeting. Everyone will have to register online for the event and register for meals at the Blowing Rock Conference Center.

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