



Special Events

Saturday, April 21: Sandhills Celebration - Celebrate Earth Day/Open House at Weymouth Woods

Celebrate Earth Day by coming to Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve. Hikes and talks will be held throughout the day to learn more about the unique plants and animals in our longleaf forest. Our Earth Day keynote speaker will take us beyond our backyard to discuss a global issue and his involvement in the International Polar Year. Contact park staff at 910-692-2167 for more information. If you haven't signed up to bring finger food or snacks to this event, call Carol Bowman at 910-690-9388 to participate. Your help is needed!

8:00 a.m. Bird Hike to Bird Banding Station. Join us for a half-mile bird walk to a location where we set up mist nets to try and capture neotropical migrant and resident birds. Learn what neotropical means, learn why we band birds, and see first-hand how the process works. Bring binoculars and bug spray.

10:00 a.m. Red-cockaded Woodpecker Talk and Peeper Demonstration. Staff from Sandhills Ecological Institute and Ft. Bragg Endangered Species will give you an in-depth look at the family life of this unique bird. The talk will conclude with a short 200-yard hike to hopefully see the birds and learn how a peeper is used.

11:00 a.m. Hummingbird Banding. Observe master bander Susan Campbell as she captures and bands ruby-throated hummingbirds. Susan will discuss the bird's life history, adaptations, and the banding process. Learn more about how to attract hummingbirds, including tips on feeding and maintaining feeders.

1:00 p.m. To Stand on the Ocean and Wonder: An Arctic Journey. Mike Dunn is Coordinator of Teacher Education at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. In August 2006, he had the privilege of joining the International Arctic Research Center Expedition for K-12 Teachers, a research and education cruise aboard an icebreaker in the Arctic Ocean. Scientists in this international multi-year study are investigating how changes in the Arctic Ocean may affect global climate. Mike will present some images and details of the Arctic cruise and comment on life aboard a Russian icebreaker. He will also discuss the Museum's involvement in the International Polar Year and how you can learn more. Mike provides school grounds ecology workshops and field experiences for educators statewide and has been a Museum educator for 17 years. He worked for the NC Division of Parks and Recreation for eight years prior to coming to the Museum.

2:00 p.m. Kids Activity. Join Ranger Kim and Ranger Billy for some fun nature games and activities.

2:00 p.m. Wildflower Hike. The Sandhills has over 900 species of flowering plants. Take a leisurely hike with NC Natural Heritage Botanist Misty Franklin to see and learn about some of the more common flowers and plants found here. The hike will be about two miles and will focus on wildflowers. Bring bug spray.

3:00 p.m. Reptile and Amphibian Hop and Crawl. OK, you will not have to hop or crawl, but you will have to hike a couple of miles. Join herpetologist Jeff Beane, Collection Manager for Herpetology at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, and fellow herp fanatic, cetacean researcher, and wildlife photographer Todd Pusser, to look for and learn more about Sandhills reptiles and amphibians.

4:00 p.m. Big Tree Hike. Meet the oldest living thing in Moore County on this short hike on the Boyd section of Weymouth Woods. You will see trees that are several hundred years old. Two trees at this site are 457 years old. Staff will discuss the ecology of the longleaf pine and why it was and is an important tree. This hike will require a short drive from the park visitor center to Weymouth Center on Connecticut Avenue.

Sunday, April 29 Southern Pines Spring Migration Bird Count.

The National Audubon Society sponsors a nation-wide bird count each winter and spring. Every year, thousands of birdwatcher volunteers participate in these events. Their results are included in a National database which is used to determine the population and migratory patterns of our various bird populations. If you would like to participate in our local count (starting before dawn, ending with lunch), please contact Susan Campbell at 910-949-3207.

Spring 2007 Meetings

Monday, April 23 Helen Munro – Bluebirds. *Pot Luck Dinner starting at 6:30 p.m.* Bring a dish to share.

Monday, May 21 Steve Hall—Jewels of the Night—Moths

Monday, June 25 Art Bogan – Freshwater Mussels of North Carolina

Meeting Times: 7:00 p.m.—Fellowship & Socializing, 7:30 p.m. —Program

Location: Weymouth Woods Visitors Center Auditorium. Phone 910-692-2167 for directions.

We normally meet on the 4th Monday of each month.

Upcoming Field Trips

IMPORTANT: Call the field trip leader to register for a trip. Also, call at least one day before the trip to ensure that the trip is still on schedule.

April 14 Beidler Forest - An all day trip to Beidler Forest in South Carolina. Participants should expect to see lots of migratory warblers. Swainson's, parula, and prothonotary warblers are particularly abundant. Barred owls may be out in the open during the day. We should see several brown water snakes, banded water snakes, redbelly water snakes, yellow rat snakes, and cottonmouths. Swallow-tailed kites, turkey, and deer may also be seen. We will walk the boardwalk which is 1.75 miles long and passes through the largest remaining virgin stand of bald cypress swamp in the Southeast. There will be excellent photographic opportunities. Meet at the Town & Country parking lot at 6:15 a.m. Carpools will leave at 6:30 a.m. sharp for a three-hour ride. Bring water, a bag lunch, and bug repellent. Admission to the Forest is \$7.00 for adults - \$6.00 for Audubon members. Leader: Todd Pusser – 910-944-2683.

May 12-13 Grandfather Mountain – The North Carolina Herpetological Society will hold its annual Spring Meeting at Grandfather Mountain near Linville, NC. Anyone interested in reptiles and amphibians is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Ron Sutherland (919 942-1780; rws10@duke.edu) or Jeff Beane (919 733-7450, ext 754; jeff.beane@ncmail.net).

May 26 Blue Ridge Parkway Birds, Blooms, and Bugs – A long all day trip hitting many spots on the parkway from Deep Gap to Linville Falls. Bring everything you need for your personal comfort. We will take several short walks. Meet at Wal-Mart at 6 a.m. Plan on returning by 9 p.m. Leader: Scott Hartley – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

- June 9** **Weymouth Woods 11th Annual Butterfly Count** – Meet at Weymouth at 9 a.m. Be prepared for trail walking and encountering ticks, snakes, and poisonous plants. The hazards are worth the chance to see several types of hairstreaks and other butterflies as well as odonates, beetles, etc. Leader: Scott Hartley – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.
- July 7** **Night Hike at Weymouth** – Meet at 8:30 pm for a one-to-two mile hike to look and listen for nocturnal critters. We will have a bait trail for moths. We will listen for owls, nightjars, frogs and toads, etc. Bring a flashlight and bug spray. Leader: Scott Hartley – 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.
- July 21** **Cape Fear Kites and Beyond** – Meet at Wal-Mart at 6 a.m. for an all day trip to look for kites, wood storks, and anhingas along the Cape Fear River. We will spend the morning stopping at various sites along the river. After lunch we will head south towards Sunset Beach/Twin Lakes to look for purple gallinules and roseate spoonbills. Bring everything you need for your personal comfort, including lunch. Plan on returning between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Leader: Scott Hartley – 910- 692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

Listed below are locations that have been suggested for future field trips. If you have other field trip ideas or would be willing to lead one, please contact Scott Hartley at 910-692-2167 or 910-944-9337.

Howell Woods
 NC Museum of Natural Sciences – Raptor Display/BugFest
 Cape Fear Botanical Gardens
 Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge
 Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge
 Museum of Life and Science – Butterfly House
 Stedman Sod Farm
 Calloway Tract

Trip Reports

Wildlife Habitat Workshop - March 3 (sponsored by the Pinehurst Conservation Commission and the Greenway Wildlife Habitat Committee)

Botanist Tracy Rush presented an informative and well-attended workshop on landscaping with native trees and shrubs in the Sandhills at the Pinehurst Village Assembly Hall. Numerous native plants suitable for the climate, soils, and rainfall characteristic of our region were profiled. The workshop stressed an inventory of property and familiarity of plants that will grow well before undertaking a landscaping project. Tracy also advocated trips to local natural areas such as Weymouth Woods and the Sandhills Game Land to examine plants in their natural habitats, but to never dig up native plants from the wild. (Kerry Brust)

Sources of native plants: Carolina Greenery in Carthage (owner Terry Shultz)
 Big Bloomers Plant Farm in Sanford and the local LOWE’S carry natives, but it requires a bit of research to find them amongst other plants.

The following websites are helpful resources for information about native plants:

<http://ncwildflower.org/> North Carolina Native Plant Society
www.ncbg.unc.edu North Carolina Botanical Garden
<http://plants.usda.gov/> USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
www.ces.ncsu.edu North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension

Pyxie Moss - Paint Hill -March 17

On March 17, 2007, Scott Hartley led a small group of naturalists to the Paint Hill tract of Weymouth Woods to take a look at blooming Sandhills Pyxie-Moss. Paint Hill has one of the only remaining populations of this rare plant outside of Fort Bragg. A low-growing plant with beautiful white flowers, it is not a real “moss” at all, but more of a “sub-shrub”. All of us were able to obtain lengthy looks at this amazing plant and grab some nice pictures as well. Other creatures seen during the outing included Brown Elfins, a species of small, brown butterfly that only flies during early spring. (Michael McCloy)

Spring Odonates - March 31

What the heck is an odonate? That is a question many of us were asking when we showed up for Scott Hartley’s field trip on March 31 at Weymouth Woods. Our purpose here was to look for spring odonates, which are dragonflies and damselflies, among other wildlife. Scott began the walk by giving us a short briefing on dragonflies and damselflies, such as how to tell one from the other, and by giving some basic anatomical terms as well. Blue Corporals were quite active that day, and Scott was able to catch several in his insect net, allowing for a really neat close-up view. Other dragonfly species seen included Mantled Baskettail, Springtime Darner, and Lancet Clubtail. We also used a dip net to search for larvae in James Creek, and ended up finding numerous dragonfly larvae. They sure look different than the adults! Other mentionable wildlife seen included an Eastern Cottonmouth on the beaver dam off Gum Swamp Trail, and several bird species. Overall, a very pleasant day to be out enjoying nature at its finest! (Michael McCloy)

From the President’s Desk: David McCloy

We began January by observing wintering waterfowl such as ringed-neck duck and hooded merganser. We ended March by observing the first warbler migrants such as yellow-throated warbler and northern parula. Plant identification ranged from a workshop on native trees and shrubs at Pinehurst Village Assembly Hall to observing trailing arbutus, creeping blueberry, and pyxie moss at Paint Hill. At the end of March we saw some of the first butterflies, dragonflies, and damselflies on a walk at Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve. Reptiles and amphibians were spotted on various individual field trips.

For the next quarter expect many migratory bird species to pass through our area or become breeders. Please consult this newsletter for our April through July field trips that feature birding as well as other interests. Bird banding will be conducted at Weymouth Woods on various days including weekends. Please contact Weymouth Woods (910-692-2167) for weekly schedule information.

There are two events that deserve your special attention. The Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve Open House/Sandhills Celebration on April 21 will celebrate the completion of renovation work as well as the amazing diversity of Sandhills fauna and flora. The Spring Migration Bird Count on Sunday, April 29, is a good chance to hone your bird identification skills as well as help in data collection.

All in all, we have an active and enthusiastic group of people in the Sandhills Natural History Society. Hopefully, everyone can develop and pursue their interests. If you have a topic you would like to see for a monthly presentation or a field trip, please contact me at david.mccloy@ncmail.net or Scott Hartley at scott.hartley@ncmail.net. We are open to your suggestions and with your assistance we can make Sandhills Natural History Society better and better.

Of This and That.....

Have you paid your 2007 dues? Annual membership dues are \$5 per person, payable to SNHS. Send c/o Beth Carpenter, 565 Orchard Road, Southern Pines, NC 28387. Please include your address, telephone number, and e-mail address with your payment.

The Sandhills Area Land Trust is still raising funds to purchase Hobby Field and save it from development. During the summer, scissor-tailed flycatchers and grasshopper sparrows nest and fledge their young there. Please contact Katie Walsh at 910-638-8042 if you wish to assist with the purchase.

NEW! Recycle your Nature, Birding or Gardening magazines. There will be a table at the SNHS monthly meetings where you can drop off or pick up magazines of interest to our group. Contact Carol Bowman at 910-295-0842.

E-bird is a citizen science project, coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, which allows birders to submit all their bird checklists for one or several locations. With E-bird, you can simply choose a location, be it a state, region, county, or park, from a drop-down menu and view all the records submitted for each species in that location. E-bird displays these records in a monthly abundance guide, to make for easier viewing. Some other features offered by E-bird are the storage of a user's life, state, county, and location lists, along with a "Bird-counting 101" tutorial, which gives helpful hints for more accurately estimating large numbers of individual birds in a flock. E-bird is growing rapidly with much more data being entered daily, thanks to the help of many birders from around the country, and hopefully will continue to grow on into the future. Go to www.ebird.org. (Michael McCloy)

The Carolina Herp Atlas is a project developed by the Davidson College Herpetology Laboratory and Davidson College Information Technology Services. The primary objective of the Carolina Herp Atlas is to provide detailed data on the distribution of reptiles and amphibians of North and South Carolina. The resulting database can be used by:

- 1) **you**; to track your personal observations,
- 2) **other herpers and amateur naturalists**; to view species occurrences via county-level distribution maps, and
- 3) **Scientists**; to understand activity periods, habitat relationships, current distributions and other facets of amphibian and reptile ecology in the Carolinas so that we can better conserve these important components of our natural heritage.

Register at: <http://www.carolinaherpatlas.org>. (Brady Beck)

SNHS MERCHANDISE IS NOW AVAILABLE - Choose from a variety of items that feature our fox squirrel logo which was designed by local artist Hal Broadfoot.

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| \$10 | T-shirts |
| \$17 | Baseball Caps (with embroidered logo) |
| \$14 | Baseball Caps (with plain logo) |
| \$12 | Mugs |
| \$ 3 | Stickers |

Contact Kerry at 910-528-6958 to order or if you have questions about any of the above items.

SNHS Board of Directors 2007

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c/o Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve
1024 N. Fort Bragg Road
Southern Pines, NC 28387

If you do not have email please read this:

Our field trips often have schedule changes and we send out email updates to the membership. We suggest you ask a friend who receives these emails to keep you informed. You can also periodically call the field trip leader to get the latest updates.