



Deer, wild turkey and other wildlife gather in the fields and forests of Horseshoe Farm. Learn why your help is needed to protect this area by reading the story on page 1.

### Wake Audubon Officers 2006

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**Mission Statement:** "To foster knowledge, appreciation, and enjoyment of nature; to encourage responsible environmental stewardship; to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."

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June 2006

Wingbeats

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## Horseshoe Farm Master Plan: The Next Step... June 15

On April 5 — after more than a year of meetings and public hearings, and after a re-write of the draft plan resulted in Committee member resignations — the Master Plan for Horseshoe Farm Park was approved and sent to the Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board for review. Wake Audubon was represented on the Committee by Sarah Luginbuhl. It was a difficult assignment, and she deserves our gratitude. The planning process was, unfortunately, beset by division from day one.

It's a shame, because this is a site on which there should be no disagreement. The 146-acre park in northeast Raleigh is cradled by one mile fronting the Neuse River and boasts a 50-acre horse pasture as its heart. It has been recognized by the NC Natural Heritage Program for its intact Piedmont levee system complete with old growth bottomland forest and vernal pools teeming with amphibians. Wild Turkey have been known from the Horseshoe for as long as anyone can remember, and other wildlife is abundant.

One would think that with the river frontage, the abundant natural resource base, and the limited access, it would be easy to plan this park. It seems a given that

the city should develop opportunities for education and enjoyment based on experiencing the Neuse River, telling the tale of its role and function in the life of our community.

In 1996 a task force developed a Park Plan for the entire Neuse River corridor, from Falls Lake toward the Johnston County line. Wake Audubon had two members serve on that committee, which designated a Horseshoe Farm Park. In 2005, the

Horseshoe Farm Master Plan Committee was instructed to develop a plan for a "Community Park" for Horseshoe Farm — a designation that usually means lots of athletic amenities. The Chair of the Committee was adamant about this and voted against a natural-resourced focused park, and pushed through a draft plan which included a gymnasium, tennis courts and a lighted dog park. The public rejected these elements at a public hearing in November and the committee later deleted them, but the chair and

*(continued on page 3)*

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Make checks out to Wake Audubon and mail to: Wake Audubon, P.O. Box 12452, Raleigh, NC 27605.

Got a submission for the newsletter? Send it to [linda\\_rudd@ncsu.edu](mailto:linda_rudd@ncsu.edu) by the first of the month to be considered for future issues. Submissions may be edited for space or content.

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## Wake Audubon Calendar

Join us for these fun and informative upcoming events.

**Monthly Meeting — June 13 Shrews of North Carolina** — Join Lisa Gatens, Curator of Mammals at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, for a look at natural history and identification of those tiny bundles of energy we call shrews.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the A-level conference room of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and is open to the public.

**Leader's Choice Bird Walk Saturday, June 9, 8:30 a.m.**

Join board member Dave Heeter for a walk at one of the Triangle's birding hot spots. Details to be announced. Contact Dave for information at (919) 834-8694 or heeterdgh@aol.com.

**Field Trip: Birding Battery Island & the Wilmington Area Weekend of June 9** Join a group from Wake Audubon for a long weekend at the beach. We will bird Battery Island in the Cape Fear

River on Friday. The boat trip, lead by Walker Golder of Audubon North Carolina, will start early in the morning. Due to the size of the boat, we can only accommodate the first 10 who sign up for the trip. Because of the cost of the boat ride, we are asking all participants to donate \$20 to the NC Coastal Sacturary, which manages this and other islands as prime bird habitat.

On Saturday we will bird some of the great bird habitats on the coast. If you can't make the boat trip or are not one of the first 10, join us for the day on Saturday instead.

We will stay Thursday and Friday nights (and longer if you wish) at the Sleep Inn in Wilmington. There will be more opportunities for birding on Sunday for those who can stay over. For further trip details and to reserve your place on the trip, please contact Gerry Luginbuhl at (919) 816-9967.

### Feathered Facts



**Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)** — *One of the delights of INBU's, besides the male's gaudy plumage, is that they keep singing through the heat of summer. And singing is a big deal. Some studies showed that 1-year males, especially those with more blue, who mimicked the song of an older neighbor, had a higher mating success. You can tell the younger males by patches of brown in their plumage — it takes two full years for males to acquire the solid blue/violet coat. But I guess it's worth the wait — studies also show older males are quite the Lothario's. Blue is a structural color that results from incident light — not via pigment. Small white granules in the feathers scatter high-energy ("blue") wavelengths, and we see blue. INBU's migrate to Mexico/Central America, where thousands are trapped and shipped abroad each year for a largely unregulated cage bird trade.*

~John Gerwin

## President's Message

### Orphans or Not? Caring for Baby Birds

**P**laintive peeps seep in through my bedroom window, the product of four little Mockingbird chicks in the bush outside. Three are five Bluebird eggs in the box out back and the Cardinals are chasing each other again. Yes, breeding season is full-on, and our feathered friends seem to be feeling their oats.

With the hungry cries of nestlings also comes the ringing of my phone; concerned citizens often seek out Wake Audubon members when they find a nest, a fledgling, an injured bird, etc. It's a pleasure to help these folks learn more about whatever they found, and to help them help the wildlife. Quite often that baby bird that appeared to have left the nest too early is in reality a newly-fledged "teenager" testing out the world beyond the nest. But well-meaning human neighbors instinctively worry about these tiny creatures, a bit scraggly and still chirping for their mothers.

As bird lovers and Wake Audubon members, you may be just learning about birds yourself, or you may find yourself questioned by friends who need bird advice this spring and summer. Help them out by passing along the following information.

Help and protect baby birds by:

- avoiding nesting sites to prevent disturbing the birds or alerting potential predators to the site.

- watching baby birds that are found on the ground, but not interfering; usually it's best to let them figure it out on their own, and mom or dad are often close by.

- removing hazards when you spot a baby bird; gather in the pets, kids, lawn mowers, etc.

- controlling your pets during breeding season; pets, cats in particular, can spell the end of fledglings that can't yet fly well enough to make a quick escape.

Of course, some baby birds truly are orphaned, maybe having fallen out of a nest or been blown out by a storm. If, after watching the baby for a while, you have seen no sign of parents, call a wildlife rehabilitator to request assistance. If the bird is threatened or injured, place it in a warm, quiet, dark place such as a cardboard box where it will be safe. The wildlife rehabber may come to you or you may be asked to bring the bird to another location. You can reach a rehabber by searching this site — [www.tc.umn.edu](http://www.tc.umn.edu) — or by calling the Piedmont Wildlife Center at 919-572-WILD or visiting [www.piedmontwildlifecenter.org](http://www.piedmontwildlifecenter.org).

Otherwise, let's hope all our bird neighbors raise their families well, and grace our yards with their presence! It's always a fun time of year — enjoy!

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## News of Interest

*(Horseshoe Farm park planning, continued from front page)*  
a few other committee members have remained opposed to the Plan that was subsequently approved. The challenge is not over yet!

On June 15, the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) will begin review of the Master Plan. We need Wake Audubon members to attend this meeting, expected to be in Jaycee Park at 6:30 pm. The PRGAB chair, Jan Kirschbaum, has stated that critics of the original draft represent a small group of citizens and that the plan should instead reflect the entire community, meaning "athletics." She, and others, can't seem to understand that a natural-resourced based park should offer unique outdoor experiences while minimizing conflicts created by having athletics at the same site. It's

the reason we don't bird at the Walnut Creek Softball complex, or Millbrook Park. The wildlife that exists at those sites is tolerant and can be found in your backyard. The City park system has few sites dedicated to natural-resource based recreation, and we haven't complained until now, but we worked hard on the Neuse corridor plan, and the City Council approved it, designating the Horseshoe as a Nature Preserve. We now expect nothing less. We anticipate the athletics community will challenge the plan at this PRGAB meeting, and the Committee may well be counting heads. Please attend if you can. To keep informed, or learn how you can help, visit the Friends of Horseshoe Farm web site at: [www.horseshoefarm.org](http://www.horseshoefarm.org).

~ John Connors

### Act Locally

#### Catch the Buzz! on Chemical-Free Mosquito Control

If you wanted to avoid mosquitoes in the summer, you could just not go outside...but that seems rather impractical advice for a group of nature lovers. There are alternatives to cutting down on these blood-suckers so you can continue to enjoy life outdoors.

A good way to begin mosquito-reduction is to remove standing water — breeding grounds for mosquitoes. There's a conflict of interest here, however, as shallow pools of water and dense vegetation that attract mosquitoes also attract other wildlife. Use your discretion to determine where to best focus your mosquito-control efforts. Remove old tires or other open water-holding receptacles, clean bird baths often, clean out clogged gutters, put a few small mosquito-larvae-eat-

ing fish in your outdoor pond, and drain, clean, or alter any other area that collects shallow water and acts as a breeding pool.

When you do go out, avoid going out at dawn and dusk, peak times for biting mosquitoes. Wear light-weight long sleeves, long pants, and a hat. Wear a bug-proof mesh jacket with a hood. Keep moving (be a moving target or stand in a steady breeze). And if you're really desperate, you can try eating garlic with every meal, try ultrasonic mosquito repellents, or a multitude of other creative ideas including some all-natural repellents now on the market. If nothing works, unfortunately, you might just be one of those unlucky people that the mosquitoes really love. In any case, have a great summer and try to remain bite free!