



# The Mountain Warbler

Newsletter of the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society – June 2013

Cashiers – Franklin – Highlands – Scaly Mountain

[www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org)

*The mission of the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society is to provide opportunities to enjoy and learn about birds and other wildlife and to promote conservation and restoration of the habitats that support them.*

## President's Message

The Highlands Plateau Audubon Society's chapter recognizes that education and helping to promote local bird-oriented conservation measures are perhaps our two most important and accessible goals. We are proud of our outreach to local schools. Our scheduled evening summer lecture programs strive to be interesting and entertaining. If you heard Chris Grave's recent lecture about managing habitat for birds and wildlife, you definitely know what I mean about interesting and entertaining!

And I certainly include the regularly scheduled Saturday morning birding outings as 'educational.' Participating in Saturday birding opportunities not only provides a means to become more familiar with our local birds, these outings also help to involve people with their environment and community. HPAS outings are of course open to everyone; HPAS provides the binoculars and help identifying what we see. First Saturdays of each month provide additional attention to introductory concepts in birding (but aren't limited to newbies). We have an 'armchair' birding offering for those with limited mobility. We live in the midst of some of the best birding one could ever hope for...it would be a shame to not be involved.

It is noteworthy that it is possible to be a member of the National Audubon organization without joining HPAS. National-only members receive the award-winning Audubon publication and receive one of six of our HPAS hard-copy newsletters (e.g., this issue).

Access to the HPAS webpage is of course publically available ([www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org)). Supporting National and Audubon North Carolina are important; the larger organizations have the clout to support wildlife refuges and other major national and international bird conservation efforts. However, becoming a member of HPAS, and/or the Franklin Bird Club, is where the *local* participation begins. HPAS strives to be an asset for this community. If you are not already a member of HPAS please consider stepping forward to become a participant in our modest but important, exciting, environmental educational experience.

- Russ Regnery

*Note: Membership forms are available at [www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org)  
or by calling Pat Strickland at 828-743-7421*

## Feeding Birds...Not Bears Annual Meeting Program

If you are wondering how to keep our local black bears away from your bird feeders, Audubon's Monday, June 10 Program is for you. Join us at 7:30 at the Highlands Civic Center, for a presentation by Russ Regnery, Highlands Plateau Audubon Society President.

Black bears are iconic features of our mountains. Many of us also make an important connection with our local fauna through the practice of supplementing the diets of seed-eating birds and hummingbirds; i.e., ‘feeding the birds.’ Bears have learned that bird feeders can be a significant concentrated food source, especially when natural food sources are limited and/or when hunting pressures encourage bears to move into relatively urbanized “safe havens.” Of bears that learn to associate bird seed as a routine food source, many are reported to subsequently have unfortunate human encounters that end up with the ultimate death of the bear, not to mention making it the easy target for hunters at the opening of bear season. The cliché that “a fed bear is a dead bear” is unfortunately an accurate truism. The problem has become sufficiently acute that, in several communities, one political reaction has been to outlaw bird feeding altogether.

As citizens with an interest in both native birds and bears, it behooves anyone feeding birds in this community to be aware of the potential negative consequences to bears, and make themselves familiar with the various methods that can be used to minimize habituating bears to unnatural food sources, while hopefully at the same time continuing to enjoy interacting with birds at a feeder.

Russ Regnery, a local resident, and someone with an interest in black bears, will review measures to minimize bear, bird feeder, and undesirable human interactions. He will also discuss techniques for installation of bear-resistant bird feeders of varying levels of sophistication. This discussion is targeted primarily for those among us who feed birds and would like to continue to do so. The discussion will focus specifically on the issue of bird feeders and bears, *not* other important bear-related topics such as garbage feeding, personal deterrents, hunting regulations, etc.

## **HPAS Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper**

Come for our Annual Potluck Supper, beginning at 6:00 PM, Monday, June 10, at the Highlands Civic Center. Bring a dish to share and a utensil to serve it! This is always a fun time to catch up with those of our members who are returning from their Southern migration. You’ll meet some new friends as well – and enjoy some delicious food. Our exciting program is described above.

There will be a **brief** annual membership meeting, with two matters of business: election of directors and approval of a minor change to our Chapter Bylaws. The nominating committee has presented the following slate, approved by the Board of Directors: Dee Andrey (Highlands), Romney Bathurst (Highlands), Avary Doubleday (Highlands), Mike Kaiser (Highlands), Michelle Ruigrok (Highlands), and Mary Lou Waas (Cashiers). Doubleday will be elected for a two-year term and each of the others for a term of three years.

The Board has changed the Chapter’s fiscal year to the calendar year, which more closely reflects our activities, and those of our birds. We are asking the membership to approval a change to Article II: Membership Meetings, Section 1 to read as follows:

The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held in either August or September, at a date, time and place determined by the Board, at which time new Directors will be elected.

As written, the Bylaws state that the Annual Meeting will be held in the last month of the fiscal year, which would now be December, not a good time for this meeting.

## **Spring and Summer Programs**

**Monday, June 10:** Potluck supper (6:00 pm), Annual Membership Meeting (7:15 pm), and Program 7:30 pm). Dr. Russell Regnery, President HPAS: “Feeding Birds...Not Bears.” (See article above.)

**Thursday, June 13:** Owl Prowl, 7:30 pm at the Nature Center. Co-sponsored with Highlands Biological Station. Check the local newspapers for complete information.

**Monday, June 24:** Dr. Mark Stanback, Davidson College, “Brown-headed Nuthatches in Suburban Environments: the Role of Nest Site Competition,” 7:00 pm at the Highlands Civic Center.

**Monday, July 8:** a film – “Birders: The Central Park Effect,” 3:00 pm at the Hudson Library in Highlands. Please enter through the rear door.

**Friday & Saturday, July 10-20:** Mountain Wildlife Days, Sapphire Valley Community Center: 828-743-7663.

**Monday, July 22:** Romney Bathurst, HPAS Board Member, “After the Victory of the Revolution: Birding in Cuba Today,” 7:00 pm, Highlands Civic Center.

**Monday, August 5:** Dr. Roarke Donnelly, Oglethorpe University, “American Dippers and the Future of Fishery Restoration in the West. 7:00 pm, Highlands Civic Center.

**Sunday, August 11:** Annual Picnic, 5:00 pm, Highlands Civic Center Shelter. Details to be announced.

**Monday, August 19:** a film – “Birders: The Central Park Effect,” 7:00 pm, Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library, Cashiers.

**Monday, September 16:** Paige Barlow, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Georgia, “Human Land Use and Avian Conservation in Changing Landscapes of Southwestern NC, 7:00 pm, the Hudson Library in Highlands.

**Monday, September 30:** Ed and Cindy Boos, “Avian Courtship and Breeding Behavior: Photographic Observations,” 7:00 pm, the Hudson Library in Highlands.

Please check the local newspapers and our web site ([www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org)) for more details about these programs, updates and changes.

## Upcoming Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled every Saturday morning, unless otherwise noted. They are subject to change so check local newspapers or [www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org) for updates and changes. Also call Brock Hutchins at 828-787-1387 if you have any questions.

*\*\*\*Rain policy: If there is moderate to heavy rain at 7:30 and if it isn't forecast to end shortly, the walks will be cancelled. If in doubt, please call the walk leader at the number listed. If it is just sprinkling and if the forecast doesn't call for any worse than that, the walks will meet as scheduled, just be sure to bring an umbrella/rain gear. Birds actually become more active following a rain!\*\*\**

### JUNE

**June 1<sup>st</sup>:** This month's Beginners Walk will work on feeder species as the home of Edwin and Kay Poole in Highlands. Last year's group loved the action at multiple feeders and the help of HPAS leaders Brock Hutchins and Edwin Poole, who will be assisted by Mary Lou Waas. If you don't have your own binoculars, HPAS will loan you a pair for the morning and help you learn how to use them, too. Meet at Highlands Town Hall Parking lot at 7:30 for a fun morning of easy birding!

**June 8<sup>th</sup>:** A walk in the mountain community of Chinquapin, adjacent to Panthertown and above Lonesome Valley. The walk will be led by Russ Regnery, HPAS President, with assistance by resident Ann Campbell, HPAS Board Member. Chinquapin is a private, gated, conservation-oriented development in Cashiers and our walk will be on the 700 acre Carlton Family conservation easement. This property is available only to groups with prior arrangements. Participants are encouraged to bring a bag lunch to enjoy after birding the trails. Brown Creepers will be the target species of interest today. Meet in the new Cashiers Community Center Parking area at 7:30 to carpool up to the community.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>:** Thursday: Our annual Owl Prowl, in conjunction with the Highlands Nature Center and featuring the live birds of the Charlotte Raptor Rehab Center, will once again be a popular event. This fun and instructive evening is free, and always a hit with children as well as adults, so bring your flashlights and join us in learning all about raptors which occur in the NC Mountains, and afterwards on a walk in town to see what owls we can find. The program will begin at 7:30PM in the amphitheater behind the Highlands Nature Center. Parking is very limited, so please do carpool and arrive early for the best seats.

**June 15<sup>th</sup>:** A new venue for bird-banding and study with Mark Hopey will be Cowee Mounds, north of Franklin. This lower elevation habitat offers some species not seen in Highlands, and the up close and personal opportunity to participate in gathering vital information on our migrant birds. George Kaye and Brock Hutchins will lead, with everyone meeting in Highlands at the Town Hall Parking lot for 7:30 car-pooling to the site in Franklin. This trip will offer great photographic opportunities, so don't forget your camera! Meeting site in Franklin will be across from the Iotla Recycling Center, approximately 5 miles north of Franklin at the intersection of Hwy. 28 and Sanderstown Rd.

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Our joint EcoTour with the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust will visit Sweetwater Farms, a mixed habitat 80+ acre property which is under a conservation easement with the Land Trust. This is a new venue for HPAS walks this year so it will be exciting to see what species we can turn up! Romney Bathurst, HPAS Board Member, will lead, assisted by Kyle Pursel, HCLT Stewardship Director, and Pat Strickland, also a Board Member, in charge of membership for HPAS. As lunch will be part of the trip, HCLT Members should bring \$5 to enjoy the yummy picnic that HCLT will provide. Those who are not yet members may join HCLT by visiting their web site, [www.hicashlt.org](http://www.hicashlt.org) or calling Julie at 526-1111. Julie will be taking reservations, which are a must in order to plan properly for lunches. Details on meeting place and time will be given when you call to reserve your spot.

**June 29<sup>th</sup>:** Paula Gorgolione of the Franklin Bird Club will lead this week's walk along the Franklin Greenway. Romney Bathurst will co-lead, with Michelle Styring assisting. Many of the birds seen down in Franklin do not regularly appear, or do not appear at all, on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau, so this week's walk along the Greenway should be especially interesting. Last year a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seen, and other possibilities include Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellow-throat, and perhaps even more "yellow" things! Meet at the Highlands Town Hall Parking lot at 7:30 sharp for car-pooling to the Macon County Public Library in Franklin.

## **JULY**

**July 6:** Beginners walk with Russ Regnery to Flat Mountain Rd area and the experimental tree farm. Meet at the Highlands Town Hall parking area at 7:30 AM to car pool. Extra binoculars will be provided if you don't have any. Russ will emphasize basic birding skills of finding and identifying birds. Bring good hiking shoes for this walk will require about a 1 mile round trip walk to the tree farm from the road.

**July 13:** Romney Bathurst will lead a trip to Flat Mountain Rd area and the Ranger Falls Trail. Meet at the Highlands Town Hall parking area at 7:30 AM to car pool. We will be looking for breeding warblers and tanagers in this high elevation location. Be prepared for wet conditions, so bring proper shoes and clothing.

**July 20:** Romney Bathurst will lead a trip to Cashiers and The Village Green. Meet at 7:30 AM at the new Cashiers Community Center. We will explore this 12 acre site including its wetland area and boardwalk. A surprising number of birds can be found in this urban area. After the walk you can go to the Mountain Wildlife Days event in Sapphire.

**July 27:** Brock Hutchins will lead a trip to the Turtle Pond Rd area near Highlands. Meet at the Highlands Town Hall parking area at 7:30 AM to car pool. This road gives us opportunities to search several types of habitats that should yield a large variety of birds. This is an easy trip with only a few short walks from the car.

*Check the August newsletter and [www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org) for more on the following filed trips:*

**August 3:** Russ Regnery will lead a field trip around Highlands for beginning bird watchers.

**August 10:** Kyle Pursel will lead a trip to Sunset Rocks and the Nature Center to find resident birds common to this area.

**August 17:** Location and leader have not yet been determined.

**August 24:** Brock Hutchins will lead a trip to Fairfield Lake in Sapphire Valley Resort.

**August 31:** Romney Bathurst is our leader for a trip to the Franklin Greenway in Franklin.

**September 7:** Russ Regnery will lead a field trip around Highlands for beginning bird watchers.

**September 14:** This trip we will go to the Blue Ridge Parkway to look for migrating warblers, vireos and thrushes. The trip is made in memory of Charlie Davis who was a long time member and supporter of Audubon and a man who loved the mountains and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**September 21:** This will be our rain day for the Blue Ridge Parkway if the September 14<sup>th</sup> trip is cancelled. Otherwise, we will visit some birding hotspots around Highlands

**December 14:** National Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Highlands will begin at 7:30 AM at a location to be announced later. Please contact Brock Hutchins at 828-787-1387 if you want to participate.

### **Southern Highlands Reserve Hosts Highlands Plateau Audubon Society**

On one of the prettiest Spring mornings yet this year, 13 birders and botanizers enjoyed an outing for both birds and plants at the Southern Highlands Reserve on May 21st. The gardens high above Lake Toxaway offered many early Spring blooms, as well as migrant birds which have recently returned to breed in our area. As the mission of the Reserve is to propagate the native flora of the Southern Appalachians, it is an ideal spot for species such as the Chestnut-sided Warbler and Indigo Bunting to find the food, nesting materials and shelter they need to raise their families. Native plants are absolutely the best for attracting the insects and caterpillars that the birds must have to feed their young. Among those species in bloom during the visit were the native Vaseyi and Pinxter Azaleas, with flame azaleas soon to follow. Dwarf-crested Iris, Fothergilla, Clintonia Lilies and many other species were enjoyed by all, with both Pink and Yellow Lady Slippers drawing the biggest sighs of admiration. Kelly Holdbrooks, Director of Programs, led the group on a special route designed to maximize birding opportunities, which yielded excellent looks at Red-eyed Vireos, Northern Flicker and Gray Catbird. The views from on top are spectacular, and the Audubon Society was delighted to be able to offer the opportunity for birding here to all its members and to the public at large.

- Romney Bathurst

### **Birding Beyond Borders**

On July 25, Board Member Romney Bathurst will present a slide show introducing participants to the why, what, where and how to approach international birding. Romney has traveled to over 50 countries on seven continents and says "birding is a great excuse to travel, and travel is a super opportunity to bird!" Romney has been birding internationally since 2000, when she became hooked during her first trip to Belize. She is a regular field HPAS trip leader. This class is offered as part of our chapter educational outreach, through The Center for Life Enrichment (CLE). Please register at [www.clehighlands.com](http://www.clehighlands.com) or call the CLE office at 526-8811. The cost is \$25 for CLE members and \$35 for nonmembers.

# Highlands Plateau Audubon Society

## Officers

**President** -- Russ Regnery, 404-558-1085

**Vice - President** – Avary Doubleday, 526-8414

**Secretary** – Brock Hutchins 787-1387

**Treasurer** – Mike Kaiser, 526-5071

## Directors and Committee Chairs

**Communications** – Avary Doubleday

**Conservation** – Kyle Pursel

**Education** – Ann Campbell

**Field Trips** – Brock Hutchins

**Finance** – Mike Kaiser

**Hospitality** – Dee Andry

**Membership & Development** – Pat Strickland

**Nominating & Leadership Development** – Don Shure

**Program** – Don Shure

**At Large** – Romney Bathurst

George Kaye

Michelle Styring

Mary Lou Waas

Glenda Zahner

**Newsletter Editor:** John Gross

**Web Master:** Jean McCormick

**Audubon NC Board Member** – Avary Doubleday



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