



Birds & Butterflies

NEWSLETTER

2011-1

The beginning of a new year always seems to bring a new optimism and enthusiasm of what is to come. All of us are looking forward to better economic times in 2011, but still thankful for the blessings of the past year.

Thank you to all of our customers for your continued support of Birds & Butterflies. As we begin our 14th year in business, many of you have become more than customers to us and we now call you our friends.

We look forward to a great 2011 and sharing our mutual interest in the beauty and awe of God's great creation.

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If you do not want to receive the newsletter please let us know by email at birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com.
If you know anyone else who would like to receive the newsletter please give us their email address.

CENTRAL SAVANNAH RIVER BLUEBIRD SOCIETY FORMED

The Central Savannah River Bluebird Society (CSRBS), an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) is now active in the Aiken area. NABS was



formed in 1978 to try to reverse the nationwide decline in bluebird populations. There are 47 NABS affiliates in the U.S., six in Canada and one in Bermuda. Prior to the CSRBS forming there were no affiliates in South Carolina or Georgia.

The CSRBS membership is \$30 per year, \$15 for NABS and \$15 for CSRBS and is open to everyone who is interested in bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds.

Some of the activities of the SCRBS will include monitoring of nine existing bluebird trails, establishment of new bluebird trails, educational information about bluebirds, opportunity to report bluebird nesting success from your own backyard and much more.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15 at 7:00PM at Birds & Butterflies, 117 Laurens Street NW in downtown Aiken. If you need additional information or want a membership application you can contact Jim Burke, chairman at 803-644-0235, Trail Coordinator Co-Chairmen, Roger Brock at 803-649-3237 or Ron Breneman, at Birds & Butterflies, 803-649-7999.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD SPENDS WINTER IN AIKEN

John and Patricia Andrews have gone to Herculean efforts to help a male ruby-throated hummingbird survive the winter in Aiken.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds usually leave our area in mid-October or early November to migrate to their winter quarters in Central America. John and Patricia noticed this male hummingbird in November and he was still here when these pictures were taken January 10, 2011.



To keep the nectar in the hummingbird feeder from freezing the Andrews' modified the feeder with an extra bowl and Christmas lights which keeps the nectar around

68 degrees. Even during the recent snowstorm the hummingbird continued to feed.

Sometimes ruby-throated hummingbirds spend the winter in unusual places such as this, but it is not known why this occurs. Keeping hummingbird feeders

up does not keep hummingbirds from migrating. Migration is triggered by decreasing day length during the fall. Hopefully the efforts of the Andrews' will help this little fellow survive the winter.



Photos by Patricia Andrews.

PINE WARBLER (*Dendroica pinus*)

The pine warbler can be found year-round in our area. It is a small, very active bird about 5 1/2" long with a wing span of 8 3/4". Both the male and female have two distinct white wing bars on each dark wing and a white belly and underside of the tail. They have a yellow eye-ring and an olive/green back. The area under the throat is yellow and the breast is yellow with indistinct olive streaks on the side of the breast. Some individuals display much more yellow color than others. Pine warblers breed as far north as southern Canada and are found year-round from the Carolinas to central Florida.

They construct a nest of bark strips, pine needles, weed stems and spider webs, almost always on a pine limb. In fact they are most closely associated with pine forests, which is their favorite habitat and hence their

name. Nests average 30-50 feet above the ground therefore it is difficult to find a pine warbler nest. The nest is lined with hair, feathers and other fine material. The female lays 3-5 white to grayish-white eggs and can have 2 or 3 broods in a season in our area. It is one of the first warblers to nest each spring.

While primarily an insect eater, it is common at backyard feeders feeding on suet and sunflower meats. Look for pine warblers at your feeders.



BLUEBIRD NESTING SEASON APPROACHING – Time to clean your nest box

If you have a bluebird nest box in your yard now is the time to clean it. Bluebirds will begin territory and nest box selection in mid- to late February in preparation for their first nest in the latter part of March.

Approach your nest box from the side and gently tap on the side of the box. If there is a flying squirrel or other critter in the box it will hopefully vacate the box.

After tapping on the box open the door carefully, and if it is void of any critters remove any old nesting material from the box. Carry the nest



material away from the box or place it in a plastic bag for disposal. It is best not to throw it on the ground near the box where the smell of it could attract predators.

Sweep out the box with an old paint brush. If it is wet inside leave the door propped open for a day or two to dry. Make any repairs need to the box such as tightening loose screws or nails or repairing cracked wood. Make sure the drainage holes in the floor are open and not plugged with old nest material. You can sprinkle some diamataceous earth in the bottom of the box to prevent insect infestations.

Close the door of the box and you should be ready for the 2011 nesting season.

If your nest boxes cannot be opened consider modifying them so that they can be opened or consider putting up a new box the can be opened from the side or front.

Butterflies at Birds & Butterflies

We have added a line of beautiful mounted butterflies at Birds & Butterflies. All of the butterflies are farm raised and mounted by an individual from Charlotte, NC. They are available as single and multiple butterflies and all are framed and matted. Stop by and take a look at these spectacular butterflies.



BIRDFEEDERS CLEANED

Birdfeeders can get quite dirty and nasty looking and it is important to periodically clean them to prevent potential disease transmission among birds.

If you don't like cleaning yours, bring them to Birds & Butterflies and we will clean them for you for \$5.00 each. We will take them apart, clean all the parts, and reassemble them for you. You can usually have a clean feeder back in 1 or 2 days.

MEALWORMS BY THE THOUSANDS

Every year more individuals are feeding live mealworms to Eastern bluebirds in their backyards. Bluebirds are primarily insect eaters, which is why they love mealworms, but they will also feed on berries, sunflower meats and suet.

Feeding mealworms to bluebirds has become a popular past-time for many Aiken area residents. Some feed mealworms only during the nesting season, March thru August, while many others continue to feed throughout the year.

If you feed the bluebirds at about the same time every day they will often be waiting nearby for you to put out the mealworms. Some individuals have conditioned

the bluebirds to come to feed when they whistle, tap on the mealworm container or make some other type of noise. We will soon have in stock a "birdie bell" that can be used for conditioning the bluebirds.

During 2010 Birds & Butterflies customers purchased over 700,000 live mealworms at our store or nearly 14,000 per week. Our mealworms are raised in California and after a coast-to-coast airplane ride, arrive in Aiken in two or three days.

If you are interested in more information on feeding mealworms stop by the shop and we will be happy to help you. If you are not interested in dealing with "live" worms, we also sell freeze-dried mealworms.

A Slant of Light in the Deep Woods

The slant of sunlight filters down and finds the forest floor

Falling leaves cast a faint shadow drifting haphazardly downward pulled softly by gravity

Wind finds it difficult to penetrate the Deep Woods

Armies of trees slow and stall the breeze

An owl waits patiently for signs of life but strangely does not give a hoot

Stillness dominates the empty spaces between trees

A box turtle digs out from under the pine straw

Silence, the older sister of Stillness casts a hushed spell on the woods

Angels could find solace here

A place where thoughts can be heard

Darkness approaches ready to flatten the slant of light

A cycle that Nature repeats every day

Find Peace in the Deep Woods

Find God's presence in the midst of Stillness

In the slant of light that casts a faint shadow.



Poem

by

Roger Brock

December 26, 2010

(Inspired by Emily Dickinson's, "There's a Certain Slant of Light")

BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES PHOTO DISPLAY BOARD

If you would like to share some of your photos with Birds & Butterflies customers, bring them to the shop and we will

place them on our photo board. Our customers are enjoying seeing the new pictures every week.

PHOTO SECTION



Japanese maple leaves in fall.



Richland Balsam Mountain – NC. Highest point on the Blue Ridge Parkway.



Downy woodpecker at suet feeder.

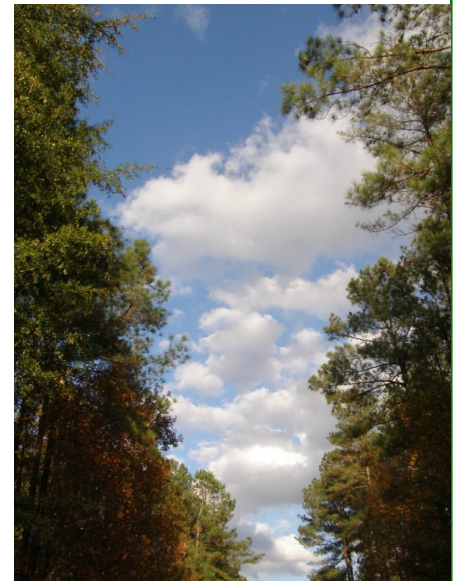
Photos
by
Ron Brenneman



Goldfinches feeding during the winter snow of 2011.



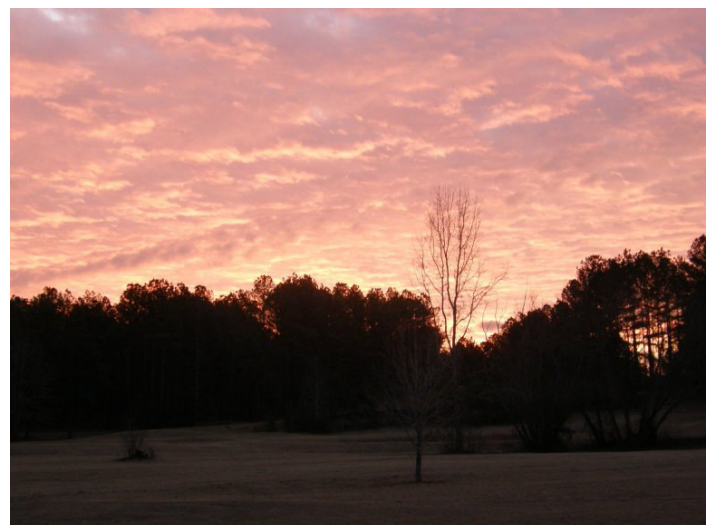
Hermit thrush bathing during cold weather.



Beautiful fall day in Aiken.



Male Baltimore oriole in downtown Aiken on January 1, 2011. Photo submitted by Dennis & Sandra Terry.



Sunrise at Boyd Pond County Park.

If you would like to submit photos for inclusion in future Birds & Butterflies Newsletters please send email them to birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com. Please include a short description of the photo and your name. We can't promise to use all of them but we will try.