



## Field Trip Committee Announces Busy May Schedule

As our Board decided last autumn to offer weekly Saturday bird walks/field trips for this season, your committee has been busy planning a full schedule of diverse and fun opportunities for birders of all levels to participate this year. The first Saturday of every month will be especially geared to “beginners”, with guidance offered in the use of binoculars and field guides and an introduction to some of our more common species in relatively easily accessible places around the Highlands-Cashiers plateau. Of course, birders of all levels are welcome on all field trips.

In conjunction with the exhibit being offered by The Bascom from March 31 to June 17, “Chicks: It’s All Gone to the Birds!” HPAS will have a uniquely packed May/June schedule of walks and programs you won’t want to miss!

**\*\*MAY:** All walks during the month of MAY will meet at The Bascom at 7:30 a.m.\*\*

May 5, the very first walk of the year, will meet at The Bascom parking lot in Highlands, and will be led by our HPAS President, Russ Regnery, with assistance from Pat Strickland and others. Binoculars will be available for those who don’t have them, and there will be field guides for reference. After the walk, anticipated to last for about 3 hours, The Bascom will offer a special, guided gallery tour for participants, which will enhance enjoyment of their exciting exhibit, “Chicks: It’s all Gone to the Birds!” As always, entrance to The Bascom is free to all.

May 8, Tuesday is a special outing to the Southern Highlands Reserve. It offers some of the most beautiful spring blooms, our native azaleas, as well as a nice selection of newly arrived migrants, such as the wood warblers, true gems of our summer mountains. Be sure to bring your cameras, as the scenery is awesome, and meet at The Bascom for car-pooling at 7:30 a.m.. Those joining this outing from Cashiers should meet at 7:45 in the area behind Wendy’s/Community Center, where those from Highlands will meet up with them at 8:00 a.m., to continue car-pooling to the Reserve, which is in the Lake Toxaway area. Wear stout walking shoes, and bring water and binoculars. This walk will be led by Romney Bathurst with Ann Campbell and others assisting. Access to the Reserve is for groups, by reservation only, so this is an opportunity you won’t want to miss! Call Romney at 526-1939 or Ann Campbell at 743-9942 with questions and to sign up for this very special outing.

Our May 12 walk will be at Lonesome Valley, in Cashiers, and will feature Curtis Smalling, Audubon NC Important Bird Areas Coordinator and Mountain Program Manager, with Romney Bathurst and Michelle Styring assisting. Curtis is an excellent leader, full of fascinating and fun information about our mountain birds, as those who have been fortunate to be on one of his walks will know. Be sure to join us, bring cameras, water and binoculars, and be prepared for some moderate uphill walking. As birders, however, we are always stopping to watch and observe, so the pace will be slow

and enjoyable. Those from Highlands will meet, as usual in May, at The Bascom, and will carpool directly to Lonesome Valley. For those from Cashiers, please meet us at Lonesome Valley at 8:00 a.m. sharp, carpooling with others, if at all possible, is recommended, as parking is somewhat limited. This is a beautiful property which is being sensitively developed, and while access is strictly private, the owners and residents are anxious to share their special canyon on this occasion. Birds such as Black-throated Blue, Black-and-White, Hooded, and Blackburnian Warblers are usually seen, along with Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Ovenbird, Pileated Woodpecker and sometimes Scarlet Tanagers. Call Romney with questions, phone numbers as above. Curtis will speak at The Bascom at 4:00 p.m.

May 19 will be another unique field trip, as it will be a joint outing to an area of special conservation interest with the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. As lunch is furnished, there will be a \$5 charge for Land Trust members (and this will be the *only* walk of the year which is not free). Those who are not Land Trust members are encouraged to join - at a modest \$35 per year, your support of their mission to conserve our precious mountain habitats is invaluable. The walk will be led by Gary Wein of HCLT, with Russ Regnery and Avary Doubleday assisting with the birds. Bring your binoculars, a drink, and cameras too. Spring migrants will again be featured, as well as wildflowers. Please call 526-1111 to reserve your spot on this special walk with HCLT.

On May 26 Brock Hutchins will lead a walk, assisted by Edwin Poole. They will help you find some of the denizens of Turtle Pond Road, just west of Highlands. This will be roadside birding, so easy walking, but do meet at The Bascom at 7:30 a.m. for carpooling. The gorgeous Canada Warbler is generally found nesting in the rhodo thickets along this road. Other birds which might be seen include Eastern Bluebird, N. Mockingbird (unusual in our mountain area), Veery, and Gray Catbird. As always, we will be on the lookout for raptors as well. Please call Brock Hutchins, 787-1387, for questions.

All walks, with the exception of May 19, are free and open to the public. Be sure to bring along a friend and help them get to know more about the wonders of our mountain birds and their habitats.

\*\*\*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! PLEASE refer to our web site, [www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org) for the most up to date information on all walks & programs.

## Field Trip June Schedule

While more complete information will be available in the next newsletter and on our website regarding June walks, here's a brief sneak preview!

\*\*\*\*\*Beginning in June, walks will meet at the Highlands Town Hall parking\*\*\*\*\*  
lot at 7:30 a.m., unless otherwise noted

June 2 – a Beginners' field trip to observe and assist with bird-banding at Tessentee Farms, Otto. Mark Hopey, naturalist in charge of the project, will speak the night before, June 1, at The Bascom. The outing on the following morning will be a great follow-up to Mark's talk, and will offer a special chance to see birds in the hand, up close and personal – you won't want to miss it! (You don't have to attend the talk to enjoy the field trip!)

June 9 – Russ Regnery will lead, stay tuned for the destination! As a special note, Curtis Smalling will be presenting a program at The Bascom that same afternoon at 4PM.

June 7 – The Owl Prowl, at Highlands Nature Center

June 11 – Curtis will be leading a “Birding 101” Class at the Center for Life Enrichment.

June 16 – Cynthia Strain will lead – she is an expert photographer and has a keen ear and eye for birds.

June 17 – Final day of The Bascom's Chicks Exhibit

June 23 – A special outing to the Chinquapin conservation area

June 30 – lots more to come!!!