

words on  
**waterfowl**

Newsletter of the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Society and the International Wild Waterfowl Association

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MERGANSERS**

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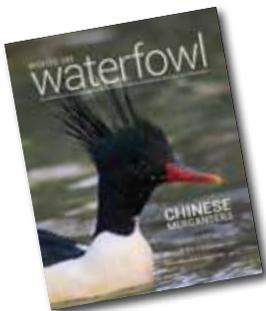
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## ON THE COVER:

The endangered Chinese Merganser is a rare sight in the wild, but captive facilities offer up-close views of this unique duck.

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## CONNECT ONLINE!



Get park updates, event information and more. Connect with Sylvan Heights on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, and visit the IWWA's new Facebook page.



Sylvan Heights, the IWWA, and scientists combine efforts to boost captive populations of the endangered White-winged Wood Duck.

## the director's report

As we enter our 9th year of being open to the public, it is wonderful to know that Sylvan Heights Bird Park is more popular than ever. Our membership continues to grow and it is such a pleasure walking around the park and talking to our guests. We strive to constantly offer visitors new and interesting exhibits, and of course the ever-popular Landing Zone is still a big favorite with all ages. Our addition of an Education Assistant has definitely proved that “two heads are better than one”, as we now have the ability to handle more schools visiting and reach out to more children by offering a variety of programs and educational events.

As you will read elsewhere in our newsletter, the IWWA Conference in Yellowstone was a great success. The IWWA continues to support the endangered White-winged Wood Duck project at Sylvan Heights by covering the costs of transporting these rare ducks around the country to increase their breeding potential. Researchers from Akron Zoo and Hiram College in Ohio visit Sylvan Heights twice a year to monitor all of our White-winged Wood Ducks for mycobacterium. We are proud to grant access to our birds for numerous educational institutions that perform non-invasive research projects for the benefit of waterfowl species. North Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine has added us as a regular part of their advanced curriculum, and we are happy to host their students several times each year.

We are fortunate to have an amazing team of volunteers at Sylvan Heights this year, who help out by making feed sticks, manning the Landing Zone, raking the paths (a much less arduous job now that we have new walkways), and cleaning barns and aviaries. Two volunteers skilled in carpentry, John Reiner and Fritz Herman, have done a wonderful job with the upkeep and repair of many things around the park. If you have been visiting this summer, you may have noticed a marked improvement in the park's landscaping. Mike Diacont, owner of Wildwood Nursery, has donated his much-needed expertise to enhance all the work that Suzanne Whitt and Laura Bartlett, our veteran garden volunteers, have been doing almost single-handedly once a week for the past 9 years.

We are very grateful to our volunteers and also to the guidance we get from our wonderful Board Members. Without their help, it would not have been possible to go forward as successfully as we are. Lastly, we thank you, our members, for your continued support of our efforts here at Sylvan Heights.

*Mike Lubbock*  
**Executive Director**  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park

# the curator's report

We had a very good breeding season, producing a lot of black-winged stilts, pied avocets, masked lapwings, elegant crested tinamous, and for the first time ever we bred all three species of flamingos (Caribbean, Chilean and Lessers). We had eggs from wreathed hornbills, but she apparently ate them before hatching. Hopefully next year we will get a little farther with them. Nick Hill, Curator of the Avian Breeding Center, had great success in flock breeding White-winged Wood ducks in the park for the first time, raising 17 of this endangered species. We would like to announce that Sylvan Heights had the first U.S. breeding of European Goosanders (*Mergus merganser merganser*) this year. The USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland also achieved a first U.S. breeding of Surf Scoters (*Melanitta perspicillata*).

After getting through a very respectable breeding season, we have spent this summer and fall giving the park a bit of a face-lift. In the spring, we opened the Bird Song Wishing Well that allows visitors to throw a coin into the wishing well bucket to

hear one of 16 recorded bird songs. The early part of the summer was spent building a new African finch exhibit. This exhibit actually serves as part of Dustin Foote's masters project through ECU, so I will let him tell you more about it in his article on page six.

In July, a thunderstorm with very high winds came through the park. It caused considerable damage, including a tree that fell within the whooping crane exhibit damaging two fences, which had to be replaced. Fortunately, the crane was not injured in any way. Two trees also broke off and fell on our pheasant exhibit. Again, none of the birds were injured, but those three exhibits were completely destroyed. The birds had to be housed elsewhere for a couple of months while we removed the old exhibit and built a new one. We must thank all of you who generously donated funds to offset the expense of construction of the new exhibit. Since we had to rebuild these three exhibits, we decided to make some improvements to the size and aesthetics. We added about six feet to the width of the

**BY BRAD HAZELTON**

General Curator  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park



A male North American Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

A Caribbean flamingo works on a nest in the Landing Zone

exhibits on each end and 2 feet added on the depth of all three exhibits. In addition to expanding the exhibit, we used a wood frame that allowed us to make the peaked roof much taller, and we covered it with ½ by ½ hardware cloth. This will allow us to keep much smaller birds in the exhibit and the mesh also makes it much easier to see the birds. We are in the process of adding a heated block shelter to either end of the exhibit, too, so we can keep other species that are more sensitive to the cold in the exhibit year round. Overall, I think most people will agree that the new exhibit is much more attractive for both the visitors and the birds.

I would also like to thank Mike Diacont, who has been serving as our volunteer gardener within the grounds. We feel that the plants within the park are capable of being just as big of a draw to our visitors as the birds, and the two serve to complement each other very well. We have needed a gardener ever since the park opened, but unfortunately it was not within the budget. Mike has made a huge difference in the park's overall appeal by weeding, dressing, and replanting many of the park's potted plants and beds, as well as trimming trees and making improvements to the irrigation system. He has also been very active in encouraging others to donate to the park. Thank you, Mike, we appreciate all your efforts and hope you keep up the good work.

We have just completed the process of paving the hill going down from the Visitor Center and the loop around Africa, Australia, and the exotic birds. Erosion from heavy rains had taken its toll on these pathways, making them difficult for some visitors to traverse. Pushing strollers and wheelchairs had also become quite a workout. We're confident the new surface will make it much easier for everybody to enjoy the park.

Paved pathways around the park's lower loop improve visitor access to the aviaries.





# african finches

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## SCIENCE AMBASSADORS

**BY DUSTIN FOOTE**

Assistant Curator  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park

Senegal Firefinch (*Lagonosticta senegala*)

Science is all about pursuing questions, and here at Sylvan Heights Bird Park we love to get you asking them. Education is a critical component of our mission, and we are always looking for new ways to get people outside observing nature. Our newest exhibit of African finches aims to do just that.

Situated across from our African Goose Aviary, the finch exhibit displays species that belong to two groups of birds. It includes members of the parasitic finches (Viduidae) and their finch hosts (Estrildidae). Brood parasitism is a unique reproductive strategy used by several species of birds who take advantage of other birds and their nests. These “parasites” deposit their eggs and parental duties onto other species, known as “hosts”. This exhibit was designed in partnership with East Carolina University (ECU) and its Balakrishnan Lab in order to further research brood parasites and their songs. Simplistically, the studies will involve placing the parasite’s eggs into non-traditional host species nests and monitoring their song development. This will allow researchers to explore what parts of the songs are learned and what parts they are born knowing.

Perhaps even more importantly, this exhibit will serve as a backdrop for K-12 education programs in science inquiry. Science inquiry is a process in which you observe, question, investigate, interpret, and then communicate your results on any subject matter. Finches are extremely active and social animals with

many unique behaviors, making them the ideal species for children to observe. Using ECU’s researchers, local youth will witness firsthand what being a scientist is all about. We hope that seeing the process using real scientists and their data will engage children on a new level.

Science is also about forming connections, and we hope the natural activity of finches will connect you with our Eastern North Carolina native bird species. Bird feeders are an excellent way for you to observe many local species during our winter months. Some finch species you might see are Purple Finches (*Haemorhous purpureus*), House Finches, (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and American Goldfinches (*Spinus tristis*). After spending time watching African finches at SHBP perhaps you will gain a new appreciation for the soothing effect of bird watching in your backyard.

SHBP is home to one of the most biologically important bird collections in the world. Our responsibility as stewards is twofold; to the birds themselves and to you. Many of the species at SHBP you can no longer realistically see in the wild, and we strive to maintain these species so that future generations will be able to see them. SHBP knows that the key to conservation is education, and the key to education is to make it fun. So come out to Sylvan Heights Bird Park, get engaged, ask questions, think about science, and most importantly have fun!



Pin-tailed Whydah  
(*Vidua macroura*),  
a parasitic finch.



The new African finch aviary  
at Sylvan Heights



Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu finches  
(*Uraeginthus bengalus*)

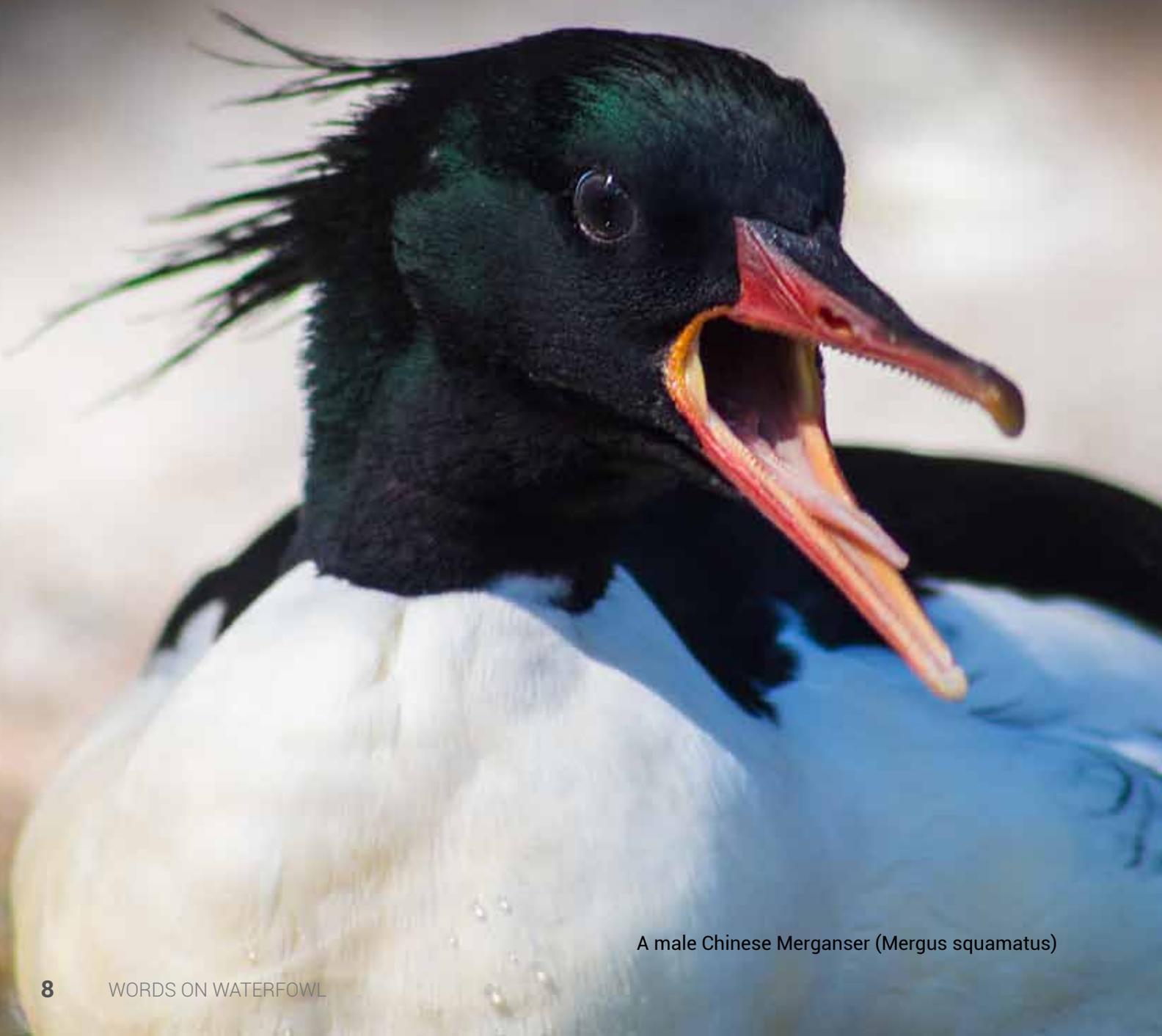
## research collaboration at sylvan heights

Sylvan Heights' collection continues to support research focusing on waterfowl and conservation. Recently, we have partnered with UNC Wilmington and the Beijing Genome Institute to sequence the genomes of over thirty new bird species in an effort to map a gene called RIG-1 that provides immunological resistance to avian influenza. This comprehensive study is the first of its kind, and will provide invaluable molecular markers for future genetic conservation studies. We are also currently working with Florida State University to explore the energy expenditure of island waterfowl species, with the goal of learning

what adjustments they have made to survive on an island. Many of the world's most endangered birds and waterfowl are found on islands, and we hope that the nine island species we maintain will provide insight for future conservation projects. Sylvan Heights also recognizes the importance of undergraduate education, as several of our local colleges and universities including North Carolina State University, Nash Community College, East Carolina University, and North Carolina Wesleyan College, have classes that incorporate the park's diverse collection, engaging students outside the classroom.

# charming CHINESE MERGANSERS

BY MORAG JONES  
Secretary, IWWA



A male Chinese Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*)

Striking flank feathers give this duck its alternate name: the Scaly-sided Merganser.

The English name of Scaly-sided Merganser accurately describes this handsome member of the sawbill family. Filigree black lines around the snow-white flank feathers do indeed give them a scaly appearance. Drakes have a red beak, iridescent black head and neck, dark mantle and wings, females have a warm red-brown head and both sexes deserve close inspection. At an average length of 52-58cm, (20 to 23 inches) the Chinese Merganser sports a faint salmon hue to its white breast, but you might miss it. For these birds are most at home on the water, their big feet and short legs optimised for an aquatic life. Like most of the mergansers, the Chinese has a wispy crest. In an adult drake, this crest nearly reaches his shoulders.

Preferring clean, flowing water that meanders through low level undisturbed mixed forest, Chinese Mergansers forage from dawn to dusk. Around noon they take some time to rest, preen and socialize on the riverbank, where they also sleep. Their diet consists of aquatic arthropods and small or young fish. In their season, fly larvae are a firm favourite. Once these emerge, fish become a more prominent part of the diet; anything of the right size and shape will be taken with relish. Probing the gravel on the riverbed these birds are well adapted for catching fast-moving prey with their thin serrated hooked beaks. Through the day, birds will gradually work their way upstream, minimising signs of disturbance to the riverbed that might alert their prey that hungry sawbills are working.

Substantial trees close to the bank are favoured for nesting. However, like the Mandarin Duck, which enjoys the same habitat, they cannot excavate their own holes and will search out suitable cavities made by other birds. In the month or so before nesting starts, the males often fight for females.

This show of strength and worthiness subsides when the serious business of egg laying commences and drakes wander off to moult whilst the duck is sitting, unlike some of the other merganser species, which share the parenting to some extent. A single clutch of 8-12 white eggs is laid in the nest chamber, which is lined with down and dry grass. Incubation is long for a duck, at 35 days. During the last few days of sitting, the duck will stoically sit through the worst



**Duckling**

PHOTO BY DEBBIE SCHOUTEN



of disturbances. Once dry after hatching, the cinnamon, grey and white ducklings leap like fluffy skydivers from the nest, called by their mother. She leads them away to the safety of the water.

Home for these birds is southeastern Russia, North Korea and northeastern China. Economic development has led to deforestation, water “management” and pollution. Other threats in the breeding range include illegal hunting, drowning in fishing nets, sand mining and motorboat disturbance. A sharp decline in their numbers was noted in the 1960s and 70s and still the Chinese Merganser is on the IUCN red list as “Endangered” - this species has a very small population which is suspected to be undergoing a continuing and rapid decline as a result of habitat loss, illegal hunting and disturbance. The total world population is thought to be less than 3000 pairs. This is a shy and easily startled bird, which has not been served well by modern progress. Chinese Mergansers are comfortable in their own company, or that of their immediate family. Only on the wintering grounds in south and central China might you see groups in double figures. This sparse distribution over a



A Chinese Merganser female (top) and a male showing his crest (above) PHOTOS BY DEBBIE SCHOUTEN



● Chinese Merganser breeding range (north) and non-breeding range (south)

large area makes study difficult and as a habitat is lost and a scarce and highly specialised species disappears, few realise that it is gone.

Some dedicated researchers have studied the ecology of the Chinese Merganser but there is still much to be done. Since early this century, a small number of breeding nuclei have been maintained in Europe and North America. Successful breeding of this species has occurred at several IWWA members’ private wildfowl breeding facilities, zoological parks and conservation centers since the first North American breeding in captivity here at Sylvan Heights. The information which has been collated may aid the mergansers in the event that artificial propagation is necessary for the survival or continued recovery of the species overall. What can be learned about the development of birds in an artificial environment, closely monitored by dedicated aviculturists, will be useful in the research and recovery of wild bird populations. Few of us will be fortunate enough to see the Chinese Merganser in the wild but here at Scotland Neck, you have the next best thing!

## FROM THE IWWA PRESIDENT



The 2014 Conference is now behind us. While in Salt Lake City, we enjoyed some wonderful places and had the good fortune to meet Fred, Sue and Lars Morris. Their travels, wildlife experiences and contributions to conservation are remarkable as is their hospitality. Yellowstone was spectacular, as always, and we were very fortunate to be there during a period of excellent weather. The post-conference trip to visit with

Joe and Sally DeSarro and then on to Sheila McKay's collection was most enjoyable. They all made us feel very welcomed. Anne Lemenager, in her excellent writing style, has provided a more detailed review of our Conference in this newsletter.

We are now planning and looking forward to our 2015 Conference. We will be going to Orlando, Florida October 13-17 for the main conference portion and October 18-21 for the post-conference portion. This conference will include a visit to Sea World and Disney's Animal Kingdom among other attractions. The post conference will include a visit to the Everglades. Complete details including registration information will be included in the next newsletter.

Lynn Dye has taken over the Conference Chair position from John Nuccitelli. John has retired as our conference planner after 20 years in this position. He has given a great deal of time and personal financial contributions to plan our conferences. At times this meant traveling to various locations to arrange details at his own expense. Thank you very much John and thank you also for remaining in the Treasurer position. Our annual auction and raffle was a huge success this year, we raised approximately \$4,900.00! This is money that will go into our conservation fund. Without everyone's help and contributions we could not continue to fund the work that we help support. Thank you very much to all who donated and/or purchased items and thank you also to the auction organizers and helpers.

During our annual Board meeting we elected Jan Harteman for a Director's position. Jan lives in Holland and is well known by many of our members. He has an extensive knowledge of waterfowl and is very well versed in social media communication. We welcome Jan to the Board and look forward to the help his expertise will bring to our Association.

The Conservation Committee continues to address the challenges of maintaining healthy populations of waterfowl in captivity. The committee has developed a list of potentially available ducks for importation. In the coming months we will be coordinating the details for a shipment. As with past importations, we will eventually be looking for zoos or private breeders to work with these birds at their facilities. If you have breeding facilities and would like to be involved in this effort please contact me. If you do not keep birds but would like to make a donation to help fund this work please contact me. As always, I welcome your comments or suggestions to help make our organization the best that it can be.

*Arnold Schouten*  
**President**

International Wild Waterfowl Association

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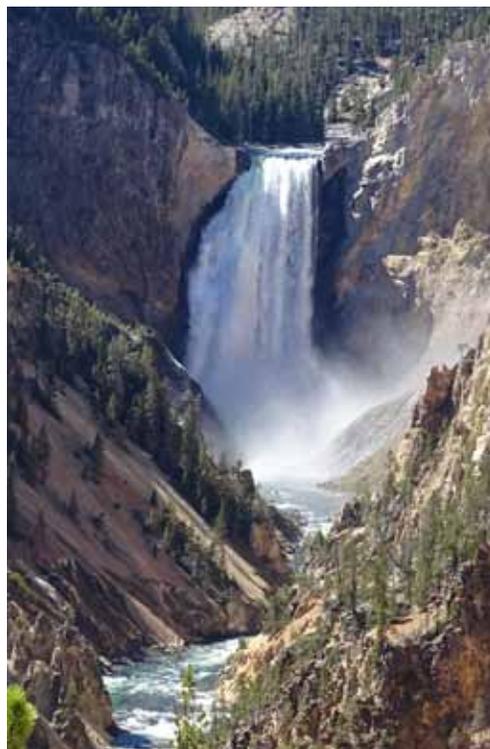
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## 2014 AWARDS

**RODNEY DAWSON AWARD**  
Roger Cattermole

**HANCOCK MEMORIAL AWARD**  
Sheila McKay

**CONSERVATION AWARD**  
Alicia Berlin



**IWWA**  
CONFERENCE  
— 2014 —  
SALT LAKE CITY  
*yellowstone*  
GRAND TETONS



BY ANNE LEMENAGER

As the members of the IWWA and Sylvan Heights who attended the 2014 conference in Big Sky country will attest, Salt Lake City is perhaps one of the more pristine cities in this country. Our headquarters for the first part of the conference was a hotel right next to Temple Square and the architecture and landscaping was gorgeous. The Hogle Zoo was open and those who went to visit it enjoyed the exhibits.

The first night's social is always a wonderful reunion and a time to meet new people who share the same love of birds and the environment. The next morning we were on our bus to the Tracy Aviaries, a bird park in the middle of an enormous recreational park in the city. The speaker sessions were held in a log barn and it was a great morning of learning. Chuck Cerbini led off the presentations with an update on all of the happenings at the Toledo Zoo including new exhibits of African penguins, flamingoes, and a "keet retreat" similar to the one at Sylvan Heights. He had slides and video of the successful breeding and rearing of a Coua chick and the Scaly Sided Merganser - only the second zoo in the country to have success with this bird. Frank Todd took us to Madagascar and as usual his photography and commentary was spectacular and entertaining, as well as educational - worthy of a National Geographic show.

Jacob Kramer's presentation brought all of us who were with him last year in Shreveport and Dallas a memorable update on the "Appeal and Headaches" of maintaining a mixed collection. Jacob's personal and professional growth as an aviculturist and curator is phenomenal and Pinola is lucky to have him as the man in charge. He gave an excellent accounting of the challenges and successes he has learned over the past few years in nesting destruction, aggression and competition in captive breeding situations. Peter Kooy and I finished up the morning speaker sessions with a slide show/video compilation of our recent birding safari to Iceland with the Lubbocks, Bairds, and Bloems. The Harlequin ducks and Barrow's goldeneyes were in their breeding grounds and put on a great show along with the otherworldly landscapes of Iceland. The afternoon was spent wandering around the aviaries and enjoying the sunshine.

On Thursday morning, we boarded our bus and headed out to see Fred and Sue Morris and their magnificent home and collection of mounts and taxidermy from the 170 countries that they have been to. I certainly have never seen anything like that library and I dare say that all of us were jaw-dropping impressed. The Morrises have donated a complete collection of waterfowl, pheasants, grouse and quail to the Museum of Natural History at BYU in Provo. Seeing the exquisite display at their home and the museum was a highlight of the convention for me.

After lunch at the Golden Corral we became very comfortable in our motor coach, which is a good thing as the next few days included a lot of hours traveling the vast expanse of the plains and mountains of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana. West Yellowstone was our next home base and on Friday morning



we had the distinction of being in the coldest place in the USA at a crisp 12 degrees. The sun was out though, and the west entrance to Yellowstone National Park was sparkling in the frost and morning light. During that tour of the upper loop of the park we stopped at all of the hot spots and took beautiful pictures of the landscapes, birds, waterfalls, hot springs and geysers. Old Faithful was on time and the rivers and lakes in the park were full of birds and people enjoying casting into the moving water. It warmed up about 50 degrees during that day!

The auction was scheduled for that night and Maynard Axelson commanded the attention of us all with Morag Jones and Tim Thomas assisting with the "marketing" of the items. Between the auction, cash donations and the raffle over \$4,900.00 was raised, as Arnold Schouten indicated in his president's letter.

The awards banquet is always a highlight of the conference as we gather to enjoy food and drink and honor people who have contributed to the organization with their time and devotion, and those who have gone out and dedicated themselves to education, conservation and aviculture.

A few goodbyes were said as some of the folks in attendance were headed back home and the rest of us were off on another bus ride to Red Lodge Montana. This ride included a trip to Lamar Valley, the "Serengeti" of the west where bison, sandhill cranes, pronghorn antelope and ravens were everywhere. We stopped at a small pond and found ruddy ducks and coot, which added to our total of 78 species of birds for the trip, and then started an ascent up through Bear Tooth Pass which would peak at 10,947 feet. A golden eagle glided on by and the chipmunks scurrying around the observation area were unfazed by the visit. The vista from there was spectacular.

Pam Lowe met up with us for dinner and the next morning we headed to the Circle D ranch and a reunion with Joe and Sally DeSarro. He has an enormous ranch and a lovely collection of geese and swans. We wandered around and went to a hunting lodge on a nearby ranch and learned a lot about the history of the area and then went back for a delicious barbecue lunch. Sheila McKay's ranch was the next stop and we learned about setting different types of traps and took a tour of her aviaries and property. I definitely have acreage envy from visiting these places.

As always is the case after one spends a week with good friends sharing the joys of wildlife and each other's company, the goodbyes are heartfelt. Knowing that we have great memories of this past convention is comforting and the anticipation of the next time we get together is brewing. And since time is whizzing by these days, we will see each other in a flash of a wing.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a green t-shirt and sunglasses on her head, is in a barn. She is holding a white egg in her left hand and a flashlight in her right hand, shining it on the egg. The barn has wooden beams and several wooden crates or nesting boxes are visible in the background.

# a day in the life of an aviculturist

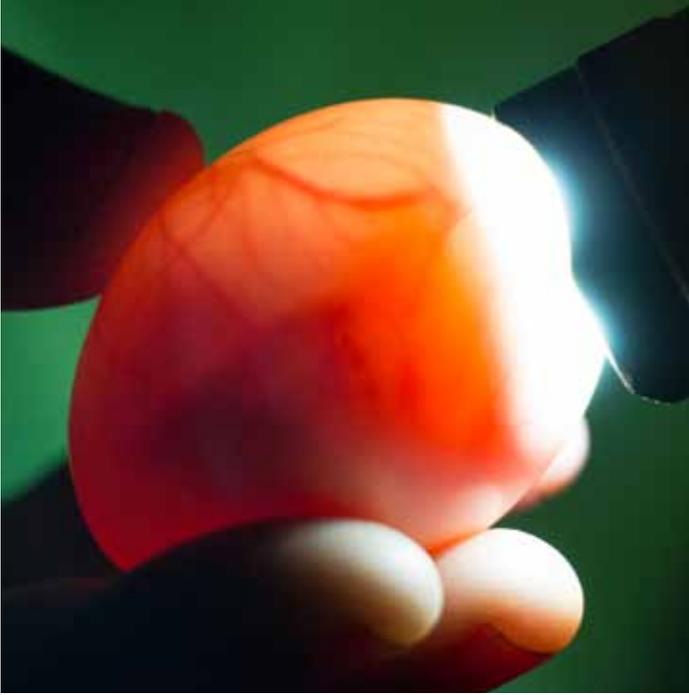
For Sylvan Heights aviculturist Kat Lewandowski, a typical day is anything but ordinary. Today, she's at the Avian Breeding Center feeding the "specials", the name Sylvan Heights has given to the growing assortment of non-waterfowl species. After dicing fruit and vegetables and organizing eight different types of pelleted diets into re-purposed coffee cans, she sets off down the hill towards the Curassow Barn, with loaded garden cart in tow.

At the bottom of the hill, Kat is greeted by a White-fronted Goose...on the wrong side of the fence. The goose is fully-flighted and has flapped out of her large paddock. She's been too fast for the aviculture team to catch for a feather trim, despite several attempts. Kat carefully maneuvers around the goose so as not to spook her, then opens the gate to the paddock and guides her back in. "NOW I can start feeding", she laughs, and proceeds to dole out specialized diets and fresh water for peafowl, Great Argus pheasants, curassows, macaws, and kookaburras.

At 9:00 a.m., Kat returns to the large barn to tend to the "broodies", a team of hens hand-picked to act as surrogate incubators

for the eggs of rare and delicate species. It's nearing the end of the breeding season, so only a few hens remain in the barn (the rest have returned to an off-site chicken house maintained by Sylvan Heights). Kat opens their nest boxes and places each chicken into a feeding area, closing the box behind them so the determined hens won't be tempted to skip breakfast and return to their duties. While they're eating, she takes the opportunity to candle each egg by shining a bright flashlight through the shell, allowing her to determine if the embryo is developing properly. Satisfied with the progress of the rare crane eggs under the broodies, she leaves the hens to their meal and moves to the incubator room, where the candling process is repeated for dozens of eggs from South American teal, whistling ducks, and African guineafowl. New hatchlings, wet and exhausted from the effort of escaping their eggs, are moved from incubators to a special vented brooder, where they will rest and dry their down.

Twenty minutes later, the broodies eagerly return to their egg-sitting responsibilities, and Kat begins preparing to feed the valley, an area that houses the center's largest birds. She loads an ATV with waterfowl and crane diet and drives down the dirt pathway. Trumpeter swans, black swans, whooper swans and

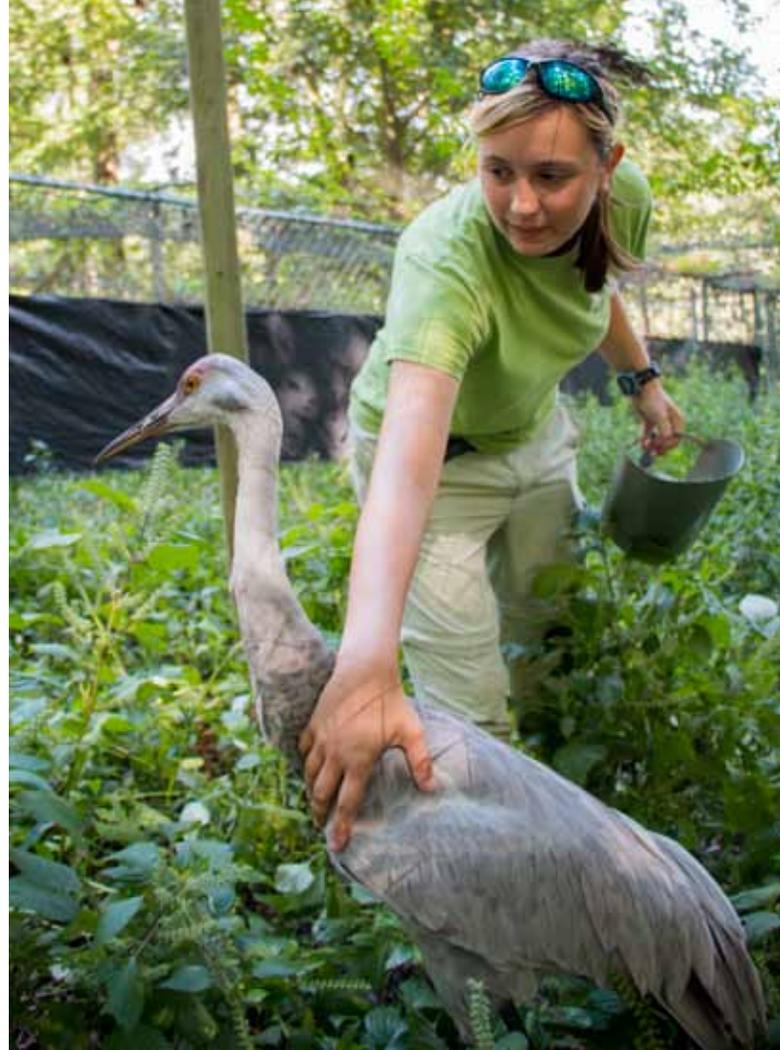


several species of cranes await the vehicle's arrival. Six foot tall Sarus Cranes, in the midst of their breeding season, dance and throw twigs in the air to impress one another. A young Sandhill crane has taken a liking to Kat, and follows her closely as she freshens his food and water dishes.

Soon, the last bird has been fed and lunchtime has arrived. Kat joins a handful of other Sylvan Heights staff in the break room at the Visitor Center. Like Kat, several of the aviculturists and volunteers at Sylvan Heights are students or recent graduates of East Carolina University's biology department, or a related field of study. Over the past five years, more than a dozen qualified ECU students have held intern or staff positions at Sylvan Heights.

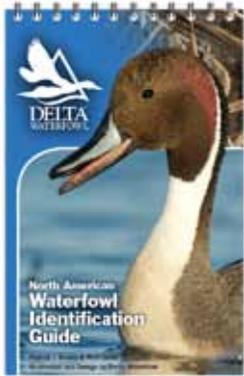
Kat's afternoon is spent monitoring nests in the center's breeding aviaries. Slowly lifting the lid off of a porch-style nest box, she coaxes a Ringed Teal hen off of her eggs just long enough to candle them, using a black cloak to block the sunlight and a flashlight to see into the developing eggs. This clutch is ready to hatch, so the eggs are removed from the nest and moved indoors to a high-humidity incubator reserved for hatching eggs. The ducklings will be hand-raised in the safety of the duckeries.

Late in the afternoon, the staff makes the feeding rounds once again to refill empty dishes for the evening. Kat's evening feed encompasses more than thirty aviaries of varying sizes. While she tends to a row of waterfowl breeding aviaries, four young Hawaiian Geese steal snacks out of the feed bucket behind her. For the next hour, the staff will visit nearly all of the center's approximately 3,000 birds, making sure they have everything they need for the night. The day's newest hatchlings, now dry and fluffy, are the last to be checked. As the ducklings doze under heat lamps in the duckery, Kat fills their small food bowls. They will be first on her rounds tomorrow morning, when the daily routine begins again.



A black cloak is used to candle eggs outdoors. ▶

# books for waterfowl enthusiasts



Sylvan Heights provided resources for this USFWS law enforcement training guide.

## NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Pat Bosco, a special agent with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Eddy Edwards, a zone refuge officer, visited Sylvan Heights this summer to gather photos for their upcoming book, the North American Waterfowl Identification Guide.

Authored by Pat Bosco and Rich Grosz, the book is a cooperative effort between the USFWS and Delta Waterfowl. It is based on a waterfowl identification teaching method that Bosco has developed and perfected while educating law enforcement officers in the U.S. and Canada. While the book was originally intended for wildlife officers, Bosco says the scope of the

project has expanded to include the general public, such as decoy carvers, taxidermists, hunters, and waterfowl enthusiasts.

The book features color photos of each species, including details that one would need when identifying waterfowl up close or in the hand, such as closeup photos of the foot, upper-and under-wing coverts, and images of both breeding and eclipse plumage for many species.

To purchase copies of the guide, visit [deltawaterfowl.org/waterfowlidguide.html](http://deltawaterfowl.org/waterfowlidguide.html)

## THE WATERFOWL MAN OF SYLVAN HEIGHTS

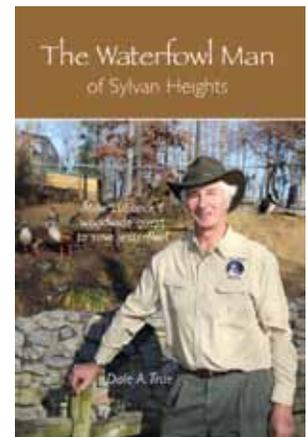
The biography of Sylvan Heights founder Mike Lubbock is now available! Co-author Dale True traced Mike Lubbock's life with birds from his birthplace in Southwest England, through his years with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, ending with the founding of Sylvan Heights. True invested four years of research, writing and editing in the manuscript.

"It's an adventure book more than anything else. Mike's story is told through the many

thrilling expeditions he made to collect birds and eggs in the most remote places on earth. The reader will experience the excitement and dangers Mike faced as he traveled the world to preserve waterfowl."

*The Waterfowl Man of Sylvan Heights* can be purchased at the Sylvan Heights gift shop, or by calling the park at (252) 826-3186.

**\$19.95 + tax (paperback)**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 12 BIRDS OF CHRISTMAS

**December 1st - 31st, 2014**

A holiday themed scavenger hunt in the park.

### PIG IN THE PARK

**March 21st, 2015**

Join us as local cooks compete to be Pig Cook-Off Champion!

### NC SCIENCE FESTIVAL

**April 11th, 18th, & 24th, 2015**

Special programs will be presented as part of the NC Science Festival.

### DUCKLING DAY

**May 9th, 2015**

Aviculturist-level members and higher are invited for a tour of the breeding center.

### ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

**May 15th - 17th, 2015**

Can you find all 18 endangered species at the park?

### WATERFOWL REUNION

**June 13th, 2015**

All members are invited to come meet the new hatchlings up close!

Please contact us at 252-826-3186 or [info@shwpark.com](mailto:info@shwpark.com) for more information, or visit [www.shwpark.com](http://www.shwpark.com) for a full listing of our upcoming events.



**HEADS UP!**  
Your Sylvan Heights membership now includes admission to the Carolina Raptor Center.

## IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

We are required to add a new state-wide tax to all admission fees starting January 1st, 2015. This tax may also affect memberships and any event that would include admission. If you are thinking about buying gift memberships or tickets for friends and family, we suggest doing so before the year ends so you can avoid next year's tax.

We have worked out a reciprocal agreement with the Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte that will allow admission for two people with any Sylvan Heights membership. If you are visiting the Charlotte area, we hope you will take advantage of this reciprocal and visit the center, which rehabilitates over 900

raptors each year and has 25 species on view. Also, the NC aquariums are now recognizing our Individual Plus memberships, and other levels, so please do go visit the NC Aquariums. If you have any questions about memberships or donations please contact me at Sylvan Heights Bird Park and I will be happy to help you out. We appreciate all the support we get from members and donors, as this park would not be what it is without your involvement.

*Brent Lubbock*  
Membership and PR Manager  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park

## thank you to our donors

***Sylvan Heights Bird Park gratefully acknowledges our donors of \$500 or more since April 30, 2014 through November 7, 2014.***

Anonymous  
Anne's Old Fashioned Food Products  
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Mr & Mrs S. M. White  
Brigette Wilds  
Klaus & Aracy Winter



Congratulations to Sylvan Heights volunteer Seth Paramore! His photo of our military macaw won first place at the N.C. State Fair in 4-H Youth Photography.

A summer camp participant builds her own terrarium.



# 2015 education calendar

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## MATILDA AND FRIENDS

JANUARY 24: Avian Vets  
FEBRUARY 21: Beaks!  
APRIL 18: Earth Day  
MAY 16: Nests  
JUNE 20: Bugs  
JULY 18: Waterfowl

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## PARK IN THE DARK: WINGS OF THE NIGHT

MARCH 13-14  
MAY 1-2



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## EGGSTRAVAGANZA

MARCH 28

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## EARTH DAY EVENT

APRIL 18

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## SUMMER DAY CAMPS

JULY 7-10: 4-6 year-olds  
JULY 28-31: 7-10 year-olds

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## OVERNIGHT CAMP

(7-12 year-olds)

JULY 21

Reservations required. For more information, please visit:

[www.shwpark.com](http://www.shwpark.com)



GET THE LATEST  
NEWS FROM THE  
EDUCATION TEAM!

[facebook.com/SylvanHeightsEd](https://facebook.com/SylvanHeightsEd)

# education update

Summer proved to be a very busy time for the Sylvan Heights education department, as staff saw increased numbers of field trips, offered more educational programs and held summer day camps for the first time in several years. From June-August 2014 the education department served a total 1323 participants through field trips and educational programs, which was almost a 70% increase from summer 2013. Pre-K and Elementary teachers will be excited to learn that we have developed a series of new hands-on educational programs for school groups geared towards PreK-2nd Grade.

The eventful summer continued during a week long summer day camp session in mid-July. Youth ages 6-10 years enjoyed a week full of hands-on learning that focused on environmental issues, watersheds, waterfowl, insects and reptiles. Campers learned to “reduce, reuse and recycle” and even made their own vermicompost bin to take home. Next they explored the wetlands in the park as they identified organisms and made water quality assessments. Sherri Jager, with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, conducted an experiment with the campers to show how wetlands filter some pollution, but do not completely eliminate it before the runoff reaches water basins. Waterfowl Exploration camp proved to be the most popular day. Participants received a behind the scenes tour of the Breeding Center and had close up encounters with numerous waterfowl species. On the final day, campers learned all about crawly creatures as they examined insects and reptiles.

The summer rounded out with a day trip to the NC Estuarium in Washington.

Plans are already in the works for Summer Camp 2015. We expect camps to fill up fast, so go ahead and mark your calendars. Day Camp for 4-6 year olds will be held July 7-10 and July 28-31 for 7-10 year olds. Parents can sign up their children for all four days or just pick the days their child is interested in. This summer, we will offer opportunities for youth ages 13-18 to serve as volunteer camp assistants. Potential volunteers must fill out an application as well as get a letter of reference to apply.

With the growth of additional education staff at Sylvan Heights, we are now able to offer additional weekend programming. Matilda and Friends is a once a month Saturday morning program for families with children ages 7 and under. Participants enjoy stories, activities, crafts and up close encounters with animals. Pre-registration is strongly suggested as this program typically fills up. We are also offering a new overnight camping experience for groups (4-H, churches, scouts, etc) called “Park in the Dark: Wings of the Night”. The program includes bird encounters, tour of a portion of the park at night, educational programs, building a bat box, food as well as camping in our tree house that overlooks the wetlands. There are also plans in the works for an Earth Day Celebration event in April. Additional details can be found online at [www.shwpark.com](http://www.shwpark.com) under the Education tab.



## SPONSOR A FIELD TRIP TO SYLVAN HEIGHTS!

You can help send students to Sylvan Heights Bird Park to learn about birds, wetlands, and the environment. Your sponsorship will cover fees for children from area schools to participate in engaging education programs.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

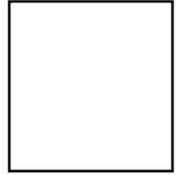
I pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to sponsor a field trip. Bill me  One time.  Quarterly for one year, beginning \_\_\_\_\_

Or, my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is included. Or, charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my  Visa  Master Card  Amex  Discover

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVN Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Please send to Sylvan Heights Bird Park • PO Box 368 • Scotland Neck, NC 27874) **Thank you!**



500 Sylvan Heights Park Way • PO Drawer 368 • Scotland Neck, NC 27874



## membership **matters!**

Your support helps us give our visitors a lasting connection with birds and wildlife.

Thank you.