News From The Forest
Red Cockaded Woodpecker Work in Bladen County

Jan Goodson, a biologist with Dr. J.H. Carter III & Associates, Inc., is contracted through the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission (NCWRC) to monitor clusters of red cockaded woodpecker (RCW). A cluster is defined as a family that lives in an area year-round. RCW are a federally listed endangered species and their preferred habitat is longleaf pine with little understory due to its resilience to fire.

As part of Jan’s work, she monitors for RCW clusters in Bladen County on forested or park lands. She watches for the number of adults and monitors for fledglings during the mating season, which is from April to May. She also monitors the number of males and females by obtaining a ratio that will help gather further information about the success of the population, as well as its health. According to Jan, there are currently sixteen active clusters and one inactive cluster in Bladen County.

Below you will see some of the technology Jan uses to help monitor nest cavities within the clusters including capturing, checking for bands and releasing the RCW. Jan uses a telescope to get a closer look at the RCW to identify male or female. Jan also uses a Hastings pole with an attached camera monitor to view the nests. There was an active nest while she was surveying and she was able to see the fledglings on the camera monitor. She even identified a new cavity, which she marked with flagging tape to be banded later.

Wishing Smokey Bear a Happy Birthday! He turned 78 on Aug. 9! Help keep Smokey’s birthday wish by remembering only you can prevent wildfires!

Visitor Hours
March 1– Oct. 31
Monday: closed
Tuesday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday/Sunday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Nov. 1- end of February
Monday: Closed
Tuesday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday: Closed
4803 Sweet Home Church Rd.
Elizabethtown, NC 28337
(910) 588-4161
Turnbullcreek-esf.ncfs@ncagr.gov
Visit all of North Carolina’s State Forest from the coast to the mountains. See NCFS website for more information, www.ncforestservice.gov
All About Birds

The forest is home to many different species of birds. The RCW is a focal species at the forest due to our management efforts to sustain the old growth, longleaf habitat that they thrive in. In addition to RCW, the forest has a wide variety of woodpecker species as well as other birds. Look below at some of the different species observed at the forest this summer and see if you are able to identify them.

When it comes to identifying these three species, pileated woodpeckers (pictured above, middle) are the largest species of woodpecker in North Carolina. They have mostly a black body with the key identifying feature being their red crest. Red headed woodpeckers (pictured above, right), as the name implies, have a bright red head that is easily identified. The red coloring on RCW (pictured above, left) is not so noticeable, and unlike the red headed and pileated woodpeckers, the red marking is only on males. Their backs are a mix of black and white stripes that almost appear spotted. Nesting cavities are marked with a white band (below left) to help protect the site.

Lastly, Turnbull Creek Educational State Forest (TCESF) has installed blue bird boxes throughout the forest to help with eastern blue bird nesting. One of the boxes just behind the office gets frequent use, as can be seen in the image (above right) of a male blue bird returning to the nest to feed the hatchlings. The males have a vibrant blue coloring with a rustic brown belly. Females are mostly brown with spots and blue coloring on the wings and tail.
Wildlife Sightings

Recent wildlife sightings, some of which were captured on game cameras, include an eastern cotton tail, black bear, bobcat and a yellow rat snake. For black bears and rat snakes, summer is mating season. For older black bear cubs, it’s also a period of exploration. Bobcats, eastern cottontail and rat snakes are native to all regions of North Carolina. Rat snakes vary in color depending on the region and the yellow color is common for rat snakes in the southeastern coastal plain. However, the black bear is primarily native to the coastal and mountain regions of North Carolina.

Wildlife Action Camp

Rangers Carrie and Monique had the opportunity to present a skins and skulls program at the Wildlife Action Camp in Whiteville, N.C. Students were taught various wildlife adaptations including ways to tell the difference between predator and prey animals.

Saturday Class Offerings

Time is quickly running out to join one of our weekly Saturday classes for the year! TCESF has been offering a unique class each Saturday of the month. Themes include guided hikes, naval stores, forest measurements, fire control and paper making. These classes offer a chance to receive N.C. environmental education credit for criteria II and III. Our final class will be Saturday, Oct. 29. Call now to register for one before it’s too late!
Sustainable Forestry Teachers Experience

The North Carolina Forestry Association (NCFA), conducted a professional development workshop titled the Sustainable Forestry Teachers Experience (SFTE). This workshop is an annual, four-day event held for the mountains, piedmont and coastal regions of North Carolina. As part of it, teachers receive an introduction to Project Learning Tree (PLT), and tour other forestry related facilities. This year’s coastal region SFTE was held in New Bern, N.C., and provided teachers with the opportunity to tour Cool Springs Environmental Education Center, Weyerhaeuser timber lands, International Paper and the N.C. Forest Service Claridge nursery. They also visited Wayne Community College and learned more about their two-year forestry degree. Ranger Monique had the opportunity to assist with leading PLT activities throughout the experience.

Upcoming Events

• Fall Birds & Snakes with WRC Sept. 24, from 1-5 p.m., call to register.
• EcoExplore Mycology Skills Session Oct. 15, from 2-3 p.m. Use link to register: https://forms.gle/XwTVxadTA4U8eh0q8
• Ranger led Saturday classes, call for info.
• Call us today to schedule a visit!