

Wildlife agency: Report armadillo sightings

SUBMITTED REPORTS

RALEIGH — The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is asking the public to report any sightings of nine-banded armadillos to the agency.

Commission biologists are seeking observations to help them determine the range expansion of armadillos in the Tar Heel state. To participate, volunteers who spot an armadillo in the wild should upload and share their photos on the NC Armadillo project, which launched today on the free online platform iNaturalist. Volunteers can upload their photos via a computer at iNaturalist.org or they can download the free iNaturalist app, which is available for

iPhone and Android.

People who want to report observations but do not want to use iNaturalist can send their armadillo observations to armadillo@ncwildlife.org. The email should include:

* A photo of the armadillo

* When it was observed (date and time)

* The location where it was observed (GPS coordinates are best, but a detailed location description is acceptable)

Armadillos are native to Central and South America but have gradually expanded their range into the southeastern United States. In 2007, the agency received the first confirmed sighting of a nine-banded armadillo in Macon County and in the



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last 12 years has received more than 170 reports in 46 counties.

The number of counties with confirmed observations is 27, stretching from Cherokee to Dare counties, and makes it likely the armadillo is expanding its range naturally throughout North Carolina, rather than

being helped by human intervention, according to Colleen Olfenbuttel, the Commission's black bear and furbearer biologist.

Watch for bird nests

With shorebird nesting now underway along the coast, the commission reminds beach-bound visitors to give beach-nesting birds, eggs and chicks a

wide berth.

"Sharing the shore" with beach-nesting birds can make a huge difference in how successful they are in breeding, nesting and raising their chicks because these birds are very sensitive to human disturbance. Eggs and chicks are well camouflaged to protect them from predators, so they can easily be stepped on and crushed. Humans, as well as their pets, can upset nesting birds by wandering too close to nesting areas, which may cause the adult birds to fly off, leaving the eggs or chicks vulnerable.

"Birds have their ways of letting you know when you're too close," said Dr. Sara Schweitzer, the Commission's Wildlife Diversity

Program coordinator. "They'll do things like dive-bombing you, or calling loudly. Some species will pretend to have a broken wing to lure you or other perceived predators away from the nest and chicks."

Skimmers, terns, oystercatchers and plovers are some of the bird species that nest on the beach. Populations of several of these species, such as the common tern, gull-billed tern and black skimmer, have plummeted in recent years — mainly due to human disturbance and habitat loss. However, increased monitoring efforts and protections have led to stable or increasing numbers of nesting American oystercatchers and Wilson's plovers along the North Carolina coast.

BASEBALL

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record the first out of the frame with a strikeout of Connor Wise.

Hughson would last only 2/3 of an inning and the Eagles added eight additional runs to go up 13-0.

Jake Tynch, a sophomore, would be the Aces' third pitcher in the frame.

He allowed a run, but was able to end the inning.

Edenton coach Robert Jordan gave credit to the Rosewood lineup.

"We couldn't get out of that first inning," he said. "Tip your hat to them. They can hit the ball. It wasn't like we were kicking it around."

The coach added that the Aces did contribute to the inning with walks.

"They were just hitting the baseball," he said. "Teams rarely overcome a 14-run inning. I was really proud of our guys — the way they battled back. We didn't quit. We didn't roll over."

Jordan noted that he told his younger players after the game to not forget

how the loss to Rosewood feels.

"I hope they use it to motivate themselves to continue to work hard and get better," he said.

Edenton scored three runs in the top of the second via a two-out rally.

With the bases loaded, Parker Clayton posted a two-run single to put the Aces on the scoreboard.

Clayton would then come home on a Chace Kelly RBI single.

On the mound, Tynch held his own as he pitched 4 1/3 innings.

He was able to escape a bases loaded situation in the bottom of the second as he struck out Carson Hatem to end the frame.

"He didn't pitch a perfect game, but he had that mentality where he was going to battle," Jordan said of Tynch. "He got into some jams, but made some pitches to get out of them. I was really proud of Jake."

The Aces added two runs in the fifth on a two-run double by Wes Privott and a run in the sixth on a bases-load walk that was forced by batter Gabriel Stulick.



PHOTO COURTESY KIM ULLOM

The Aces celebrate their 4-2 win over West Columbus on May 14 during the third round of the state playoffs at Historic Hicks Field.

Rosewood's Will Harris pitched six innings and posted seven strikeouts.

Edenton is set to lose seniors in Kelly and Privott.

Third round

John A. Holmes 4, West Columbus 2: John A. Holmes starting pitcher Caleb Bunch pitched a complete game as the Aces defeated West Columbus on May 14 in the third round of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 1A baseball state playoffs at Hicks Field.

Bunch held West Columbus (17-7), the No. 6 seed in the Class 1A East

Regional and defending 1A East Regional champions, to six hits over seven innings of work on the mound and registered nine strikeouts for the win.

Entering the top of the seventh, John A. Holmes coach Jordan had a decision to make.

Does Bunch go back to the mound?

In the previous inning, West Columbus scored two runs during the frame against Bunch.

One of the runs scored on a RBI double by Cole Benton to make it a 4-2 contest.

With the sophomore doing just enough to get out of the sixth, Jordan

decided to keep Bunch, a right hander, in the game.

Bunch would reward his coach as Bunch retired the Vikings in order — which included back-to-back strikeouts — to end the game.

"What he showed [Tuesday night] in the seventh inning — a bulldog came out of him," Jordan said of Bunch. "He wasn't going to have anyone else come into the game. He dominated that last inning."

Jordan noted that Ryan White was waiting in the wings to relieve Bunch just in case.

The coach believed that Bunch may have picked up the velocity on his pitches

in the final inning.

"That's the way to close out a game," Jordan said.

Bunch was also able to escape a tight situation with Vikings on second and third with two out.

He was able to force a groundout to end the West Columbus scoring threat.

The Aces, the No. 3 seed in the regional, opened the scoring in the bottom of the first inning.

After Parker Clayton reached base on a leadoff walk, senior shortstop Chace Kelly would bring home Clayton on a RBI double to give the Aces a 1-0 lead.

Kelly would score later in the inning from third base on a wild pitch by West Columbus starting pitcher Cody Benton.

The Vikings' starting pitcher went four innings and struck out eight Edenton batters.

The Aces kept the pressure on the Vikings on the base paths as Edenton had multiple stolen bases.

Edenton took a 3-0 lead following a wild pitch that allowed Kelly to score from third.

He had reached base in the inning on a single.

TITLE

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Coston and the 4x200 meter relay team of Josiah Carter, Brooks, Coston and Pryce.

Brooks finished third in the 300-meter hurdles.

Pryce also earned the NCHSAA Sportsmanship award for his performance during the race. According to reports from the race, a runner ahead of Pryce fell.

"I remember he was just like a few steps ahead of me. When I saw him fall, I was in shock because I had never seen someone fall before. I was worried about him, so I finished my race, went back and helped him out," he said.

Feels great to achieve victory at the state meet!

"It feels great — I got a ring," Coston said.

Brooks added, "It felt good to be with my brothers — we went out with a bang."

Hill said, "It felt good because last year I went all the way to state — came in second — but came back this year and came in first; brothers helped me out."

Pryce had a gold cross dangling on a necklace across his chest said, "It was just a blessing."

Let's give credit where credit is due.

"For me, everything because I prayed before every race and asked Him to let it be His will, so it must be His will," Pryce said.

Relay holds a different type of pressure than just putting on spikes and running on the track. Drop the baton or miss the handoff, the entire team loses the race.

"Pressure — there was a lot out there," Brooks joked. "After I passed the baton off, I felt a whole lot better than what I had before I got the baton. It was better after I gave the baton to my other brothers to take control of it and finished it off."

During the Regionals, the relay teams dominated the competition almost like parents racing small children around the Courthouse Green. Though the Aces were triumphant at the state meet, the competition was a bit harder.

"We still got out and got it done — it was a little bit of pressure," Coston said.

Rather than wasting time playing video games, the track team trained over the winter break leading into the spring season to improve their speed.

"It really helped out during indoor track with the same exact coach (Tamika Nixon) so that when came out for outdoor track, it

was just home," Brooks said. "It just felt like having a coach who was going to be behind us 100 percent."

Pryce paid homage to Coach Nixon, who was named Coach of the Year.

"After every mess-up or hiccup that we had, she always told us that it's alright; we got it," he said. "That always kept us motivated. Coach always made sure we knew that one hiccup will be alright because we will just keep getting back up and doing what we have to do."

Brooks added, "In practice, she would always make sure that the first thing on her agenda is whatever we messed up on, we got to fix before going on about our day. She helped us out tremendously."

"It feels good," Nixon said of the award. "I knew they had it in them and to bring it out of them. I feel good about it."

As to being role models for their peers at JAHHS, Brooks said, "Maybe a little bit. Seeing the young kids and people come out to the track meet and having fun like that track meet we had with the middle schools — seeing them see us run — we all had a good time. I think we are a great role model to this community — all of us in different

sports but also in track."

Pryce said the track stars are getting a good education.

"Yes, we are — teachers are doing what they can do for us and making sure that we know what we got to know to move onto the next level," he said.

Brooks said it is hard being a student-athlete, all of whom are college bound.

"All of our coaches say you got to be a good student before being a good athlete," he said. "You got to get the work done in the building before you come out on the track, so that played a huge role."

Coach A. Downing added, "If you don't stress academics, then they don't participate. My thing is, I don't want them just to be eligible to participate, I want them to be as good as they can be academically because at some point, your athletic career will end but academics can take you as far as you want to go."

Other area teams that deserve a high-five for competing at the state meet include Perquimans and Gates counties.

Perquimans' Ceo Riddick, a senior, finished fourth (42.09 seconds) in the boys' 300-meter hurdles to secure a medal — his first year out of the gate

ever topping the hurdles. He's the first Pirate to compete in three events within the past several years.

"The highlight of the meet was knowing that Ceo had posted his personal best time in the 1st heat of the 300 meter Hurdles, but having to clock watch to see exactly how good it was. It felt pretty good to see two Edenton hurdlers and a Perquimans hurdler on the podium," Pirates' Coach Jonathan Nixon said.

Here's a bit more about Riddick — though he finished the preliminary heat of the 110 meter hurdles (16.67 seconds), he narrowly missed making the finals of the 110 meter hurdles by about a half a second.

Also worth noting, the Pirates' 4x400 meter relay team — Riddick, Gabreal Tripp, Joseph Askew, and Quindall Freeman — ran a season best time (3:39.67 minutes) to place 11th in state.

"I am very pleased with not only the state qualifiers, but also with the our regional qualifiers. We qualified athletes in 12 events at regionals and 3 events at states," Nixon said. "That's pretty good for a team that does not have a track to practice on! It really shows how much determination and heart

the Perquimans athletes have when practice is centered around running up and down stairs, through a cemetery or parking lot and lower body workouts to build up their strength."

Athletes and relay teams that finish in the top four in their event earn a medal.

Gates County High School track team scored some personal bests at the big meet.

State runner-up and bringing home a silver medal was the boys' 4X400 meter relay team — Brian Riddick, Deroyne Griffin, Cassius Gary, and Keivonte Leary — which crossed the finish line with a personal record (3:30 minutes).

Worth noting, this same relay team was conference champions, regionals champions and say it again, 1A State Runners up.

The girls' 4X100 meter relay — Saniyah Pruden, Kyia Riddick, Jordan Lyon, and Ariana Matthews — finished 7th with a time of 52.02 seconds, also a personal record.

Triple jumper, Tyrell Holley, finished 6th with a personal record of 42 feet 4 inches.

Keivonte Leary and Brian Riddick competed in the 400 meter dash with 9th and 12th place finishes respectively.

STEAMERS

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coaches for a 12-week period from late May until mid-August.

Host families are being entrusted by both the organization, as well as the players' parents, with the essential comfort of the player(s).

In the very least, a clean, comfortable (linens, air conditioning, etc.), and private space (for example, bedroom with a door) for the player is required in

order to be eligible as a Steamers host family.

It is expected that pleasant interaction will take place between the player and family members also.

At the same time, these players are young adults and deserve a place in the house where they can go to rest, relax, be alone, or have a private phone conversation, etc.

Beyond this rudimentary requirement, it is hoped that families would extend welcome courtesies to the player(s)

much like a visiting guest, such as some meals (when not with the team), use of TV/internet, etc.

Naturally, each player-family relationship will have its own dynamic but the goal is for a mutually positive experience on both ends with the Edenton Steamers always available for support and/or guidance.

For information on becoming an Edenton Steamers host family, please contact the Steamers office at 482-4080.

FRIEDMAN

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about the upcoming season but Roy Williams has managed to get commitments from a stellar mix of talented prep stars and proven college transfers. Coach Williams will have the difficult task of getting them to play as a team but I wouldn't trust any other coach alive to do the job better.

I didn't talk about them much this year but the Carolina Hurricanes and their coach Rod

Brind'Amour deserve a lot of credit for the season they had. They may have been considered by some to be a "bunch of jerks" but their non-stop effort and exceptional play once again inspired a region that doesn't care much about hockey to show up and tune in to cheer on their Canes.