

# THE BULLETIN

## Chapel Hill Bird Club

September, 2001

(Vol. XXX, No. 9)

c/o Ginger Travis  
5244 Old Woods Rd.  
Hillsborough, NC 27278

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### September meeting – first of the fall

*When:* Monday, Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m.

*Where:* The lounge, Binkley Baptist Church. Binkley is on the corner of Willow Drive and the 15-501 Bypass in Chapel Hill (next to University Mall).

*Who:* The speaker will be CHBC's own Rob Gluck on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. This bird has been presumed by many to be extinct, but reports of sightings in remote swamps continue to be made. Rob traveled to Louisiana to join a group looking for the Ivory-billed. He'll talk about his experiences there and the evidence that a few Ivory-billeds may survive.

*Refreshments:* Yes! Come at 7:15 to eat and talk.

### Upcoming meetings, service project

Mark your calendars for:

*Oct. 22 (meeting):* Wayne Irvin on birding the Svalbard protectorate of Norway

*Nov. 11 (service project):* Field trip offered for beginning birders, Brickhouse Rd. To help, contact Karen Bearden ([chickadeebirders@earthlink.net](mailto:chickadeebirders@earthlink.net)) or Judy Murray ([jmurray@unc.edu](mailto:jmurray@unc.edu)). More details later.

*Nov. 26 (meeting):* Pat Coin on birding in Australia.

### CHBC Sat. field trips

For the regular Saturday-morning local trips, we'll leave the Glen Lennox parking lot (on the north side of 54 just east of the intersection with 15-501 in Chapel Hill) at 7:30 a.m. sharp and return by noon. Reservations are not necessary, and trips are free. Beginners and visitors are welcome.

*Sept. 15* – Chatham County Fall Migration Count. To participate, call or email Will Cook: 660-7423; [cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu). No regular local trip.

*Sept. 22* – Mahogany Rock and Bullhead Mountain for hawk watch and migrating warblers – milepost 235, the Blue Ridge Parkway. Contact Will Cook

([cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu)) to make sure you know when to meet up there. No regular local trip.

*Sept. 29* – Local trip. Call Doug Shadwick for details: 942-0479.

*October* – Trips continue through the month.

### CHBC members vote (and eat!)

Thanks to the creative minds of Judy Murray and Karen Bearden, on May 21 the Chapel Hill Bird Club revived an old tradition and had a potluck picnic dinner at Ebenezer Point, Jordan Lake, for the last meeting before the summer break. What this meeting proved is that birders can cook and eat up a storm! The food was superb. We had twenty-some people who finally tore themselves away from their plates long enough to vote on the slate of officers for this year. All officers from last year will repeat except for treasurer. Fran Hommersand needed a break, and Ruth Roberson was willing to serve. Thank you both, Fran and Ruth, for your service to the club – and thanks to all of the officers, who have worked as a really good team.

### Recommended reading: shorebirds

by *Steve Shultz (to Carolinabirds)*

Let me recommend a book for those interested in identifying the many shorebirds migrating through the area. Stokes "A Beginners Guide to Shorebirds" is available for a shelf price of \$8.95. Don't let the name fool you, as I feel the book is useful for beginners, intermediates, and even more advanced birders. Each of the roughly 60 species of regularly occurring shorebirds in the U.S. and Canada (excluding Alaskan specialties) is covered, most with multiple photos of birds in flight and on the ground. Each species is given 2 full pages, one of text and one of photos. Also included are discussions on plumage, molt, habitat, and feeding. Several features I enjoyed were a listing of species by length of migration (short, medium, long), a breakdown of shorebirds likely to be seen by habitat, and migration timetables for spring and fall for each species. I consider myself fairly adept at shorebird identification but really enjoyed my first look at this

book. I even learned something new the first time I opened the text: our locally breeding Willets leave the U.S. in the winter and are replaced by Willets moving south from more northerly breeding areas. I didn't realize the Willets we see in the summer are different individuals than the ones in winter. The book is exactly the same size as a Peterson's, so it fits well in a pocket while out in the field.

## **Common Nighthawks on the move**

*by Amalie Tuffin (to Carolinabirds)*

A flock of about 40 Common Nighthawks was flying around the schoolyard at the Carver Street School at the corner of Hillandale and Carver Streets in Durham around 7 this evening [Aug. 27]. I was able to drive my car into the schoolyard, open the windows, and sit right in the middle of the wheeling birds. It was really amazing.

*Note: This is one of many reports of migrating nighthawks being seen in Orange and Durham counties in late Aug. and early Sept.*

## **Good news for a rare sedge, birds**

*by Josh Rose (from Carolinabirds)*

I read from an on-line conservation news service that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is probably going to list the Golden Sedge, *Carex lutea*, as endangered. The species was only discovered a few years ago and is known only from the North Carolina coast, eight populations in the Cape Fear basin in Onslow and Pender counties. It apparently grows mainly in and around pine savannahs, so the main bird beneficiaries of its protection would be Bachman's Sparrow, maybe Henslow's, and associated species. Red-cockaded Woodpecker, which also likes pine savannahs, is already protected in its own right, of course.

## **In and out of luck**

*by Bruce Young*

Three-day weekends shouldn't be wasted doing everyday things, so Monday morning (Sept. 3) I drove down to Goldsboro to check out the sewage ponds for birds I haven't seen this year (namely black tern and pectoral sandpiper). I spent a leisurely hour scoping the ponds from the road and got my target birds plus both yellowlegs, stilt sandpiper, semipalmated plover, and lots of least sandpipers (with a couple of semipalms thrown in).

I then decided I should go check the fields around the prison and was rewarded with an upland sandpiper. I found him along the main road about half a mile up from the prison in a mud puddle next to a fence. He just stood there and let me watch him. I consider this payback for last year when uplands were reported from that area and I went to look

twice, never seeing them (not to mention the vermilion flycatcher which I also went to see twice and failed).

By 11 a.m. I was back in Durham and ran into Kent Fiala on Shepherd Trail, and he said he had seen one flock with some good warblers (worm eating, magnolia, redstart) but I got exactly nothing. I guess I used up my luck for the day.

## **Bumps on a log**

*by Lucretia Kinney*

I did very little birding this summer but did have an interesting encounter on a short trip to Waynesboro, Penn. Very early one morning I walked to a wooded farm/park near where I was staying, and on one of the trails, I noticed bumps on two dead trees in the distance. Through binoculars, I discovered the numerous bumps were roosting yellow shafted flickers. They were tight against the tree trunk with their necks pulled down into their bodies. As I watched, one woke up, stretched his neck, ruffled his feathers, and looked from side to side at the others who were still sleeping. I half expected him to nudge them awake, but he didn't and soon flew off by himself. When I returned along the trail about fifteen minutes later, all had flown.

## **Our Northwest trip (jays and juncos)**

*by Horace Sher*

When my friend, Mary, asked me this past spring to accompany her in August to San Francisco during her five days of meetings, I began looking at my California, Oregon, and Washington state maps and immediately decided to go, and work in seeing some magnificent Northwest scenery and some of their native birds. Trip time was Aug. 10-25.

I've been to San Francisco only twice before, but only on very short stays. This time I planned to see some of the most beautiful and interesting scenery in the U. S., but looking for some northwestern birds wasn't my primary objective, but we stumbled upon some interesting first-time birds, as we went looking for some magnificent scenic places. After the five days of meetings in San Francisco, Mary and I were very ready to head north on the Pacific coastal highway thru California's big redwood tree country, Oregon's lovely coast, and Washington's glorious Olympic rain forest and snow-covered mountains. There were many water birds along the coast. Steller's, Steller's, and more Steller's Jays were at about every rest stop scavenging for food. The last half of the trip on the way back to San Francisco, we drove through Washington's Mt. Rainier and Mt. St. Helens, Oregon's Columbia River Gorge and Lava Lands National Park and Crater Lake National Park, and California's Lassen Volcanic National Park. There again were the Steller's Jays at

every picnic table at Lassen. In a wonderful museum called the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon, we saw these amazing birds which they had in captivity: Long-eared Owl, Great Horned Owl, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, California Quail, and a Black-billed Magpie. First time I ever saw a Magpie. In closing I'll say that Crater Lake was the most beautiful lake I'd ever seen, and walking and hopping around in mid-August at its top, (which is about 1000 ft. above the water level) was one of my favorite winter birds, that we won't see down here until December...the Dark-eyed Junco. That one at Crater Lake was a Dark-eyed "Oregon Junco."

## **Loons, sandpipers, and rocky coasts**

*by Karen Bearden*

Joe and I spent two weeks birding in Maine and New Brunswick in July. I was thrilled when cheerful Black-capped Chickadees greeted us at the Maine Welcome Center! We birded Scarborough Marsh, Biddeford Pool, East Point Sanctuary, and Gisland Farm at the Maine Audubon Headquarters in the Portland area. We saw elegant Snowy Egret, a pair of Eastern Kingbirds guarding their nest, Yellow Warbler, Common Tern, Herring Gull, American Black Duck, and rafts of Common Eider. There were numerous American Goldfinch and Cedar Waxwings singing and flying wherever we went it seemed. It was a treat to hear Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated Sparrow singing on their breeding grounds, birds we only see during winter in the Triangle.

Next, we drove north to New Brunswick, our first visit there. I highly recommend a birding trip to the Bay of Fundy area! Mary's Point and The Nature Conservancy's Johnson Mills on the coast are hot spots for migrating Semipalmated Sandpipers. We arrived at the start of migration and saw up to 5,000 sandpipers. It was amazing to see and hear them as they flew in unison, going back and forth and up and down, like they were dancing! Numbers reach up to 100,000 at their peak during early August. Eighty percent of their population use these areas as feeding grounds on their way south. We learned from TLC staff that the soil quality is decreasing, creating concern over the food resource for the birds. The sandpipers fascinated me so much that we birded Mary's Point three days in a row. One day we were delighted to see a Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon soaring overhead at the same time! The falcons, especially, stir up the sandpipers. Mary's Point is also a good place for woodland species and marsh birds such as Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows. The sparrows are easier to find when you know their call. We were told they sound like a soda can opening -- a great tip to locating them!

The mountains, rocky coast, wildflowers, and huge fir trees make Fundy National Park a great

place to visit. We finally saw Boreal Chickadees along a trail. The highlight came as we were eating lunch overlooking Wolfe Lake. One adult loon was swimming with two young close by. She called and a reply came in the distance. Soon, there was another adult loon swimming toward us. I was surprised and happy as he got close enough for us to take pictures. He communicated with the female who was still on the backside of the lake. As he started swimming further away, suddenly there were three adult loons swimming together in a circle. I predict they were stirring up fish. The two young loons stayed close to a rock in back as the adults were on the other side of the lake. I love to watch as loons waggle their legs and stretch out by flapping their wings and showing the beautiful, white belly underneath. Gorgeous bird!

There was one pair of Piping Plover with two young blending in well on the light gray sand along a marked-off beach at the Irving Eco Center in Bouctouche. At the Sackville Waterfowl Park we saw Blue-winged Teal, Short-billed Dowitcher, Red-eyed Vireo, and Chipping Sparrow. We only had an afternoon to spend in Nova Scotia, where we birded at Amherst Point Wildlife Sanctuary. I was happy to see a pair of Common Loon with one kid, plus Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Ring-necked Duck, and Great Blue Heron. On our way back to Maine we stopped at Irving Nature Park in St. John. Another beautiful setting on the rocky coast with a Black-capped Chickadee getting close for pictures, Red-throated and Common Loons, gulls, and Spotted Sandpiper.

Back in Maine, our base for five nights was a B&B in Robbinston, 12 miles south of the Canadian border. There are many great places to bird from this location! West Quoddy State Park has more stunning rocky coast scenery, lighthouse, and trails. There were singing Black-throated Green Warblers, rafts of Common Eider and White-winged Scoter, plus Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls.

We took our first pelagic trip to Machias Seal Island out of Cutler on Bold Coast Tours. We saw lots of adorable Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Arctic Tern, plus a few Sooty, Greater, and Manx Shearwaters. Puffins get a lot of attention, but I think Razorbills are equally adorable!!

We birded both the Edmonds and Barring Units of Moosehorn NWR where we saw Alder Flycatcher, American Kestrel, Common Raven, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, and Common Nighthawk. A treat along US 1 is a platform with a pair of Bald Eagle nesting. The refuge has a sign and viewing stand set up. We saw an immature eagle by himself, looking like he was ready to fledge any moment. So we were delighted to see him flap his wings and lift up to fly a short distance around the platform. There were also three active Osprey platforms in the same area. Cobscook Bay State Park is another good spot where we found

Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Hairy Woodpecker.

I was happy when we found four Common Loons on a lake close to our B&B. Loons are always a reason and highlight for us in planning a trip north in summer!! Happy birding!

## **Summer 2001: Touring and birding in Scandinavia**

*by Ken Lundstrom*

My wife Kathryn and I were fortunate enough to be able again to take a two-week tour of Scandinavia this summer -- similar to our tour in 1999 -- with the added twist of six days on the Island of Gotland when the tour was completed (July 20-Aug 9). In addition to antiquities, relatives, and ancestors, I hoped also to add to my European and life list some birds beyond those seen on the 1999 trip.

The final count was 40 + birds. The most interesting spots were a Tufted Duck in one of the canals in downtown Copenhagen, Oystercatchers not only on the shores of Gotland and Öland but also in the fjords of Norway. The Sogne Fjord also yielded up Black Guillemots.

Other sightings included a Hawfinch perched on a treetop outside our hotel window one morning in fjord country while Fieldfare were on the lawn and trees around the property. (Fieldfare seen later in Gotland, too.) Chaffinch was found on Gotland as was Lapwing, Common Sandpiper, and Greenshank. Later a Curlew was seen in flight. Greenfinch was spotted conveniently by our country hotel in Soderaka, near Kalmar, Sweden. Blackbird was seen in the parks in Sweden and also Gotland. Eiders were seen in the waters of the fjords and also the coastal waters of the islands. Gulls were frequent: Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed and also Great, Herring Gull, and Black-headed Gull. Cormorant, Mallards, Coot, Red-breasted Merganser, Barnacle Goose, Canada Goose, and Mute Swan were seen in several locations. Gray Heron was the only wading bird (also in downtown Copenhagen). Ravens soared for us on the east coast of Gotland. Yellowhammer was found in the bushes on Faro Island above Gotland. A Buzzard was seen soaring near the Gota Canal.

White Wagtails were ubiquitous throughout. The more common sightings were Magpie, Hooded Crow, Jackdaw, Swift, House Martin, Swallow, and House Sparrow. Wood Pigeon was fairly common and Collared Dove was seen on Gotland.

Good trip and good birds!

## **Colorado: looking for lifers (pt. 2)**

*by Ginger Travis*

After a great day of grassland birding on July 4, we headed north toward the Front Range on July 5, and suddenly it was very difficult to get campsites.

Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs and Fort Collins all sit at the foot of the mountains and are crammed with people who moved to Colorado to play outside year round. In summer they fill up the campgrounds, even in the national forests, after reserving sites on the Internet. That was a shock to us. When we tried to reserve a site by phone, we were shut out of 10 national forest campgrounds that we requested on the east and north sides of Rocky Mountain National Park. But to the south, in Pike National Forest, we finally drove past a perfect small campground with vacancies. At an elevation of about 8,200 feet, it was cool enough, and we settled in for a few days. Ponderosa pines in a grassy parklike setting reminded me of North Carolina longleaf pine savannahs. We were high enough, though, that the ponderosa was intermixed almost 50 percent with spruce and fir. Our commonest camp bird was Western Tanager – a noisy bird. Black-capped Chickadees worked the pines in our site, and we heard or saw Plumbeous Vireos, “Red-shafted” Flickers, White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Chipping Sparrows, American Robins, Steller’s Jays, Common Ravens, and Hairy Woodpeckers. We got some lifers too: Broad-tailed Hummingbird, which whirred through camp several times a day checking out the red taillights, Olive Flycatcher hawking insects from a high perch, “Gray-headed” Dark-eyed Junco, and Common Poorwill (heard only, when I woke up in the middle of the night). Cathy and I went looking for Williamson’s Sapsucker in an aspen stand one day, but at noontime the place was dead, and we found only one Red-naped.

We drove to Guanella Pass – this is above treeline at 11,669 feet – with a little snowmelt lake and a trailhead for a couple of towering “fourteeners,” the 14,000-foot peaks climbed and collected by Colorado peak-baggers. What keeps casual traffic away from Guanella Pass is the dirt washboard road with hairpin turns and a speed limit of 15 mph. We barely went 10 – but that was the perfect speed to hear roadside birds. On the way up, we pulled off in a little valley with a meandering creek and willows. I pushed, and up popped a male Wilson’s Warbler. Then we spotted usually-secretive Lincoln’s Sparrows hanging out in full view in another willow. I suddenly realized how special it is to see these birds on their breeding grounds – the birds we usually just wave at when they’re passing through North Carolina. (Others were Pine Siskin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The male Yellow-rumped – “Audubon’s” Warbler -- in full breeding plumage just blazed with color. It was not the joke we consider a Yellow-rumped in North Carolina!) Back on the road again, in the spruce-fir zone we heard a ruckus, pulled over at a wide spot and walked back to the noise, which was coming out of a tree – a

nest of woodpeckers shrieking to be fed. Both parents were carrying food to the nest tree as fast as they could, and still the babies demanded more, more, more. When I saw the yellow forehead of one parent, I was shocked -- and thrilled: Three-toed Woodpecker. (Cathy, trained as a reporter, actually counted the toes.) This was the luckiest life bird of our trip.

On July 8, we moved to Mueller State Park a bit farther south (near Pike's Peak) and above 9,000 feet. The campsites were surrounded by spruce, fir and aspen, and there were meadows with elk and mule deer. We hadn't even put up the tent when a soft, furry-looking, silent bird flew into the campsite to check us out: Gray Jay. Thank you! Another lifer. This is a very charming bird, as fluffy as a stuffed-animal toy. At Mueller, we also had hard, raucous Steller's Jays in camp, Mountain Chickadees, Common Ravens and more robins and juncos. On a long hike through the woods and out into aspen-edged meadows, we saw our first Mountain Bluebirds of the trip, Vesper Sparrows, a beautiful pair of redbills, a hen Blue Grouse who was so big I thought at first she was a turkey, and a Western Wood Pewee (saying "Brrrrrrr"). The grouse and the pewee were lifers. And then on our last morning, as I sat at the picnic table eating breakfast, I looked up and there was a Williamson's Sapsucker perched in front of me on a tree trunk. At last! I grabbed my binoculars and got a good look at an immature male. Lifer number 13.

Then came a drought of life birds. Unable to get a campsite in Rocky Mountain National Park, we moved just west of it to Shadow Mountain Lake, a bit above 8000 feet. I was hoping for Dusky and Hammond's Flycatchers, but our campsite bird in the lodgepole pines was Cordilleran. Here I finally got a clue: Just enjoy the ordinary campsite birds, I told myself, and stop fretting over the next lifer. The ordinary was exotic enough. I saw an adult male Rufous Hummingbird sitting on the perch of a feeder hanging from a motor home. I'd never seen a Rufous at rest before. The gaudiness of this bird through binoculars just knocked me out: the iridescent copper body, blazing orange throat, and what appeared to be a midnight blue or green wing.

By this time, Cathy's 14-year-old niece Allyson had joined us in camp, and we were getting rained on daily and needed a motel and a rodeo to cheer us up -- so we decided to drive north to Laramie, Wyoming by way of North Park, one of four broad, intermountain valleys in Colorado. We almost crashed into a cow moose en route -- the reintroduction of moose to Colorado in the early 1970s has been a big success (for moose and probably for auto body shops too).

North Park is all sage flats surrounded by snow-covered mountains, and its wide open spaces were free of the crowds we'd run into everywhere

else. Just south of the little town of Walden we saw a couple of adult Golden Eagles perched on power poles. With close views, we could really see their golden napes and relatively small heads, just as the field guides say. These birds were magnificent -- it was a privilege to see them. The Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, also near Walden, was a great find. Its small impoundments held all sorts of waterfowl -- lots of dabbling ducks, a few American Avocets with young, a vociferous Black-necked Stilt, maybe a Willet (I forgot to write that one down), and two more lifers: Eared Grebes with their outrageous yellow headgear in breeding plumage (looked like a Mardi Gras outfit to me) and Wilson's Phalaropes. I was in heaven hopping out of the truck every few hundred yards with my scope and my new binoculars. Cathy's niece asked politely, "Aunt Cathy, is it going to be like this all the time?" (Allyson was a great camper and cook -- and she made a fashion statement in moose pajamas -- but she was never convinced that every girl needs a life list.)

After Laramie, Allyson caught a flight home, and Cathy and I managed to snag a campsite in Moraine Park in Rocky Mountain National Park. In this campground we had the quietest people and noisiest birds of the trip: Clark's Nutcrackers, American Crows, Common Ravens, American Magpies and Steller's Jays. The mountains surrounding us were huge and rugged, but the "park" (valley) itself was pastoral and intimate, with the creek-sized Big Thompson River snaking through it and ponderosa pines in camp. On a long walk around the perimeter of the river's floodplain, we saw two more lifers: Townsend's Solitaire, the bird that looks most like its pictures in the field guides (including scaly youngsters), and Pygmy Nuthatch -- a whole hyperactive family in a single pine. Along the river in a willow bush, a Dusky Flycatcher look-alike tantalized me and then disappeared. It never vocalized. No ID. (And maybe it was just a Willow Flycatcher after all.) I never saw another bird I could quite make into either Dusky or Hammond's, but that didn't stop me from trying!

My two favorite places in Colorado were the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and Mesa Verde in the extreme southwest -- both arid and at about 8,000 feet. Their trees are Utah juniper and pinyon pine, with stands of low-growing Gambel's oak and shadbush in moister soils, and Douglas firs in shady canyons. At the Black Canyon, on a hike along the north rim where there were almost no people at all, I heard a gnatcatcher, pished, and got something else I really wanted: Virginia's Warbler. A glimpse of the bird's front end (white eye ring, gray elsewhere) and a quick glimpse of the back end (more gray but yellow undertail coverts), and I figured two halves added up to a whole life bird. Interestingly, I got good looks on the trail here of both Mountain and Black-capped Chickadees. And there was another

difficult Empidonax – a silent, fairly large bird that sat right in front of me in a pinyon pine and repeatedly dipped its tail, phoebelike, until I gave up and trudged off in the desert heat. The next morning while reading Sibley I realized what I'd seen: the only Empidonax tail-dipper, Gray Flycatcher! An accidental lifer but a lifer no less.

People go to Mesa Verde to see the famous cliff dwellings, but I thought the wildlife was just as good. A fire burned 23,000 acres in this national park last year, and it may have pushed some wildlife off the hills and into the campground, which firefighters saved, barely. (This year, one loop of the campground was reserved for a crew of Navajo firefighters removing brush from around the archaeological sites. They were interesting guys, fun to talk to when we'd all show up at the same time in the evening to line up for showers.)

We saw a mule deer doe and her twin fawns every day on our campground loop, a Blue Grouse that walked down the road shoulder within six feet of me, a turkey with four poults that strolled into the campsite next to ours (just delighting a little girl there), and, most amazing, a nest of four baby Cooper's Hawks about 12 feet up in a tangle of low Gambel's oak behind another nearby campsite. (Why here and not high up in a Douglas fir?) I was studying the babies very carefully through binoculars when I suddenly found myself looking into the scary red eye of an adult – then it buzzed me, calling “kek, kek, kek, kek!”

Our site was a tiny, cool clearing in the brush. I saw a Black-throated Gray Warbler feeding a fledgling just a couple of yards from our tent and a Hermit Thrush lurking in the shadows – but not a single robin. (It was our only camp in Colorado without a robin.) I also heard chickadees, probably Mountain, which we had seen on the Spruce Canyon Trail. Around the cliff dwellings we never saw birds, just throngs of people. But on the edge of the museum's hot, 150-car parking lot, Cathy sat on a shaded bench to rest while I wandered off, and there she carried on her tradition of seeing MY life birds while I miss them: Juniper Titmouse this time. “Well, I tried to find you, but I couldn't,” she said. “It just flew down next to me.” (I was off trying to turn a fat, fluffy, immature, very gray Western Scrub Jay into a Mexican Jay. Didn't work.)

The best of Mesa Verde was our last morning, when we walked the Knife Edge Trail at the base of the cliffs along the north rim of the mesa. We saw two great sights: dozens of Rufous Hummingbirds swarming through acres of Indian paintbrush in bloom and a couple of Peregrine Falcons, a parent and a begging youngster, flying and perching on the cliffs above us. A patch of whitewash below a large horizontal crack revealed the nest site – and on a smaller scale it seemed to me exactly like the cliff alcoves the Anasazi chose for

their dwellings 900 years ago. Returning from that walk I saw my last lifer of the trip, Green Towhee, scratching around in the campground. (My 23 life birds also included Pine Grosbeak and Black Swift in Ouray and Western Grebe near Eckert.) I missed a lot of easy birds and was lucky on a couple of hard ones.

Our 27<sup>th</sup> and last night on the road, we stopped in Tennessee's Cumberland Mountain State Park to camp one more time and savor the end. I was excited to see tulip poplar again, and white oak, and rain-slicked dogwood. I noticed that the campground was much birdier than any we'd stayed in out west. The evening chorus included some familiar birds we'd had with us in Colorado – robins, nuthatches, flickers – but also some distinctly eastern voices up close and clear: Carolina Wren, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Eastern Wood Pewee. Voices of home. And they just sounded great.

## Got an idea?

Do you have ideas for programs, special field trips, refreshments, or public service projects? Want to serve as a club officer in the future? CHBC needs your energy and ideas. Please contact Magnus. Don't be shy.

## Club officers

*President:* Magnus Persmark (933-2255)

*persmarknc@mindspring.com*

*Vice President (CH):* Judy Murray

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*Vice President (RDU):* Karen Bearden

*chickadeebirders@earthlink.net*

*Secretary & Refreshments chair:* Karen Piplani

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*Treasurer:* Ruth Roberson (489-4888) *ruth-*

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**<http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc>**

## Join the club – we want you!

Membership is \$15 per year for individuals or families, \$10 for students. (Multiply by the number of years you want.) The CHBC has friendly people and lots of benefits -- interesting speakers, weekly field trips, notice of upcoming bird counts, the newsletter, public service projects, and the club website. Please make your check payable to the Chapel Hill Bird Club and send it to treasurer Ruth Roberson, 3406 Ogburn Court, Durham, N.C. 27705.