

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

March, 2002

(Vol. XXX I, No. 3)

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

Next meeting – March 25

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

When: 7:15 p.m. for refreshments; 7:30 meeting begins.

Program: "NC Partners in Flight: Your Connection to the New World Tropics." Mark Johns, a wildlife biologist with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the N.C. coordinator for Partners in Flight, will help us learn more about temperate and tropical issues affecting migratory birds, the Partners in Flight Program in N.C., and what we can do to further bird conservation.

Saturday morning field trips

Trips leave every Sat. from the Glen Lennox shopping center parking lot promptly at 7:30 a.m. (north side Hwy. 54 just east of 15-501 Bypass in Chapel Hill). Back by noon. Call Doug Shadwick for details (942-0742). Trips are free. All are welcome.

Hot off the press, N.C. state parks birding guide

by Karen Bearden

I'm delighted to announce a new book, "Birding in North Carolina State Parks," produced by Audubon North Carolina, is now available. Using the same basic format as Wake Audubon's "A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle," the 164-page book describes 34 state parks. The 35 contributors and authors are park superintendents, park rangers, and birders, including a few CHBC members. There are also map and bird illustrations. Proceeds from the sale of "Birding in North Carolina State Parks" will benefit joint projects between Audubon North Carolina and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

"Birding in North Carolina State Parks" costs \$15, or \$18.25 by mail. I'll be selling the book at CHBC meetings. Or make a check payable to National Audubon Society-NC and mail it to me at: Karen Bearden, 1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh, N.C.

27612. For more information you can call me at 919-844-9050. Or email me: chickadeebirders@earthlink.net.

Thanks, renewers!

Thanks to all who continued your membership by renewing for one or more years. But if you have not renewed already, then you still have that 01-02 number on your mailing label. Please write a check to the Chapel Hill Bird Club for \$15 (one year – or multiply by the number of years you want) and send it to Ruth Roberson, 3406 Ogburn Ct., Durham, N.C. 27705.

Roundup: 2001 lists – lots of lists

Thanks to everyone who sent list totals. Interesting how many different ways we like to keep track of our birds! G.T.

World

3579 Derb Carter
1665 Alan Johnston
1537 Dan Kaplan
1089 Jeff Phippen
1008 Pat Coin
859 Josh Rose
801 Roy and Betty Lindholm
755 Kent Fiala
581 Will Cook
523 Steve Shultz
403 Ken Lundstrom

Africa

715 Alan Johnston

Europe

46 Ken Lundstrom

North America

914 Jeff Phippen
698 Derb Carter
448 Alan Johnston
400 Ken Lundstrom

ABA Area

707 Dan Kaplan
 661 Norm Budnitz
 635 Josh Rose
 631 Jeff Phippen
 606 Kent Fiala
 571 Will Cook
 534 Pat Coin
 532 Karen and Joe Bearden
 512 Judith Fortney
 485 Steve Shultz
 435 Erik Thomas
 405 Bruce Young
 303 Roy and Betty Lindholm

ABA Area, photographed

421 Josh Rose

USA (50 states)

684 Josh Rose

Contiguous 48 States

629 Jeff Phippen
 623 Josh Rose
 606 Kent Fiala

Alaska

160 Judith Fortney

Florida

262 Karen and Joe Bearden

Michigan

279 Jeff Phippen

North Carolina

405 Derb Carter
 381 Jeff Phippen
 371 Will Cook
 340 Kent Fiala
 340 Dan Kaplan
 317 Norm Budnitz
 295 Josh Rose
 294 Bruce Young
 251 Erik Thomas
 238 Karen and Joe Bearden
 220 Judith Fortney
 213 *Alan Johnston*

Triangle

261 Will Cook
 243 Jeff Phippen
 218 Dan Kaplan
 214 Bruce Young
 194 Josh Rose

Brunswick Co.

203 Jeff Phippen

Chatham Co.

229 Will Cook

192 Jeff Phippen
 167 Bruce Young
 156 Josh Rose

Dare Co.

276 Will Cook
 268 Jeff Phippen
 209 Josh Rose

Durham Co.

204 Will Cook
 197 Jeff Phippen
 167 Bruce Young
 157 Josh Rose

Granville Co.

155 Will Cook
 91 Josh Rose

Orange Co.

174 Jeff Phippen
 156 Bruce Young
 82 Josh Rose

Wake Co.

170 Will Cook
 133 Jeff Phippen
 79 Josh Rose

Falls Lake

172 Brian Bockhahn

Yard

130 Norm Budnitz
 107 Ginger Travis
 66 Karen and Joe Bearden
 58 Kent Fiala
 56 Erik Thomas
 50 Judith Fortney
 34 Roy and Betty Lindholm
 34 Josh Rose

Year – 2001

431 Jeff Phippen (ABA area)
 404 Shantanu Phukan (world)
 419 Steve Shultz
 303 Bruce Young

N.C. Year – 2001

273 Jeff Phippen
 252 Steve Shultz
 238 Bruce Young

Postscript to lists

Shantanu Phukan: The highlights of 2001 were: 1. The Mountain Trogon which finally showed itself to me as a vision in the Oaxacan cloud forest after clucking at me for over an hour from a dark oak tree; 2. the Montezuma Quail which pecked ever so timidly in the dried grass on an abandoned Arizona by-road on the very first of the year, and thus kick-

started it in the very best way; and 3. the lonely but well-fed Emperor Goose that foraged leisurely in the raw wind and rain of a Pacific winter storm at Bodega Bay, California, on the very last day of 2001. A year that begins with a covey of Montezuma Quail and is crowned with an Emperor Goose is not a bad one, even if the Swainson's Warbler still defies me.

Brian Bockhahn, Falls Lake ranger; More Falls Lake totals: Birds by Bike 135; Big Day 4/12/01 84; Butterflies 63; Dragonflies 52; Mammals 19; Herps (reptiles & amphibians) 37.

Steve Shultz: First bird was a Mourning Dove and last was the Calliope Hummingbird in Winston-Salem. The NC year list closed out at 252. I'm especially happy that my personal statistic of how the birding year went (ratio of birds seen during the year to the total number on my life list) was 80%. I figure any year that I get more than 75% was a good one.

Birding Belize (pt. 2)

by Harriet Sato

(In April 2001, Harriet spent 10 days birding in Belize. Part 1 described Crooked Tree Preserve and Lamanai.)

Our last stop, Chan Chich, has a more extensive property and a greater variety of birds and animals. But in comparison to the other two, the atmosphere was more formal and more commercialized. The dining room was reserved only for visitors. But the local guides were impressive with their skill in identifying birds and animals by sight and sound and their ability to imitate bird songs.

The outstanding bird for me was a King Vulture which was perched on a tree by the road. Previously I had only seen the vulture soaring in the sky far away. The guidebook describes them as having a harlequin head, a creamy white body and black wings. They are much bigger than our Turkey Vultures. One would not associate such spectacular good looks with a vulture.

Blue-crowned Motmots are robin-sized South American arboreal birds with long racket tails. They are beautiful with iridescent blue crown, green back and buffy breast and tail as long as the body. Perhaps because they were so common we became rather blasé about them, but we were greatly excited to see the pygmy version of the family, Tody Motmot. "Small is beautiful" was certainly true in this instance.

Oscellated Turkeys were everywhere on the grounds. As with most tropical birds, they were much more colorful, having iridescent blue, green and brown, than our drab Wild Turkeys.

One of the memorable events at Chan Chich was a no-show. One day, led by a local guide we bushwhacked our way through a thick brushy hill to a point where we could glimpse an Ornate Hawkeagle brooding on a nest, which it has done annually for the past 7 years. The birds had chosen the site well, for we could only see a portion of the

bird. I saw the tail end of the bird through the scope, and someone else saw the crest as the bird turned around in the nest. The nest was covered by leaves. We milled around for about half an hour, and our leader decided to move on. All left except one enterprising birder. Five minutes later she related to the rest of us envious birders that as soon as we left, the mate of the brooding bird flew in to relieve the latter. She (the birder) had a complete view of the magnificent hawkeagle with its ornate crest. Oh, well, win some, lose some.

Zeiss team's Ivory-billed search ends

(News release, forwarded by Rob Gluck)

Slidell, La., February 20, 2002 -- Zeiss Sports Optics, a leading manufacturer of high-quality sports optics, today announced that the 30-day search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in southeastern Louisiana ended on February 18, 2002 without a sighting of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Four of the six members of this international search team did hear a series of loud signal taps at 3:30 p.m. on January 27, the eleventh day of the search. They heard four double raps, separated by 20-30 seconds, followed by a single rap, which was followed by four consecutive raps. The fourth double rap and the subsequent raps were recorded onto digital audiotape using a parabolic microphone. This recording can be heard on the Zeiss Web site at <http://www.zeiss.com>.

The searchers marked their location with global positioning system units (GPS units) when they heard the sound but were unable to move closer because of high water in the area. They chose not to share news of this recording at the time, convinced that they could eventually find the bird making these sounds. After days of scouring this area, they were never able to locate the source of the sound.

"The goal of this search was to find the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and photograph it. We did not see an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, but we found potential evidence of its presence in the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Pearl River Wildlife Management Area," said the Zeiss search team in a joint statement.

Remarkably, the search team later learned that at 10:30 on the same morning they obtained their recording, a team from Cornell University also heard one double rap 1.3 km from the recording site. While searching for the source of the sound, the Cornell team saw one Pileated Woodpecker and one unidentified large woodpecker involved in a chase high in the trees, then flying off.

"Having heard one clear example of this unusual double-rap ourselves, earlier that same day and in an area not too distant from where the Zeiss team was searching, we remain quite intrigued to discover its source," said Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "Neither we nor the Zeiss team ever heard Pileated Woodpeckers giving this display during many days

in the field, yet Pileateds were the only large woodpeckers we could locate near where we'd heard these double-raps. We cannot rule out that these could have been displays by Pileateds, but if they were, it would be strange that we heard the sounds only on that particular day, in that particular place."

After hearing the search team's recording, Dr. Van Remsen, an ornithologist at Louisiana State University and curator of ornithology at its Museum of Natural Science, said, "Having listened to Pileated drumming many times, Martjan's recording sent a chill down my spine, literally. For the last 12 years, I have been around Pileated Woodpeckers nearly daily where I live, but I have never heard them make a sound that came close to this in terms of both power and rhythm. I would have given almost anything to have seen what was making that sound. I agree with the search team, however, in regarding it as insufficient proof of the bird's existence."

Throughout the search, the Zeiss team discovered concentrations of tree bark scaling, the primary method used by Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in foraging for food (but also used to a lesser extent by Pileateds). On January 29, two days after the team made the recording, one team member heard a double rap, and then two team members heard several loud raps, similar to the sounds previously recorded. Team members found concentrations of extensive bark scaling, plus several large, fresh cavity starts and large, older cavities in the area where the sounds were recorded. (Photos of these trees can be seen on the Zeiss Web site.)

The search team covered thousands of acres in both the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area and the adjacent Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge to the north. They covered the territory on foot and by boat, equipped with Zeiss binoculars, digital video cameras, GPS units and waterproof field books to record bird and habitat data for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Although the six Zeiss searchers have ended their expedition, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Acoustic Recording Units (ARUs) will remain in the field until mid-March when Dr. John Fitzpatrick and his team take them back to Cornell for analysis. Dr. Fitzpatrick anticipates releasing Cornell's findings sometime in April.

"We are most appreciative of the searchers' dedication to this project. They have done a great job covering what turned out to be very challenging terrain," said Anthony R. Cataldo, vice president and general manager, Zeiss Sports Optics North America. "We now look forward to hearing of Cornell's findings once Dr. Fitzpatrick and his team listen to their recordings, and we will determine what our next steps are at that time."

About the search: This project was possible only through the extensive cooperation between Zeiss Sports Optics, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Nature Conservancy, U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Louisiana State University, and Cornell University.

The six members of the Zeiss search team include: Rick Knight, Martjan Lammertink, David Luneau, Peter McBride, Alison Styring and Alan Wormington. For additional information on the searchers or to access the search team's extensive report, see photos of bark scaling, hear the sound recording and read each searcher's individual opinion of the expedition and possible existence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, visit the Zeiss Web site at <http://www.zeiss.com>.

Birdhouse nesters -- 6 "most wanted"

by Charlotte Goedsche, to Carolinabirds

... Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a running study in which anyone who has birdboxes can participate (the annual fee is \$12 or \$15, depending on whether you belong to the Lab). If you sign up for The Birdhouse Network you'll get lots of information on boxes, predator guards, and descriptions of the nesting behavior of many different species of birds who will nest in boxes. The Lab recently issued their annual report and listed 6 species for which they have received very little information from participants, a.k.a their six "Most Wanted" species. Four of those species nest in the Southeast: Purple Martin, American Kestrel, Prothonotary Warbler, and Great Crested Flycatcher. We immediately went to the lumberyard, and now have an American Kestrel box and a Great Crested Flycatcher box, built according to the directions given by Cornell. Cynthia's and my monitoring of our first bluebird box has given us much joy and taught us a lot about the birds' behavior. It also makes us feel good to know that we are contributing to science when we send Cornell the results of each year's nestings. Now we're looking forward to attracting another bluebird family and maybe even Kestrels and GC Flycatchers. We made sure we're putting the boxes where the birds will look for them (Cornell supplies that info) and where they will be accessible for us to monitor. For more info on The Birdhouse Network: www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse.

Morning run and a raven

by Brian Bockhahn, to Carolinabirds

(March 1) My morning run to the top of Occoneechee Mountain in Orange County, N.C. yielded a Common Raven calling and perched on the tower on the summit. Not too unimaginable, but I think it's the park's first "official" record. Hanging Rock State Park had a raven nest a few years back...wouldn't it be nice if this one stuck around! (Is this also a first for the Triangle? G.T.)