

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

April 2002

(Vol. XXXI, No. 4)

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

Next meeting – April 22

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: “A Comparison of Singing Behavior in Male and Female Cardinals at Mason Farm” by Joanna Vondrasek, fifth-year graduate student working with Haven Wiley. Northern Cardinals are an unusual species in that both sexes sing from conspicuous perches, where they give both solo songs and countersing with mates or prospective mates. Do male and female cardinals sing under similar circumstances; do their songs serve similar functions? Vondrasek will report what she found in her field research at Mason Farm Biological Reserve.

Potluck with elections, May 20

Mark your calendars for the second annual CHBC potluck picnic (and last meeting before the summer break), again to be held at Jordan Lake’s Ebenezer Church State Recreation Area. The date is May 20 to avoid conflicting with Memorial Day weekend. We’ll have the election of next year’s officers during dinner. Last year the food was out of sight, and the lake was beautiful at sunset. Don’t miss this one! Directions to Ebenezer: From Chapel Hill, go south on Farrington Rd. (SR 1008), which changes name to Beaver Creek Rd. south of Hwy. 64. Cross U.S. 64. Ebenezer is 2.3 miles south of 64 (there’s a sign). There are several picnic areas – ours is at the end of the main road at the point. Admission is free.

Saturday field trips – just two more!

April 20: Last local field before spring bird counts start. Meet at Glen Lennox shopping center parking lot; trip departs 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). Trip is free. All are welcome.

April 27: Day trip to Sunset Beach for shorebirds. Call Doug (942-0742). If you want to go down a day

or two before, then plan to meet Doug Saturday at 7 a.m. in the Sunset Beach parking lot at the end of the causeway.

After these two trips, regular Saturday morning field trips will resume next fall.

Spring counts need you!

Durham, 28 April (Sun.), Contact Mike Schultz, 490-6761 or mschultz@duke.edu

Jordan Lake, 5 May (Sun.), Contact Carol Williamson, 383-2364 or carolw@sandler-recht.com

Raleigh, 11 May (Sat.), Contact John Gerwin, 715-2600 or ncs1416@mindspring.com

Chapel Hill, 12 May (Sun.), Contact Will Cook, 660-7423, cwcook@duke.edu

Changes to the CHBC checklist

by Will Cook

Every year around February, the slowest birding time of the year, I try to update the local bird sightings database with reports that have appeared on Carolinabirds and in the Briefs for the Files section of The Chat. Then, after a few years of sightings have accumulated, I re-evaluate the frequency designations on the text version of the checklist, based on these new sightings, plus the results of the local bird counts. The graphical version of the checklist, with bars of varying width corresponding to the expected frequency of a given species in a given week, is a lot more tricky to update. Since I created the original version in 1996 I hadn’t done an update, apart from modifying the format in 1999 to fit on letter-sized paper.

Where possible, the frequency designations are based on numbers instead of guesswork. For example, if a species has been reported only 3 times in a given week over the years included in the database (1975-now), it’s listed as “occasional,” but 5 times moves it up to “uncommon,” and 1 time makes it “rare.” Bird counts afford even more precision – the exact guidelines for using averaged bird count data are listed at the end of the checklist.

Hundreds of minor changes have been made to the original designations, based on the new information. We have a much better feel for what to expect in the third week in September thanks to the new Chatham County Fall Migration Count. For some species, those with rapid changes in frequency lately, I've more heavily weighted the more recent counts. For example, Northern Bobwhites have been seriously declining and Wild Turkeys have been increasing, so their designations are based on averages of just the last 10 years of counts.

Please take a look at the new checklist (the last sheet of this newsletter) and let me know if you have any suggestions for improving it. If you'd like to compare, both the old and new versions are available on the CHBC web site:

<http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc/> . Hope you all find it useful!

Wildathon for Mason Farm and Audubon coastal sanctuaries needs our support!

by Ginger Travis

The Wildathon is a local annual fund-raiser organized by New Hope Audubon and held in May, with proceeds split equally between our beloved Mason Farm and the state Audubon Society's 22 coastal sanctuaries for birds badly in need in undisturbed nesting places – birds like skimmers, terns, plovers, ibises and more. Yes, it's fun to participate on a Wildathon team, running around collecting bird sightings (or counting plants, herps, leps, odonates or whatever). But if you're reading this and don't plan to participate and haven't been asked to give, well, I'm asking you. This is a great cause, and it's raised about \$8,000 in each of the last two years because of strong enthusiasm and good leadership. To add your bit, make out a check to New Hope Audubon Society (and feel great about what it will accomplish); send it to Marsha Stephens, 118 Crows Creek Road, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312. Need more info? Call Marsha: 942-7205.

Triangle and state park bird guides on sale near you

by Karen Bearden

"A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle" (\$11 retail, \$14 by mail) and "Birding in North Carolina State Parks" (\$15 retail, \$18.25 by mail) are available at CHBC and Audubon chapter meetings. They're also for sale in the following locations: Outdoor Bird Co., Wildbird Center, Stevens Nature Center at Hemlock Bluffs, Great Outdoor Provision Co., Regulator Bookshop, McIntyre's Fine Books, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, N.C. Botanical Garden, Umstead State Park, Weaver Street Market, The Trail Shop and Townsend and Bertram Co. To order by mail, call Karen Bearden at 844-9050 or email her: chickadeebirders@earthlink.net.

Don't let the next be your last!

by Ginger Travis, editor

Your last newsletter – if you still haven't renewed your membership – will come to you in May. How do you know if your membership is past due? The top right corner of your mailing label will say 01-02. Hate to lose you! Easy to renew. Membership is \$15 per year for individuals and families, except students, who pay \$10. For any procrastinators reading this message, renewing for several years is highly recommended! Then you don't have to be harangued annually. Just multiply \$15 by the number of years you want. Make your check out to the **Chapel Hill Bird Club**. Send it to **Ruth Roberson, 3406 Ogburn Ct., Durham, N.C. 27705**. Whew! That was easy, wasn't it.

CHBC officers, 2001-2002

President: Magnus Persmark (933-2255)

persmarknc@mindspring.com

Vice President (CH): Judy Murray (942-2985)

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Secretary & Refreshments Chair: Karen Piplani

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Treasurer: Ruth Roberson (489-4888) 3406 Ogburn

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Field Trip Chair: Doug Shadwick (942-0479)

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List Manager/Triangle Checklist Compiler: Will

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Haiku for a Black-and-white Warbler, newly arrived in spring

by Russ Palmeri (Asheville) to Carolinabirds

A black-masked warbler
brought spring to the mountain
on a squeaky wheelbarrow.

Coming next month . . .

Judith Fortney and Patsy Bailey bird Thailand; Josh Rose directs birders to his road-food hotspots. (Eat early, eat often, eat a lot!)