

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

May 2002

(Vol. XXXI, No. 5)

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

Next meeting – May 20 potluck picnic, Jordan Lake

Monday, May 20, 6:30 p.m., Ebenezer Church State Rec. Area, Jordan Lake (free admission).

Your family members, friends and significant others are welcome – bring them along. Also bring a dish to share with others and your own plate, utensils and beverage. Let's see how much we can recycle and how little trash we can leave behind!

Please note that the date and time of this meeting are slightly different from usual to avoid conflicting with Memorial Day weekend.

We'll have the election of next year's officers during dinner. We'll also have a couple of members' kayaks on the beach for you to try. Great birding platforms!

Directions to Ebenezer: From Chapel Hill, go south on SR 1008 (known as Mt. Carmel Church Rd., later Farrington Rd., and finally Beaver Creek Rd.) Ebenezer is on SR 1008 2.3 miles south of U.S. Hwy. 64. It is well-marked. There are a couple of picnic areas – for ours, just go straight to the end of the main road to the point. Admission is free.

For a helpful map of Jordan Lake, see Will Cook's website: www.duke.edu/~cwcook. Click on "Triangle Birder's Guide" and then on "Jordan Lake and Chatham County."

May 20 election slate

Officers will serve from May 2002 to May 2003.

Here's what your CHBC officers do: the *president* presides at meetings and makes sure club business is taken care of; the two *vice presidents* arrange all of the speakers for the eight monthly meetings; the *secretary* keeps the minutes as prescribed by our by-laws; and the *treasurer* collects dues, pays our bills (monthly meeting space at the church, copying and postage for the newsletter, and incidental expenses) and maintains an account of our funds.

Officers frequently do whatever else needs to be done; the secretary organized the refreshments for meetings this year. And some important jobs are done by volunteers: organizing the regular Saturday morning field trips and maintaining the club webpage are two examples.

If you would like to volunteer your time and energy, please let any officer know of your interest. There are new activities the club could try if someone wanted to organize them. Backup field trip leaders are needed. New officers may be needed in 2003 and subsequent years. Don't be shy!

The 2002-2003 slate of officers:

President: Joe Bearden

Vice president (Chapel Hill): Judy Murray

Vice president (RDU): Karen Bearden

Secretary: Karen Piplani

Treasurer: Ruth Roberson

All except Joe Bearden are running for reelection. **Magnus Persmark**, our current president, is stepping down after three terms. Many thanks to you, Magnus! Joe Bearden, v-p Karen's husband, is a very active member and volunteer.

Summer break

We won't meet in June, July and August. Our first fall meeting will be on **Monday, Sept. 23**. Write up your summer birding adventures if you'd like to share them in the September issue of the Bulletin. Please send your stories by Sept. 2 to Ginger Travis, editor. (See my address, last page.)

Chatham Co. mini breeding bird survey needs counters for two routes

Marsha Stephens, coordinator for the Chatham Co. MBBS, has two 9.5-mile routes, each needing a counter. The count can be performed anytime between mid-May and the end of June. To learn more about the MBBS, which originated with an idea by Haven Wiley, see www.unc.edu/~rhwiley/mbbs. If you are interested in taking one of the Chatham routes, please call Marsha: 942-7205.

Warbling Vireos, Dickcissel return

Shantanu Phukan reported to Carolinabirds on April 22 that the Warbling Vireos are back, apparently to nest again for the third straight year in the maple tree outside of Mr. and Mrs. Snipes's house at Anilorac Farm on Dairyland Rd. On April 29 Shantanu reported seeing a female Dickcissel at Anilorac Farm. Last year a pair of Dickcissels fledged young there. No male reported yet.

Breeding Scissor-tailed Flycatchers return to farm near Monroe, N.C.

A pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers has nested the past two years on an electrical transmission tower on a farm near the state line. The pair recently arrived for the third year. The flycatcher hosts are Anne and Blayne Olsen, who welcome visitors. Their email follows. NOTE: No nest as of May 9, and sightings are decreasing. Email before going.

“We just spent the last hour watching the S-T investigate nesting sites in the tower. There appear to be several nest starts (we can see wisps of wool). We watched the female fly to several ledges in the tower and back into the empty corner, stay just a minute and then try another one. They spend time in the Chinaberry tree and on the ground under it which is where there are little clumps of wool from the sheep rubbing on the trees. I think the tower will be used again this year, so the signs "FLYCATCHER" are at the road and the driveway, and Friendly Ridge Farm is open for visitors .

DIRECTIONS

From Charlotte take US 74 East. From I 85 get off at Concord and take 601 South. Exit 74 at 200 South; this is also where 601 will come in from Concord. This exit is where Dale Jarrett Ford is located. Head south through Monroe and out the other side. You will be on Skyway Drive when you get off 74 and this will turn into Hayne St., and as you go out the other side of Monroe you will be on 207 South. 207 South will make a right turn at a blinking light. This is Wolf Pond Road. Follow 207 South past Macedonia Church Rd coming in from the left. Then Buford Short Cut will come in from the right. The next road will be Joe Collins road on the right. Just after Joe Collins Road as you go up a slight rise you will see high tension lines crossing the highway . The FLYCATCHER sign will be on a telephone pole on the left under the high tension lines. Turn left here on the paved unmarked drive, go to the end of the paving, down the hill, cross the little creek and turn right on to the farm. There will be another FLYCATCHER sign and the house number 4429 at the beginning of the drive. The Flycatchers are nesting in the tower just in front of you, but please continue on the drive to the parking area just past the little woods on the right, which is a cemetery. Park on the right in the mowed field. The best viewing area is at the gate where you will disturb the nesting bluebird but not the S-T. *Blayne & Anne Olsen*, bolsen@trellis.net aolsen@wingate.edu

Birding Thailand's high mountain

by Judith Fortney and Patsy Bailey

At 2,565 meters (8,336 feet), Doi Inthanon is Thailand's highest mountain. Typifying modern Thailand, its peak is topped with a Buddhist stupa, holding the remains of the last ruler of Chiang Mai, and a radar station that tourists are asked not to photograph. Doi Inthanon National Park is home to about 250 birds and is the winter stopping point or

passageway for another 100 migrants. After attending a professional meeting in Bangkok, three of us hired a guide and spent five days of birding in the park. Although all three of us had visited Asia before, it was everyone's first time birding in Thailand.

Birding in Asia means whole families of birds never before encountered – barbets, babblers, bee-eaters, river-chats, crakes, sunbirds and more. And colors that make even a Painted Bunting look dowdy. First we had to learn the common birds – the Pied and Grey Bushchats, the Magpie Robin, and the bulbuls – Red-whiskered (now established in Miami, Fla.), Black-crested and Black-headed at the lower altitudes, and Mountain, Sooty-headed and Flavescent at the higher ones. Then we had to learn the common calls so we could concentrate on the less common ones. We learned to shut out the incessant calls of the barbets – Great, Blue-throated and Golden-throated – depending on the altitude. Most calls we didn't learn, as it wasn't our guide's forte. But an oriole-like call turned out to be just that, a Slender-billed Oriole, a spectacular slender yellow bird.

We started at the top of the mountain the first day and worked our way down. One doesn't think of Thailand as cold, but at the summit (and at night) we wore fleeces, down jackets and thick socks. Near the top of the mountain is a sphagnum moss bog with trees covered in epiphytes, including lots of blooming orchids. It's hard to imagine the geology that causes this phenomenon, but it results in a diverse avifauna. Our first coup was a pair of Eurasian Woodcocks. Despite their status of "winter visitor," they were displaying – leaping in the air with tails fanned, and booming. They were deep in the undergrowth and not easy to see. Then we were excited by a Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, followed by an Eye-browed Thrush, but these turned out to be rather common, and we saw flocks of them. (The English phoneme "th" is hard for Thais to get their tongues around, so it is perhaps unfortunate that there are 17 species of thrush and another 9 laughingthrushes.) We were delighted by the chubby little Snowy-browed Flycatcher scurrying on the forest floor and not at all shy – but a flycatcher whose preferred habitat is the ground? And we were thrilled to see numerous Green-tailed Sunbirds, an endemic race of the species that is completely confined to the summits of these mountains.

There were quite a few birders at this marsh and several photographers with enormous lenses. Except for us, all were Thai, which bodes well for bird conservation in Thailand. One photographer (Suppalak Klabdee) shared his pictures with us, and they are fabulous. We met another photographer (Chitapong Kuawong) who had published a book of excellent photos. We later recognized his face on the back of his book in the bookstore, but it is, unfortunately, only available in Thai.

Like all good guides ours knew the reliable places and when to visit them! Like clockwork at 5 p.m. the Black-tailed Crane appeared out of a marsh at the Visitors' Center. The Collared Falconet showed up in a tree by the Mae Klang River, and the Mountain Imperial Pigeon sat on his usual snag. Many highly sought-after birds we failed to see, but we did get a good look at the rare Giant Nuthatch (about the size of an American Robin), and a bird that is new to the park – the Fire-capped Tit.

One of our favorite birds was a White-crowned Water-Redstart (the name in Thayers software) or River Chat in the two Birds of Thailand books we had. This marvelous bird has a dark slaty grey back, wings and hood; bright cinnamon-colored belly, rump and tail; and a bright white crown. Dipper-like, it sits on a rock near a waterfall, constantly cocking and fanning its tail, and making forays into the rushing water to catch insects before returning to a rock. Sharing the river rocks with the River Chat was a Plumbeous Redstart and a large sapphire blue bird, a Blue Whistling Thrush. We could have watched for hours.

As in any 2,500-meter change in altitude, the variation in habitat was impressive: from rice paddies and bamboo brakes at sea level to dry dipterocarp forests, pine forests, Karen rice terraces and the Highland Agricultural Project, where local villagers are planting Gerbera Daisies and cold weather fruits instead of opium poppies. Higher up were broadleaved deciduous forests and flowering rhododendron. In addition to birds and orchids, the butterflies distracted us on more than one occasion.

We can't conclude without referring to Mr. Daeng's Shop, a place where birders hang out and exchange the day's experiences and digital photographs. Mr. Daeng – himself an excellent birder – provides great food (reduced spices if you wish) and a nice campground with the best toilets of the duration. Accommodations in the park are very limited, so camping may be the best way to go.

All too soon we had to return to Chiang Mai for the flight back to Bangkok, birding along the way (Little Grebes and Lesser Coucal among others). We were at least partly happy to go. Our accommodations can most positively be described as simple – a straw hut with no electricity or hot water and the availability of cold water being only sporadic. But we adjusted to going to bed at dark and closing the soap dish to keep mice from consuming it.

We saw about 105 species of birds, most of them new to all of us. For a field guide we recommend Boonsong, Lekagul and Philip D. Round, *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand* (published by Saha Karn Bhaet Co., Ltd) and readily available in Thailand at about US\$20. We found the much more expensive *A Field Guide to the Birds of Thailand and South-East Asia* by Craig Robson (published by Asia Books, New Holland Publishers, UK) less satisfactory because it lacks maps and

contains many birds that are not present in Thailand. The cost for the four nights, all food, guide, car and driver, and airfare from Bangkok was \$550 each.

Eat early, eat often, eat a lot! Where to forage, Triangle birders.

by Joshua Stuart Rose

Some birders are all business. When they go on a birding trip, they pack a cooler full of food and drinks so they won't lose time anywhere along the way except occasionally to use a bathroom or put gas in the car. They eat and drink with one hand while aiming binoculars or a spotting scope with the other. A little sand in the sandwich, the coffee getting cold, a few chips lost in a gust of wind are small prices to pay for those extra minutes during which a staggering rarity might suddenly show up and just as suddenly vanish.

I'm not one of those birders.

Sure, birding is all about the birds. At least mostly. And I've certainly eaten my fair share of home-packed sandwiches and leftovers, fast-food drive-thru, and cellophane-packaged food imitations from gas station convenience stores, all in the name of spending as much time as possible with the birds. But birding also takes us to an ever-expanding frontier of new places, towns we've never visited before and may never again. Besides, think about it: how many really exciting birds have you ever seen between noon and 1 PM?

Unfortunately, not all birding hotspots can be Bosque del Apache NWR, with the Owl Bar and Grill selling its renowned green chile cheeseburgers just outside the refuge. And not all rarities are as accommodating as Shrimpy, the Kelp Gull in Seagates, Maryland, who has spent several years wintering within sight of the amazing cream of crab soup of the Sea Breeze restaurant. But with a little sense of adventure, I've managed to ferret out some great birding/eating combinations right here in the Triangle.

Many of Durham's most exciting birding and nature spots – the Butner Gamelands, Knap of Reeds Creek, Penny's Bend, Willie Duke's Bluff, impoundments of the Little and Flat rivers – lie along the Old Oxford Highway. Along this highway itself, there are no places to eat. However, a common route to and from Old Oxford is via Roxboro Road, and on that road just north of I-85 sits **Mi Pequeno Honduras**. It isn't fine dining. Often my friends and I are the only nonLatinos in the place when we go there, and the staff does not speak much English. But if you yearn for Central American snacks like plantains, yuca, chicharrones, and pupusas, this is the place to visit.

On the far side of Falls Lake from the Oxford and Butner neighborhoods is Rolling View State Recreation Area, perhaps the best place on the lake for scanning open water for loons, grebes, and other waterbirds. Standing on the exposed shoreline in the cold winter breeze can sure work up an appetite,

though, and appealing options are few and far between in east Durham. Right on N.C. 98, about ten miles west of the turnoff for Rolling View, is the intersection with Miami Boulevard. And on the northeast corner of this intersection, back in a large strip-mall, is **Taqueria mi Pueblo**, the single most authentic Mexican restaurant I've found in the Triangle. Now, authenticity is not good in all ways; for example, not one thing on the menu is vegetarian, not even the beans. And the language-and-cultural barrier here is even more pronounced than at Mi Pequeño Honduras; you have to at least be able to count in Spanish, because they give you a numbered ticket when you order, and call the numbers out in Spanish when the food is ready. But their Burrito al Pastor is worth a few hours' studying a foreign language!

The Jordan Lake vicinity is especially devoid of options. Birders in this area who haven't packed a lunch often are forced to drive west to Pittsboro, or miles north to the U.S. 54 strip malls. I usually suffered with whatever I could find in the nearest gas stations. Then, one day, I noticed that a grill called the **R&T** had opened up behind the Exxon station at U.S. 64 and Farrington Road. With low expectations, I ordered a double cheeseburger with everything; it came out with hand-crafted discs of meat instead of the usual frozen factory-formed patties, with big slabs of tomato and onion, and with loads of condiments including chili con carne and cole slaw. I've tried a lot of burgers in North Carolina, from Durham's famed Wimpy's to the grill at the Alligator River Marina that boasts on a full-size highway billboard of having world-famous cheeseburgers, but so far the R&T's beats them all. The fact that they serve tater tots gets them extra points in my book too. And they open at 6 AM, early enough for birders to grab a biscuit before sunrise in the winter. Their only weak point is that they close at 2 PM, so you have to get there promptly for lunch.

The last time I birded Horton's Pond we returned to the car too late to reach the R&T and so hungry that even their massive, heavy burgers might not have filled us. Fortunately, I had another idea. On Jones Ferry Road in Carrboro, just inside the Hwy. 54 Bypass, is the unassuming-looking storefront of **Chilango's**. It is a buffet of Mexican food. It isn't the usual fixed-price all-you-can-eat buffet; they charge by the pound. But the food is far, far better than any other buffet of this kind I've ever tried. Be careful; if your eyes are bigger than your stomach, you could end up spending a great deal of money as well as getting so full that birding (or even breathing) after lunch becomes painful. The dark woody interior is festooned with lights and speakers hanging from the ceiling, as they host Latin dance nights there regularly with lessons beforehand.

Sadly, I recently lost one of my favorite birding-eating combinations. Fortunately, the birding side is still intact: Occaneechee Mountain in Hillsborough, which actually is never that good for

birds specifically but has certain wildflowers, butterflies, and dragonflies that you'd have to drive two hours or more to find otherwise. But the Mayflower, part of a chain of Carolina seafood restaurants, has apparently closed its Hillsborough branch that was only a few miles from the base of the mountain. I'll have to find another place out there; perhaps **Casa Ibarra**, one of the few Mexican places in the Triangle that I haven't tried yet, or **Tupelo's** upscale Cajun/Creole food.

Since I live in the Triangle, my experience in the rest of the state is limited. However, I have made some discoveries worth mentioning. One was on the Outer Banks, where many of the restaurants are closed in the winter, and virtually none serve breakfast. Most birders settle for 7-11 or McDonald's and wait until lunchtime for real food. But a few months ago, during the Kitty Hawk CBC, I discovered the **Grits Grill** in Nags Head. They apparently are no longer open 24 hours, now opening at 6 AM, so participants in pelagic trips are probably out of luck. However, in the winter 6 AM is plenty early enough to eat something and still be out birding by sunrise. As the restaurant's name implies, grits are probably the best option, especially with cheese.

A few days after the 2001 Kitty Hawk CBC was the Alligator River NWR CBC. There are no actual restaurants anywhere near Alligator River, so normally you'd have to bring food out there or drive to Manteo, a 15-minute trip. However, during the Wings Over Water birding festival in November, I had noticed a grill – shades of the R&T – in the back of a gas station called **White's** in the town of Mann's Harbor, right on the edge of the refuge. I tried their barbeque platter; it was possibly the best I've had in the state, with a slight mustard edge to it, and almost made up for my not seeing the Rough-legged Hawk (not for missing the Fork-tailed Flycatcher, though; no food is that good!). During the CBC, I returned, confirmed that they were open for breakfast, and got a chicken, egg, and cheese biscuit sandwich. Chicken and biscuit were both surprisingly light and fluffy, probably unhealthy as all heck, and tasted fantastic. And the barbecue for lunch was almost as good the second time as it was the first (and the second time I saw the Rough-leg too!).

Many Triangle birders head to Weymouth Woods State Park and other destinations in the Sandhills to seek Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and other specialties. Just a few miles from Weymouth Woods is another North Carolina rarity, a good Thai restaurant! **Thai Orchid** is probably better than the Thai places I've tried in the Triangle, and a good way to recharge after a hot, sandy day.

Lake Waccamaw is a classic under-birded location. The largest of the Carolina bays, it hosts wintering waterfowl and migrating passerines in the right seasons, and a few patches of Venus' Flytrap and other carnivorous plants, huge old Bald Cypress trees, American Alligators, endemic species of fish, snails, and mussels, and other attractions. And along

the lakeshore northwest of Lake Waccamaw State Park is **Dale's**, a classic Carolina seafood shack. On my one visit there, not only did they have huge mounds of fried shrimp inside, but also huge mounds of newly emerged mayflies outside on every wall and tree!

I'm sure there are many more places out there waiting to be discovered. I have utterly failed, for example, to find any place worth eating anywhere near Hemlock Bluffs in Cary in two trips there. I can't name any food worth stopping for in the popular chain of lakes in southern Wake County: Crabtree-Wheeler-West-1010-Greenview and the rest. And my visits to the Outer Banks, Fort Fisher, the Blue Ridge Parkway (the NC part at least), and other state hotspots have all been much more successful for yielding birds and nature than food. But maybe somebody reading this knows places that I don't. If so, you all know how to reach me...

Write Josh Rose at 918 Ninth St., Durham, N.C. 27705 or email jsr6@duke.edu.

Heading west

by Liz Pullman

On April 3, Audrey Booth and I began a trek through Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, planning for mostly coastal birding. A genuine fallout at Dauphin Island, Alabama, yielded two days of excellent birding including 16 species of warblers. Stop # 39 on the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail (ACBT) – the Shell Mounds – was THE place. It consists of four acres of very large live oaks and thickets interlaced with trails. Dauphin Island has six of the ACBT sites (more up-to-date than the Texas Trail, and a booklet is available through the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau at their website: www.gulfshores.com). After Alabama we headed west on I-10, whipping across a tiny slice of Mississippi and past New Orleans. Our destination was Lafayette for a look at the Atchafalaya River Basin and the Cameron Prairie NWR below Lake Charles (and, incidentally, Prejeans Cajun Restaurant for crawdads and Corona Light). Things were rather tame birdwise although we enjoyed the racks of nesting egrets at Avery Island. Bands of thunderstorms and heavy rain wiped out the trip to Cameron so...on to Winnie, Texas. From this central point, High Island, Bolivar Peninsula, Anahuac NWR, and Galveston Island are easy day trips. High Island did not produce a famous *fallout* but Bolivar was excellent until the rain pools dried up - good shorebirds, waders and waterfowl in drive-up situations. The most memorable: Fulvous Whistling Ducks.

After Houston we headed on south after a mid-day stop at the Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge (no chickens but great plants) and settled at Rockport/Fulton – an area apparently declared off limits to all birds. We did discover the Port Aransas Birding Center, which is a wastewater treatment plant set up to be birder-friendly. The pathways are

lined with native plants (all labeled), bird murals are painted on the sides of the holding tanks, and a boardwalk and viewing platform have been built for scoping the freshwater ponds. It is well worth a stop, if only to admire the ingenuity of the Texans.

Not exactly racking up a list here, we decided to head due west to Kingsville and then beyond, almost to Uvalde before turning north to Kerrville. Very, very dry conditions made us seek our birds in damp spots (dwindling creeks and rivers) and cemeteries (many trees and available water). A stopover in Austin provided entertainment – scoping the settling ponds at Hornsby Bend and an unsatisfactory trip to Travis Sanctuary for Golden-cheeks.

Starting back east, we finally got a look at Cameron Prairie NWR with plentiful Purple Gallinules and the elusive (for us) Yellow-crowned Night Heron. We got home April 25th. In all, we logged 196 species with about a week off from birding for family visits, and we did it without dipping down into the Lower Rio Grande Valley (been there, done that).

A few thoughts on Texas birding:

YOU KNOW YOU ARE BIRDING IN TEXAS IF.....

.....you spot four wirebirds and three are Mockingbirds and one a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

.....on day one there are migrants in the trees on High Island and on day two the only birds are over in the rookery.

.....you are scolded at the beginning of a trail not by wrens but by Great Kiskadees.

....applause at a marsh is answered by the stone-clicking calls of Yellow Rails.

....the blob on the top of the utility pole is a Crested Caracara.

.....you find yourself visiting every cemetery because that's where birds hang out in a drought (water faucets and shade).

....White-tailed Hawks no longer merit screeching to a halt after the third sighting.

.... and rest stops rarely have restrooms!

Local books benefit birds

The profits from "A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle" (\$11 retail, \$14 by mail) go to local environmental projects, including nestboxes, Purple Martin houses, and the restoration of a wildlife meadow at Anderson Point Park in Wake County. Profits from "Birding in North Carolina State Parks" (\$15 retail, \$18.25 by mail) go to joint projects of Audubon and the N.C. Div. of Parks and Recreation, which will include hiring a seasonal warden for the Audubon colonial waterbirds breeding sanctuary at Lea Island and setting up a hawk watch at Bullhead Mountain in Alleghany County. Look for both books at lots of area stores. To order by mail, call Karen Bearden at 844-9050 or email her:

chickadeebirders@earthlink.net.

CHBC field trip to Sunset Beach and Green Swamp on April 27

by Magnus Persmark

"You mean three o'clock in the afternoon, right?" my daughter asked incredulously. Nope! At that time, minus twelve hours, Doug Shadwick, our leader, was in the driveway. A semi-comatose drive brought us to the Sunset Beach parking lot by 7 a.m., where a sizeable CHBC contingent, the wiser of whom had spent the night locally, met up. The group included not just Triangle locals but visitors as well. Karen Piplani's daughter Mira From Washington, D.C. and Jill Froning's friend Craig were brave enough to venture afield for a full day with a bunch of birders. Eager to kick up some sparrows, we headed into the marsh as a light drizzle drifted in. The marsh sparrows put on a lively show and treated us to outstanding views and associated soundtracks. Savannah Sparrows scuttled among the reeds, and Seaside Sparrows popped up and down. Most exciting, though, was the good showing of both species of Sharp-tailed Sparrow, with Nelson's outnumbering Saltmarsh by some 4 to 1. We picked up lingering Northern Gannets, were happy to see Least and Forster's Terns again, and spotted a fair number of shorebirds and waders; Bruce noted a Glossy Ibis overhead, and several Whimbrels were among the many Least Sandpipers and Dowitchers, although a Wilson's Plover was by far the most interesting. Heading out, Doug picked up the chirps of a Painted Bunting over the din of a megaphone announcer at a surfing event attended by the Eastern Surfers Association, Southern North Carolina section (no kidding!). The bunting that would be a lifer for several participants, and a gorgeous one to boot, caused slight commotion as we tried to locate the by-now quiet bird. Fortunately, Anssi and Merja had brought along not only 14 month-old Leo, remarkably happy and content throughout the day, but a portable CD with a speaker as well. The male responded instantly and vigorously, and his territorial display with fanning tail and spread wings at point-blank range was simply stunning. At Twin Lakes we noted Marsh Wren, Clapper Rail (heard by all, seen by Tom and Anssi), and in a tree a Green Heron on nest with four green eggs was an unexpected treat. The little heron tried very hard to appear invisible among the branches, to the delight of those with cameras. Following a quick bite during which we lost Ken, we headed for the Green Swamp in an increasing drizzle. A group of botanists alerted us to several delightful species of carnivorous plants. Unfortunately plants were pretty much what we had available to observe, as the rain and time of day kept bird life at bay. Nevertheless, Doug quickly identified the distant call of a Bachman's Sparrow that unfortunately was rather uncooperative. Fortunately a Red-cockaded Woodpecker was much more accommodating. The passerines were by now very quiet, and we were so desperate that an Eastern Wood-peewee caused quite a stir. Despite several

stops at good locations in the area, the only noteworthy sighting (actually not even a sighting, just a few phrases), was a Swainson's Warbler at Driving Creek. Still, a Solitary Sandpiper (Q. How do you identify a Solitary Sandpiper? A. It's by itself—actual CHBC wisdom.) was a pleasant surprise in the Green Swamp pond. Another more macabre surprise was the remains of a sizeable alligator on the sand by the retracted pond. Our local vet (Jill) identified it by skeletal characteristics. We were impressed and convinced. A desiccated reptile pretty much described how I felt on the way back home, dozing off between cups of coffee. An excellent trip, though, and hats off to our, literally and figuratively, tireless field trip coach. Stalwart trip participants were: Doug Shadwick, Rick Payne, Judy Murray, Bob Rybczynski, Jill Froning, Craig Deboard, Anssi, Merja and Leo Vahatalo, Magnus Persmark, Tom and Barbara Driscoll, Bruce Young, Karen and Mira Piplani, Ken Lundstrom, Shelley Theye and Lee Van Malssen.

Many thanks to . . .you and you and you!

To all who made the year a good one for the CHBC, including folks who attended field trips and meetings and otherwise supported the club; speakers; officers (below); and the bringers of refreshments to meetings: Karen Piplani, Julia Guo, Mary Altpeter, Sue Covalla, Roy and Betty Lindholm, and Ruth Roberson. It was a good year. Let's do it again!

2001-2002 officers:

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Last call

by Ginger Travis, editor

If you still haven't renewed your CHBC membership, this will be your last newsletter. Don't let that happen! Dues are \$15 per year for individuals and families, except students, \$10. Make your check out to the **Chapel Hill Bird Club**. Send it to **Ruth Roberson, 3406 Ogburn Ct., Durham, N.C. 27705**. Hope to see you on the mailing list for the next issue!