

# THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

May, 2003

(Vol. XXXII, No. 5)

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

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## **Next meeting: Monday, May 19, for the year-end, by-the-lake potluck picnic and election. Be there!**

This year's potluck picnic with elections – our last meeting until September – will take place on Monday, May 19, at **6:30 p.m.**, at **Lake Crabtree County Park**. The park is on Aviation Parkway. From Chapel Hill, take I-40 east, take exit 285 (just past the two airport exits), and go south on Aviation Parkway about 0.3 mile to the park entrance. Once in the park, take the third right toward the canoe rental area. You should see some picnic tables. That's where we'll meet and eat. Bring: a dish you can share, your own utensils, and drink. Maybe we'll compile a bird list for the event while we eat, talk and vote. Entrance to the park is free.

## **Election slate. We need a candidate for secretary!**

The nominating committee is having a very tough time finding someone willing to fill the secretary spot. Many have said no, and we are still without a candidate. The job is to attend meetings and take minutes. If anyone is willing to serve, please contact any officer – see list below. The rest of the slate consists of those currently serving; they're willing to give us another year.

### **CHBC officers**

*President:* Joe Bearden, 844-9050

Email: chickadeebirders@earthlink.net

*Vice-president, Raleigh-Durham:* Karen Bearden, same contact info as Joe Bearden

*Vice-president, Chapel Hill:* Judy Murray, 942-2985

Email: jmurray@unc.edu

*Secretary:* Karen Piplani, 929-6553,

Email: karenpip@aol.com

*Treasurer:* Ruth Roberson

Email: Ruth-Roberson@nc.rr.com

*Field trip chair:* Doug Shadwick, 942-0479

*Refreshments coordinator:* Karen Piplani

*Webmaster, mailing list manager, Carolinabirds list owner,*

*checklist compiler:* Will Cook Email: cwcook@duke.edu

*Bulletin editor:* Ginger Travis, 942-7746

Email: ginger\_travis@unc.edu

## **1900 Chimney Swifts, one chimney**

*by Rob Gluck (to Carolinabirds)*

I capped the Chapel Hill Spring bird count by visiting the Franklin Street Post Office chimney again at 8 p.m. Sun. night to count Chimney Swifts barreling down their night-time roost -- since Will tells me that my count of 1900 (and could be higher) blows away the previous high spring count of 343. I think it worth mentioning again that this is a phenomenal (almost incomprehensible) sight if you've never seen it before.

Some time after 8 p.m. the birds begin gradually gathering/circling in the sky; first dozens, then hundreds, then more and more. At some point they begin making individual dives toward the chimney only to swerve back up all the while the numbers growing/swarming; eventually (and I have no clue what the signal is) a couple of birds do dive into the chimney and then dozens, and hundreds follow on every pass -- how they choose their turns I don't know! (on Sun. night the first birds went in at 8:26 p.m.), taking many minutes for the entire group to make their way in -- in fact when I left on Sun. several hundred swifts were still circling above possibly because the chimney(which is not that large) was out of room and they would have to seek lodging elsewhere for the evening.

Anyway, this is one of the most amazing and accessible birding sights I know of and highly recommended.

## **The Warbling Vireo is back. How about that Dairyland Rd.?!?**

*by Ginger Travis*

How long can this go on? This is year 4 for the Warbling Vireo at Anilorac Farm out Dairyland Road in west-central Orange County. No one has reported yet seeing both birds in a pair, but Shelley Theye saw one bird and heard it sing on April 24. A pair has nested in the maples in front of the farmhouse for the last three years. Shelley reports that the residents, Mr. and Mrs. Snipes, lost one maple to the ice storm, but a couple remain. Shantanu Phukan reported hearing Grasshopper

Sparrows singing along the road just west of the farmhouse. There are usually other nice birds out there: however, no Dickcissels this year. Anilorac Farm is about 6.2 miles west of Old Highway 86 at Calvander.

The birding is so good for grassland species on Dairyland, that maybe we ought to declare the 3-mile western half of Dairyland as a CHBC birding trail. Here's how it would work. You'd start at the corner of Dairyland and Rocky Ridge Rd. just over 3.5 miles west of Calvander. At the starting point is the Maple View Farm dairy store. (It doesn't open till noon, but all good things are worth waiting for.) Pick up an ice cream cone before proceeding. In winter scan the fields all around the intersection. (This is where Derb Carter found Lapland Longspurs last winter.)

Proceed west on Dairyland just a tenth of a mile or so to your first right turn, Meadow View Rd., which is gravel. Pull in past the mailboxes, get out of your car, scan the roadside pond, and pish at the hedgerows. (Stay on the road shoulder. The pond and fields are private property.) The pond can offer different duck species from winter to winter. I saw my life American Wigeon there. Mallards, Hooded Mergansers and Wood Ducks are more common. There was a Northern Shoveler last winter. In a dry summer, if the pond is drawn down to mud, you could see shorebirds. I saw dowitchers once. I also saw a Savannah Sparrow in the shrubbery before I knew exactly what it was – just not quite right for a Song Sparrow.

After scanning the pond, get back on Dairyland headed west, and look at the fields as you drive along. The famous Ross's Goose of this past winter was seen occasionally in the field opposite the main entrance to Maple View Farm. Black Vultures are regular here. Bobolinks are spotted in the fields almost every spring.

Keep going west. You'll cross the next paved road known as Dodson's Crossroads. Just over a mile west of Dodson's is Anilorac Farm. You can't miss it. There's a huge sign out front. Pull off on the shoulder and listen for the Warbling Vireo song coming from the front yard of the farmhouse. This is a private residence, but the Snipeses don't seem to mind birders gawking at their trees. They're nice people. Say hi if they come out of the house.

Drive west another 100 or so yards to a little line of trees growing along a tiny streamlet that crosses under the road. Could be an Orchard Oriole here and maybe a Blue Grosbeak perched on the guy wire of a nearby power pole. Might be a Common Yellowthroat in the bushes. A Green Heron could be lurking. West of this stream, the fields are a slam dunk for Grasshopper Sparrows – you'll hear them buzzing. In another half mile or less you'll reach Orange Grove Rd. Turn around and drive all the way

back to the Maple View dairy store for another ice cream cone. Gotta keep up your strength for birding!

## Good Books for Boatin' Birders

by Ginger Travis

Two new books could be of great value to birders who like to explore quiet waters by canoe or kayak.

*Paddling Asheville*, by Betsy Mayers, lists 28 trips described in the book's subtitle as "gently exciting regional river trips." This means moving water, but not above Class I or II in the whitewater rating system. In effect, most of these trips would be relatively easy at normal summer water levels – gentle enough so that you could look for birds. The maps are excellent, and the writing, though brief, is very good. Since flatwater paddlers have a problem finding suitable waters in the mountains, this book adds a lot of possibilities. (By the way, the July 2002 issue of *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine contained an article on fishing several neglected mountain lakes – an article that sent me straight to some great paddling and birding experiences in western North Carolina. Just substitute "paddling" for "fishing" and you're all set!) As I recall, *Paddling Asheville* costs about \$15, including shipping, from the author/publisher. Email her at betzmayers@aol.com for ordering info.

*Paddling Eastern North Carolina* by Paul Ferguson, Pocosin Press, is an encyclopedic guide to the rivers, creeks and millponds of the eastern two-thirds of the state. This book takes the place of an earlier guide by Benner and McCloud. If you want to try exploring such places as Contentnea Creek, the Black River, the Lumber, and the Waccamaw, use this book to figure out put-ins and take-outs, distance on the water from point to point, the minimum necessary water level, and possible hazards. The writing in this book lacks the sparkle Betsy Mayers gives her trip descriptions, but Paul Ferguson compensates by giving readers detailed directions to hundreds of possibilities. If you ever drove over a highway bridge in the piedmont or coastal plain and looked down at the water wondering if you could get a boat in there, Ferguson will give you the answer. He's been paddling in North Carolina for about a million years, and he puts all that experience at our disposal. The book costs \$19.95 and is available from the usual bookstores, paddle shops and the publisher: [www.pocosinpress.com](http://www.pocosinpress.com) or 919-781-3080.

Happy paddling and birding!

## Peter Cashwell to give local readings . . .

from his new book *The Verb "To Bird"* at McIntyre's Fine Books (542-4000), Fearington Village, **May 25, 2 p.m.**; Market St. Books and Maps (932-7034), Chapel Hill, **June 11, 7 p.m.**; and Quail Ridge Books (828-1588), Raleigh, **June 13**, time unknown. Cashwell grew up in Chapel Hill.

## Sightings

*compiled by Will Cook*

*(Part II of a year and a half's worth of notable sightings.)*

9/14/02 - Semipalmated Plover (3), Greater Yellowlegs (6, 2 ad 4 juv.), Lesser Yellowlegs (33, 5 ad 28 juv.), Short-billed Dowitcher (3 juv.), Pectoral Sandpiper (16), White-rumped Sandpiper (1 ad), Western Sandpiper (4 juv.), Semipalmated Sandpiper (23 juv.), Least Sandpiper (73, 8 ad 65 juv.), Sora (5), Bobolink (18), Merlin (1 juv.) - Ellerbe Cr mudflats, Falls Lake (Durham Co.) - Mike Skakuj

9/17/02 - Spotted Sandpiper (1), Pectoral Sandpiper (31), Herring Gull (1), Ring-billed Gull (1), Forster's Tern (1), Caspian Tern (4) - Ellerbe Cr mudflats, Falls Lake (Durham Co.) - Mike Skakuj

9/18/02 - Am. Golden Plover (3 juv.), Sora (1), Philadelphia Vireo (1), Swamp Sparrow (1) - Ellerbe Cr, Falls Lake - Mike Skakuj

9/19/02 - Mute Swan (2) - in short grass on Old Highway 86, Orange Co. - Ginger Travis

9/20/02 - Am. Golden Plover (1 juv.), Semipalmated Plover (7), Lesser Yellowlegs (26, 25 juv. 1 ad), Pectoral Sandpiper (13, 2 ad), Western Sandpiper (6, 5 juv. 1 ad), Semipalmated Sandpiper (18 juv.), Least Sandpiper (141, 133 juv. 8 ad), Wilson's Snipe (1), Sora (1) - Ellerbe Cr mudflats, Falls Lake (Durham Co.) - Mike Skakuj and Brian Bockhahn

9/22/02 - American Golden Plover (9 juv.), Baird's Sandpiper (2 juv.), Caspian Tern (6), Yellow Warbler (1) - Falls Lake - Mike Skakuj

9/22/02 - Merlin (1), N Waterthrush (2) - Mason Farm - Will Cook

9/24/02 - Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (1) - Duke Forest (Orange Co.) - Jeff Pippen

9/28/02 - Semipalmated Plover (5), Kildeer (75), Greater Yellowlegs (26), Lesser Yellowlegs (212), Spotted Sandpiper (4), Sanderling (3), Semipalmated Sandpiper (3), Least Sandpiper (63), White-rumped Sandpiper (4), Pectoral Sandpiper (92), Stilt Sandpiper (37), Ring-billed Gull (1), Caspian Tern (1), Peregrine Falcon (2), Yellow-rumped Warbler (1), American Pipit (1) - Olive Grove Peninsula, Cheek Rd causeway, and Panther Creek Point, Falls Lake - Ricky Davis

9/29/02 - Black-bellied Plover (1 juv), Semipalmated Plover (1), Lesser Yellowlegs (35), Pectoral Sandpiper (81), Dunlin (9 juv.), White-rumped Sandpiper (1), Least Sandpiper (12) - Falls Lake (Durham Co.) - Mike Skakuj

9/29/02 - Mute Swan (1), American Wigeon (1) - gravel pit pond in NW Orange Co. - Barb Brooks. Mute Swan also seen 10/14/02.

9/29/02 - Little Blue Heron (1 imm) - Little Beaver Creek, Jordan Lake - Ginger Travis

9/30/02 - Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1), Blue-winged Warbler (1) - Coker Arboretum, Chapel Hill - Ginger Travis

9/30/02 - Gray-cheeked Thrush (1), along with Swainson's and many Wood Thrushes - yard in n. Chatham Co. - Shelley Theye

10/1/02 - Chimney Swift (5000) - roosting at Broughton High School, Raleigh - John Connors, Lena Gallitano

10/3/02 - Lesser Yellowlegs (32), Pectoral Sandpiper (15, 1 ad 14 juv.), Least Sandpiper 17 (9 ad 8 juv.), Swamp Sparrows (5), Bobolink (1) - Ellerbe Cr, Falls Lake - Mike Skakuj

10/3/02 - Ruddy Duck (2), N Shoveler (7) - Wake Co. - Steve Shultz

10/5/02 - Am. Golden Plover (2 juv.), Bobolink (1) - Falls Lake - Mike Skakuj

10/6/02 - Stilt Sandpiper (51), Dunlin (7), Peregrine Falcon (1), Dickcissel (1), Caspian Tern (3), Forster's Tern (1) - Falls Lake - Ricky Davis

10/6/02 - Caspian Tern (10), Forster's Tern (2), Wilson's Warbler (1) - Steve Shultz

10/6/02 - Yellow-rumped Warbler (4) - Mason Farm, Chapel Hill - Carol Williamson

10/6/02 - Common Nighthawk (1) - Durham - Josh Rose

10/8/02 - Greater Yellowlegs (2), Lesser Yellowlegs (61), Stilt Sandpiper (21), Pectoral Sandpiper (8), Dunlin (3), Least Sandpiper (22), Am. Pipit (2) - Falls Lake - Mike Skakuj

10/9/02 - Winter Wren (1), Scarlet Tanager (1), Wood Thrush (1) - yard in Orange Co. - Ginger Travis

10/10/02 - Wood Thrush (1) - Duke Gardens - Josh Rose

10/12/02 - Pectoral Sandpiper (12), Dunlin (2), White-rumped Sandpiper (1 juv.), Least Sandpiper (24) - Cheek Rd. causeway, Falls Lake - Mike Skakuj

10/14/02 - White-crowned Sparrow (3), Golden-crowned Kinglet (3), Brown Creeper (1), Palm Warbler (many) - Brickhouse Road, near Falls Lake - Will Cook

10/16/02 - Ruby-throated Hummingbird (2) - yard in Orange Co. - Ginger Travis

10/19/02 - Indigo Bunting (2), Hermit Thrush (1) - Durham Co. - Tom and Janet Krakauer

10/22/02 - WHITE WAGTAIL (1 imm), Merlin (1), Spotted Sandpiper (1), Caspian Tern (3) - Sandling Beach State Rec Area, Falls Lake (Wake Co.) - Karen Bearden and Jill Froning, many observers. First record for North Carolina and may be first US record of nominate subspecies (*Motacilla alba alba*, from Europe). Unfortunately, it was a one-day wonder.

10/25/02 - Common Loon (29), Common Tern (1), Laughing Gull (1), and Bonaparte's Gull (1), Greater Yellowlegs (1) - Sandling Beach, Falls Lake - Kent Fiala

10/25/02 - Purple Finch (1) - Orange Co. - Ginger Travis

10/26/02 - Laughing Gull (2), Chimney Swift (6), N Parula (4), Black-and-white Warbler (1), Black-throated Green Warbler (1), Blackburnian Warbler (1), Blackpoll Warbler (1), Cape May Warbler (3) - Jordan Lake - Josh Rose, CHBC

10/26/02 - American Redstart (1) - Mason Farm - Toni Rexrode

10/26/02 - Bonaparte's Gull (3) - Sandling Beach, Falls Lake - Will Cook

10/26/02 - COMMON RAVEN (1) - soaring over I-40, Durham Co. - Will Cook

10/27/02 - Merlin (1) - Brickhouse Rd, Durham Co. - Hartsell and Sandy Cash

10/27/02 - Marsh Wren (1) - Horace Williams Tract, Chapel Hill - Rob Gluck

11/1/02 - Baltimore Oriole (1) - yard in n. Chatham Co. - Shelley Theye. Present since 10/29.

11/7/02 - CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD (1 ad male) - Ginger's yard on Old Woods Rd., Orange Co. - Ginger Travis. First for

the Triangle area and the first record of an adult male in the state! Last seen 1/23/03.

11/10/02 - Sanderling (1) - Ebenezer Pt, Jordan Lake - Josh Rose

11/15/02 - Rusty Blackbird (40) - Brickhouse Road, Durham - Randy Emmitt

11/16/02 - Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1 female) - yard in Orange Co. - Kent Fiala. Latest local report ever!

11/18/02 - White-crowned Sparrow (1) - new yard bird, Orange Co. - Ginger Travis

11/24/02 - Orange-crowned Warbler (1), Common Yellowthroat (1), Rusty Blackbird (3) - Flat River and Little River Impoundments, Falls Lake - Jeff Pippen

11/28/02 - Dickcissel (1 female) - at feeder in yard in Carrboro - Jan Hansen. Seen daily through 12/2, with flock of juncos.

12/4/02 - Mute Swan (1) - Horton's Pond, Jordan Lake - Rob Gluck

12/31/02 - Bald Eagle (1 ad) - Mud Creek beaver pond at Erwin Rd., Duke Forest, Durham - Dan Richter. (Unusual location for not being in the migration period)

1/8/03 - Rusty Blackbird (100) - Bolin Cr., Chapel Hill, Rob Gluck

1/8/03 - LONG-EARED OWL (1) - Hit the second floor mirrored plate glass window of the Tobacco Cooperative Building, off Annapolis Drive in downtown Raleigh, was brought to American Wildlife Refuge in Raleigh for treatment, where it will likely remain, because of eye damage - Steve Stone.

1/11/03 - Long-tailed Duck (1) - Jordan Lake - Doug Shadwick, CHBC

1/19/03 - LAPLAND LONGSPUR (2) - Mapleview Farm, Dairyland Rd., Orange Co. - Taylor Piephoff and Rob Van Epps. Same birds Derb Carter discovered here on the CH CBC 12/22/02. Also seen on 1/26/02 by Josh Rose. First record for the count and the county.

1/21/03 - Fish Crow (2) - Orange Co. landfill, Eubanks Rd. - Jeff Pippen and Will Cook

1/23/03 - CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD (1 ad male) - Ginger's yard on Old Woods Rd., Orange Co. - Ginger Travis. Last date for overwintering bird that arrived 11/7/02. Snow and cold appears to have done him in.

1/25/03 - Common Goldeneye (1 ad male), Hooded Merganser (150), Am Black Duck (100) - NC 50 bridge, Falls Lake - Harry LeGrand

1/25/03 - Common Goldeneye (2 female), Canvasback (1 raft) - Jordan Lake - Doug Shadwick, CHBC

1/25/03 - White-winged Scoter (2) - Lake Crabtree, Raleigh - Steve Shultz

1/26/03 - Great Egret (1) - 64 causeway, Jordan Lake - Harry LeGrand

1/26/03 - Greater Scaup (15), White-winged Scoter (2), Common Goldeneye (1 f) - Lake Crabtree, Raleigh - many observers. The ducks were seen through at least 2/2.

2/1/03 - ROSS'S GOOSE (1 adult) - Dairyland Rd, Orange Co. - a white goose in flight was first spotted by Jeff Pippen, relocated and identified on 2/2 by Derb Carter and Will Cook. First record for the county. The goose was seen through at least 2/7 by many observers.

2/2/03 - Common Goldeneye (3), Hooded Merganser (200) - Beaverdam State Rec Area, Falls Lake - Harry LeGrand

2/9/03 - Greater Scaup (14), N Pintail (4) - Jordan Lake - Will Cook

2/24/03 - Osprey (1) - Jordan Lake - Kate Finlayson

2/25/03 - Fish Crow (12) - Chapel Hill Country Club - Mel Hochhalter

3/3/03 - Osprey (1) - Panther Creek, Falls Lake - Brian Bockhahn

3/9/03 - Red-necked Grebe (1) - Farrington Rd bridge, Jordan Lake - Derb Carter and Ricky Davis. Still present 3/10.

3/9/03 - Red-necked Grebe (1) - Falls Lake - Ricky Davis

3/10/03 - Broad-winged Hawk (1) - Durham Co. - Edith Tatum

3/15/03 - N Rough-winged Swallow (6) - Greenview Pond, Raleigh - Steve Shultz

3/15/03 - Barn Swallow (2) - Jordan Lake - Steve Shultz

3/17/03 - N Parula (1) - Durham - Mike Skakuj. Earliest on record!

3/17/03 - Yellow-throated Warbler (1) - Chapel Hill - Rob Gluck

3/28/03 - Great Blue Herons - nesting for first time at Cane Creek Reservoir - Eric Barnhardt (fide Jeff Pippen)

3/29/03 - Caspian Tern (1) - Falls Lake - Brian Bockhahn et al

4/1/03 - PAINTED BUNTING (1 male) - Durham - fide Edith Tatum. ("Yesterday a coworker asked me what kind of bird has blue and green feathers. "Why", I asked. "I found a dead bird at my front door that looked like that", she responded. I asked if there were any other colors present. She answered, "Yes, red." I asked her to bring me this bird if she could get up the courage to pick it up. The bird was gone when she went back (probably taken by a cat). I showed her my Kaufman's guide turned to the bunting page. She immediately pointed to the painted bunting and said, "That's it". As yesterday was April fools Day I made sure it wasn't a joke. She doesn't joke about dead things." - Edith Tatum)

4/3/03 - Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1) - Hillsborough - Randy Dunson

4/3/03 - Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1), Hooded Warbler (1), Ovenbird (1) - yard in n Chatham Co. - Shelley Theye

4/3/03 - Chimney Swift (1) - Durham - Josh Rose

4/4/03 - Blue-headed Vireo (2, one bird working on a nest) - Old Hope Valley Farm Rd. - Sandy Cash

## **Last membership renewal pitch!**

*by Ginger Travis, chief scold*

If your mailing label carries "Jan. 03" or "01/03" in the upper right corner, your CHBC membership expired several months ago. This will be your last issue of the newsletter, unless you renew. Just do it! Send a check for \$15, made out to the Chapel Hill Bird Club, to Ruth Roberson at 38 Stoneridge Place, Durham 27705. Multiple-year renewals strongly encouraged for procrastinators. (I'm one. I did it. I'm glad.)