

# THE BULLETIN

## Chapel Hill Bird Club

March 2004

(Vol. XXXIII, No. 3)

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

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### Next meeting: Monday, March 22

**When:** 7:15 p.m., refreshments; 7:30 p.m. meeting.

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

**Who:** Magnus Persmark, CHBC member and past president, will talk about birding in Brazil. Magnus writes: "Ten of us visited the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso in September 2001 on a trip organized by Merrill Lynch with assistance from the Pantanal Bird Club and led by local guides. We visited three distinctly different biogeographical regions, each with their own unique flora and fauna: the Pantanal, the cerrado and the southwestern Amazon basin. The Pantanal is the world's largest freshwater wetland and only recently connected to the outside world by dirt road and one hundred-odd rickety bridges. Birding was easy, pleasant and varied. The cerrado has a unique, ancient vegetation with thick-leaved plants similar to the South African veld, and as a consequence holds several endemic bird species. The last area we visited does not need any description. Nevertheless, our lodge at Alta Floresta is not as well known as it deserves to be, with an abundance of spectacular birds and mammals, including giant otter and tapir. We saw some 400 bird species over two weeks, from Jabiru to hummingbirds, on a thoroughly enjoyable trip."

That Magnus, his wife Rosalie Hammond, and the rest of the group were able to make the trip at all is amazing, since their scheduled departure was less than a week after Sept. 11, and many flights were cancelled. Magnus wrote a vivid account of this trip, which appeared in three parts in the CHBC Bulletin: Nov. 2001, Dec. 2001 and Jan. 2002. These issues are archived on Will Cook's Web site at the CHBC page, and you can read them there: ([www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc](http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc)). Magnus has traveled widely and birded in some great places around the world, but this one sounds unbeatable. Come see what birding Brazil is all about!

### Coming up in April

At our April 26 meeting the program will be given by Haven Wiley, professor of biology at UNC and

the founder of the mini-breeding bird surveys in Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties. Orange was the first county to be surveyed and now has five years' data. Below see Haven Wiley's preliminary discussion of Orange County results.

### Field trips continue through 4/17

Saturday field trips continue through April 17, then are discontinued as the spring counts begin on April 25 (Durham) and run through the first couple of weekends in May.

Trips begin promptly at 7:30 a.m. with participants leaving from the Glen Lennox shopping center on the east side of Hwy. 54 just a few yards south of the Hwy. 15-501 Bypass. You should be back by noon. Field trips are free, and all are welcome. For details of the destination, call Doug Shadwick at 942-0479.

### Membership renewal form, a note on lag times

Our treasurer Ruth Roberson wants all who renew their membership to know that there's a slight lag between the time she receives your check and the time she sends the information to Will Cook, who manages the membership list. If you sent in your renewal but your mailing label does not appear to be up to date, give it another month. Then call Ruth if you think we have forgotten to enter your new renewal month and year: 489-4888.

By now you know the drill: make your check for \$15 (\$10 if you're a student) payable to the Chapel Hill Bird Club. Mail it to Ruth Roberson, 38 Stoneridge Place, Durham 27705. Here's a handy form!

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I want to renew my CHBC membership.

**My name:**

**Postal address:**

**Phone no.:**

**Email address:**

## **Oriole update**

*by Lena Gallitano (to Carolinabirds, Feb. 20)*

The Baltimore Orioles in my yard now number nine and the juvenile males are really starting to enter the teenage years with lots of single black feathers beginning to show up on their neck and heads -- and the squabbling is at a peak. Sharing the feeder has decreased tremendously as each one must be trying to show its rank among the flock. Interesting birds to have for the winter and even though I'm ready for spring and the hummingbirds to return, I sure will miss having them around.

## **Glaucous, Little Gulls at Jordan**

*summarized from numerous postings by G.T.*

Just when the excitement from the Hanks Chapel Gray Flycatcher was dying down, on Sunday, Feb. 15, Haven Wiley's avian biology class from UNC discovered a very pale gull just a few yards north of the Farrington Road bridge at Jordan Lake -- this and other gulls were congregating just east of the little island where the old river channel comes down from the north and passes under the bridge. Initially Haven and his class thought the gull was an Iceland.

CHBC members then stampeded out to the lake and began taking digital pictures and posting them. A lot of discussion ensued on Carolinabirds as to whether the gull was an Iceland or a Glaucous, with plenty of knowledgeable comments from Mike Skakuj, Ned Brinkley, Bob Lewis and other gullphiles. The consensus seemed to favor Glaucous.

Shelley Theye posted links to Jean Irons' website with tons of gulls at Niagara Falls (many of which may look almost identical to a nongullphile!): <http://www3.sympatico.ca/jeaniron/Iceland.htm>  
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/jeaniron/Gulls04.htm>  
By midweek, the Jordan Lake Glaucous Gull disappeared, perhaps sent packing when the weather improved and fisherman began anchoring at the exact spot the gulls had favored.

Then, on Feb. 21, Ricky Davis reported a Little Gull at Ebenezer Point at Jordan Lake among the many Bonaparte's Gulls. The Little Gull was not seen again.

Birders, scope those gulls!

## **More rarities:**

### **Trumpeter Swans in N.C.**

*by John Wright (to Carolinabirds, 2/28)*

I left the Pungo Lake area at 2:30 p.m. today, after observing the four Trumpeter Swans over a space of several hours. These birds were first seen and heard today by Derb Carter and Ricky Davis as the swans flew west from the area of Pungo Lake. They settled into a large flock of Tundra Swans just east of Canal C Road at about 9:30 a.m. Between then and 2:30

p.m. they moved two more times -- about a mile each time. However, they stayed within the area just east or west of Canal C Road in the area southwest of Pungo Lake. Refer to the Delorme North Carolina Atlas and Gazetteer, page 47. Their use area today essentially encompassed the extreme northwest corner of Hyde County.

Identification of these birds by sight can be relatively easy if they are seen in direct comparison with nearby Tundra Swans, in profile, and with their heads up. Otherwise, the size differences are not so easily seen. A good scope is essential, since all the swans are wary and will not allow a close approach.

The most interesting observation was the calls in flight. The Trumpeter Swans have a lower pitched clear "honk" note in flight which is distinctly different than the flight notes given by the Tundra Swans. Each time these four birds took flight, they gave these "honk" notes. Before leaving this afternoon, I had a conversation with two local men who had been hearing these birds for several days, and recognized the difference in the flight notes, but did not know that these were Trumpeter Swans.

In addition to larger size, these birds have distinctly larger bills with a straighter profile from forehead to bill tip. The heads of these adult Trumpeter Swans are also slightly more dusky in appearance than the adult Tundra Swans. Although there is no yellow color in front of the eye, this can not be used as a field mark since many of the Tundra Swans appear to have no yellow.

My advice for scanning the Tundra Swan flocks is this: Scan first looking for a small group of large swans with slightly dirty heads. Don't quit just because you don't see obviously large birds. Use a scope and run up the power as much as you can for viewing bill size and shape. Go early in the day so that heat waves don't destroy your view. Keep your ears open. When these four birds get up and fly, they sound different.

I will note, for those who may have missed the original email about these birds, that they were captured a couple of days ago by FWS employees who were banding swans at Pungo NWR. They identified and photographed the birds but were unable to band them because none of their bands were large enough to fit these birds.

### **Good news for eagles at Lake Crabtree.**

*by Rob Gluck*

*Ed. note: As reported in the Jan. CHBC Bulletin, Bald Eagles nested at Lake Crabtree for the first time ever in the summer of 2003 -- the only known Wake Co. pair. They fledged two youngsters. However, during the summer one of the adults was electrocuted on a powerline. Would the surviving eagle find a mate and use the huge nest again in 2004? They*

would. Dan Kaplan saw a pair of eagles at the lake in February. Then Rob Gluck checked the nest on Feb. 21 and wrote the following account. As Rob cautions, if you go to see the nest, do NOT attempt to stop your vehicle on the causeway. The park staff are monitoring the nest.

WOW! Great views of Lake Crabtree Bald Eagle nest with both eagles in it this morning [Sat., Feb. 21] off west side of Aviation Parkway causeway (north end of causeway, maybe 300 yds. to west in top of pair of pine trees). Both birds sitting on edge bobbing up-and-down into nest either rearranging material or attending to hatchlings. (I presume an appropriate agency is monitoring situation ?) Nice views for you potential digiscopers out there (if authorities will let you set up long enough on causeway!?) Birds apparently unperturbed by 747s flying right overhead, so viewing from causeway is undisturbing.

## **Where have all the birds gone?**

by Haven Wiley

The short answer is nowhere, at least for the past five years in Orange County. Despite striking downward trends for many species in eastern North America over the past few decades, there have been few major changes in the breeding birds of Orange County recently.

The Orange County Mini-Breeding Bird Survey has been conducted by nearly 20 volunteers each year since 1999. Its model is the continent-wide Breeding Bird Survey organized by the Fish and Wildlife Service. A Mini-Breeding Bird Survey focuses on only one county, where it provides much more thorough coverage. In Orange County observers follow 12 randomly selected routes, each 10 miles along secondary roads, to record all birds seen or heard on a morning in late May or June.

The results, posted on the MBBS web site ([www.unc.edu/~rhwiley/mbbs](http://www.unc.edu/~rhwiley/mbbs)), reveal how stable the populations of some birds have remained in recent years. Take, for example, the Red-eyed Vireo, the most numerous and widespread species every year. Although many of our small songbirds migrate to Central America for the winter, the Red-eyed Vireo is one of the few that goes all the way to South America. Yet its numbers on the Orange County MBBS have remained almost constant (with less than 10% variation) for five years. Other migrants, such as Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, have also shown no progressive increases or decreases. Many permanent residents, like Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch, have fluctuated somewhat. Nevertheless, they too show no signs of overall trends. Even the numbers of American and Fish Crows and Blue Jays, all birds

thought to be especially affected by West Nile Virus, provide no evidence of local decimation by this avian epidemic.

Populations of some recent invaders of the county appear to have reached a steady state. The House Finch, established here since the late 1970's, now seems on an even course. The Canada Goose, which quickly colonized the impoundments of beavers in the late 1980's, was still increasing from 1999 through 2001 but then declined in the past two years.

Sometimes we can see the effects of hard winters. The Carolina Wren seems particularly susceptible to prolonged freezes. So following the winter of 1999-2000, when snow remained on the ground for over a week, the Mini-Breeding Bird Survey revealed a 30% drop in their numbers. By 2003, however, their numbers had bounced back almost to the 1999 level. The Carolina Chickadee suffered a comparable set-back in 2000, but its numbers have yet to recover. It is easy to understand why wrens, which feed on the ground, would be affected by prolonged snow. Why should the arboreal chickadees have suffered so much? And why have they not bounced back like the wrens?

In a preliminary review of all the species recorded in the last five years on the MBBS in Orange County (nearly all the species known to breed here), I see few signs of worrisome trends. Yet there are a few that look ominous. The numbers of Eastern Meadowlarks have fallen by almost 70%. It is not clear that the problem is simply a loss of habitat, because another bird of hay fields, the Grasshopper Sparrow, shows no clear trend. Some other species with ominous trajectories include Green Heron, Killdeer, and Barn Swallow.

In 2004 the sixth annual MBBS is scheduled for Orange County. Chatham County will have its fifth MBBS and Durham County its third. It takes at least five years to see overall trends and patterns, so we are on the threshold of some real usefulness for our information.

If you would like to help with planning or to participate in this summer's MBBS surveys, join us at the Chapel Hill Bird Club meeting in April.

## **Interesting heron behavior**

by Bruce Young (to *Carolinabirds*, 2/16)

A few weeks ago we saw some interesting great blue heron behavior. We pulled up to a small pond and quickly noted a GBH standing in the shallows. A couple of minutes later we noticed that it had somehow found itself a large rat. I guess he picked it out of the nearby grass. The rat was probably 8-10 inches long not including the tail. The heron chomped it a few times in an apparent attempt to kill it. The heron also repeatedly dunked the rat in the

water, but not to drown it. We guessed that it might be wetting it to make it easier to swallow, which he finally did. Now one would think that a large rat would satisfy a heron for a while, but not this guy. A couple of minutes later he found a huge frog. It was enormous, larger than the rat. I guess the heron must have found it buried in the mud. The strange thing was, the heron dunked the frog just like it did with the rat. But the frog had just come out of the water, and they generally seem pretty slippery anyway. Was the heron washing its food?

We didn't stick around to watch anymore because, frankly, we were nervous the heron might be looking in our direction. . . .

## **Birding Ecuador, part 2**

*by Tom Driscoll*

*In part 1, Tom and his wife Barbara, with a superb guide named Edison, started in Quito and birded their way to the San Isidro Lodge.*

Next, we drove to Cabanas Alinahui, which is further east, and lower, right on the edge of the Amazon Basin. We stopped first, though, at Loreta Road which is a great birding road, although with a bit too much traffic for me. We saw many good birds along this road including Magpie Tanager, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Paradise Tanager, Cliff Flycatcher (they are big and all rufous), Blue-rumped Manakin, Lesser Kiskadee, and White-winged Tanager. I saw a raptor with white wristbands very high that Edison said was a Black Vulture. I saw bands on the tail, though, and after a lot of discussion, Edison capitulated and said it was a Black-and-Chestnut Eagle. We drove on to Cabanas Alinahui.

The next day we boated down the Napo River to look for Hoatzins – one of the birds we had all wanted to see. It was very hot in this area, but not very muggy (the area was in a drought). We went to a place where they had been seen and walked around for a bit. We did see them. They are very strange birds with unkempt crests, big eyes, and strange calls. They are part of the cuckoo family. We saw a Crimson-masked Tanager and a caiman here. We went back to the boat and were ready to enter when a kingfisher flew up. We had seen several Amazon Kingfishers, but this one was bigger and oddly colored. After some discussion, we decided it was an immature Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher. Oddly enough, it was a lifer for Edison! He bought the beers that night and we had made good on our prediction (of finding a lifer for Edison)! We boated back to the cabanas. The highlights for the three days we stayed in the Cabanas Alinahui area included Hoatzins, Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher, several aracari species, White-throated Toucan,

Cream-colored Woodpecker, Pied Plover, Orange-backed Troupial, Plumbeous Kite, and Greater Yellow-Headed Vulture.

Edison drove us back to Quito and left us there. Our friends left the next day, while we flew to Coca. Coca is much further east and when we arrived it was very muggy and lush. We got on the boat with about 30 others and boated down the same Napo River to the Sacha Lodge. The Napo River is one of the main tributaries to the Amazon River. When we got there, we were told we had about a 45-minute walk to canoes and then across a lake to the lodge. However, we started birdwatching immediately and some guides, Olger and Carlos, appeared. They were our guides for the six of us during our stay at Sacha Lodge. It took several hours for us to make it to the lodge. During our stay, it rained violently several times here. One day we went down to a clay lick to look at the parrots eating clay, but didn't see any. Several other times we went up tall towers to birdwatch in the canopy. We also birdwatched from canoes. Highlights here included Gray-winged Trumpeters, Orange Blackbird, Silvered Antbird, Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl, Orange-crowned Tanager, several oropendola species, Red-capped Cardinal, Mottled-backed Elaenia, Bi-Colored Antbird, Rufous-throated Sapphire (another hummer), Screaming Piha (it really screams, but is hard to find), Chestnut Woodpecker, Large-billed Tern, Dugand's Antwren, Moriche Oriole, Black-faced Hawk, Agami Heron, Cocoli Heron, Rufescent Tiger-heron, White-browed Purple-tuft, Ladder-tailed Nightjar, Caqueta Seed-eater, and Green Oropendola. At the end of our stay, we boated back up to Coca and flew back to Quito.

In Quito, we were driven to Hacienda La Cienega, two hours south of Quito. It was a beautiful and romantic place to stay as we ended our visit to Ecuador. There are beautiful gardens there and many hummingbirds including a Giant Hummingbird. I hiked around before dinner and found a Peruvian Meadowlark. The map in the book doesn't have it this far north, so I was not expecting to see it. It looks very much like our meadowlarks, but has a bright red instead of yellow chest. I was very pleased. The next day, Edison came down for one more day of birding. He drove us to Parque Nacional Cotopaxi. We could see Cotopaxi from where we were staying. It is the world's highest active volcano at over 22,000 feet and covered with snow. We saw many great birds here including Grassland Yellow-Finch, Ecuadorian Hillstar (hummer), Paramo Pipit, Variable Hawk, Carunculated Caracara, and Shining Sunbeam (hummer). There is a shallow lagoon, at about 11,000 feet, where we saw Andean Lapwing, Andean Gulls, Yellow-billed Pintail, Baird's Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes, Noble Snipe, and Andean Coots. While searching for the Yellow-

billed Pintail (the only one there and the only one we saw), a small rail jumped out of tall grass and ran for its life to taller grass! Edison didn't know what species it was. When we got back to the car and looked through the book, we decided it was an immature Ecuadorian Rail. The only rail we saw. When Edison brought us back, he bought my scope. He had been admiring it during the whole trip and finally asked what I wanted for it before we went to Coca. Since it is difficult and expensive for them to get optics there, I told him what I wanted for it. Again, I very much recommend Edison for a guide (he knows plants and insects as well) when you are in Ecuador!

In the morning of the next day, we went birdwatching after a late breakfast. Barbara found a Peruvian Blackbird, we saw another Giant Hummingbird, and I found a Band-Tailed Seed-eater, my last lifer for the trip. In the afternoon, we rode back to Quito. During the trip, we saw 550 species, of which 396 were lifers. If you have any questions or would like to discuss birding Ecuador, then please contact me (tadriscoll@msn.com).

## **And now, birding Kenya**

*by Helmut and Nancy Mueller*

We were in Kenya 28 Nov. through 17 Dec. 2003. Kenya is 3.3 times the size of North Carolina, but we saw less than one-fourth of the country, so we birded in an area smaller than our state. We were never more than 150 miles from the equator and although there is no summer and winter, temperatures were not too hot because we were above 5000 feet in elevation most of the time; indeed, we had to wear sweaters on many mornings. We ended up being the only persons on our safari, so we had a Land Rover, our driver Silas, and our bird guide Alex Oloo, all to ourselves. Alex, a native of Kenya, knew most of birds by their vocalizations and was invaluable in helping us find and identify birds. The accommodations were quite luxurious. (They even put hot water bottles in our bed at one "tent camp.") The food was excellent. At one camp, the chef was a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu, and the French cuisine was outstanding.

Our safari was limited to the southwestern corner of Kenya. We visited Nairobi N.P. (National Park), Amboselli N.P., Lake Elementaita, Lake Baringo, Lake Bogoria N.P., The Kakamega Forest, Lake Nakuru N.P., Lake Naivasha, Crater Lake, Hell's Gate N.P. and the Masai Mara Game Reserve.

Our safari concentrated on birds, but the mammals were spectacular! We saw hundreds of elephants, including two bulls fighting, as many as 20 hippos at a time, including two males in a vicious fight and both species of rhinos. We saw hyaena, bat-eared fox, jackal, giraffe, zebra, water buffalo

and about 10 species of antelope. We also got excellent looks (less than 40 ft. away) of cheetah, leopard and lion. We saw a pride of lions kill a water buffalo, from the very inception of the stalk until the kill!

We saw 428 species of birds. A list follows giving the name of the group and the number of species. You will notice that many of the groups do not occur in North America.

Ostrich-1; Grebes-2; Herons-12, including the Goliath Heron, almost twice the size of a Great Blue; Hamerkop-1; Storks-5, including thousands of migrating White Storks in "kettles" like Broad-winged Hawks; Ibis-3; Spoonbills-1; Flamingos-2, we saw at least 80,000 individuals; Geese & Ducks-11; Secretary Bird-1; Osprey-1; Fish Eagle-1; Vultures-5; Snake-eagles-3; Bateleur Eagle-1; Harrier-hawk-1; Harriers-4; Chanting Goshawks-2; Accipiters-2; Buteos-3; Aquila Eagles-4 (The genus of our Golden Eagle); Hawk-eagle-1; Long-crested Eagle-1; Martial Eagle-1; Falcons-6, including the Pygmy Falcon, about the size of a Red-wing; Francolins & Spurfowl-4; Guinea Fowl-1; Rails-4; Crowned Crane-1; Bustards-4, including the Kori Bustard, the largest bird that flies (as big as a medium-sized antelope, weighs more than 40 lbs!); Coursers & Pratincoles-3; Plovers-10; Sandpipers-11; Gulls & Terns-4; Sandgrouse-2; Pigeons & Doves-13; Parrots-2; Turacos-5; Cuckoos-9; Owls-3, including Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, twice the size of a Horned Owl; Swifts-7; Mousebirds-2; Trogons-1; Kingfishers-6; Bee-eaters-5; Rollers-2; Hoopoes-1; Wood-hoopoes-2; Hornbills-8, including the Ground Hornbill, about the size of a turkey; Barbets-12; Honeyguides-3; Woodpeckers-5; Larks-8; Swallows-11; Pipits & Wagtails-10; Bulbuls-10; Bristlebill-1; Babblers-7; Thrushes-20; Flycatchers-9; Warblers-29; White-eyes-1; Tits-2; Paradise Flycatchers-4; Batises-4; Crowned Shrikes-1; true Shrikes-7; Bush-shrikes-11; Drongos-2; Orioles-2; Crows-4; Starlings-12, many of them spectacularly iridescent; Sunbirds-10; Sparrows-4; Weavers-30; Finches-4; Whydahs-1; Canaries-4.

In short, it was a fantastic trip! We arranged for our tour with Ontdek Kenya Ltd., a small firm run by a Belgian who fell in love with a Kenyan girl and moved there. His web site is: [www.ontdekenya.com](http://www.ontdekenya.com) We were extremely pleased with them and would be happy to furnish more details to anyone interested in a safari. I took about 1,500 photos on the safari and have been posting photos of our trip on [www.photoisland.com](http://www.photoisland.com). Sign in: [helmutnc](mailto:helmutnc), password: hawk. I add and delete photos weekly.

## Chapel Hill Christmas count

by Will Cook, compiler

This year's Chapel Hill Christmas Bird Count, held on Sunday, 21 December 2003, returned to near normal after last year's fantastic species count of 94. Still, this year's 89 species is 4 above the ten-year average of 85, and the count of 14,909 birds is above the average of 14,163. Party-hours were well above normal at 160.2 (average 136), the highest since 1985, while birds per party-hour was a low 93 (average 105). The count circle received almost complete coverage, though unfortunately the key territory in the circle, which can add 5-10 species to the count, went uncovered due to illness.

The bird of the count was one that was seen both before and after the count, but not on count day - the Common Raven that's been frequenting Maple View Farm west of Chapel Hill. Derb Carter reports that he's seen it fairly regularly flying by the dairy store around noon-12:30 since the count. This would've been a first count record and is only the second or third sighting for Orange County. Another bird that would have been a great addition was a male Blue-winged Teal, which Rob Gluck saw the day before, but not on count day. We've had that species only once, in 1949.

The rarest bird actually seen on count day was a Rufous Hummingbird at Fred and Eleanor Kilgour's feeder in Carolina Meadows, our third count record, all since 1999. Susan Campbell later banded and identified it as an adult female Rufous. Other good birds included 6 Northern Shovelers at Mapleview (Carter; becoming more regular - our first count record was in 1990, but we've had them 4 of the last 5 counts), 7 Red-breasted Mergansers at Jordan Lake (Johnston party), 2 Northern Harriers (Carter and Johnston parties; formerly more regular in the count circle), 2 Wild Turkeys (Stiffler party; only the 4th in last 40 years), 2 Palm Warblers (Fiala and Bockhahn), 2 Common Yellowthroats at Mason Farm (Cook party), and a Baltimore Oriole at April Smyth's feeder in Chapel Hill. For a photo of the Rufous see the online summary:

<http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc/chcbc03res.html>

We set a good number of record highs, the most notable of which is the 11 House Wrens, which beats the stew out of the old record of 5 set in 2000. Jeff Phippen found 6 of the wrens near the Orange County dump on Eubanks Road. Canada Geese numbers continue to take off, jetting into the stratosphere with 747 (618 in 2002). Other records are 6 Northern Shovelers (5 in 2002), 98 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (91 in 1976), 21 Pileated Woodpeckers (20 in 2001), 562 Carolina Chickadees (544 in 1991), 439 Tufted Titmice (416 in 2001), 128 White-breasted Nuthatch (124 in 2001), and 181 Chipping Sparrows (142 in 2001). We also found well above average numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawk,

Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, Brown Creeper (27, highest since 1977), Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird (180, highest since 1980), Brown Thrasher (37, highest since 1976), Eastern Towhee (208, highest since 1982), Purple Finch (76, highest since 1986). We didn't set any record lows, but the count of 187 House Finches is well below the average of 260.

Teams with highest totals: Once again Derb Carter, covering the Dairyland Road area, turned in the highest species count, with 63 (1197 individuals). And once again the Phippen team - this time Jeff was ably assisted by Anne and 9-year old daughter Erica - had the highest count of individuals with 1308 (48 species), finding large numbers of birds hanging out at the dump. Their most abundant bird was European Starling (201), though on the overall count Dark-eyed Junco came out on top (1631), followed by White-throated Sparrow (1397) - the only two species to break 1000.

Weather was much colder than average: Low 21 F, high 47 F, wind west 0-10 mph, clear, no precipitation, still water partly frozen. Effort: 45 observers in 23 field parties, 160.2 party hours (137.45 by foot, 22.75 by car), 349 party miles (90 by foot, 259 by car), 6.25 hours and 3.25 miles owling, 8 people and 31 hours watching feeders.

Full count results will be online at the Christmas Bird Count web site if they get it up and running: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>. (The count entry system worked fine last year, so they decided to improve it and now of course it doesn't work at all!)

Capping off the day was a countdown party at Derb Carter's new house near Maple View Farm. The company was warm and the food delicious. Thanks for hosting, Derb, and thanks to all counters for a job well done!

*Full results of Triangle CBCs follow on the next two pages. And mark your calendars now for the upcoming spring counts:*

**Sun. April 25, Durham:** Mike Schultz, 490-6761, email: [ross.gull@verizon.net](mailto:ross.gull@verizon.net)

**Mon., April 26, Falls Lake:** Brian Bockhahn, 676-1027, email: [Brian.Bockhahn@ncmail.net](mailto:Brian.Bockhahn@ncmail.net)

**Wed., April 28, Kerr Lake:** Brian Bockhahn, same

**Sun., May 2, Jordan Lake:** Carol Williamson, 383-2364, email: [cncbrdr@yahoo.com](mailto:cncbrdr@yahoo.com)

**Sat., May 8, Wake Co:** John Connors, 755-0253, email: [John.Connors@ncmail.net](mailto:John.Connors@ncmail.net)

**Sun., May 9, Chapel Hill:** Will Cook, 382-9134, email: [cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu)



## 2003 Triangle Area Christmas Bird Counts

— Chapel Hill Observer Party —

Species	Dur	Ral	JL	Kerr	Falls	CH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	19	20	21	22	23	24		
Winter Wren	24	24	23	3	27	32	2	4	2	1		1	6	5		3	1		5		1		1								
Golden-crowned Kinglet	163	79	329	20	183	142	15	2	4	2	1	15	40	3		3	8		7	8	1			17	7			6	3		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	276	124	375	31	197	267	30	6	24	16	2	22	19	5	7	8	12	4	20	12	9	11	11	12	11	8		13	5		
Eastern Bluebird	185	164	220	96	169	375	29	8	20	17	20	14	9	7	26	15	4		22	21	4	8	35	35	20	19	13	23	6		
Hermit Thrush	29	22	91	3	29	72	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	3		1			28	5	2	1	4	6	2			2	4		
American Robin	585	133	807	116	473	234	2		3	14	2		2	9	35	46	13	12	1	19			7	25	3	1	2	6	34		
Gray Catbird	2	2	1		1	1						1																			
Northern Mockingbird	48	59	66	13	28	180	14	3	9	19		3	1	3	10	17	7	1	8	16		3	8	3	3	14	6	1	31		
Brown Thrasher	17	29	18	1	20	37	3			2		4	1		2				8	2			2	3	1		1	2	4		
European Starling	277	1310	270	120	1944	634	29		201	4			3	50	2	16			46	3	159	14	48	6		25		8	20		
American Pipit	25	5	60			56	55														1										
Cedar Waxwing	889	304	743	100	319	345			3	5			3	15	2	4	2		130	46		8	36	14	30	33			14		
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	324	444	367	19	152	596	19	11	55	9		21	7	32	62	30	27	5	55	57	38	9	24	7	44	19	22	17	26		
Pine Warbler	8	25	81	4	41	43	4						1							1	1	5	11	1	8			9	1		
Palm Warbler	1	10			1	2								1							1										
Common Yellowthroat	2	1	3		2	2														2											
Eastern Towhee	180	150	91	8	95	208	6	9	24	7		29	6	3	9	17	9	5	36	16				6	13	5	2		6		
Chipping Sparrow	260	151	106	19	142	181	71		50	23			2		8	5			1			1	1			1		18			
Field Sparrow	88	69	34	3	18	63	18	1	5	3			8	3					1	2	21							1			
Savannah Sparrow	5	28	*		4	32	32																								
Fox Sparrow	47	1	18		35	48	2						6	3					33	1			1					2			
Song Sparrow	967	431	268	34	241	493	41	5	40	12	1	13	25	48	10	16	7	4	155	8	7		19	23	25	5	5	12	12		
Swamp Sparrow	215	119	26	2	44	110	2	5	4	7			3	9		1	2		65	2				1		5	1	3			
White-throated Sparrow	1313	1078	678	119	827	1397	79	44	150	166		44	30	110	22	80	88	31	265	59	35	6	42	33	30	8	16	6	53		
White-crowned Sparrow	13	5	*																												
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	898	402	922	315	900	1631	78	53	97	243	11	46	100	35	46	66	11	22	7	141	7	62	71	150	22	74	15	150	124		
<b>Snow Bunting</b>					5																										
Northern Cardinal	301	244	333	73	261	507	16	10	26	30	1	47	7	16	4	38	28	17	57	50	9	6	19	18	23	14	16	16	39		
<b>BLUE GROSBEAK</b>	1																														
<b>PAINTED BUNTING</b>	1																														
Red-winged Blackbird	3270	116	358	3	311	122	30		1										65	16						3		5	2		
Eastern Meadowlark	26	11	134	5	1	49	31	5	11														2								
Rusty Blackbird	8	65			17	36						1							26		9										
Common Grackle	2	183	39	120	452	14	2						1										1						10		
Brown-headed Cowbird	20	702																													
Baltimore Oriole		6			1												1														
Purple Finch	38	11	36		12	76						2	33										4						37		
House Finch	79	85	36	2	51	187	7		17	7		13	1	14	16	11	6	9	25		4		2	3	17		12	23			
Pine Siskin					*							*	*																		
American Goldfinch	414	296	307	49	339	577	28	41	18	35	20	24	14	19	40	12	16	5	30	18	9	1	26	35	42	11	13	64	56		
Evening Grosbeak			10																												
House Sparrow	23	30	8	2	25	44								14	5		4					1				2		8	10		
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>41</b>	
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>15967</b>	<b>11235</b>	<b>15943</b>	<b>7822</b>	<b>31888</b>	<b>14909</b>	<b>1027</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>1283</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1156</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>783</b>		
<b>Number of Groups</b>	17		27	4	15	23	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
<b>Number of Participants</b>	28	60	63	7	23	45	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	4		
<b>Start Time:</b>	630	545			300	600	700	830	730	830	710	645	710	715	600	830	700	700	715	630	745	630	700	550	800	700	300	630			
<b>End Time:</b>	1800	1600			1745	1600	1430	1730	1400	1200	1455	1230	1640	1545	1700	1730	1100	1745	1645	1130	1145	1630	1500	1430	1145	1230	1415	1500			
<b>Party Hours: Total</b>	102.3	81.5	187	33.95	107.3	160.2	9	6.5	7	6.5	2.5	6.8	6.5	9	8	14	9	4	7.5	9.5	4.5	4	7	8	7	3.8	5.2	7.5	8		
<b>Party Hours: On Foot</b>	82	75	113	18.35	75.25	137.5	8	5.5	6	6.5	2	4.8	6.5	7.5	4	13	7	4	7.5	8	4	3	7	5	6	3	5.2	6	8		
<b>Party Hours: By Car</b>	20.25	6.5	72.5	15.6	32	22.75	1	1	1	0.5	2		1.5	4	0.5	2			1.5	0.5	1		3	1	0.8		1.5				
<b>Party Hours: By Bicycle</b>			1.5																												
<b>Owling Hours</b>	0.5	3	4.75	1.25	4.25	6.25	1					0.3			0.5						0.5		0.5	1	1		1	0.5			
<b>Feeder Hours</b>	4.25		2		31					1																				30	
<b>Party Miles: Total</b>	282.8	148	389.4	203.8	316.8	349	36	19	30	6	3	44	4	37	20	6.5	29	3	6	30	6	11	1	10	11	13	5.5	16	3		
<b>Party Miles: On Foot</b>	68.8	64	94	14	62	90	3.5	3	8	6	2	6	4	6.5	3	6	4	3	6	6	4	2	1	2	1.5	2	5.5	2	3		
<b>Party Miles: By Car</b>	214	84	285.4	189.8	254.8	259	32	16	22		1	38		30	17	0.5	25			24	2	9		8	9.5	11		14			
<b>Party Miles: By Bicycle</b>			10																												
<b>Owling Miles</b>		2.5	21.8	0.75		3.25	0						0			0									3	0			0	0.3	

Chapel Hill count date: 12/21/03; compiler: Will Cook; 21-47F; W 0-10; clear; no precip; still water partly frozen  
 Raleigh count date: 12/20/03; compiler: John Connors; weather: 25-35F, clear, 5-10 mph breeze  
 Falls Lake count date: 1/4/04; compiler: Brian Bockhahn

Kerr Lake count date: 1/3/04; compiler: Brian Bockhahn  
 Durham count date: 12/14/03; compiler: Mike Schultz  
 Jordan Lake count date: 12/28/03; compiler: Norm Budnitz; 20-60F, clear

**Party Areas**

- 1 1,4
- 2 2,7
- 3 3, 5, 6
- 4 5 (Hogan's Farm)
- 5 7 (part)
- 6 8, 13
- 7 9, 10
- 8 11, 12
- 9 14, 17
- 10 15, 18
- 11 16, 29
- 12 19
- 13 20

**Party Members**

- Derb Carter
- Pam Timmons, Perry Haaland
- Jeff Phippen, Erica Phippen
- Dori Rhodes
- Ginger Travis, Portia McKnight
- Tom Driscoll
- Norm Budnitz
- Kent Fiala
- Betty King, Barbara Roth, Judy Teague
- Bob Chase, John Frederick
- Josh Rose, April Smyth
- Carol Williamson
- Will Cook, Maryscot Mullins

**Party Areas**

- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24