

THE BULLETIN...



Chapel Hill Bird Club

January 2005

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

c/o R. Gluck
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Vol. 34

NEXT MEETING: Monday, Jan. 24
Program: "Birding Panama"

When/Where: 7:15pm./refreshments; 7:30pm./meeting
The lounge, Binkley Baptist Church, corner of Highway 15-501 bypass and Willow Dr., behind University Mall, Chapel Hill.

Who/What: Start the new year by coming out of the cold and being transported to a warm land teeming with birds, butterflies, and scenic natural history, as Club members Will Cook, Kent Fiala, Lena Gallitano, and Judy Murray recount their 2-week birding excursion to Panama last spring with wonderful slides and travelogue details.

~ Saturday Morning Field Trips ~

Local field trips, generally led by Doug Shadwick, depart from Glen Lennox Shopping Center parking lot off Hwy 54 promptly at 7:30 am. most Saturday mornings (NOT Jan.15, see below). All skill levels welcome. Trips are usually over by noon. Dress for the weather and for walking. For further details call Doug at 942-0479. (For other local bird walk possibilities see page four of *Bulletin*.)

=>>> MLK Coastal Trip -- JAN. 15-17!!

Doug's traditional coastal weekend outing (Martin Luther King holiday) to the Outer Banks and possibly including Lake Mattamuskeet is *RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER* -- a field trip bonanza, especially if you've never seen the Outer Banks at prime waterfowl season. Expenses include food, lodging, gas. Contact Doug, QUICKLY, (at the no. above) if interested in joining up for all or part.

Field trips, counts, meetings/talks, webpage, newsletter, checklists, fun, knowledge... your Chapel Hill Bird Club!

No. 1

>} Thought For the Day >} >} >}

"Birds are, perhaps, the most elegant expression of reality."
~ Roger Tory Peterson

HAPPY 2005!! and Greetings

...from your new newsletter editor. A big *THANKS* to Ginger Travis, Will Cook, and other past Bird Club editors whose footsteps I follow. I'll be testing out some new features in the *Bulletin* (for all the different tastes out there). Feel free to make suggestions, submit material, or let me know what you do/don't like.

~ Rob Gluck, ed.

DUES, DUES, DUES... and a DON'T

Speaking of the New Year, it's time for most, not all, members to **RENEW** their dues (\$15/yr. individual/family, \$10/yr. students -- renewal date is on mailing label). Please make checks out to Chapel Hill Bird Club and promptly send along to:

Chapel Hill Bird Club, c/o Ruth Roberson,
38 Stoneridge Pl., Durham, NC. 27705

Thanks, and please DON'T forget.

??? Questions Of The Month ???

In an attempt to make the newsletter more interactive I'll be tossing out a question or two each month to which readers can respond (to thrush@hotmail.com, or via mail)). If enough folks reply I'll summarize results the following month.

This month's questions: (answer one or both)

- 1) What originally got you started in birding?, and
- 2) If you could magically be a bird for one day in the Triangle what bird species would you choose?

Who's Who -- Getting To Know Your Fellow Club Members

Each month I hope to include a brief profile of 1-2 of our more active or long-term Club members so we can all get to know them better. This month's 'birding bios' are of two excellent birders, Kent Fiala (past Pres. of CHBC, and current editor and webmaster for Carolina Bird Club), and long-time Triangle birder/teacher Norm Budnitz

Kent Fiala is a Ph.D. (dissertation on Red-winged Blackbird breeding) in Zoology (U. Michigan) and a software developer for SAS. He has been a member of CHBC for about 13 years and was one of those instrumental in revitalizing the Club in the mid 90's. A recent birding thrill for Kent was briefly spotting (with John Fussell) a large swift last November on the NC coast -- possibly a record-sighting Fork-tailed Swift!? Chapel Hill count areas #11 & #12 (near New Hope Creek, adjacent to Duke Forest) are among his favorite local birding spots. And he cites Scott Wiedensaul's Living On the Wind as a favorite birding read.

Kent grew up in Beatrice, NE. and traces his nature interests back to the children's nature stories of Thornton Burgess. The Golden Nature Series "Birds" volume funnelled that interest more specifically to birds, and this is how he recalls the moment at age 11 when 'birding' took hold of him as he noticed a friend gazing at a tree in his own front yard:

"I went out to see what he was looking at, and he pointed out a Brown Creeper. I knew about Brown Creepers from the Burgess Bird Book for Children but never dreamed I could actually see one. The thought that I was seeing one not just in Nebraska, not just in my town, but in my own yard, was mind-bending. It was a moment that changed my life." From that beginning Kent now lists 619 species on his ABA life list including 358 NC state birds.

Norm Budnitz is another Ph.D. (studying lemurs in Madagascar) in Zoology who currently works at Duke teaching teachers how to teach science -- something he excelled at for 22 years at the middle and high school level, instilling young people with his own love of learning and science (including instructing our own Will Cook along the way!). Norm has been a CHBC member for about 10 years, but originally grew up in Massachusetts. It was around age 10 at summer camp in New Hampshire however where regular bird walks first sparked Norm's interest and, presented with binoculars and a bird book at age 13, Norm was "hooked." Two of his favorite local birding spots are Butner Gamelands (north Durham County) and the east side of

the Jordan Lake dam. He cites Beak of the Finch by Jonathan Weiner (on natural selection in the Galapagos) and the classic Ravens In Winter by one of his hero-naturalists, Bernd Heinrich, as two of his favorite bird-related volumes. (Another Heinrich gem, Winter World, was recently lauded on Carolinabirds.) Norm's ABA life list stands at 692 (subject to a Dec. trip to the Rio Grande Valley), and he names the Kiwi, Lyrebird, and Emperor Penguin as more worldly species on his wish-list. In addition to birding, gardening and origami are among the top interests/talents of this multifaceted Red Sox fan. If you ever need a great birding instructor AND a fine set of paper-folded cranes, Norm's the guy to see!

....and Our Mascot: The Brown-headed Nuthatch

The Brown-headed Nuthatch has become a sort of unofficial mascot of the Chapel Hill Bird Club. As newsletter editor back in 1993 Will Cook used the spunky bird as a logo in the *Bulletin* heading, and currently employs it on his official CHBC webpage as well. Then in November 2003, the Club donated funds to the N.C. Museum of Art in Raleigh for restoration of the Brown-headed Nuthatch print in their Audubon folio.

This diminutive bird is in our area all year-round, but often goes unnoticed. If attracted to a backyard feeder they can become tame enough to eat from your hand. And despite their size they are often fearless around larger species in territorial disputes. I once watched one repeatedly dive-bomb a Pileated Woodpecker until the frustrated larger bird gave up its post on a rotting stump.

Primarily a bird of pine forests the Brown-headed is a cavity nester that will excavate its own hole if a pre-existing hole is not available. And according to The Birder's Handbook (Ehrlich, *et. al.*), it is one of the only N. American birds to habitually use "tools" -- routinely employing bits of bark to pry off other bits of bark in its search for insects; even being observed carrying its 'tools' in flight from tree to tree. This industrious and perky avian makes a fine representative for the Bird Club!

Hey, Who Is Our Senior Senior ???

I'm on a quest to find out who among us is the most long-standing Club member. If you have been a dues-paying member of the Chapel Hill Bird Club for **over 25 years** please contact me (thrush@hotmail.com or 967-3134) with the estimated span of your membership (sorry, no cash prizes awarded, just bragging rights).

Stock Up On Bird Seed

Mast production (acorns & other nuts) was unusually low this winter in much of the Piedmont and other parts of NC. Birds (...and yes, squirrels/rodents) that utilize this food supply will be looking for alternative sources of sustenance this season. Be prepared to refill your backyard feeders even more often than in past winters.

Condor Success

The first wild-hatched **California Condor** chick to fledge in California in 22 years took its first flight last Nov. 4. The father is a 10-year-old formerly captive male released in 1995, and the mother a 7-year-old 1998-release. The chick will require about 18 months of care from it's parents... and a good dose of luck.

Whooper Success Too

As of Dec. 1, 2004, a record-breaking 216 **Whooping Cranes** had arrived at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on migration.

From the 'WHA-A-AT Were They Thinking' Dept.!

As most *Bulletin* readers know, last Dec. 7, owners of a Manhattan townhouse had the nest of "Pale Male," the NY city Red-tailed Hawk made famous in book and TV specials, torn down from its 12th floor ledge, after over 10 years and 25 chicks raised, sparking a fury among the urban raptor's widespread fans. Eight days later, stunned by the unforeseen outcry, and following talks with National and NY Audubon, building owners agreed to permit the nest to be rebuilt. Efforts are underway to re-attract the hawk pair. Stay tuned... (Marie Winn's site, www.mariewinn.com, is one of several keeping track of the story.)

News Blues

Experts now estimate that possibly as many as 25% of all bird species may be "functionally extinct" (critically endangered or extinct in the wild) by the end of the century. Already, BirdLife International classifies about 1/4 of the world's 305 known raptor species as 'threatened.' On a brighter side, the American Bald Eagle, listed as "endangered" in 1978, and downgraded to "threatened" in 1995, has rebounded to the point US Fish and Wildlife proposes delisting the species altogether, although numbers are still far below the estimated 250,000 that soared over the land when the nation was founded over 200 years ago. (If you're interested in helping with official Bald Eagle counts locally contact Kate Eschelbach of New Hope Audubon, 613-8118 or kak15@duke.edu).

If You Put It Up... Maybe... They Will Come:

Each winter increasing numbers of (mostly western) hummingbirds are seen throughout NC. Susan Campbell of the Hummingbird Study Group encourages everyone so inclined to put up and maintain a hummer feeder through the winter months. Ya' never know just who might show up. At least three winter hummers have already been seen in the Triangle this season. If you see one of these winter gems please report it to Susan at: 910-949-3207, or susan@ncaves.com.

Worldly Travelers....

Many Club members have travelled extensively on birding excursions and could be good resources for others considering such trips. I'd like to put together a listing of folks in the newsletter who can be contacted for information/advice about various North American and worldwide birding locales. If you feel able and willing to assist others with such info please send me your name, ph. no., email, and locales you would be happy to advise others about.

....speaking of which, John Connors with the NC Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, recently posted the following notice on 'Carolinabirds' for a spring Nicaragua excursion:

EcoQuest Travel will once again offer a 10-day ecotourism trip across central Nicaragua from April 29-May 8, 2005. Leader: John Connors
This excursion includes a 5-day stay at the Finca Esperanza Verde, 2-day home-stays with families in San Ramon where we experience Nica culture (make nacatamales and dance to Nica folk tunes) and bird the general Mataglpa highlands. We conclude with 3 days in the colonial city of Granada where we visit an active Volcano Masaya, experience dry tropical forest at the Domitilia Wildlife Reserve, and shop in the markets near Masaya. In the past we have identified over 150 species of birds (including 3 new species for the country), dozens of reptiles and amphibians, and many mammals including Mantled Howler Monkeys, 2 species of Sloth, Agouti, Olingo and more. This is a trip where you experience both the culture and the natural history of Nicaragua... many past participants will vouch for how this experience impacted them. Info: John Connors (919-755-0253 H) or www.EcoQuestTravel.net (John is also offering an earlier April bird-banding trip to Nicaragua through EcoQuest you may contact him about.)

Oceanic B-r-r-r-ding

Brian Patteson leads pelagic field trips off the Carolina coast right through the winter months, with two scheduled in February. If interested, check 'em out at his website: www.patteson.com

Field trips, counts, meetings/talks, webpage, newsletter, checklists, fun, knowledge... your Chapel Hill Bird Club!

Sightings From Carolinabirds

(If you are unfamiliar with 'Carolinabirds', our North/South Carolina internet birding listserv group see Will Cook's home-page, listed at end of "CHBC Contacts" section, to learn how to subscribe.)

--Nov. 2004 -- Early reports by many individuals of Siskins, RB Nuthatches, and Purple Finches, afford hope for a banner year of winter 'irruptive' species.

--Nov. 1 -- Alan Kneidel finds a rare **Lark Sparrow** at the old cemetery on UNC campus.

--Nov. 6 -- at Oregon Inlet on the coast; Kent Fiala and John Fussell sight a large quick-moving **Swift**; possibly a record-setting Fork-tailed Swift.

--Nov. 13 -- Ricky Davis finds 5 **Black Scoters**, 2 **Surf Scoters**, and 1 **White-winged Scoter** at Ebenezer Pt., Jordan Lake, possibly the first reported occurrence of all 3 species in a single Triangle locale. Also observed, 1 **Red-breasted Merganser**, 22 **Bald Eagles**, and **Common Loons**. And on the same day a single **Eared Grebe** spotted at Cary's Lake Crabtree as well by Ricky.

--Nov. 26 -- Steve Shultz reports the usual winter ducks showing up on Raleigh ponds in some numbers, including **Ring-necks**, **Bufflehead**, **Am.Wigeon**, **N. Shovelers**, **Hooded Mergansers**, and **Lesser Scaup**. (and **Canvasbacks** in later weeks.)

--Nov 29 -- A late-nesting **Killdeer** found in an NC State parking lot by Clyde Sorenson.

--Nov. 29 -- Taylor Piephoff and Jeff Pippen report a **Common Eider** at Ocean Isle on the coast.

--Dec. 1 -- John Daughtry reports a male **Western Tanager** in his yard in Greenville, NC.

--Dec. 6 -- Brian Bockhahn surveys Falls Lake for waterbirds and finds, among other things: 22 **Common Loon**, 16 **Horned Grebe**, 130 **DC Cormorant**, 33 **Hooded Mergansers**, 33 **Red-breasted Mergansers**, 35 **Bonaparte's Gulls**, 38 **Herring Gulls**, 1 **Greater Black-backed Gull**, 1 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, 1 **Gadwall**, 9 **Canvasback**, 8 **Bufflehead**, 8 **Ruddy Duck**, and 3 **Bald Eagles**.

--Dec. 10 -- Joanne Harley, down New Bern way, reports at least 7 **Baltimore Orioles** at her backyard feeders, attracted by grape jelly. She also mentions marshmallows, oranges, apples, and baked goods as at-

tractants. Each winter several orioles appear for extended stays in the Triangle as well (at least 8 were recorded on the Dec. 18 Raleigh Christmas Bird Count!)

--Dec. 12 -- Derb Carter spots 2 **Ravens** on Hwy 54 just west of Chapel Hill. This is in addition to earlier spotty sightings of Ravens in the Orange County area by Derb and others.

--Dec. 12 -- UNC's resident **Barred Owls** appear back on their breeding grounds on the front quad of campus (McCorkle Pl.)

--Dec. 18 -- Gail Schwoerke reports a winter **hummingbird** appearing at her feeder in Durham.

--Dec. 18 -- Oliver and Joanne Ferguson report a **Summer Tanager** visiting their feeder in Durham.

--Dec. 18 -- Highlights for the Raleigh Christmas Bird Count as reported by John Connors include: a **Great Egret**, 2 **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers**, at least 4 **Loggerhead Shrikes**, **Palm Warbler**, **White-crowned Sparrows**, at least 8 **Baltimore Orioles**, a **Rufous Hummingbird**, and a **Nashville Warbler**.

--Dec. 19 -- Will Cook observes 3 **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** and 7 **Pintail** near Falls Lake during Durham Christmas Bird Count.

-- Dec. 25 -- A lone female **Evening Grosbeak** was one of Cindy Fox's Christmas day presents in her Chapel Hill yard. By the time you read this, possibly more will have been spotted.

Further info from local Christmas bird counts will be available in an upcoming newsletter.

More Upcoming Local Bird Walks

Jan. 8, 22, and Feb. 5 -- Wild Bird Center walks; meet at 8am. at the Eastgate Shopping Center store.

Jan. 23 -- New Hope Audubon outing; meet at Mardi Gras Bowling Alley parking lot off Hwy 54 at 1pm.; Tom Driscoll, 932-7966 for info.

Feb. 5 -- Lake Crabtree bird walk (off Aviation Parkway); meet in first parking lot at 8:30am.

If you know well in advance of other outings you would like to see posted in the *Bulletin* please let me know of them.

-- Book Looks --

Some recent books of possible interest to Bird Club members include:

The Carolina Parakeet: Glimpses of a Vanished Bird
by Noel F. R. Snyder (~\$30)

A comprehensive account of an enigmatic species and the only parrot ever endemic to the United States.

On the Wing: To the Edge of the Earth with the Peregrine Falcon
by Alan Tennant (~\$26)

The story of a naturalist's effort to track, via radio-tagging, the epic yearly migration of a Peregrine Falcon.

John James Audubon: The Making of an American
by Richard Rhodes (\$26)

One of three current bios now out on the man most closely associated with ornithology in this country, by a Pulitzer prize-winning historian.

Oh, By-The-Way, You KNOW You're a Birding Fanatic If...

(adapted from internet sources)

1. Announcing you need a little fresh air, you grab your binoculars and head out for the nearest sewage treatment plant.
2. You hurriedly rush to the beach upon hearing that a hurricane is on the way.
3. Your co-workers excitedly come grab you whenever they find a dead window-strike outside the building.
4. 96.7% of all gifts you receive are bird-related.
5. While at your best friend's wedding you casually remark to the person standing beside you how nice the bride and groom look in their breeding plumage.
6. You have twice as much money invested in your optics as in your automobiles.
7. You keep a list of birds you observe outside the bathroom window while on the toilet.
8. Your email address, license plate, and ATM 'pin' word are all bird names.
9. Whenever you meet a member of the opposite sex who's a birder the first thing you notice about them is the brand of their optics.
10. You ACTUALLY enjoy ID'ing gulls!

******Just-For-Fun Column ******

(all quiz answers at very end of *Bulletin*)

Bird Jumble:

(unscramble these bird names and then use the indicated letters to form another bird name. ex. ornib = robin)

POGINE _ _ ^ _ _ _ _ _ _ ^

KILFREC _ _ _ _ ^ _ _ _ _ _ _

CALPINE _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ^ _ _

RYEKUT _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

TERLEKS _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ^

??????? _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ^

Match Game:

Match the birds listed in column B with their most appropriate associations from column A?

A.

B.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Timber Doodle | A. Snowy Owl |
| 2. Spatulate | B. Manx Shearwater |
| 3. "Nevermore" | C. Roseate Spoonbill |
| 4. Tubenose | D. Kiwi |
| 5. Psittacine | E. Jacana |
| 6. Hybrid | F. Raven |
| 7. Lek | G. Woodcock |
| 8. Polyandrous | H. Brewster's Warbler |
| 9. Nyctea Scandiacca | I. Sage Grouse |
| 10. Lack of retrices | J. Monk Parakeet |

If you drop the first 3 letters of a common backyard bird's name you end up with the name for a bird of the open countryside. Can you name the yard bird?

The only 'birds' to ever win the Super Bowl were the Baltimore Ravens (2001), but two other 'species' have played in the big game. Can you name them?

Uhhh, Questions and Answers:

(for the 6-year-old in each of us)

Q: Why did the chicken cross the road?
A: To prove to the 'possum it could be done.

Q: Hey, how do you keep a turkey in suspense?
A: I'll tell you tomorrow!

Email! Email! Read All About It...

Receiving the *Bulletin* via internet/email (a PDF file at Will's site), instead of through the Post Office, saves your Club significant \$\$\$! So if you'd like to do your part for the environment and the Club please contact me (with your email address) to choose this option.

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**From Those Folks at Cornell...**

For the academically-inclined out there, the authoritative Handbook of Bird Biology from Cornell Lab of Ornithology (multiple authors) is now available for a cool \$100, covering avian anatomy, physiology, behavior, and ecology, with numerous interesting sidebar topics. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>)

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Avian Factoids of the Month:

(from David M. Bird's The Bird Almanac)

At 5 mph. the slowest flying bird species is the American Woodcock (who is now among us putting on their nightly mating rituals).

And the fastest running flying bird is the Greater Roadrunner at 26 mph.

~~ **Membership Form** ~~

(become a member or give a gift membership to a friend!)

Name _____

Address _____

ph _____

email _____

new member: ___ or, renewal: ___

dues: \$15/yr. individuals/family, \$10/yr. students
send checks payable to Chapel Hill Bird Club to:

Ruth Roberson, 38 Stoneridge Pl., Durham,
NC. 27705

Birding Yard Sale!

If you have birding or other nature-related items you'd like to sell (moving up to Swarovskis and getting rid of those old Bushnells!) I'd like to try offering space in the newsletter for such goods to be advertised. I prefer to limit this service to dues-paying members and to appropriate items (optics, bird/nature books, camping/hiking equipment., etc.). Please send me notices, preferably by email, of such goods you wish to offer (include name, ph. no., email, short description, and price). This is an experiment; let's make it work to everyone's benefit!

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**CHBC Contacts** (ph., email) :

- >President: Joe Bearden, 884-9050 chickadeebirders@earthlink.net
- >Vice-Pres.(RDU): Karen Bearden, 884-9050 chickadeebirders@earthlink.net
- >Vice-Pres. (Chapel Hill): Judy Murray, 942-2985
- >Secretary: Amalie Tuffin, 641-8072 amaliet@post.harvard.edu
- >Treasurer: Ruth Roberson, 489-4888 ruth-roberson@nc.rr.com
- >Field Trip Chairman: Doug Shadwick, 942-0479 dougshadwick@aol.com
- >Refreshments Chair: Karen Piplani 929-6553 karenpip@aol.com
- >CHBC webmaster, Chapel Hill checklist and CBC compiler: Will Cook, 382-9134 cwcook@duke.edu
- >Newsletter Editor: Rob Gluck, 967-3134 thrush@hotmail.com

Visit the CHBC on the Web at:

**[www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc](http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc)**

Also, Will Cook's homepage is an excellent general source of birding and nature-related links/resources:

**[www.duke.edu/~cwcook](http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook)**

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Pass It On....

Suggestion: when you're done with this newsletter drop it off where someone else interested in birds just might find it!

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**Parting Words...**

"We must go out and re-ally ourselves to Nature every day. We must make root, send out some little fibre at least, even every winter day." ~ *Henry David Thoreau*

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Quiz Answers:

- "Bird Jumble": pigeon, flicker, pelican, turkey, kestrel, & pintail
- "Match Game" : 1G, 2C, 3F, 4B, 5J, 6H, 7I, 8E, 9A, 10D
- 'backyard bird': mockingbird ---> kingbird
- "Super Bowl": Atlanta Falcons and Philadelphia Eagles

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