

THE BULLETIN...



Chapel Hill Bird Club

May 2005

<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>

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Vol. 34

Final Get-Together of Season: Club Potluck, Monday, May 23

When/Where: ~6:30pm., Ebenezer Pt., Jordan Lake

Who/What: Bring yourself and family or friends, a food dish to share, your own drink, plate and utensils, binoculars, kayak/canoe, and maybe a good bird story or two, to our annual end-of-season potluck (last monthly meeting 'til next Sept.).

We'll also be voting on next year's slate of officers, which looks suspiciously familiar... because this year's set of excellent folks have agreed to serve for another year in their respective posts!: Joe Bearden -- President; Karen Bearden -- Vice-Pres.(RDU), Judy Murray -- Vice Pres.(Chapel Hill); Secretary -- Amalie Tuffin; and Treasurer -- Ruth Roberson.

directions: Ebenezer Pt. State Recreation Area is off SR 1008 (aka Mt. Carmel Church Rd. or Farrington Rd.), about 2.3 mi. south of intersection with Hwy 64 (Wilsonville). Sign marks entrance (admittance free), pass gate area and follow road straight back to far end bordering lake with shelter, picnic tables, rest rooms.

\$\$\$ Wildathon \$\$\$

One of the best ways to contribute to local/state conservation efforts is to contribute money to local Audubon chapter fundraisers known as "Wildathons" or "Birdathons," that take place yearly and are currently ongoing. Contact the following if you can help with a donation or want more information.

Tom Driscoll, **New Hope Audubon** (Orange/Chatham/Durham counties), 932-7966, btdriscoll@bellsouth.net

Karen Bearden, **Wake County Audubon**, 884-9050, chickadeebirders@earthlink.net

To :

No. 5

>} *Thought for the Day* >} >} >|

"The truth is out there."

~ Dr. Jerome Jackson, in 2002, writing in regards to the possible continued existence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker



IVORY-THRILLS



'LORD GOD!', WHAT NEWS: As most readers know the **IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER** has been **rediscovered** in the Big Woods area of NE. Arkansas (stunningly confirmed by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and The Nature Conservancy on April 28, reporting at least 15 sightings over a one year period, though uncertain if more than one bird is involved) -- the so-called "Holy Grail" of North American birdwatching. For some of us this is the culmination of a lifetime dream 40+ years in-the-making. What the future holds for the species of course remains highly uncertain, but just knowing that a few individuals managed to 'outwit, outplay, and outlast' the horde of skeptics over the years is reason enough for much joy and satisfaction.

We are left to wonder how many, if any, other out-of-the-way locales, murky backwaters, and remote bottomland tracts, rarely trekked by birders, might yet harbor members of this grand primeval-like species. One ought never underestimate the ability of winged creatures to elude simple human efforts at detection ...nor, overestimate our shallow understanding of their behavior, needs, or adaptability. There is MUCH we don't know with certainty... but hey, the truth *IS* out there, and for now we can revel in the moment.

(If so-inclined you can make a donation toward protecting the habitat where Ivory-bills have been found by going to: <http://www.ivorybill.org>)

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

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

Ginger Travis has been in CHBC for about a decade, a product in part of birding workshops organized by Barbara Roth in the mid-90's. At that same time Haven Wiley inspired her to learn most of the local breeding bird songs which has been a wonderful aid in accumulating a yard list of 119 species, including 25 warblers, over the 20 years she's lived in the woods of Orange County. Her interest in birds goes back even further though and she still owns/treasures the Peterson Field Guide she was given in 1954, revelling in its author's unequalled "gift for describing in a few words the essence of a species' appearance, movements or song."

Since 1998, one of Ginger's favorite pastimes has been kayaking/canoeing the local lakes. And among her most "delightful" spots is the delta where Phil's Creek enters University Lake, with a kayak allowing very close approaches to several wonderful spring birds. Currently, she also employs the kayak to help monitor one of the Jordan Lake Bald Eagle nests for the Army Corps of Engineers once-a-month. After she takes early retirement from her job with UNC she'd love to discover additional similar volunteer opportunities.

In acknowledging that she's not much of a lister nor rarity-chaser, Ginger notes that "the single most interesting thing I've learned about birders and birding is that we all pursue the activity according to our own personalities -- and I seem to do it seeking peace and solitude." If there are others in the Club so inclined she adds that she'd "love to help any CHBC members get started birding by canoe or kayak." If that offer sounds enticing to you give her a call at 942-7746 and tell her of your interest.

Jeff Phippen (one of our April speakers and Peru survivors) hails originally from Michigan where a "begrudgingly"-taken ornithology course in grad school at U. of Michigan introduced him to (and hooked him on) birding, leading to a current world life list of 1613 species (ABA=648, NC=403). He's been with CHBC since moving to our area 18 years ago.

Jeff works as a biology research associate at Duke (where he's been known on occasion to work and bird with a fellow named Will Cook), and also teaches introductory biology at Durham Technical Community College. Many of his interests, including butterflying, center around natural history, and come together at his own website: <http://www.duke.edu/~jspippen/nature.htm>

Locally, he especially likes to bird Jordan Lake areas, and further afield has a hankering for the Rio Grande Valley (TX.), SE Arizona, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He cites Bill Oddie's "Little Black Bird

Book" as a favorite bird-read [*Ed. note: I've never known anyone familiar with this volume that didn't highly recommend it. Also, see pg. 4 'Summer Reading'*]

As a greatest birding thrill Jeff mentions once watching an E.Kingbird land on the back of a Bald Eagle and peck at it as if to say, "Get out of MY territory," before returning to its tree perch. This episode helps explain in part what struck me as Jeff's unusual choices for favorite local birds: Eastern Kingbird and Gray Catbird -- somewhat drab species compared to many folks' selections, but proving once again that in birding, as in life, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Mini-Breeding Bird Survey

Each year, since 1999, Dr. Haven Wiley has organized a survey of local (Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties) breeding birds, in conjunction with data being collected nationally. This is done along various assigned routes, following specific methodology, and can be completed between the dates of May 15 to June 30. If you are interested in participating call Marsha Stephens at 732-4014 for additional information, and visit the following website to learn more:

<http://www.unc.edu/~rhwiley/mbbs/>



One Lucky Bird

Thought this recent April anecdote off 'Carolina-birds' listserv from Alan Meijer, a research technician at NCSU, worth repeating for those who missed it:

"The other night, I ran right over a bird flapping on the road. I didn't see it till I was! right upon it.! I turned around and went back.! After the next car went by, I could see in my headlights a Red Phase SCREECH OWL standing in the middle of the road, looking a little wobbly!! I picked him up in my fleece jacket, took it home, showed my kids, and it soon started to seem fine.! I finally let it go.! It flew up, hovered in front of my face momentarily, and then took off into the night.! I think perhaps it had landed on prey and a car ran over it, dazing it, but not injuring it.! After three cars went over it, it was woozy.! What a beautiful bird.! Made my day."

[*Ed. note: Alan may have been one lucky fellow as well: A raptor rehabber once told me that, despite their cute, huggable appearance, Screech Owls were the raptor she most feared working with (or turning her back on), because of their quickness and viciousness!*]

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Some Area Sightings

Remarkably, to the delight of birders, the Guilford County **Sandhill Crane** first found in early March, stayed around for about a week into April!

Also of note this season: somewhere around a dozen **Bald Eagle** nests are being monitored in the Triangle area for current activity.

Mar. 26 -- Karen/Joe Bearden see a **Common Loon** at Lake Crabtree. Also, around 26th Amalie Tuffin hears an **Ovenbird** in Hillsborough.

Mar. 30 -- R. Gluck sees a **Yellow-throated Warbler** off Big Woods Rd. (Chatham Cty.) and a **Red-breasted Merganser** at Little Creek Impdmt. (hwy 54).

Mar. 31 -- W. Cook & J. Phippen spot a **Mississippi Kite** over Duke Forest (Orange Cty.), and 3 CHBCer see one near Cane Creek (west Orange Cty.) on Apr. 1.

Apr. 1 -- J. Socolar reports a couple of **Black-throated Green Warblers** and many **Parulas** in Duke Forest (Orange Cty.), and Shelley Theye hears an **Ovenbird** in Chatham Cty.

Apr. 2 -- Jeff Phippen finds a lone **G. Egret** on beaver swamp in Duke Forest land off Erwin Rd.

Apr. 3 -- Randy Dunson reports a first-of-season **RT.Hummingbird** in his Hillsborough backyard, and on the 4th they were reported in Chapel Hill as well.

Apr. 6 -- Greg Dodge reports a **Broad-winged Hawk** in Hillsborough and Alan Kneidel sees one over Battle Park (Chapel Hill). J. Phippen reports **C. Swifts** in Durham.

Apr. 9 /10 -- B. Bockhahn finds a **Forster's Tern** at Falls Lake and a **Royal Tern** at Lake Crabtree on successive days.

Apr. 10 -- Yet another **C. Raven** sighting in the Triangle, this time over Durant Nature Park in Raleigh, seen by John Connors. Helmut Mueller would later report both a **Raven and Mississippi Kite** flyovers at his Chapel Hill home.

Apr. 11 -- Clyde Smith finds 5 **Gt. Egrets** at Little Creek Impdmt. on hwy 54. **Hooded Warbler** arrives at Shelley Theye's Chatham County residence, also **Ovenbirds**, and from previous week: Shelley reports **Blue-headed & Yellow-throated Vireo**, and **Broad-winged Hawk**. Finally, on 11th, Alan Kneidel reports 58 species at Mason Farm including: **Grt.-Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, N. Parula, Prairie Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Redstart, Ovenbird, C. Yellowthroat, YB Cuckoo, Gt. Egret, House Wren, Rusty Blackbird, and E. Meadowlark.**

Apr. 12 -- **Eastern Kingbird** heard by Josh Rose in Durham, and the above warblers and vireos being reported by several folks around Triangle.

Apr. 13 -- A **Pacific Loon** and **Loggerhead Shrikes** reported at Kerr Lake. A **Loggerhead** also reported in Alleghany County by James Coman III on 15th..

Apr. 15 -- Lisa Merschel spots 2 **Palm Warblers** in her Hillsborough yard.

Apr. 17 -- Lisa Dailey and later Shantanu Phukan find an adult **Little Blue Heron** at Little Creek Impdmt. (hwy 54). Over in Alleghany Cty. James Coman III comes upon a **Sora Rail** in a small pond on his farm.

On schedule, by around mid-April, the normal spring migrants (warblers, vireos, tanagers, Wood Thrush, etc.) were being reported by various folks throughout the Triangle.

Apr. 24 -- On Durham spring bird count Will Cook picked up **Blackburnian, Palm, and Worm-eating Warblers** near Falls Lake, as well as 5 **Caspian Terns....** which were put to shame by Ricky Davis' finding of an astounding 33 Caspians at Raleigh's Lake Wheeler on the same day! Additionally, Ricky had a **Cattle Egret** at Falls..



Durham Yard Bird #101 ???

Since mid-April many folks in East Durham have caught glimpses of a fast-moving 5-foot tall bird (and they were neither watching "Sesame Street" nor drinking at the time). An escaped **Emu** eluded police equipped with nets, lassoes, and "Emu-proof vests." Birder Jonathan Steere and wife Sarah encountered the bird on Cheek Rd. when it approached their stopped car with a posse of officers in hot pursuit, before it once again escaped back into woods.

An unsuccessful Sgt. J.M. Peter of the Durham police concluded, "We were probably more entertaining to him than he was to us." If you happen to spot this scofflaw call Durham County Animal Control at 560-0630.

~ Quiz Corner ~

(answers at end of page 4)

What's It Mean?

Can you match up the following ornithological-related terms (column A) with their closest meanings from column B (not all 'B' terms will be used):

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>A.</u> | <u>B.</u> |
| 1. fulvous | a. abnormally pale |
| 2. pileated | b. hooked or curved |
| 3. leucistic | c. heavily-streaked |
| 4. ferruginous | d. tawny or brownish-yellow |
| 5. falcated | e. bluish or silver-gray |
| 6. glaucous | f. non nest-building |
| 7. gallinaceous | g. helpless, dependent |
| 8. altricial | h. short-tailed |
| | i. resembling domestic fowl |
| | j. capped or crested |
| | k. rusty colored |

Wordplay, Birdplay

If you spell a certain seabird name backwards you get the plural of a different type of seabird. Can you identify the birds in question?

...And Play Bird, er uhh, Play Ball

America's 'favorite pastime' is getting underway. Only three professional baseball teams are named after birds; can you name them?

The *LAST* words of an avid birder: "What duck??"

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~~ **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**

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,
jmurray@unc.edu
- >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 ,
k_piplani@alumni.unc.edu
- >CHBC webmaster, checklist, and CH Xmas count compiler:
Will Cook, 382-9134 , cwcook@duke.edu
- >Newsletter Editor: *Rob Gluck*, 967-3134 , thrush@hotmail.com

Visit the CHBC on the Web at:

http://chbc.carolinanature.com

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

http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook

A Note of Thanks...

to all those who helped our Refreshments Chair,
Karen Piplani, provide members with snacks and drinks
at our monthly meetings this season: Julia Shields, Ruth
Roberson, Roy Lindholm, Edith Tatum, and Julia Guo.

If YOU'D like to help out with the Club's gustatory
predilections(!) next year contact Karen at 929-6553.

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Bibliophiles

The Wilson Ornithological Society runs a website
offering close to 1000 mostly used and out-of-print
(but some new) bird books and monographs available
for sale. Possibly of interest if there's something
you've been looking for for awhile and can't find:

http://www.ummz.lsa.umich.edu:591/Ornithology/
.....

...and Summer Reading

(...okay, so it's not John Grisham)

Birding-related books just keep a-coming. A quick
look at Amazon.com revealed several books in the
pipeline or just out, of possible interest to Club mem-
bers. Here are just two that looked intriguing:

**To See Every Bird On Earth: A Father, A Son,
and a Lifelong Obsession** by Dan Koeppl

**Tracking Desire: A Journey After Swallow-
tailed Kites** by Susan Cerulean

By the way, Bill Oddie, sort of a Dave Barry of Bri-
tish birding mentioned on pg. 2 of *The Bulletin* for his
Little Black Bird Book, has written several other books
as well, including:

**Bill Oddie's Introduction to Birdwatching, Follow
That Bird, and Bill Oddie's Gripping Yarns: Tales of
Birds and Birding**

Finally, under the circumstances, I can't help but also
recommend two other volumes:

The Race to Save the Lord God Bird by Phillip
Hoose, and **The Search For the Ivory-billed
Woodpecker** by Jerome Jackson

Enjoy...

Parting Words...

"Ya Gotta Believe..."

~ *Tug McGraw, with the '73 N.Y. Mets*

HAPPY SUMMER EVERYONE !

(With birding and Club activities slowing down, the next issue of
The Bulletin will come out in August or September.)

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Quiz Answers:

What's It Mean : 1-d, 2-j, 3-a, 4-k, 5-b, 6-e, 7-i, 8-g

Wordplay, Birdplay : Skua and Auks

Play Ball: St. Louis Cardinals, Baltimore Orioles, Toronto Blue Jays