

birding the triangle... and beyond, for over half a century

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The BULLETIN...
Chapel Hill Bird Club
Nov/Dec 2007
<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>

Vol. 35

>> Meeting :Monday, Nov. 26 <<
"North Dakota Grasslands"

When/Where: 7:15 PM/refreshments; 7:30/Meeting
The lounge, Olin T. Binkley Baptist Church, corner
of Hwy. 15-501 bypass and Willow Dr., behind
University Mall, Chapel Hill.

Who/What: The November 26 meeting speaker is
Steve Schultz on
"Birding the Dakota Grasslands".

In Steve's words: "a journey from the boreal forests
of Minnesota, where the ringing call of Connecticut
Warblers compete with the constant buzz of
Nashville Warblers and the quiet but emphatic call
of the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, across the prairie
filled with breeding ducks and shorebirds, to the
badlands of the Little Missouri River where Golden
Eagles soar over multi-hued buttes and the mayor
doubles as the town's only bartender. Target birds
included LeConte's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit,
Baird's Sparrow and more."

Steve had a blast on this CBC trip, and you will too
at his program. Come early for refreshments and
fellowship (7:15).

Saturday Morning Field Trips

Local field trips, usually lead by Doug Shadwick,
depart from Glen Lennox Shopping Center Parking
lot off HWY 54 promptly at 7:30 most Saturday
mornings. All skills are welcome. Trips are usually
over by noon. Dress for the weather and for
walking. For further details, call Doug at 942-0479.

To :

No. 8

Check with Doug about whether there will be a trip
on Nov.24. Because of the Christmas Bird Count,
there will be no field trips from Saturday Dec. 15
until after the New Year.

**Triangle Area Christmas Bird
Counts**

Christmas Bird Counts are coming up soon. These
are the dates:

12/15/07 - Raleigh Christmas Bird Count
12/16/07 - Durham CBC
12/23/07 - Chapel Hill CBC
12/30/07 - Jordan Lake CBC
1/2/08 - Falls Lake CBC
1/3/08 - Kerr Lake CBC

Please contact the following people if you would
like to participate. Help is always appreciated!

Chapel Hill - Monday, 23 December 2007
Contact: Will Cook, cwcook@duke.edu, (919)382-
9134

Durham - Sunday, 16 December 2007
Contact: Mike Schultz, ross.gull@verizon.net,
(919)490-6761

Falls Lake - Wednesday, 2 January 2008
Contact: Brian Bockhahn,
Brian.Bockhahn@ncmail.net or
cbockhahn4@earthlink.net, (919)676-1027

Jordan Lake - Sunday, 30 December 2007

Contact: Carol Williamson, cncbrdr@yahoo.com,
(919)383-2364

Kerr Lake - Thursday, 3 January 2008

Contact: Brian Bockhahn,
Brian.Bockhahn@ncmail.net or
cbockhahn4@earthlink.net, (919)676-1027

Raleigh/Wake County- Saturday, 15 December 2007

Contact: John Connors, John.Connors@ncmail.net,
919-755-0253 (h)

October 22, 2007 Meeting – “Painted Bunting Conservation in the Carolinas: Traditional Monitoring Meets Citizen Science.”

Our speaker, Jaime Rothenberg, is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Ecology in the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Originally from the west coast, Jaime came to North Carolina thinking that the folks in the area had probably done a lot of work on Painted Buntings, but discovered that there is a lot that is unknown about these beautiful birds.

There are 2 distinct population groups of Painted Buntings. The eastern group is centered in South Carolina and Georgia, and extends up along the North Carolina Coast to Moorehead City, and down to northern Florida. In North Carolina, this group is found only in the maritime shrub-scrub environment, but it is found along the coast and further inland in South Carolina and Georgia where the group also frequents low country agricultural shrub areas. These birds molt while they are still on their breeding grounds, before migrating to south Florida, to Cuba and the Bahamas for the winter.

The central/western group is centered in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. These birds thrive in a riparian environment. These birds start to migrate earlier than the eastern group, and stop at a staging area in SW Texas and northern Mexico where they molt before continuing their journey. These birds head for Mexico, the Yucatan peninsula and Central America.

Major threats to the Painted Bunting are:

- Habitat Destruction and Loss
(Increased building on the coast, and destruction of rough shrubby areas between fields)
- Nest Predation
- Nest Parasitism (ie Brown Headed Cowbirds)
- Feral Cats (especially on the outer banks)
- Capture on Wintering Grounds in Mexico, Cuba, and Central America for the Caged Bird trade

Jaime has marshaled a group of amateur observers to provide additional distribution and feeding data on those birds which frequent backyard feeders during the breeding season. This effort is reminiscent of the Cornell Christmas Bird Counts, Backyard Bird Counts, and Breeding Bird Survey in which citizen scientists collect behavioral data . (White millet is reputed to be “Whipped Cream for Painted Buntings” according to Jaime.) The **PBOTs** are members of the **Painted Bunting Observer Team**, and have been increasing in number since inception of the group last year. As the university team bands more birds, and accumulates more point data, amateur observers are expected to provide increasing amounts of information about specific individuals, their range and feeding habits. The involvement of interested amateurs provides data that could be collected in no other way. The effort has been funded by many groups, including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, SC Department of Natural Resources , and the USGS. The website address for the group is pbot@uncw.edu

October 13, 2007- Saturday Morning Field Trip – Butner Game Lands

It was in the 40’s and sunny when we left the Glen Lennox parking lot for Butner. Doug Shadwick led a group composed of Ron Hodgson, new to the group, Nathan Swick, and Karen Piplani. Rick Payne was waiting for the group in the parking lot, and Bob **Rybczinski** joined us just as we were starting off. The level in the small pond beyond the last parking spaces was so low that the entrance to the beaver lodge was exposed. Two great Blue Herons and a female Wood Duck went up as we passed. When we headed downhill to the area with impoundments and heavy gravel roads, Bob spotted a Merlin in an area he had seen one before. We

watched as it suddenly changed course, pulled in its wings and made a steep dive for a bird. It missed its target, but it was wonderful to see its maneuvers. The brushy areas in the ditch yielded lots of sparrows, and a wonderful array of the "regulars".
Karen Piplani

2007 Chatham County Fall Bird Count by Will Cook

The drought-created extensive mudflats at Jordan Lake made the 12th annual Chatham County Fall Migration Count on 9/15/2007 one for the record books, with a dozen species new for the count and amazing numbers of shorebirds. The inch of rain the day before the count raised the lake level by just 0.2 feet to 211.9 feet above sea level, so fortunately for us there were still plenty of mudflats (they begin to appear at 214'). Count day started off foggy, but soon cleared and became warm and partly cloudy. We ended up with a record-shattering 123 species, far, far above the average of 101.5 and well past the previous record mark of 115 on the 1999 count. Land birding was on the slow side, but shorebirds were abundant, so we counted an excellent total of 4599 individual birds, our third highest (3527 is average). Observer effort was slightly below normal, so we ended up with a record high number of birds per party-hour, 73.4 (average 53.6).

The mudflats drew in huge numbers of shorebirds, including several less common species and rarities that had not made an appearance on the count before. Two boldface highlights were our first Wood Storks (a flock of 4) and our first Red Phalarope. Both were at the New Hope Creek mudflats, both were only the second ever reported for Jordan Lake, and both were found the day before by Josh and Sterling Southern. Amazingly, ten other species were also new to the count: Gadwall (Will Cook), Green-winged Teal (Doug Shadwick's party), Merlin (Cook and Travis), Peregrine Falcon (Cook), Black-bellied Plover (Cook, Ricky Davis, Shadwick), Ruddy Turnstone (Davis), White-rumped Sandpiper (Davis), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Cook, Davis, Shadwick), Short-billed Dowitcher (Cook, Davis), and Wilson's Phalarope (Shadwick).

Other rarish species found on the count include Northern Shoveler, Little Blue Heron, Stilt Sandpiper, Black Tern, Savannah Sparrow (only our second), and Bobolink.

We set a bunch of record highs, mostly waterfowl and, as you might expect, mudflats species: 163 Canada Goose (average 51), 6 American Black Duck (0.5), 116 Mallard (20), 79 Blue-winged Teal (9), 10 Northern Shoveler (0.5), 94 Black Vulture (24), 71 Semipalmated Plover (0.7), 183 Killdeer (38), 20 Greater Yellowlegs (1), 152 Lesser Yellowlegs (4), 18 Spotted Sandpiper (1.5), 135 Semipalmated Sandpiper (2), 54 Western Sandpiper (0.5), 152 Least Sandpiper (4), 108 Pectoral Sandpiper (6), 16 Stilt Sandpiper (1), 457 American Crow (214), 78 Fish Crow (7), 48 Palm Warbler (4), 2 Savannah Sparrow (0.1), and 12 Bobolinks (0.5). Shorebird numbers were mind-bogglingly high. We tallied 933 individuals (750 non-Killdeer) in 17 species, blowing away the previous record years 1998, when we had 12 species, and 2005, when we had 298 individuals (151 non-Killdeer). On an average count we record 5 species and 61 individuals (24 non-Killdeer). The hordes of caterpillars eating sedges on the New Hope Creek mudflats brought in a huge flock of crows -- an estimated 200 in this one flock alone.

Land birds seemed to be in relatively short supply and we missed a few species for the first time -- American Robin, European Starling, and Chestnut-sided Warbler. And we missed Eastern Screech-Owl for only the second time. Warbler numbers were normal, however, with 17 species (average 18) and 342 individuals (average 328).

Teams with the highest counts: Once again Will Cook's party, covering NC 751 and the eastern New Hope Creek mudflats, came in first in both species (82) and individuals (1509), squeaking by Doug Shadwick's party, covering the Morgan Creek and western New Hope Creek mudflats from Old Hope Valley Farm Road, with 80 species and 1223 individuals.

Thanks for your help, counters -- this was a great one!

Will Cook, compiler

2007 CHATHAM COUNTY FALL BIRD COUNT

Species	9/15	ovlp	notes	KB	NB	WC	RD	TD	JO	DS	ST	GT	AT	AU
Canada Goose	163		H		2	72				34		40	15	
Wood Duck	39			2		8				28			1	
Gadwall	1		NC			1								
American Black Duck	6		H			2				4				
Mallard	116		H		50	38				26		2		
Blue-winged Teal	79		H			65				14				
Northern Shoveler	10		H			7				3				
Green-winged Teal	3		NC							3				
Wild Turkey	15	3				4	3			10			1	
Northern Bobwhite	2							2						
Pied-billed Grebe	1									1				
Double-crested Cormorant	236				6	25		13		133		18	41	
Great Blue Heron	114				4	35		20		34		7	13	1
Great Egret	276					190		30		41		7	8	
Little Blue Heron	1		R							1				
WOOD STORK	4		NC				4							
Black Vulture	94		H		15			48	8	17	1	2		3
Turkey Vulture	78			3	13	11		8		16		15	4	8
Osprey	8				1	1		1		1		1	3	
Bald Eagle 9 ad., 9 imm.	18				4	4		4		4		2		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1							1						
Cooper's Hawk	2							1		1				
Red-shouldered Hawk	13			2	2	2				3	1		2	1
Red-tailed Hawk	13			1		4		1	1	4		2		
American Kestrel	2					1				1				
Merlin	2		NC			1						1		
Peregrine Falcon	1		NC			1								
Black-bellied Plover	5	1	NC			4	1			1				
Semipalmated Plover	71	23	H			23	65			6				
Killdeer	183		H		2	60		9		109		3		
Solitary Sandpiper	2	1				1	1					1		
Spotted Sandpiper	18	3	H			3	6	4		3		5		
Greater Yellowlegs	20	10	H			10	12			8				
Lesser Yellowlegs	152	50	H		2	85	85			30				
Ruddy Turnstone	1		NC				1							
Sanderling	6	1				1	1			5				
Semipalmated Sandpiper	135	80	H			100	110			5				
Western Sandpiper	54		H				18			36				
Least Sandpiper	152	25	H			35	65	26		43		8		
White-rumped Sandpiper	5		NC				5							
Pectoral Sandpiper	108	52	H			72	80			8				
Stilt Sandpiper	16	3	H			16	3							
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	6	3	NC			4	3			2				
Short-billed Dowitcher	2	1	NC			1	2							
Wilson's Snipe	2						2							
Wilson's Phalarope	1		NC							1				
RED PHALAROPE	1	1	NC			1	1							
Caspian Tern	15	8				10	8			5				
Common Tern	2						2							
Forster's Tern	5						5							
Black Tern	5		R				5							
Rock Pigeon	9					5						4		
Mourning Dove	33			1	9	2		5	2	2	2		2	8
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4			2				1			1			
Eastern Screech-Owl	0		L											
Great Horned Owl	3									2				1
Barred Owl	5					1				1	1			2
Whip-poor-will	5									5				
Chimney Swift	63				1	17		5		38			2	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	10			2		1			2		2			3
Belted Kingfisher	11			1	1	2		2		1			4	
Red-headed Woodpecker	22				1	1		1		16				3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	39			3	6	7		4	2	3	3	1	9	1
Downy Woodpecker	35			5	9	9		3	1	4	2		1	1

2007 CHATHAM COUNTY FALL BIRD COUNT

Species	9/15	ovlp	notes	KB	NB	WC	RD	TD	JO	DS	ST	GT	AT	AU
Hairy Woodpecker	5				2					2	1			
Northern Flicker	14			2	3			3		2			4	
Pileated Woodpecker	6									2	2		2	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	25			2	5			11	2	2			1	2
Eastern Phoebe	21			1	2	4		2	3	2			4	3
Great Crested Flycatcher	3			1						2				
White-eyed Vireo	16				1	2		5		3		1	3	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	5			1	3					1				
Red-eyed Vireo	12			2	1	3				4	1		1	
Blue Jay	94			7	15	2		5	3	28	2	3	22	7
American Crow	457		H	4	14	270		16	2	73	5	33	32	8
Fish Crow	78		H		5	10		2		52		1	8	
Carolina Chickadee	106			11	8	17		18	7	22	5	3	12	3
Tufted Titmouse	102			9	10	15		16	3	24	5	3	12	5
White-breasted Nuthatch	24			1	2	5			2	3	2		7	2
Brown-headed Nuthatch	45			1	14	6		8	2	6	3	3	2	
Carolina Wren	141			11	9	27		25	5	33	5	2	18	6
House Wren	4							3		1				
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	40			4	12	6		3		7	1		7	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1				1									
Eastern Bluebird	84			5	21	8		7	12	15	1		11	4
Veery	1										1			
Swainson's Thrush	2					1					1			
Wood Thrush	3			2							1			
American Robin	0		L											
Gray Catbird	8					3		2					3	
Northern Mockingbird	18				4	7		1						6
Brown Thrasher	4					2			2					
European Starling	0		L											
Northern Parula	9			4	2	2				1				
Yellow Warbler	3					2		1						
Chestnut-sided Warbler	0		L											
Magnolia Warbler	3				1			2						
Cape May Warbler	5				3			2						
Black-throated Blue Warbler	2				1	1								
Blackburnian Warbler	1							1						
Yellow-throated Warbler	1							1						
Pine Warbler	206			6	55	20		18	4	94	2	2	5	
Prairie Warbler	2				1	1								
Palm Warbler	48		H		13	2		2		31				
Black-and-white Warbler	6				4	1								1
American Redstart	23			5	7	5		5					1	
Worm-eating Warbler	1			1										
Ovenbird	4			2	1			1						
Northern Waterthrush	5					3				2				
Common Yellowthroat	20				2	7		3	2	6				
Hooded Warbler	3			2		1								
Summer Tanager	17			1	4	5			1	3			3	
Scarlet Tanager	8				2	5				1				
Eastern Towhee	23				2	9		6		3			3	
Savannah Sparrow	2		H							2				
Chipping Sparrow	30			13	2			2	3	1			9	
Field Sparrow	6									6				
Northern Cardinal	162			15	27	22		18	8	44	6	2	13	7
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1				1									
Blue Grosbeak	17					8				9				
Indigo Bunting	83					67		7		8			1	
Bobolink	12		H			1				11				
Red-winged Blackbird	6					6								
Common Grackle	6					6								
Baltimore Oriole	1								1					
House Finch	5													5
American Goldfinch	55				1	4		11	3	4	6		14	12

2007 CHATHAM COUNTY FALL BIRD COUNT

Species	9/15	ovlp	notes	KB	NB	WC	RD	TD	JO	DS	ST	GT	AT	AU
TOTAL SPECIES	123	16		35	54	82	24	52	24	80	26	27	39	26
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	4599	265		135	389	1509	488	396	81	1223	63	172	304	104

Notes: H = Record High, L = Record Low, NC = New to Count, R = Rare

ovlp = estimated overlap (birds counted by 2 parties)

Weather: temp 65-82F, wind N 0-12 mph, no precip, fog in morning, partly cloudy in pm, lake level 211.9'

Start	600		800	635	700	800	725	730	600	730	930		630
End	1745		1130	1225	1745	1200	1248	1615	1600	930	1515		1430
Parties	11		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Individuals	23		2	3	9	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Regular Party Hours: Total	62.7		3.3	6	9.5	4	7.4	3.75	9	2	5.75	4	8
Party Hours: On Foot	54.75		3	6	9	4	6	3.75	9	2		4	8
Party Hours: By Car	2.2		0.3		0.5		1.4						
Party Hours: By Boat	5.75										5.75		
Party Miles: Total	65		7.5	2	11	4	15	3	10.5	0.5	5.5	2	4
Party Miles: On Foot	39.5		2.5	2	6	4	5	3	10.5	0.5		2	4
Party Miles: By Car	20		5		5		10						
Party Miles: By Boat	5.5										5.5		
Owling Hours	1									1			
Owling Miles	0.25									0.25			

Area

White Pines Preserve
Ebenezer Point, Seaforth, Tody Goodwin Rd
NC 751 area

NC 751 and Farrington Road (free radical)

Farrington Road

Henley Road area (off Jack Bennett)

Old Hope Valley Farm Rd.

Boothe Hill Rd.

Big Beaver Creek arm of Jordan L. by kayak

Big Woods Road

Jay Shambley Rd, Rocky River, etc.

Party Party Members

KB Karen and Joe Bearden

NB Norm Budnitz, Lois Schultz, Mike Schultz

WC Will Cook, Kyle Dexter, John Kim, Shu-yi Lin, Irene Liu, Glaeshia O'Rourke, Chad Schoen, Jim Senter, Cynthia Tedore

RD Ricky Davis

TD Tom Driscoll

JO Jane Oliver

DS Doug Shadwick, Bob Rybczynski

ST Shelley Theye

GT Ginger Travis

AT Amalie Tuffin

AU Andy Upshaw

Past Counts

Year	1996	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Date	9/14	9/21	9/20	9/19	9/18	9/16	9/15	9/21	9/20	9/18	9/17	9/16	9/15
Species	86	84	99	107	115	107	103	95	98	96	114	98	123
Birds	1313	1584	3125	3805	4609	3887	4895	3471	3381	2256	3728	4037	4599
Parties	5	7	10	12	13	13	17	9	13	10	11	12	11
Counters	5	13	14	19	27	23	37	14	17	12	18	17	22
Party Hours	26.5	31.25	54	70	86.7	88.25	132	53.75	67.25	42.3	68.5	66.2	62.7
Birds per Hour	49.55	50.69	57.87	54.36	53.16	44.05	37.08	64.58	50.28	53.33	54.42	60.98	73.35

Warblers

species	18	14	18	16	23	21	22	18	19	14	17	17	17
individuals	211	142	295	433	570	505	411	340	208	120	294	285	342
non-Pine individuals	94	105	108	111	293	125	187	136	130	36	111	79	136

Shorebirds

species	3	2	5	12	5	3	3	1	2	6	11	2	20
individuals	28	14	47	187	26	16	9	30	19	20	298	5	940
non-Killdeer individuals	4	1	23	58	4	3	4	0	1	12	131	2	757
lake level	232.2	224	214.7	213.9	223.5	216.2	216.2	214	217.1	216.4	213.8	217	211.9