

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

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The BULLETIN...

Chapel Hill Bird Club

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>> Meeting :Monday, March 24 <<

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.

John Gerwin, Curator of Birds at the Museum of Natural Sciences, will present a detailed look at one of North America's most secretive birds,
the Swainson's Warbler.

This warbler is a species of management concern in the Southeast. Much has been learned about its breeding biology over the past 15 years. John will discuss 2 projects he oversees, including data from 12 years of banding. John will have just returned from Haiti, so he'll also briefly share the latest status report for the **Black-capped Petrel**, the topic of work with which he's been involved.

Saturday Morning Field Trips

Local field trips are usually lead by Doug Shadwick, and 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. It is always useful to check with Doug the night before, just in case the field trip is not a local one, and leaves from another location.

To :

No. 3

Chile isn't chilly in the austral summer By Judith Fortney

February is summer in Chile, that long skinny country on the west coast of South America. Although Chile ranges from 17° to 55° South, we visited only the central area between 32° and 42° or the southern equivalent of California in the northern hemisphere. It was never too hot and rarely chilly even at 10,000 feet.

You would think that a country that extends 2700 miles from one end to the other and encompasses deserts, high alpine areas, steppe, temperate zones and coastal areas would have more than 490 species of birds (North Carolina has a similar number), but the lack of tropical areas limits the number of species. I was also surprised by the number of endemics, twelve, three of which are confined to the Juan Fernandez Islands. Although Chile shares thousands of miles of border with other bird-rich countries, much of the border is in the high Andes, a significant bird barrier.

The flights from the US converged in Santiago, the capital, then the next day we flew to Puerto Montt, a port city just north of Chiloe (*chill oh way*) Island. On the ferry to Chiloe we saw our first penguins, albatross, Silvery Grebe and Flightless Steamer Ducks along with other, more familiar, species. Among the more interesting birds of Chiloe was our first of

several species of cinclodes, a robin-sized passerine always found by water. We took another small boat for a nano-pelagic around some small rocky islands to see penguins – Humboldt and Magellanic – most of them looking sorry for themselves in various stages of moult. We also saw four species of cormorants – Red-legged, Rock, Neotropic and Imperial Shag. The Black Skimmers here were *Rhynchops niger cinerensis* or “Amazon Skimmers” that breed in the Amazon, a potential split.

Next we headed to the hills and stayed in a ski area on the slopes of a long dormant volcano. Our prize here was a pair of Magellanic Woodpeckers, cousins of IBWO with a similar double tap. The female is especially handsome; she is all black with just a little red around the bill and a punky crest that tilts forward. The area also yielded several species of tapaculo (a new genus for me), skulky birds with loud calls from deep undergrowth. Especially frustrating was the Dark-throated Huet-Huet, an all dark bird with a very loud call (wet wet wet wet wet), that runs along the ground like a large mouse. Birding in the crater of the volcano yielded very few species – Ground-tyrants, Black-faced Ibis and Sierra-finches. The Ground-tyrants like to perch very upright on rocks or in the remaining patches of snow.

Still higher at 8500 feet we found birds with wonderful names – Torrent Duck, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, Crag Chilia (which fills the Canyon Wren, Wallcreeper niche), White-sided Hillstar and, best of all, a pair of Diademed Sandpiper-Plovers, the diadem being a thin white line that completely circles the head.

North again to the port city of Valparaiso (we actually stayed in Viña del Mar) and a half day pelagic. Among the familiar birds (Sooty Shearwater, Wilson’s Storm-petrels) were three species of albatross (Northern Royal, Black-browed and the Salvin’s subspecies of the Shy), five petrels (Juan Fernandez, Defilippi’s, Westland, White-chinned and Peruvian Diving-petrel), and several terns including my trip favorite trip bird, the Inca Tern

– a cool charcoal gray with bright red bill and legs, and curious white feathers that extend into a kind of curly handlebar moustache.



Inca Tern (photo from DK Images)

Once again we headed inland and uphill, birding along the way. Our highest point was the ski resort of Farellones at 10,500 feet where our target bird was the rare Creamy-rumped Miner. That target achieved we enjoyed a kettle of seven Andean Condors, and a young one guarding, but not eating, a dead horse, also a Sierra-finch that took refuge on someone’s hat to avoid a stooping Peregrine, a Mountain Caracara and several coveys of California Quail calling “Chicago” incessantly.

Details: this was a Field Guides trip. The leaders were Alvaro Jamarillo and Ricardo Mutas. There were 14 participants and we traveled in a small bus with a professional driver – much more comfortable than the usual 15-passenger van. The trip lasted two weeks; Field Guides also does a longer trip in November that visits more areas of the country both north and south. The field guide we used was *The Birds of Chile* by Alvaro Jamarillo, Princeton Press, 2006.

We saw a total of 168 species (1/3 of the total), and all the endemics except those restricted to Juan Fernandez. I got 97 life birds including three new bird families (tinamou, seedsnipe and plantcutters). Bird list available on request (contact me at jafortney1@aol.com). Furthermore, Chile is a lovely country – spectacular scenery from the beaches to the

Andes, clean, safe (seatbelts & motor cycle helmets worn), nice people and nice wine. There is a general European feel to it, especially the beautiful city of Santiago. I highly recommend it for vacation or birding.

Many thanks to CHBC member **Judith Fortney** for the above article. We encourage submission of articles for the Bulletin by members and friends.

Apologies to you all about the errors for the Carol Woods Bird Club Meeting at which Lena Gallitano spoke about birding in Bhutan. The meeting was Monday the 11th, not Thursday the 14th of January. Karen Piplani

Meeting of February 25, 2008: Susan Campbell on Gardening for Hummingbirds

Members and guests who heard Susan Campbell speak at the February meeting had a great talk, in addition to a drawing at the end of the meeting for 12 plants, furnished by her gardening sources!

Susan, who is a part-time naturalist at Weymouth Woods, the Sand Hills Nature Preserve, is affiliated with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. She started her career with a degree from Cornell in Biology, and received a masters from NC State. Her major interest is in hummingbirds. Susan has been a licensed humming-bird bander since 1999, and is the first one in our state. She notes that her banding research is helping to developing a picture of which types of hummers overwinter, how often they return, and to which sites.

At this time of year Susan reminds us that the first male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds begin to return about March 15th, and the first females are seen about 2 weeks later. (It is assumed that everyone knows that sugar water should be mixed in 1 part sugar to 4 parts water, and that the solution should not be colored.)

Susan noted that she would be discussing plant requirements by season. In general, the following characterize "Good Humming Bird Plants":

1. Flowers with nectar containing 25-30% sugar.
2. Trees, shrubs, vines, and lots of herbaceous plants.
3. Inflorescences that are usually, but not always, brightly colored.
4. Plants that are low maintenance and pest free

In the winter, one should be aware of the need for **evergreen trees and evergreen shrubs** which can provide shelter in the cold weather, as well as small insects for the birds to eat. Some people bring in their hummingbird feeders at dark, and put them back out first thing in the morning. This may help provide over wintering birds with nutrition for a longer time during the day, without the small birds having to wait until the sugar water thaws.

In **WINTER**, plants should provide cover, and insects. Winter Honeysuckle shrubs, old Camellias, and Sasanquas (may have ants on the sweet varieties), Petunias (modern varieties are not as good as the older ones), Japanese Mahonia (blooms in March, berries are loved by catbirds), Hollies and other evergreens (provide protection and insects), Cedars (also good for Ruby crowned Kinglets) are recommended.

(Wintering Yellow-Bellied Sap Suckers drill holes in the bark of healthy trees for sap to attract insects. Hummingbirds are also attracted to the holes for the insects they draw.)

EARLY SPRING OPTIONS:

Native Vines: Cross Vine, Carolina jessamine, Coral Honey suckle

Wild Azaleas,

Native Perennials, such as Columbine and Hydrangea species

Blooming Trees -Red Buckeye, Tulip Poplar, Basswood

SPRING Hummingbird attractors:

Columbine (native varieties), Cross Vine (native), Coral Honeysuckle (native), Carolina Jessamine (native), some old Azalea varieties produce nectar (Keep notes on good varieties.), Lyre Leafed Sage, and Native Salvias .

In planting for hummingbirds, remember that the key attractors are bright colors, especially red, and tubular shaped blossoms. Not all flowers have

nectar, and there may be some whose attraction is the small insects that they harbor. Hummers need protein as well as well as carbs!

SUMMER (Most are sun loving plants.)

1. **Salvias** – i.e. *Salvia guaranitica*, which is blue, spreads by runners, and blooms till frost.
Salvia greggii- “Cherry Chief”. These may be red, pink or purple. They are evergreen through the winter.
Annual *Salvia coccinea* ie “Texas Sage” which germinates from seed and reseeds itself every year.
Salvia splendens family- “Van Houtii”- blooms in mid-summer and tolerates more shade than other salvias
2. **Morning Glories** – Not “Trumpet Creeper”. “Cypress Climber” is not a native, and has a feathery look.
3. **Lantanas and Butterfly Bush**- Good for both blooms and insects.
4. **Mallow family**- such as “Sultan’s Turban” These plants are fairly tender
5. **Others**-Standing Cypress (biennial), Cardinal Flower, wild geranium, various lilies, penstemon, and cone flowers.

FALL

Salvias- especially Pineapple sage, and Mexican

Native Asters and Golden Rod

Important: •Use no pesticides to protect birds’ water sources, nesting habitat and materials. If necessary, a small amount may be carefully sprinkled on wet leaves. •Leave frost killed stems in place in order to protect roots from winter freezing. •Protect from predators, especially free-roaming cats. •Remember that late season plants will also attract other species such as moths, both Sphinx and Clear Wings, butterflies, bats, and Screech Owls.

The “Big Box” stores will have some of the named varieties, but until you are familiar with the varieties, you may wish to shop at the suggested

SOURCES:

- Niche Gardens
- NC Arboretum
- Big Bloomer Flower Farm (in Sanford)
www.bigbloomerflowerfarm.com

•Richard Dufresne

http://www.electasy.com/gallery_of_salvias/

• Various Mail order Firms

RESOURCES:

“Attracting and Feeding Hummingbirds” by Sheri Williamson

“Hummingbird Gardens” by Barbara Nielsen, Nancy Newfield, and Roger Tory Peterson

<http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/HUMNETintro.html>

Susan Campbell’s Short List of Hummingbird Plants for the Carolinas
(most have brightly colored flowers, most are sun lovers and bloom prolifically all summer)

Perennials:

- *Anise-scented sage (*Salvia guaranitica*): many varieties, blooms spring to frost
- *Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*): late blooming, fragrant foliage
- *Cherry Chief, Cherry Queen, etc. (*Salvia greggii*); more compact plant, can be found in a variety of reds, as well as pink and white
- *Turk’s Cap (*Malvoviscus drummondii*): unusual blooms
- *Cigar Plant (*Cuphea* spp.): “David Verity” best
- *Trumpet Creeper (*Capensis radicans*): native vine
- *Butterfly bush (*Buddleia*): many colors available
- *Lantana (*Lantana* spp.): “Miss Huff” is best

Annuals:

- *Texas sage, pink or red (*Salvia coccinea*): reseeds itself with abandon
- *Van Houtii’s sage (*Salvia splendens* “van Houtii”): several colors, more flowers in late summer; shade tolerant
- *Morning glory (*Ipomea* spp.): “Cardinal Climber” is best
- *Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia*): seed-eating birds love this too
- *Impatiens (*Impatiens*): many varieties; shade tolerant; Jewelweed is best

by Karen Piplani