

c/o K. Piplani, 1502 Halifax Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
k_piplani@alumni.unc.edu

The BULLETIN...

Chapel Hill Bird Club

October 2008

<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>

Vol. 36

>> Meeting: Monday, October 27 << Birding in Newfoundland

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: **Tom Krakauer** will speak on a recent birding trip to Newfoundland. Tom notes that in contrast to last month's "Birding in Ecuador", where there were lots and lots of species and fewer numbers of each, in Newfoundland the experience is the opposite; fewer species, and lots and lots and lots of birds of each species.

This talk will be of personal interest to our President, because Amalie Tuffin's ancestors were from Newfoundland.

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. 7

Name Changes in recent AOU Update

For folks who are not regular viewers of the information on CarolinaBirds, Harry LeGrand, Jr. sent an e-mail on Sep. 12, 2008 which is of interest.

"Mark Johns sent a pdf file to some of us with the latest AOU updates 49th Supplement (Auk 125:758-768). Here is what I could find that might affect the NC and SC lists.

*** A split of Greater Flamingo, such that the form in the Caribbean/Atlantic is a full species -- American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). [Is this species on the SC state list? Not on the NC list.]

*** English name change: Green Violet-ear is now Green Violetear [remove hyphen] [impacts the NC list]

*** Essentially all of the 'black-headed gull species' have been removed from *Larus*, leaving *Larus* for the big white-headed species [seems like a proper move to me].
So:

>Bonaparte's Gull -- *L. philadelphia* is now *Chroicocephalus philadelphia* [ugh]

> Black-headed Gull -- *L. ridibundus* is now *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

> Little Gull -- *L. minutus* is now *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

> Laughing Gull -- *L. atricilla* is now *Leucophaeus atricilla*

> Franklin's Gull -- *L. pipixcan* is now *Leucophaeus pipixcan*

Note that the ‘black-headed gulls’ found in the Carolinas are now in three separate genera. The only other major thing on the US list might be the changing from ‘Robin’ to ‘Thrush’ for most all *Turdus* species, except American Robin. So, it is Clay-colored Thrush now, etc. There were no new splits of eastern and western races to new species, etc. In fact, the AOU rejected the separation of Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*); there was a proposal to split off the Vega Gull (proposed *L. vegae*) and the American Herring Gull (proposed *L. smithsonianus*). This does not happen, for now. So -- the "Vega Gull" you might have seen [I have] in Alaska is not countable as a new species, and the Herring Gull in the US is not a separate species from the one in Europe [I recall one or two supposed records of the European type in the US recently].

Hopefully, Kent Fiala (CBC webmaster) will update the NC and SC list name changes on the website. By the way, the name changes seem to follow

‘LeGrand’s Rule of Taxonomy’: ‘When a scientific name is changed, it is always from a shorter or an easier to pronounce name to a longer or more challenging name to pronounce.’ “

Harry LeGrand

A brief summary of September’s talk **“Birding in Ecuador”**

Our first talk for the 2008-2009 season was a great review of a three week trip to Ecuador taken in November-December 2007 by Derb Carter of the Southern Environmental Law Center, Will Cook, who is the Webmaster of our website, and Kent Fiala, who edits the “Chat” and who is the webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club. They were joined by Merrill Lynch of the Nature Conservancy, who has moved to Western NC and was unable to join the group for this presentation. Each of the birders spoke about one week of the trip.

Derb started by describing Ecuador. It is a country about the size of Colorado, with the Andes Mountains cutting the country in two from north to south. It is bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the East by the Amazon basin. This means that with

changes in altitude and humidity, completely new ecological areas emerge, with resulting changes in the bird species that make their home there.

One of the main changes that Derb saw from previous trips was a wonderful increase in public awareness of the avian treasures of their country. There were numerous hummingbird feeders, even in private homes, to help some of the 61 species of hummingbirds seen on the trip, where there had been none before. There has been a great increase in the protection of the environment, in the formation of protected areas, and in the provision of birding support.

They started from Quito in a small SUV and went about 2 miles north to the Reserve Pulumahua, which surrounds a collapsed volcano. Then on to the attractive Guango Lodge, on upland eastern slope of the Andes. The lodge has dozens of birdfeeders, which attract many species. One of the real treats provided us were several videos of hummingbirds of the area at the feeders, including the Tourmaline Sunangel, the Glowing Puffleg, the Long-tailed Sylph, and the Swordbilled Hummingbird. The Swordbill has a bill that is the length of its body, and feeds mainly from *Daturas*, which have many very large, single hanging flowers. The weight of the bill is so much that the bird perches with the bill pointed almost straight up, in order to balance it with minimal effort. It was amazing to see over 10 hummingbirds at some large feeders, with swordbills above, drinking over the backs of the others. They saw 15 species at once at the lodge.

Then they went on to the Guacamayo Ridge, which had a huge number of butterflies, including lots of clear-winged butterflies. The next stop was San Isidro for a whole new set of species. There was a large group of Tanagers, including our familiar Red and Summer Tanagers and the Vermillion Tanager.

At the entrance to the town of Cosanga, was a sign noting the population, altitude and *number of bird species!* This unique area is in danger of being overtaken by deforestation by growers of crops such as naranilla, a citrus species, or for cattle grazing.

The group stayed at “Wild Sumaco”, a lodge designed by and for birders. It’s still in process of building, so accommodations were a little rustic, but enjoyable. The Sparkling Violetear was among the hummingbirds seen, plus many butterfly species.

Will Cook described the second week of travel. The group headed back to Quito to pick up Kent Fiala, and then on to the Tandayapa Valley and the Yanacocha Reserve on the Inca trail. This is a high altitude cloud forest. Although they missed seeing the Black-breasted Puffleg, they did see a Sapphire-vented Puffleg, a Great Sapphirewing, and a Tyrian Metaltail. They also saw Masked Flower-piecer; this bird has a slightly curved hook on the bill, which allows the bird to pierce flowers and steal the nectar.

Then on to the Bellavista Cloud Forest Preserve, a middle altitude cloud forest, where they stayed in the Bamboo House. The Booted Racket-tail, the Turquoise Jay and the Speckled Hummingbird were some of the treats seen there.

At the private farm of Angel Paz de las Aves, they were able to see some of the especially elusive birds. A special treat was an Andean Cock-of-the-Rock. It was immobile for an extended period on the video, and when sitting in the brush must be very difficult to see. One Giant Antpitta, named "Maria" had been trained by the guide to come when called, for worms. A Yellow-breasted Antpitta, named "Willi" had also been trained to come to food, and a Violet-tailed Sylph was seen.

The next stop was near a research station above Bellavista. Black-capped Tyrannulet, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Gorgetted Sunangel and others were seen.

Then to the Tandayapa Bird Lodge which was designed especially for birders. A Brown Violetear, and Andean Emerald were seen and an Immaculate Antbird was spotted from a blind.

The next stop was lower down in Los Bancos, in Milpe, a spectacular area. At the Mirador Rio Blanco, a restaurant which has guest rooms, there was a great platform with many banana feeders which were refilled frequently. Blue-gray, Palm, and Golden Tanagers, Bananaquits, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, and White throated Quail-Doves were attracted and easily seen.

Kent took over describing the last week of the trip. The next stop was the Mangaloma Lodge, where 2 nights were spent. This facility was recently developed and had no electricity, and it was necessary to walk trails, which was problematic because of all the rain. Luggage was packed in by horseback. Interestingly, the lodge is on the same longitude which goes right through the I-40 and 15-501 intersection! (Barred Puff birds, *Long-

wattled Umbrella bird, and many clear-winged and other butterflies.) Only one snake was seen on the whole trip, a small unidentified one near the trail, and an Armadillo, both of which we saw on video.

On the third day, they went to the Rio Canandé Lodge, a new lodge in a lowland forest preserve. It was muddy, and they wore boots a lot. The normal breakfast was always *instant* coffee, fruit juice and boiled eggs, and gas was always \$1.48 per gallon. They had a great guide, Edison Buenano. Summer Tanagers, which stay red all year round, a Band-tailed Barbthroat, poison dart frogs, a Broad-billed Motmot, and Guyaquil Woodpeckers, members of the same genus as the Ivory Billed Woodpecker, Campephilus. They also saw a caecilian, a long legless amphibian which looks sort of like a snake.

Kent notes that the Derb planned the trip and corresponded with lots of people in the process of setting it up. They easily saw over 500 species of birds. They had few mosquitoes, despite the walls with spaces between the boards in many lodges, and no chiggers or ticks. Derb notes that the Quito area and the Tandayapa Valley are easily accessible. "Birds of Ecuador" by Robert S. Ridgely, Paul J Greenfield and Frank B. Gill was one of their major resources, as well as the Andean Birding Tour company, headed by Jonas Nilsson from the Wild Sumaco lodge.

(Please note that any errors herein are mine, and that I was unable to list all the birds that were seen. I'm sorry for the folks who did not get to hear the talk and see the Wonderful photos and videos.)

By Karen Piplani

Chapel Hill Bird Club Officers

President: Amalie Tuffin, amaliet@post.harvard.edu

Vice President: Ginger Travis, (919) 942-7746
ginger_travis@bellsouth.net

Vice President: Dave Gulick d2gulick@earthlink.net

Secretary: Amalie Tuffin, amaliet@post.harvard.edu

Treasurer: Patsy Bailey, (919) 933-5850

Field Trip Coordinator: Doug Shadwick,
(919)942-0479 dougshadwick@nc.rr.com

WebMaster: Will Cook cwcook@duke.edu

Bulletin Editor: Karen Piplani, (919) 929-6553,
k_piplani@alumni.unc.edu