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The BULLETIN...

Chapel Hill Bird Club

To:

March 2010

<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>

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Meeting: Monday, March 22, 2010

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: **Lena Gallitano** will be speaking on:

“The North Carolina Birding Trail”

Lena Gallitano is an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well-traveled birder. She spoke to the Chapel Hill Bird Club in 2008 about her two recent trips to the ANWR and the Yukon River Delta in Alaska. Lena has been instrumental in the North Carolina Birding Trail since the initial planning began in 2004. Now completed, the NCBT consists of three regional guides for the Coast, Piedmont and Mountains.

Come and learn the details and future plans of this great resource for birders.

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### Saturday Field Trips

Trips led 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.

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### Your Favorite Bird/Nature/Wildlife Book

We asked for nominations in January and February, requesting books that were not overly technical, and that might be enjoyed by a variety of readers, perhaps as summer reading, or as a gift. These are the results.

From **Deitz Kessler:**

#### “The Song of the Dodo’ by David Quammen

Quammen is a science writer, rather than a practicing scientist. Hence, his books are very readable, as well as being scientifically accurate. This is a fascinating lay person's account of the experiences of Alfred Russell Wallace in the tropics of the East Indies. Here is where Wallace developed his understanding of island biogeography that led him to the idea of evolution by natural selection. Also, Quammen has recently written the very readable book "**The Reluctant Mr. Darwin**" about how Darwin came to write "The Origin of Species". Read them both.

"**Curious Naturalists**" by **Niko Tinbergen** is my favorite account of how the behavior of animals can be understood by doing clever experiments in the field. The infectious enthusiasm of this famous scientist is almost as interesting as his accounts of the behavior of the insects and birds he studies. The examples are more oriented toward the experimental method than those in Quammen's books, but anyone who's had a college course in intro biology would be interested.

"**Never Cry Wolf**" by **Farley Mowat**. OK, most people think this is light reading. It's after all a fictionalized account of a young government scientist left by himself in the Canadian wilderness to study wolves with the goal to eradicate them. Naturally, the hero of the story finds that, as far as caribou are concerned, the wolves are a lot less destructive than human hunters and developers. Don't be

misled by the easy writing style: the description of wolf behavior is right on target. Added benefits are an interesting account of the Inuit culture, and the theme of an individual growing toward mature self-confidence. PS: Rent the DVD. Great shots of the Canadian tundra. PPS: For another great adventure book sympathetic to the people of the Canadian north, read "The Last Gentleman's Adventurer: Coming of Age in the Arctic" by Edward B. Maurice. It's not a book on biology; it's a very readable memoir about a young man from England who, as an apprentice trader for the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada, comes to understand the Inuits of the high Arctic. Biology is there, but from the viewpoint of the Inuit.

**'The Double Helix' by James D. Watson'** Your request for book nominations seemed to be broad enough to include this classic book written for the lay public on Watson and Crick's adventures in the quest for the structure of DNA, the genetic material in all living things (OK, with the exception of a few viruses that use RNA). Watson portrays himself as an immature young man (he remains so to this day, just a little older), but he has a gift for narrative showing the excitement of scientific inquiry. You can skip the very few sections on X-ray diffraction and other technical subjects. It's the quest for the Holy Grail by two young men - that's the lasting theme. For those who justly think Watson was insensitive in his treatment of the contributions of Rosalind Franklin, whose X-ray diffraction studies led Watson and Crick to their goal, there are several biographies of her life to counterbalance Watson's account. They are not as fascinating as Watson's account, however."

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From **Elsa Thompson**, who is not a member, but logs in bird club newsletters for the Bird Watchers' Digest:

**"The Immense Journey' by Loren Eiseley**  
I first read this book in the early '60s. I still had my original paperback, priced .95 cents. The author was a scientist, an anthropologist, who articulated his thoughts about the world around him in magnificently poetic essays. I heartily recommend!!"

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From **Judy Murray**:  
"I have one to recommend. It's not necessarily a favorite, but one I'm currently reading. I have learned so much about the Arctic region that I thought others might enjoy it. It's called **'After the Ice: Life Death and Geopolitics in the New Arctic'** by **Alun Anderson**."

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From **Karen Piplani**:  
"I'd suggest trying **'Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth'** by **William Bryant Logan**. I picked up this book expecting an introduction to soil science, but found it to be a fascinating, beautifully written series of essays on various aspects of dirt. It was a real treat. "

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## Join or Renew Your Chapel Hill Bird Club Membership

Postcards will be going out next month to remind any members who have yet to renew their membership for this year.

Membership dues for one person or family are \$15 per year, or \$10 for a student. Make your check payable to the **Chapel Hill Bird Club**, and please mail to:

Patsy Bailey,  
277 Mint Springs Rd.  
Pittsboro, NC 27312

### Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

New member: \_\_\_\_\_ or, RENEWAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
dues: \$15/yr. individuals/family, \$10/year students

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**Chapel Hill Bird Club Officers**  
*President:* Amalie Tuffin, [amaliel@post.harvard.edu](mailto:amaliel@post.harvard.edu)  
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*Treasurer:* Patsy Bailey, (919) 933-5850  
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