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# The BULLETIN... Chapel Hill Bird Club

To:

## January 2012

[Hhttp://chbc.carolinanature.com](http://chbc.carolinanature.com)  
<http://chbirds.blogspot.com/>

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### Meeting: Monday, January 23, 2012

**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: John Dole & Will Cook**

will be speaking about

### What: Colombian Birds and Adventures

Colombia has the longest bird list of any country in the world and has become safe enough to travel in. John Dole, Professor of Horticulture at NC State, and our own Will Cook, researcher in the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke, will highlight birds and experiences from a recent birding tour in Colombia. The trip was put together by fellow birder Derb Carter. Join us for an evening's exploration of the kind of trip we'd all like to take!

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### Saturday Field Trips

Trips are led by Doug Shadwick and depart from Glen Lennox Shopping Center Parking lot off HWY 54 promptly at 7:30 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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Male Bar-crested Antshrike at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve  
Photo by Will Cook

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### Save the Date: February 11th A Watershed Event

Friends of Bolin Creek have developed "**Can We Heal Our Local Waterways?**" a Symposium and Exchange focused on a community discussion of current water quality problems and actions needed to

restore our local urban streams. A series of speakers and a community discussion takes place between 9 and 11:30 am. Then Mary Sonis takes us all on a photo journey down Bolin Creek. Between 12 - 1 pm local groups and exhibitors tell us about what they are doing for water quality. We are offering a special program for the children of those attending the Symposium. The details are on our website at [www.bolincreek.org](http://www.bolincreek.org) or on the blog [www.bolincreek.org/blog](http://www.bolincreek.org/blog). And food will be available.

**We need your support for this event. What can you do?**

- First mark Feb 11th on your calendar and tell your friends.
- Refer folks to [www.bolincreek.org](http://www.bolincreek.org).
- Be willing to play a part to support the event.

It's been a big effort to coordinate with the UNC Institute for the Environment, staff from the Towns, the NC Botanical Garden and our speakers. The more the program has come together the more we realize the acute need to begin a dialogue about how to protect our creeks. Friends of Bolin Creek and the UNC Institute for the Environment are the program developers, and the NC Botanical Garden is a co-sponsor.

From Julie McClintock

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Misty evening in the bosque (rainforest) at the Piha reserve  
Photo by Will Cook

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**Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine!**

For over 75 years the National Audubon Society has offered residential birding programs for adults, teens and families at the historic Audubon Camp in Maine on Hog Island. Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul, Steve Kress, Lang Elliott, Don Kroodsmma, Bill Thompson III and many more expert ornithologists, naturalists, educators and authors will be in

residence during the 2012 sessions. Most programs sell out months in advance, so it is worth registering early. Nearly 100 scholarships are offered each year by local Audubon Chapters and birding clubs.

See website: <http://hogisland.audubon.org>

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Black Inca, a Colombian endemic hummingbird, at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve  
Photo by Will Cook

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**2010 Chapel Hill (NC) Christmas Bird Count Summary**

The Chapel Hill Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, 26 December 2010 was definitely one for the record books. Not the number of species or individual birds, but for being the snowiest, prettiest, and siskiniest Chapel Hill count ever. Heavy snow began falling late the night before the count and by daybreak everything — ground, roads, trees, shrubbery, grasses — was covered by a spectacularly beautiful 5" thick layer of white. The snow continued off and on most of the day and eventually totaled about 6". Because of the snow many counters played it safe and stayed home; those that lived in the count circle counted their feeder birds. Most of those that ventured out found that the roads in Chapel Hill mostly weren't all that slick, just snowy, and enjoyed the most beautiful count day ever. Just 19

intrepid observers made it out in the snow, our lowest since 1971. Conversely, the number of feeder watchers, 19, is a record high.

So how did we do with the birds? As you might guess, the weather did have a big impact on the count. We ended up with 80 species, just one shy of last year's 81, but about 10 below the 10-year average and our lowest since 1997. Not too bad, especially considering that the most productive areas at Jordan Lake went uncovered. We counted a paltry 6234 birds, less than half the 10-year average of 15978 and our lowest total since 1968. This has mostly to do with the low number of party-hours, but also the fact that it was difficult to actually see the birds in all that snow! With snow covering every limb of every tree, perched birds were lost from sight as soon as they landed. Sparrows and other field birds mostly stayed hidden in the low vegetation, under the snow. Walking through snowy fields at Mason Farm, it was bizarre to have sparrows popping out from underfoot! Number of birds per party-hour, which takes into account the low turnout, was 93.7, well below the 10-year average of 112. Also keeping birds per party-hour down, no big flocks of blackbirds, robins, or gulls were found.

The highlight of this count was an adult Bald Eagle and two Common Ravens that Derb Carter spotted feeding on a deer carcass in the snow on the side of Dairyland Road. This seems more like something you'd see in Alaska, not Chapel Hill! Besides being an amazing display of nature in the raw, this is our third count record of Common Raven, seen also in 2006 and 2007. All these were from the western edge of the count circle, though ravens have now made it much further east, to Raleigh and even to the Coastal Plain. Derb also had some Fish Crows in downtown Chapel Hill in the days before the count, for a first count week record. Other good finds on count day included an American Black Duck and Black Duck x Mallard hybrid at Mason Farm (Will Cook), a Green-winged Teal (Carter), a Blue-headed Vireo (Kent Fiala), two Red-breasted Nuthatches (Shelley Theye), a Gray Catbird (David and Judy Smith), two White-crowned Sparrows near Dairyland Road (Derb Carter), and a Baltimore Oriole at each of 3 different feeders (Judy Murray, Julia Shields, and Susan Stone). Pine Siskins are often hard to find on the count, but this year they were widespread and abundant. Total count was an astounding 357, including 150 at Cynthia Fox's feeders and 106 in Carolina Meadows.

This year we set just one record high. As you might guess — Pine Siskin! The count of 357 handily beats the 290 we had in 1969. Our average is 28; we miss them about every third count. The only other bird seen in

unusually high numbers was Purple Finch — 46 is thrice the average of 15.

We set no record lows and there were no big misses, but because of the low number of field hours, dozens of species were at a small fraction of normal, at their lowest numbers in decades. Those with the lowest numbers in 40 years or more: 110 Mourning Doves (average 279, lowest since 1970), 28 Northern Flickers (average 125, lowest since 1958), 65 Blue Jays (average 248, lowest since 1964), 20 Ruby-crowned Kinglets (average 214, lowest since 1964), 51 Northern Mockingbirds (average 147, lowest since 1968), 93 European Starlings (average 716, lowest since 1958), and 50 Eastern Towhees (average 178, lowest since 1961). The count of 4 House Sparrows (average 55) is especially noteworthy since it's the lowest total since they first made an appearance on the Chapel Hill count in 1933 (no House Sparrows from the first count in 1923 through 1932).

Team honors: Derb Carter, covering the Dairyland Road area, had the highest species count and highest individual count, with 1003 birds in 58 species. Will Cook's Mason Farm team came second in species, with 52 (797 birds).

Most abundant birds: Dark-eyed Junco (1044), White-throated Sparrow (616), American Goldfinch (405), and Pine Siskin (357).

Weather: Temperature 28-30 F, wind from the north at 5-10 mph, overcast, heavy snow in morning, light snow in afternoon, still water partly frozen, running water open. Effort: 19 observers in 10 field parties, 66.5 party hours (53.75 by foot, 12.75 by car) and 157 party miles (35.5 by foot, 121.5 by car), 2 hours and 1 miles owling, 19 people and 53 hours watching feeders.

Thanks to all the participants for slogging through the snow to count some birds!

-- Will Cook, compiler

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**Chapel Hill Bird Club Officers**

**President:** David Smith, [davidjudysmith@verizon.net](mailto:davidjudysmith@verizon.net)

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## 2010 Triangle Area Christmas Bird Counts

Species	— Chapel Hill Observer Party —																					
	12/18	12/19	1/2	1/4	1/5	12/26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
<b>Snow Goose</b>		3	1		5																	
<b>ROSS'S GOOSE</b>					3																	
Canada Goose	1141	1187	355	189	287	224	51	3			10	2	75	5			19	17	38			4
Mute Swan	7																					
Wood Duck	10	172	53	15	5																	
Gadwall	40	20	56	1	31																	
American Wigeon	2				1																	
American Black Duck	41	53	20	99	6	1												1				
<b>Mallard x Black Duck</b>						1												1				
Mallard	277	453	65	61	36	84	37	2			2						6	30	7			
Northern Shoveler	69	21	4	2	1																	
Northern Pintail	1	3			4																	
Green-winged Teal	90	12	<b>15</b>			1	1															
<b>Redhead</b>					<b>5</b>																	
Ring-necked Duck	263	3	32	15	3	5					5											
<b>Greater Scaup</b>					5	1																
Lesser Scaup	21				5																	
<b>BLACK SCOTER</b>					1																	
Bufflehead	101		47	63	145																	
<b>Common Goldeneye</b>	1	2	2	2	1																	
Hooded Merganser	395	18	117	182	606	16	5							2				5	4			
Ruddy Duck	217		cw	2																		
Northern Bobwhite			8	1	1																	
Wild Turkey		12	26	16	11																	
<b>PACIFIC LOON</b>				1																		
Common Loon	1		2	134																		
Pied-billed Grebe	12	1	50	40	46	1															1	
<b>Horned Grebe</b>	2		5	120																		
Double-crested Cormorant	79	19	1214	88	46	1															1	
Great Blue Heron	49	77	71	46	51	18	3	1					1	1			1	3	8			
Black Vulture		55	62	321	93	43	12				3		1					12				15
Turkey Vulture	17	214	122	65	123	60	39	3			2	3	2					5				6
<b>Osprey</b>					1																	
Bald Eagle 4 ad., 1 imm.	4	14	21	19	19	5	1														4	
Northern Harrier	2	2	2	5																		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	4	3	2	2	1															1	
Cooper's Hawk	12	5	5	2	5	3	1	1		1												
Accipiter sp.	1		2																			
Red-shouldered Hawk	32	24	31	11	30	6	2		1			1							1			1
Red-tailed Hawk	11	27	21	12	12	8	2	2											3	1		
American Kestrel	5	11	7	3	3																	
<b>Merlin</b>				1	1																	
American Coot	37		1360		2																	
Killdeer	55	166	47	25	39	13	7						1						5			
<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>		1																				
<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>				2	1																	
<b>Least Sandpiper</b>		<b>85</b>																				
<b>DUNLIN</b>		2		1																		
Wilson's Snipe		18	2	cw	1	0																
American Woodcock	5	1	1	3	3	2												1	1			
Bonaparte's Gull		8	162	222	1	2															2	
Ring-billed Gull	582	4062	<b>65000</b>	1802	4743	130	12	20			1	1	20				6	25	19	3	23	
Herring Gull	3	27	89	1	52	1											1					
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>		1			1																	
<b>Great Black-backed Gull</b>			1		1																	
Rock Pigeon	413	187	54	71	50	51	7				18		1								25	
<b>White-winged Dove</b>		cw																				
Mourning Dove	262	106	293	147	156	110	22	4	1	15	6	3	12	2		6	1	6	10	10	12	
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	1	3	2	2	3	3															
Great Horned Owl	3	3	3	9	7	cw	cw															
Barred Owl	1	4	5	9	3	5	2													1	1	1
<b>Rufous Hummingbird</b>					1																	
Belted Kingfisher	26	12	25	8	23	6		1							1		1	2	1			
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	55	22	1	21	10													9			1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	164	149	136	71	111	90	8	3	2	1	34	2	5		2	5	12	3	4	9		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	33	40	38	18	31	23	7	2			1	2	1						3			7
Downy Woodpecker	98	81	79	47	53	64	6	4	3	2	9	4	3	1	1	4	10		4	13		
Hairy Woodpecker	17	16	16	11	14	12	1		1		2	1	1		1	3			1	1		
N. (Yellow-shafted) Flicker	83	189	129	65	78	28	7				3	3	4						9		1	1
Pileated Woodpecker	23	16	26	17	27	5							3		1					1		
Eastern Phoebe	28	36	22	13	14	16	3	2			2	1	1						6	1		
<b>Loggerhead Shrike</b>	4		1	1	3																	
Blue-headed Vireo	3				2	1							1									
Blue Jay	139	227	330	101	97	65	2	4	2	8	10	5	4		1	2	4	19	1	1	2	
American Crow	223	525	683	291	359	202	29	15	4	7	26	9	26	6			11	6	41	6	16	
<b>Fish Crow</b>	1		cw	4	3																	
<b>Common Raven</b>					5	2	2															
Carolina Chickadee	301	270	381	88	262	143	16	14	3	5	31	10	2	4	2	1	6	18	4	10	17	
Tufted Titmouse	193	255	343	113	264	156	11	13	2	5	26	18	9	3	4	1	7	21	1	10	25	



## 2010 Triangle Area Christmas Bird Counts

Species	12/18	12/19	1/2	1/4	1/5	12/26	— Chapel Hill Observer Party —															
	Ral	Dur	JL	Kerr	Falls	CH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	<b>Party Areas</b>	<b>Party Members</b>						<b>Party</b>			<b>Areas</b>			<b>Party Members</b>								
1	1,4	Derb Carter																				
2	2,7	Pam Timmons, Perry Haaland						13			22 S			Anson Cooke, Dwayne Cooke, Phil Warren								
3	4-yard	Cynthia Fox						14			25-yard			Shelley Theye								
4	7-yard	Susan & Bill Stone																				
5	8, 13	Tom Driscoll, Bo Howes; Feeder watchers: Barbara Driscoll, Diane Meyer																				
6	9, 10	Norm Budnitz, Gene Kingsley						15			32			Steven Graves, David Murdock, Marge Miles								
7	11, 12	Kent Fiala												Feeder watchers: Mary Floyd, Sara Johnson								
8	14,15,18	Nathan Swick												Lynn Ogden, Candace Owens, Harry & Caroline								
9	14-yard	Julia Shields												Pederson, Joan Redmann, Jerrold & Joan Walecka,								
10	17-yard	Judy Murray												Bobbie Hahn								
11	16, 29	David Smith, Judy Hinderliter Smith																				
12	20	Will Cook, Andrew Thornton																				