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

## The Bulletin Chapel Hill Bird Club

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<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>  
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### **Next Meeting: Monday, 22 October**

**When/where:** 7:15 pm refreshments;  
7.30 pm meeting. The lounge, Olin T  
Binkley Baptist Church, corner of  
Highway 15-501 Bypass and Willow  
Drive, behind University Mall, Chapel  
Hill.

22 October 2012. **Bill Majoros**,  
photographer, author and instructor  
at Duke University will discuss *Warbler  
photography at Magee Marsh*.

Bird photographer, author, and  
instructor Bill Majoros from Duke  
University will discuss techniques for  
photographing warblers and other  
small birds, and will describe his  
experiences photographing warblers  
at the birding mecca known as  
Magee Marsh in Ohio. He will discuss  
all aspects of photographing  
warblers, including equipment, field  
techniques, and postprocessing in  
Photoshop. His talk will feature a  
slideshow documenting the annual  
birding festival at Magee Marsh, with  
many exquisite, high-resolution

photos of warblers photographed  
during spring migration at Magee.  
You can preview his work at  
[ThirdBirdFromTheSun.com](http://ThirdBirdFromTheSun.com)

### **Saturday Field Trips**

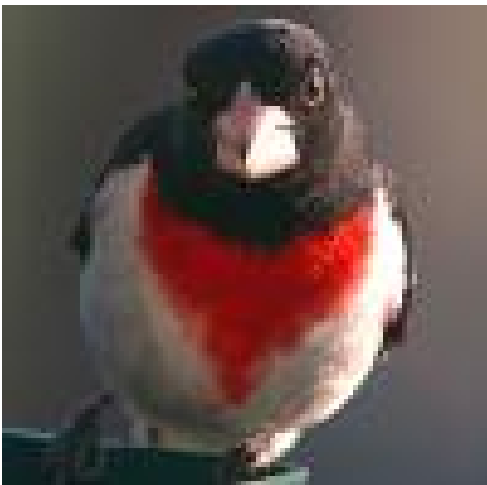
Trips are led by **Doug Shadwick** and  
depart from Glen Lennox Shopping  
Center parking lot off Highway 54  
promptly at 7.30 every Saturday  
morning. All skills are welcome. Trips  
are usually over by noon. Dress for  
the weather and for walking.  
Details? Call Doug at 919 942 0479.  
It's useful to call Doug the night  
before in case the field trip is not  
local and leaves from another  
location.

## Was there ever a year like this?

*Ginger Travis*

For Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, I mean, Today, October 16, I just saw a male parked on my seed feeder. I couldn't believe it. I was sure the show was over! The first male appeared in my yard on September 24 and appeared uncertain as to how to perch on the narrow feeder ledge. That problem was soon solved, and for three weeks grosbeaks, male and female, parked

© Jerry Acton



themselves on that ledge and gorged on black sunflower seed. Their long stay in my yard is unprecedented. Usually in fall and spring migration I see one grosbeak for a day or two. This fall, over three weeks, the highest number of individual grosbeaks I counted was five on September 30. What a great year! And with seed failures in the north perhaps it will be a wonderful winter.

## Book Review

Chris Chester. *Providence of a Sparrow*. The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City 2002 (289 pages in the Anchor Books, 2004, edition I read.)

Reviewed by Judith Fortney

An odd little book, this. About a man and his sparrow – a House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, the lowly, often despised, English Sparrow. It fell, featherless, 25 feet out of its nest into the life of Chris and Rebecca who fed it *every half hour* with puppy food on a toothpick, then baby food on a toothpick until he could feed himself. Although intending to release him into the wild when old enough, they somehow couldn't quite do that as man and bird each imprinted on the other.

I actually learned quite a lot from this book. I had not known that HOSP (and some other finches) remove the husk from seeds before they eat them. I had not known that HOSP has many vocalizations not only the irritating raspy "cheep" that lets you know not to bother trying to see that bird. Nor had I any idea how intelligent a House Sparrow apparently is. And playful; Hunt the Bottle Cap was an important ritual for both man and bird; B (for bird) remembered hiding places, and distinguished between colors of bottle caps, and had color preferences. Bottle cap tug-of-war was another favorite game. B would listen at the heating vent to hear what went on out of his line of sight and reacted accordingly.

Only occasionally lapsing into anthropomorphism (and acknowledging that he did), the author strives to understand B's behavior, why he likes some activities and not others, why he dislikes yellow and fusses at people wearing it. B waits for the author to come home from work and is agitated if he is late. B grooms his humans – especially cuticles, noses and ears. He likes to be put to bed at night (though doesn't demand a story).

Although initially a bit put off by the degree of introspection (on his mild depression, deaths in the family, his obsession with this bird), I got over it



© Richard Strade

and found it not to be a detriment to a good read. And did I mention that this book is, in places, really funny? Funny enough that I laughed so hard I had to stop reading for a while.

Not having to contend with cats, cars and windows, B lived to the ripe old of eight years as opposed to an average of two years among wild House Sparrows. Compensation perhaps for never having been a wild bird.

## Welcome New Members

Suzanne Miller of Durham  
Ashley Merritt of Durham  
Karen & Mark Hogan of Chapel Hill

We hope to get to know you at a meeting of the Chapel Hill Bird Club very soon.

## Coming Meetings

26 November 2012. **Kent Fiala**, PhD in Zoology, Editor of *The Chat*, and webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club will describe his *Birding Brazil: the Southeast and the Northeast*.

28 January 2013: **John Gerwin**, Curator of Birds at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences will describe his research on Painted Buntings. *Painted Bunting in the Southeast: Merging traditional science and citizen science*.