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

The Bulletin Chapel Hill Bird Club

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Next Meeting: Monday, 26 November

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.

26 November 2012. **Kent Fiala** and
Will Cook, will speak on **Birding Brazil**
– **the South-east and Northeast**.

Kent is a senior software developer
at SAS in Cary, but previously earned
a PhD in Zoology at the University of
Michigan where he studied Red-
winged Blackbirds. He is also Editor of
The Chat, webmaster for the
Carolina Bird Club and former
President of the Chapel Hill Bird Club.
Will is a researcher in ecology at
Duke. In October 2010 and again in
October 2011 Kent visited Brazil with
Derb Carter, and on the second trip
with Will Cook and Merrill Lynch.
These trips were to the southeast and
northeast of Brazil respectively, and
especially targeted several endemic
species. Come and hear about and
see photos of Sharpbill, Buff-throated
Purpleuft, Red-legged Seriemea,
Indigo Macaw, Araripe Manakin and

many other birds. Hear tales of the
wolves of Caraça and the search for
the Cipo Canastero.

Annual Dues

As we near the end of the year,
please check to make sure whether
your club dues should have been
paid during 2012, and if so, did you
pay them? If you don't already,
consider paying for more than one
year at a time; that saves our
Treasurer from having to remind you
so often, and saves you the bother
of writing and mailing the check.

Why do we need dues? Our biggest
expense is renting the room at
Binkley Baptist Church for our
meeting each month – and that cost
will increase in 2013. It costs about
\$12 a month to mail this Bulletin to
those members who prefer to
receive actual rather than virtual
copies.

So check your records and mail a
check to Patsy Bailey, 277 Mint
Spring Road, Pittsboro NC 27312;
To learn your status, e-mail her at
pbailey_489@yahoo.com

Birding Mongolia

Judith Fortney

Inspired by the 2011 exhibit on Ghengis Khan at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences as well as the book *Ghengis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* by Jack Weatherford, I was inspired to go to Mongolia. And what better way to see any country than on a birding trip? Accordingly, I booked a trip with Sunbirds, the British arm of the American birding company Wings.

There is no English language field guide for Mongolia, and nothing in my library seemed appropriate, so I took no field guide. This was surprisingly liberating! Our leader carried *The Birds of East Asia*. Our cook carried *The Birds of Mongolia* - in Mongolian, but it also gave the English names (in Latin script) as well the scientific name, so we non-Mongolian speakers could look things up.

We visited four zones of the country: the Gobi Desert, the Saxaul forest, the northern taiga forest and the steppe. I saw 136 species (others saw more) of which about forty percent were life birds for me. As it was May, we saw many migrants on their way north to breed in Siberia. In one small tree in our ger (yurt) camp we saw – all at the same time – Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, Two-barred Greenish Warbler,

Daurian Redstart, Asian Brown Flycatcher, the beautiful Red-throated Flycatcher . . . and a House Sparrow. The mountains in the Gobi yielded Mongolian Trumpeter Finch, Amur Wagtail, Koslov's Accenter, Godlewski's Bunting, and a distant view of Altai Snowcock.

We camped beside a very large large lake north of the Gobi (in tiny tents this time). Because it was the only body of water in a huge area, the variety of birds was amazing. Though I saw life birds (Relict Gull, Pallas's Fish



Pallas's Fish Eagle
(Wikipedia)

Eagle) the really inspiring sight was thousands of White-winged Black Terns flying in a huge swirl, clockwise and then counter clockwise, making an impressive racket as they circled round and round hawking insects.



White-winged Black Tern

North to the taiga forest brought Siberian Rubythroat, Red-

throated Thrush, Yellow-breasted Bunting, Black Grouse, not to mention the “luggage yak” who transported our luggage from the van to our ger; later we were to see the water yak carrying barrels of water from the distant pump and the milk yak which transported (cow’s) milk from the village.

In the Saxaul forest we saw the locally endemic Saxaul Sparrow and a Henderson’s Ground Jay (the cook proudly found that one).

The steppe produced Mongolian Larks, White-naped Crane (pair with chicks) and – the bird of the trip – a distant Siberian Crane, the first seen in our leader’s seven trips to Mongolia. He was ecstatic and the news got tweeted to London within seconds and immediately acknowledged by an envious friend.



Siberian Crane
(Wikipedia)

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.

Future Meetings

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.*

25 February 2013: **Alan Hurlburt**, Assistant Professor of Biology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. *Understanding patterns of bird diversity.*