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

The Bulletin Chapel Hill Bird Club

February 2013

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Volume 41

No.2

Next Meeting: Monday, 25 February

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.

25 February 2013: **Allen Hurlbert**,
Assistant Professor of Biology,
University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill. *Understanding
Patterns of Bird Diversity*

Dr Alan Hurlbert studies the structure of ecological communities and the processes that shape them. Using experiments, mathematical models and global data bases, he and his students work with vertebrate (especially bird), invertebrate and plant communities. He teaches courses on ecology, biodiversity and avian biology. He will describe continental patterns of bird diversity based on data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, as well as field work in the southern Appalachians and

characterize some of the ecological factors that might be important to birds

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.

2012 Chapel Hill Spring Bird Count — Compiler's Comments

Will Cook

The Chapel Hill spring count on May 12 was pretty normal overall, with 122 species, near the 10-year average of 124 species. Observer

effort was well below average at 124 party-hours (average 147.5), and so the number of individual birds counted was a low 8997 (average 10747). The number of birds per party-hour, though, was as normal as you can get (72.6, average 72.6).

The outstanding rarity of the count this year was the same species as the outstanding rarity last year: King Rail. Ginger Travis and Marty McClelland heard three calling from the rushes at the Morgan Creek arm of Jordan Lake, which they covered by kayak, and Dave Curtin saw one in flight at the Little Creek impoundment. This is only our third for the count, with the first only in 2008, though they have nested at Mason Farm. Perhaps they're not all that rare, but just have gone unnoticed in past counts.



King Rail

Gray-cheeked Thrushes appeared on the count for the first time in a decade, as seen by Tom Driscoll's party and heard by Ali Iyob (they have a distinctive nocturnal flight call). Will Cook and company found a few good birds at the southwest Durham

wastewater plant, including Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons used to be rare on the count, but lately they're being found in increasing numbers as more are breeding near impoundments on the outer fringes of Jordan Lake. This year Scott Winton and Mike Schultz got 10 at the New Hope Creek impoundment on NC 54. Other goodies: Northern Harrier, American Woodcock (flushed at Mason Farm), Eastern Screech-Owl, and a late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Some great count week birds: on May 10 Lois Schultz saw a late Dark-eyed Junco and on May 13 Ali Iyob got Blackburnian, Canada, and Wilson's Warblers at Mason Farm.

We set only a few record highs: the total of 6 Cooper's Hawks edges past the old record of 5 set in 1999, the 4 King Rails beat last year's 2, 29 Least Sandpipers easily surpasses the 20 in 1996, and 10 Great Egrets ties the tallies from 2002 and 2007.

The big miss this year was Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler, the first miss in the history of the count, which started in 1952. This year's count was a week later than average to avoid a conflict with the Carolina Bird Club's 75th anniversary meeting, but we've had several counts as late or later. We get 89 Myrtles on an average spring count. We set two other record lows: 37 Wood

Thrushes and 1 White-throated Sparrow. We average 101 on a spring count, but the last 5 years have all been below average. Many observers have noted the decline of Wood Thrushes in recent years. The lack of White-throated Sparrows is no doubt related to the late date of the count (51 on an average count). Other unusually scarce species include Canada Goose (lowest since 1997), Wood Duck (1990), Black-and-white Warbler (2000), Black-throated Blue Warbler (2000), Prairie Warbler (1989), Eastern Towhee (1999), Swamp Sparrow (1996), Scarlet Tanager (1996), Northern Cardinal (1999), and Red-winged Blackbird (1999).

Team honors: Pam Timmons and Perry Haaland, covering the Dairyland Road area, got the top species count with 82, edging out Ali Iyooob at Battle Park with 80 and Will Cook's Mason Farm team with 79. Bob Chase counted the most individual birds, 882.

Weather in brief: low 48F, high 76F; wind SSW 5-10 mph; mostly cloudy with no rain.

Thanks to all 39 field counters and 2 feeder watchers!

Future Meetings

25 March 2013: **Michael Tove**, Chair of the state records committee. *What is a Records Committee? And why do we care?*

April 2013: **David Smith**. President of the Chapel Hill Bird Club. *Birds (and wildlife) in Kenya*.

20 May 2013: **Norm Budnitz**, science teacher par excellence. *Birding islands in the Bering Sea*

Officers of the Chapel Hill Bird Club

Elected Officers

President: David Smith

(davidjudysmith@frontier.com)

Vice President (Durham area): Judy Smith (davidjudysmith@frontier.com)

Vice President (Chapel Hill area): Kent Fiala (kent.fiala@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Patrica Bailey (pbailey_489@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Edith Tatum (etatum@nc.rr.com)

Appointed Officers

Bird Count Supervisor/compiler:

Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Field Trip Chairman: Doug Shadwick (dougshadwick@nc.rr.com)

Bulletin Editor: Judith Fortney (jafortney1@aol.com)

Webmaster: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

2012 TRIANGLE AREA SPRING BIRD COUNT TOTALS

4/25 4/26 4/29 5/6 5/12 — Chapel Hill Observer Party Number —

Species	FL	KL	Dur	JL	CH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
GOOSE, Canada	97	120	88	203	217	22	8		24	1	8	8	17		55	2	8	4	10		9	36	2			3	
DUCK, Wood	7	12	90	82	17	2						1	2			1			6		3		2				
MALLARD	26	4	23	53	44	2	3		2		4		1	2	21		4	1		1				2	1		
TEAL, Blue-winged		4	5																								
SCAUP, GREATER		5																									
LESSER		4																									
BUFFLEHEAD		1																									
MERGANSER, Hooded		1																									
Red-breasted		4	11																								
DUCK, Ruddy	1																										
TURKEY, Wild	2	6	8	9	4					1												2	1				
BOBWHITE, Northern		4	2	4	1																				1		
LOON, Common		6		1																							
GREBE, Pied-billed	1	2	4	1																							
Horned		1	1																								
CORMORANT, Double-crested	110	204	409	484	69							30						6	4	7	11	1		4	6		
BITTERN, American			1																								
HERON, Great Blue	69	33	70	200	159	2	2		2	1	1	7	1	1	1	4	2	3	17	18	8	4	63	15	1	6	
EGRET, Great		2	1	1	10							1							8	1							
HERON, Green		1	5	8	14	6									3			2				1		1	1	1	
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned					10							7	3														
IBIS, GLOSSY		1																									
VULTURE, Black	28	101	29	120	83	1	2		7	2	1			3	1	5	6	3	11	1		11	10	3	2	14	
Turkey	59	39	111	196	147	13	13		4	6	1	1		5	3	7	11	5	15	2	3	16	14	7	4	17	
OSPREY	31	22	19	69	16				1			1		2			1	4	6	1							
EAGLE, Bald adult:6 imm: 7	8	4	10	58	13									1		1		1	2	4	3			1			
HARRIER, Northern					2																					2	
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	2	2	2		1																					1	
Cooper's	1		4	1	6									3									2			1	
Accipiter sp.				2	1																					1	
Red-shouldered	11	5	20	26	29	1	4		1	2	1	1	2	2	4	3		1		1	2		1		2	1	
Broad-winged			1		2		1									1											
Red-tailed	9	4	12	20	27	2			2	1				4	5	4	2			1		1	1	2	1	1	
KESTREL, American		1	3	1																							
RAIL, KING			1	3	4							1							3								
COOT, American	cw	5																									
KILLDEER	28	16	11	34	37	10	1			1		5		1	3	8	1	4				1	1		1		
YELLOWLEGS, Greater		6																									
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser					1											1											
SANDPIPER, Solitary	1	1	14	16	4		1					2			1												
Spotted	12	19	10	31	29	4			2			4			8	4		3	1	2	1						
Least					29												7								22		
WOODCOCK, American					1											1											
SNIBE, Wilson's		6																									
GULL, Bonaparte's	7	6		1																							
Ring-billed	110	35	51	27																							
Laughing				1																							
TERN, Common		1																									
TERN, Caspian	1	12		3																							
PIGEON, Rock	5		43	31	25	11			1			3		8	2												
DOVE, Mourning	64	90	96	279	238	22	14		14	16	6	4	5	6	32	9	21	4	21	3	11	8	12	11	1	17	
CUCKOO, Yellow-billed		2	20	15	13						1			1	1	2		2		2	1	1	1			1	
OWL, Eastern Screech-	1		1	2	1	1																					
Great Horned	3		1		1		1																				
Barred	4	3	8	10	16	2		2	2	1				1	1	2					1	2		1	1		
CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW	7																										
WHIP-POOR-WILL	5			3	8																8						
SWIFT, Chimney	50	2	64	135	116	7			9		1	3	2	30	10	9	4		8		4		10	4		15	
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated	6	4	18	23	43	2		3	5	1		1		1	4	14	1		1	3	1	1		2		3	
KINGFISHER, Belted	7	4	8	10	7	2	2								3												
WOODPECKER, Red-headed	22	11	20	52	30	2			1	12	2	1			1		2		1		4		3			1	
Red-bellied	60	30	71	182	184	10	14	3	25	15	5	7	7	3	21	10	13	2	9	2	7	11	6	9	2	3	
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied			cw		1																					1	
WOODPECKER, Downy	23	8	35	53	97	6	5	5	14	1		4	6	2	6	11	1	2		3	2	5	9			15	
Hairy	7	3	5	16	12	2		2	2		1			1	1					2		1					
"Yellow-shafted" FLICKER	13	6	11	29	19	2	1		2						1	3			1			3	1	1		4	
Pileated	14	10	13	34	28	4	1		2	1	1	1		1		1	1		3		4	1	2	5			
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern	7	1	14	79	41	6	4		1		2				1	2		1	2		4	2	8	4	3	1	
FLYCATCHER, Acadian	4	7	9	42	76	8	6		8	4	5	1	6	2	1	10	2	1		14				5	1	2	
PHOEBE, Eastern	26	11	32	59	47	4	4	1	4	1	1	2	2	1	6	7			4			1	2	5	1	1	
FLYCATCHER, Great Crested	45	36	58	174	98	6	2	1	17	8	1	3	2	2	4	4		2	4	7	5	9	11	5	1	4	

2012 TRIANGLE AREA SPRING BIRD COUNT TOTALS

4/25 4/26 4/29 5/6 5/12 — Chapel Hill Observer Party Number —

Species	FL	KL	Dur	JL	CH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
Grasshopper		3	5		3	3																						
Song	5	1	6	2	56	1	2		3				1	2	8	22	2								1		14	
Lincoln's			1																									
Swamp	9	15	14		1											1												
White-throated	108	50	51	3	1	1																						
White-crowned		1																										
JUNCO, Dark-eyed					cw								cw															
TANAGER, Summer	36	26	33	183	88	14	2		10	7		3	1	5	3	14	2		1	2	8	5	4	6		1		
Scarlet	16	10	17	52	32	9	2		2		1			2		1				1	3		2	9				
CARDINAL, Northern	230	85	245	466	590	48	59	6	79	16	17	35	16	2	74	36	36	3	22	5	7	38	20	11	10	15	35	
GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted	6		4	6	4										4													
Blue	9	21	32	96	33	5	3		3		1	2				6			3		5	1	2			2		
BUNTING, Indigo	24	30	121	173	177	13	9		13	7	3	6	9	25	8	38		2	17		8	1	10	3		2	3	
BOBOLINK			130	78																								
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	169	66	80	73	73	13					1	2	1	10		5			12	12		2	8		2	5		
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	13	21	31	34	13	13																						
GRACKLE, Common	59	157	145	240	194	9	18		6		6	32	2		30	12	11		10	10	6	4	3			35		
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	63	67	124	199	165	14	1		11	6	1	3	7	1	12	26	6	6	15		4	19	4	4		25		
ORIOLE, Orchard	15	24	22	66	21		2		1					1		1			3	6	5	1				1		
Baltimore		1	1	1																								
FINCH, House	38	21	42	76	196	17	13		15		4	15	6	7	26	9	29	1	5			6	12			31		
SISKIN, Pine																												
GOLDFINCH, American	140	68	116	195	263	29	9	8	22	2	4	10		8	38	18	10	2	20	3	8	1	21	15	10	25		
SPARROW, House	23	23	17	22	48	4			6		2	2		25	5		4											
TOTAL SPECIES	160	115	120	132	120	122	82	61	23	67	50	52	69	44	80	71	79	44	44	58	45	67	61	65	52	20	38	60
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	4367	3421	5835	10471	8997	776	581	68	770	263	197	410	277	433	882	778	370	103	412	185	376	470	433	258	79	174	702	
Number of Groups	11	8	11	24	22	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Number of Participants	18	12	30	55	39	2	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	
Start			530		515	530	610	600	650	550	700	615	755	800	515	700	645	900	745	900	530	545	630	630	800	745	615	
End			1510		2000	1735	1610	2000	1430	1200	1230	1115	1100	1900	1730	1545	1545	1100	1200	1330	1230	1400	1200	1900	1200	1100	1500	
Party Hours: Total	71.25	48.25	64.85	156	124	9.5	6.5	2.25	7	5	5.5	5	3	7	9	8	8.25	2	4.25	4.5	6.5	7	5.5	5	4	3.25	6	
Party Hours: On Foot	56.75	39.25	49.6	122	97	8.5	6.5	2	6.25	5	4.5	4.5	2.5	6	7.5	7.5	2	1.5	4.25		6.25	4	5	5		3.25	5	
Party Hours: By Car	14.5	9	9.25	21.5	17.5	1		0.25	0.75		1	0.5	0.5		1.5	0.5	6.25	0.5			0.25	3	0.5				1	
Party Hours: By Bicycle	0.5				1									1														
Party Hours: By Boat			6	12.5	8.5															4.5						4		
Party Miles: Total	107.3	132.5	63.95	251	209	5	10.5	4	15.5	6	19.5	10	7	9	12	11	46	13	2	6	8	6	8	1	3	2.5	4	
Party Miles: On Foot	44.5	25.5	36.75	80.5	88	3	10.5	2	10.5	6	4.5	5	3	6	9	6	2	2	2		6	3	1	1		2.5	3	
Party Miles: By Car	62.8	107	21.2	158.5	109	2		2	5		15	5	4		3	5	44	11			2	3	7			1		
Party Miles: By Bicycle	2.5				3									3														
Party Miles: By Boat			6	12	9															6						3		
Nocturnal Hours	4.5	1	1	2.0	3.5	0.5		0.5						1							0.5						1	
Nocturnal Miles	10.5	0.5		0	1.25	0		0						0							0.25						1	
Feeder Hours	7				9				1.5																		7.5	

CH = Chapel Hill count 5/12/12; weather: low 48F, high 76F; wind SSW 5-10 mph; mostly cloudy, no rain

Dur = Durham count 4/29/12

FL = Falls Lake count 4/25/12

KL = Kerr Lake count 4/26/12

JL = Jordan Lake count 5/6/12

cw = seen during count week only (within 3 days before or after the count)

Party Areas

- 1 1,2,4,7
- 2 3,5,6
- 3 4-yard
- 4 8,13
- 5 9,10
- 6 11,12
- 7 14,17
- 8 15
- 9 16, 29
- 10 18
- 11 20, 22N
- 12 21

Party Members

- Pam Timmons, Perry Haaland
- David & Judy Smith
- Cynthia Fox
- Tom Driscoll, Bo Howes, Jill Paul
- Gene Kingsley
- Kent Fiala
- Scott Winton, Dave Curtin
- Mike Schultz
- Ali Iyooob
- Bob Chase
- Will Cook, Catherine & Tony Carter, Peter Perlman, Mark Kosiewski
- Ken Lundstrom

Party Areas

- 13 22S
- 14 23, 25
- 15 24 - canoe
- 16 24N-south
- 17 24N-north
- 18 24S
- 19 25-home are
- 20 27-canoe
- 21 30
- 22 32

Party Members

- Phil Warren
- Amalie Tuffin
- Ginger Travis, Marty McClelland
- Doug Shadwick
- Judy Murray
- Edith Tatum
- Shelley Theye
- Terri Buckner
- Jane Oliver
- Maurice Graves, Steven Graves, Richard Graves, David Murdock, Mary Cavenar
- Dietz Kessler, Lynn Ogden, Nancy Hinrichs
- Feeders: Caroline Pederson, Florence McCachren