

Editor: Judith Fortney  
PO Box 51969  
Durham NC 27717  
[jafortney1@aol.com](mailto:jafortney1@aol.com)  
<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>



Doug Pratt

# Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

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## Next Meeting: Monday, 27 January

**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.

January 27: **Brian Evans:** *Migratory Bird Research*

Brian Evans is graduate student at UNC Chapel Hill and a field technician for the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. He is studying bird communities and demographic rates across the Washington DC metro area. The project involves citizen Nest Watch participants and seeks to determine how variation in habitat quality may affect bird populations in urban areas. Brian will present his findings during his talk.

## 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 skill levels are welcome. Trips are usually over by noon. Dress for the weather and for walking. Details? Call Doug at 919 942 0479. Call Doug the night before in case the trip is not local and leaves from another location.

## Welcome New Members ☺

Nicolette Cagle of Durham  
Grace Gilbert of Chapel Hill  
Bart Singer of Chapel Hill  
Cheryl Drescher  
Laurie Degernes  
Julia Storm

## In Defense of Listing

In a recent article in *Bird Watcher's Digest* a birder described starting his life list all over again. I've a California friend who did this too. Many – perhaps most – birders keep lists, though others are adamantly

**Happy New Year and good  
birding in 2014**

opposed. The latter sometimes claim that listing turns birding into a competitive sport. So what? Birding is big tent, it holds all kinds of people. Many listers never share their list(s) with others, while quite a few list regularly with the ABA so that the world can admire their lists.

Why do we keep lists? There are many reasons I suppose. I do it because it's fun. If you keep enough lists, then even a House Sparrow can be exciting – if you see it in Alaska! I once spent an entire day looking for starlings in Anchorage; I found some too. When I switched software programs a few years ago, I had to re-enter every bird I'd ever seen. It sounds onerous, but in fact I quite enjoyed it. I relived that first Scarlet Tanager in Vermont, and that first Painted Bunting in Morehead City. And I celebrated all over again the Bermuda Petrel off Hatteras. And, yes, the House Sparrow in Ketchikan too.

Some people keep rather weird lists! In addition to ABA, Lower 48, USA, state lists, yard lists, year lists not to mention one for every country you've visited, some of keep lists of birds seen on wires, birds seen while peeing (yes really!), states in which they've seen at least 50 birds, state birds in their own state (Rhode Island is a challenge). Californians keep county lists which can be a challenge on a pelagic; I remember a not very exciting California pelagic when the "best" bird of the trip was a Brown Pelican *for San Diego County!* The cell phones came out and by the time we got back there were telescopes on the dock trained on a distant channel marker – a thrill for county listers.

My own peculiar list is female birds because I once met a birder

who only counted a species if she (*she!*) saw a male; as a feminist, I promptly started my female list. Sure, there are many species in which it is hard to tell the gender, but therein lies the challenge. Surprisingly, I know no-one else who keeps such a list.

Several books have described the thrill (perhaps I should say obsession) of serious listing. To mention just three of the best known, all of which are good reads:

- Phoebe Snetsinger, *Birding on Borrowed Time* (the first person ever to see 8000 species).
- Dan Koeppel, *To See Every Bird on Earth*
- Mark Obmascik, *The Big Year* (on which the movie of the same name was based).

Speaking of Big Years . . . in 2013 Ali Iyoob was hoping to break the record for the most species seen in North Carolina in a single year. We hope he'll give a talk to the Club on his adventures..



My Ketchikan AK House Sparrow

A few years ago when Ginger Travis was editor of this *Bulletin* she asked members to share their favorite lists. If you email them to me at the (address on masthead) I'll print them in the next *Bulletin*. Go ahead, boast a bit! What are you proud of? What's your special quirky list? JF

## Future Meetings

The vice presidents have enlisted a terrific cast of speakers for our monthly meetings in the coming year. We meet the third Thursday of most months – not in December or during the summer. The speakers are:

February 24: **Scott Winton:** Mattamuskeet waterfowl and climate change.

March 24: **Charlotte Goedsche:** Cerulean warblers of Bull Creek.

April 28: : **Judy & David Smith:** Birding Ethiopia.

May 19: **Brian Bockhahn:** Spectacular birds of NC state parks.

**More details in coming Bulletins!**

**Don't forget to pay your dues this month! Bring them to the Club meeting on Monday or mail to our Treasurer:**

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

**Dues are \$15 a year for how ever many years you wish to pay in advance.**

## Officers of the Chapel Hill Bird Club

### *Elected Officers*

**President:** David Smith

(davidjudysmith@frontier.com)

**Vice President (Durham area):** Eddie Owens (banjoman\_57@yahoo.com)

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

**Treasurer:** Patricia 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)