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Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin



Doug Pratt

September 2014

Volume 42

No.6

Next Meeting:

Monday, 22 September

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.

Mike Tove: *Hawks and their migration*

Michael Tove started birding as a hawk-watching enthusiast. In the 1970s, he was a volunteer counter at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania. In the 1980s he maintained the hawk-watch count in the Wellsville Mountains of Utah.

His talk includes an overview of the history and mechanics of hawk migration, a tutorial on hawk identification, and is a prelude to a special invitation to attend a hawk watch at Kiptopeke, Virginia over the weekend of October 3-5.

Join us for an exciting talk about one of the most enigmatic groups of birds, then mark your calendar for a follow-up field trip.

Saturday Field Trips

Rob Rybczynski leads field trips for the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The trips from Glen Lennox Shopping Center on Highway 54 in Chapel Hill at 7.30 Saturday mornings except for the summer hiatus. All skill levels are welcome. Trips usually end by noon. If the trip is not local and/or leaves from another location, the change will be posted to CarolinaBirds (readable also at birding.aba.org/maillist/NzC) and at the Chapel Hill Bird Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/chapelhillbirdclub/. For yearly schedules see <http://chbc.carolinanature.com/fieldtrips.html>). The 2014 season will recommence the Saturday after Labor Day – 6 September.

Need more details? Call Rob at 919 460 9383.

As you will see from his remarks below, Rob was a close friend of the previous leader (Doug Shadwick) and we expect he will fill Doug's boots admirably.

Before I wrote in the May issue that Doug would retire I phoned him to ask him what he would like me to say about him. Ever modest and self-effacing he could think of nothing but that he had led the trips for 25 years. He also told me that he would undergo surgery the following day.

Soon after we announced his retirement, Doug died at the age of 64. The Chapel Hill Bird Club, and indeed, the entire Chapel Hill Birding community, offer their heartfelt sympathy to his family and his many friends.

Doug's funeral was attended not only by family but by members of the Chapel Hill Bird Club, colleagues, members of the choir Doug sang in, church members and many other friends. Bob Rybczynski, in addition to being a pallbearer, made the following remarks intended to explain the lure of birding to all of Doug's other friends and colleagues. His remarks are reprinted here.

Wishing to honor Doug, the Chapel Hill Bird Club is working to establish a memorial, probably in the form of a bench along the trail at Mason Farm. Members will be given the opportunity to contribute. More information soon.

A tribute to Doug Shadwick

By **Bob Rybczynski**

[Eulogy delivered at Doug's funeral 6/29/2014]

I'd like to give you my personal view about a side of Doug's life that might be unknown or unfamiliar to you - that is, Doug's deep interest in wild birds. Birding is like many avocations in that it's hard to explain the attraction to those who don't feel the same. I won't attempt to explain it here either. But,

even if it's foreign to you, I think you'll still see the essential Doug.

I first met Doug about 12 years ago, when I joined a Saturday morning Chapel Hill Bird Club trip that he was leading. Doug was the central pillar of the club's field trips, leading hundreds over the years. I soon became a regular on these trips. Why? Well, initially it was because Doug knew all the local birding spots and I didn't. But it soon became obvious to me that Doug was an interesting person and birding with him was great fun.

Birding can be pursued at many levels, from casual to obsessive. Doug was clearly in the advanced, intensely interested category and he had the requisite skills to pursue his interests at that level. With Doug, you might see falcons or eagles hunting, colorful warblers migrating from their winter homes in Central America to their summer quarters in northern Canada, or even watch otters fishing in Falls Lake.

When leading field trips, Doug never looked down on or ignored beginning birders. He conveyed information that would help them enjoy their new interest. He was patient with their attempts to see quickly moving birds or learn bird songs, and gentle in correcting errors of identification.

As a birding trip leader, Doug didn't hog the spotlight. If someone else identified an unusual bird or corrected Doug's identification, he was quick to compliment or acknowledge the correction. Though an experienced birder, Doug was always happy to look at common, everyday birds. If a beginner, or a foreign visitor, hoped to see a common bird they'd never seen before, Doug would cheerfully do his best to make it so, even if he'd seen it a thousand times.

Birding can seem puzzling, or even vaguely sinister to non-participants.

When a casual passersby, or a suspicious landowner or sheriff's deputy wondered what we were doing or seeing, Doug would patiently explain and try to show them the bird of interest.

Doug remained composed in situations that would cause many others to lose their cool. Miss a turn on a long drive - no problem, we'll just go back. Lost a straggling birder - organize a search.

Doug also led many multi-day trips to eastern North Carolina and the coast and to the North Carolina mountains. It was on these trips that Doug and I became friends and not just birding buddies. On long drives to the coast or in motels rooms after dinner, we'd talk. About birds, of course. But we talked about a lot of other things too: books and TV shows, work and family, the environment, politics and politicians, what comprises a compassionate and fair society. These conversations showed what a caring, thoughtful and considerate man Doug was. It was clear, too, that Doug appreciated that Eugenia supported his deep interest in birds, even if, like so many spouses of birders, I suspect, she didn't wholly understand it.

The last time I went birding with Doug was in April. He stayed in my car, mostly, while the rest of us walked along the roadside or into the woods. Afterwards, Doug said that, understandably, he had to give up his position as Chapel Hill Bird Club Field Trip chairman. I think it will take many future club trips before I stop feeling that these are still Doug's trips.

I last saw Doug several weeks ago, shortly after he was released from UNC hospital. We talked a good part of an afternoon much as we had on many evenings and long drives. As I was leaving, Doug thanked me for visiting and being a friend. But Doug's concern and respect for others made being his friend easy, and that last afternoon I had with him now feels like a gift I will

never lose. And I hope all of you, too, will never lose your gifts from Doug.

Future Meetings

22 September 2014 – **Mike Tove:** Hawks and their migration. Note Mike invites you to come to a hawk watch at Kiptopeke, Virginia over the 3-5 October weekend.

17 October 2014 – **Lindsey Addison:** Topic to be announced. Lindsey is a coastal wildlife biologist.

24 November 2014 – **John Gerwin** (Ecuador) Hummingbirds and Tanagers and Manakins – Oh My!

December 2014 – No meeting

26 January 2015 – **Kim Brand:** Why the Brown-headed Nuthatch matters.

23 February 2015 – **Natalia Ocampo-Penuela:** The birds of Colombia.

23 March 2015 – **Judith Fortney:** Birds and Islands

27 April 2015 – **Tom Driscoll:** Topic to be announced (it will be The birds of Chile, or Uganda, or South Africa)

18 May 2015 – **Dave Gammon:** Vocal Mimicry in Northern Mockingbirds.

Officers of the CHBC

Elected Officers

President: David Smith
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Vice President (Durham area): Eddie Owens (banjoman_57@yahoo.com)

Vice President (Chapel Hill area):
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Secretary: Edith Tatum
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Appointed Officers

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