

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

November 2014

Volume 42

No.8

---

## Next Meeting: Monday,

### 24 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.

### **John Gerwin: Ecuador Hummingbirds and tanagers and manakins. Oh my!**

John will recap his 17 days of birding in Northern Ecuador. He will discuss and show images of many of the 60 species of hummingbirds seen, and many of the tanagers and other notable tropical birds.

**John Gerwin** is the curator of ornithology at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. He researches the life cycles of migratory birds with a focus on the Painted Bunting (NC, SC), Black-throated Green Warbler (NC), Swainson's Warbler (NC, SC) and

Golden-winged Warbler (Nicaragua). John has been involved in other avian initiatives including the Scientific Council on Rare, Threatened and Endangered Birds of North Carolina, the Important Bird Area Technical Committee for Audubon NC, and the Partners in Flight advisory committee.

### **Saturday Field Trips**

Rob Rybczynski leads field trips for the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The trips leave 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](http://birding.aba.org/maillist/NzC)) and at the Chapel Hill Bird Facebook page [www.facebook.com/groups/chapelhillbirdclub/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/chapelhillbirdclub/). For yearly schedules see <http://chbc.carolinanature.com/fieldtrips.html>). Need more details? Call Rob at 919 460 9383.

## Want to Talk Turkey?

It seems appropriate at this time of year to talk about Wild Turkeys. For a long time this was my nemesis bird. I could NOT see one! Friends would say "just drive down Stage Coach Road, you're sure to see some." No luck! Finally, after several years of this, I saw some, appropriately enough, at the Butner Game Lands with Rob Rybzcynski. They were roosting high up, backlit, and nowhere near as beautiful as the one shown below.



Wikipedia

North Carolina's set of original Audubon prints used to be in the State Library where anyone could study them. The Wild Turkey was what most people came to look at – and touch – them. Presumably mostly hunters. Now, of course, they are under glass in the NC Museum of Art, and while you can still admire the Wild Turkeys, touching is *verboten*.

There are several subspecies of Wild Turkey, though exactly how many is quite hard to pin down. California birds (*Meleagris merriami*) are smaller than our North Carolina *sylvestris*, Florida birds (*M. osceola*) are also smaller. The birds of Southeast

Arizona's sky islands (Gould's) are much larger. Once hunted nearly to extinction, they were re-introduced from Mexico and are now quite well established in the mixed oak/juniper woodlands.

Turkey breeding behavior is not unlike that of other game birds – they gobble, strut, drum and fight. With feathers puffed out, tail fanned, wings spread, they are a sight to see. Each breeding male has a harem of females, and often some attendant young males who help defend and raise the poults – and wait for the opportunity to take over the harem if the dominant male falters.

The main threat to Wild Turkey – in addition to hunters – is habitat loss. But they seem to manage better than Bobwhite Quail who inhabit the same space. My experience was not typical; turkeys are not usually difficult to add to your life list. And after that first elusive sighting, I saw turkeys everywhere. Flocks can be quite large and a flock does require quite a lot of space. A winter flock of perhaps 20 birds ranges over about 50 acres. When they break up into families in the spring, the area necessarily increases. Turkeys raise large clutches, sometimes more than a dozen eggs hatch. Their predators are many; before they are able to roost in trees, the poults sleep on the ground under the hen. But poults learn quickly to fly and are strong flyers by three weeks of age. By mid-summer it is not uncommon to see large family groups of a big dominant male, several hens, several young adult males and the rapidly growing poults.

The subspecies *butterball* is another story altogether. Known for their size rather than their intelligence, they lack the beautiful coloring of their wild counterparts – they're mostly white! As they no longer roost in trees, they probably are much better eating too. Try not to overindulge in either the avian or the liquid species this holiday. Have a good one!



*Meleagris bourbonii*

**There is no meeting in December**

### **Next 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 either the birds of Chile, or South Africa)

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

## **Officers of the Chapel Hill Bird Club**

### ***Elected Officers***

**President:** David Smith  
([davidjudysmith@frontier.com](mailto:davidjudysmith@frontier.com))

**Vice President (Durham area):** Eddie Owens  
([banjoman\\_57@yahoo.com](mailto:banjoman_57@yahoo.com))

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

**Treasurer:** Patricia Bailey  
([pbailey\\_489@yahoo.com](mailto:pbailey_489@yahoo.com))

**Secretary:** Edith Tatum  
([ektatum@nc.rr.com](mailto:ektatum@nc.rr.com))

### ***Appointed Officers***

**Bird Count Supervisor/compiler:** Will Cook  
([cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu))

**Field Trip Chairman:** Bob Rybczynski  
([squawk510@att.net](mailto:squawk510@att.net))

**Bulletin Editor:** Judith Fortney  
([jafortney1@aol.com](mailto:jafortney1@aol.com))

**Webmaster:** Will Cook  
([cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu))