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Doug Pratt

Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

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Next Meeting: Monday, May 18th

When/where: 7:15 pm refreshments; 7.30 pm meeting. We are **NOT** in the lounge this month but in Room 15 of Olin T Binkley Baptist Church, corner of Highway 15-501 Bypass and Willow Drive, behind University Mall, Chapel Hill.

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

With their remarkable ability to imitate dozens of species, mockingbirds have fascinated humans for millennia. Despite this fascination, scientists are only beginning to address basic questions of vocal mimicry. **Dave Gammon**, a bird biologist from Elon University, has studied vocal mimicry in Northern Mockingbirds for nearly a decade and will present some of his recent findings of this 'many-tongued' mimic.

The May meeting also includes the election of officers for the coming year. This year we have two vacancies – Vice President and Secretary. Though candidates for each position have emerged, more nominations (and volunteers!) will be welcome at the meeting.

Welcome New Member!



Ron McClear of Durham

Saturday Field Trips

Rob Rybczynski leads field trips for the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The trips are every Saturday – **except in the summer** – and leave from Glen Lennox Shopping Center on Highway 54 in Chapel Hill at 7.30 am.

Saturday trips now enter their summer hiatus and will resume in September. Stay tuned, and check the web site in September.

Feeding Hummingbirds in Arizona

You may have noticed (at least, I hope you did) that your April issue never materialized. That was because I simply forgot to write it! My excuse is that I was busy feeding hummingbirds. My husband and I have a little adobe house (built in 1926) in the Chiricahua Mountains of Southeast Arizona – which, as many of you know, is very good birding country. And one of the biggest differences between there and here is hummingbirds. I have seen eleven species of hummingbirds in our yard, and two more (Berylline and Violet-crowned) have been seen though, sadly, not by me.

In Spring, some of them are just moving through and heading north. In August, they are heading back – and the two seasons couldn't be more different. In Spring they are aggressive; no two birds ever share a feeder. This is especially true of the Rufous; there'll be hardly another hummer in the yard during the week or so that the Rufous are around. But in August everyone manages to get along. You can often see all six stations on a feeder occupied. In August, we might have a hundred or more hummingbirds in the yard, in Spring, no more than twenty or so. Only the Blue-throat spends the whole year there – even in January when there is snow on the ground.

In two weeks in April I go through about 10 lbs of sugar, but in August it's more like 30 lbs in a month; neighbors with bigger yards can go through 60 lbs of sugar. This, of course, is in addition to a yard

planted for their benefit with sage, penstemmon, yucca and so on.

The Broadbill (below) is probably my favorite – some readers may remember the one that spent a winter in New Bern a few years ago. But the Blue-throat is a close second.



Lois Manowitz (Wikipedia)

Hummingbirds are not the only birds that like the sugar water. Orioles (Scotts, Hooded and Bullock's), Acorn Woodpeckers, and even House Finches can be seen on the feeders with varying degrees of success. There are two kinds of bats in SE Arizona that eat nectar, and they can empty the feeders overnight necessitating the use of bat cages around the feeders. A coatimundi can empty any feeder it can get to in a very short time. And black bears will go to a lot of trouble to get to them too. In the end, we give in, and take the feeders inside each night. In the morning a few hummers will accompany me as I return the feeders to their hooks. Some even try to feed as we move along.

Future Meetings

Over the summer your Vice Presidents will recruit speakers. If you have a topic you would like to see addressed, contact Eddie Owens (see below) and make the suggestion.

Speakers for the 2015-16 season will be announced in the September issue.

Update: By the time you read this Doug's bench at Mason Farm will be complete. Visit Mason Farm this weekend, enjoy the birds and take a moment while you sit on the bench to remember our late trip leader.

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

(ektatum@nc.rr.com)

Appointed Officers

Bird Count Supervisor/compiler:

Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Field Trip Chairman: Bob Rybczynski

(squawk510@att.net)

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