

Editor, Mary George
500 Sharon Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
mcgeorge44@gmail.com
<http://chbc.carolinanature.com>



Brown-headed Nuthatch by Doug Pratt

Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

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Next Meeting

Monday, March 28 , 2016

Time and location: 7:15 pm refreshments; 7:30 pm meeting. Olin T Binkley Baptist Church, corner of Highway 15-501 Bypass and Willow Drive, behind University Mall, Chapel Hill, NC

Members and guests are welcome to gather for dinner at the K & W Cafeteria (University Mall) at 6 pm before the meeting. Go to the back room of the cafeteria to join the group after making your dinner selection.

March 28 2016 Program Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary – Preserving Paradise.

Speaker: Robbie Fearn

Balancing uses in the development of a nature center in an Important Bird Area is critically important. Come learn about plans for the development of the Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary in Corolla NC, a climate stronghold for birds that is listed in the top 5% of locations nationally. Located at a historic duck hunting lodge, the future for this site involves research into habitat response to sea level rise and immersive adult education.

Robbie Fearn serves as Center Director of the Donald C. O'Brien, Jr. Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Corolla, NC. As Center Director, Fearn oversees conservation planning impacting the greater Currituck Sound region, construction and renovation of the 2,600 acre property for programming and research activities and he engages the local community in the protection of this pristine property. After earning his M.S. in Environmental Studies from Antioch New England Graduate School, Fearn served in many leadership roles including Executive Director of Birmingham's Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, Director of the Cape Wildlife Center in Massachusetts, and Education Curator at the Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence RI. With Millie Overman and a core of dedicated volunteers, he and his wife Pamela cofounded the Network for Endangered Sea Turtles on the Outer Banks.

Saturday Field Trips

Bob Rybczynski leads field trips for the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The trips are every Saturday, except during the summer, and leave at 7:30 a.m. from the Glen Lennox Shopping Center on Highway 54 in Chapel Hill.

Y2K and Beyond

by Kent Fiala

Anyone remember Y2K? I really wanted to reach ABA 600 before Y2K but it didn't happen. In a last-ditch effort to reach 600 at least before the end of the second millennium, I hiked the Snake Bight Trail in the Everglades in December 2000 to get Greater Flamingo (now American Flamingo, and now my 603rd species after taxonomic changes) as my ABA 600, and I wrote about the adventure in the February 2001 issue of the CHBC newsletter. There are numerous members of the club who have longer life lists than I do, but because I wrote about reaching 600, editor Mary George asked me to provide an update on where I've been since.

Although it took me nearly 40 years of birding to reach 600, it took me barely 5 years to reach 500 ABA species in the third millennium alone, and now I have nearly reached 600 again in just this millennium. But as my birding travels have turned increasingly toward South America, my ABA area traveling has languished and so has growth of my ABA list. I am still a couple of dozen away from my next goal of 700. The local Northern Lapwing of three years ago is actually one of my most recent lifers, but this month a super-long Florida layover on a return from a trip to Colombia allowed me to get a much-needed boost of five lifers, from the mundane feral Muscovy Duck to an ABA Code 5 Zenaida Dove that appeared just as we were giving up and leaving after a few hours of waiting. (Oh, and I got 70 world lifers in Colombia). Most of my lifers since 600 have come from return visits to the Lower Rio Grande Valley and southeast Arizona, the "chicken tour" of Colorado, a February trip to Duluth, and especially my first and only trip to Alaska. An upcoming first visit to the Dry Tortugas should give me another ABA boost. I'm looking forward to that trip.



Zenaida Dove

Photo credit Kent Fiala

Upcoming Meetings

April 25 Jessie Birckhead: Conserving Breeding Habitat for Grassland Birds in a Changing Agricultural Landscape. Jessie Birckhead, Conservation Coordinator for the NC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, will discuss challenges facing grassland birds in agricultural landscapes and how the cattle industry can better accommodate breeding grassland birds by using native warm-season forages.

May 23 David Smith: Birds of New Zealand and Tasmania. The wildlife of New Zealand encompasses everything from fabulous endangered endemics to horribly misguided introduced species. Natural and un-natural selection have led to a precarious balance, but the country offers great opportunities to the traveling birder. David and Judy Smith will share photos and memories of their trip to New Zealand and also to the Australian island-state of Tasmania. Expect everything from Albatross to Wallaby, with a couple of devils thrown in.

Welcome New Member

Maria de Bruyn, Chapel Hill

Avian pointillists – combining art and utility

by Maria de Bruyn

As an aficionado of the fine art of painting, I studied various art forms in college, including impressionism, expressionism, dada and surrealism. Pointillism, a technique used by artists such as Seurat and Pissarro, intrigued me – the use of dots of paints to form patterns that the eye combines into an image. As I got into birding later in life, it was intriguing to find out that one woodpecker species is also a member of the pointillist club.



The yellow-bellied sapsuckers are gorgeous birds with their mottled black, brown and white dorsal feathers. Their faces are black and white with beautiful red caps and black bibs; the males also have red throats. They specialize in drilling sap holes into trees as they perch upright on tree trunks while keeping their balance with their tails.

The holes are pecked out to become shallow impressions in the tree where sap can be easily lapped up, along with any insects that happen to be caught up in the sticky juice.



The Cornell Lab of Ornithology tells us that the sapsuckers make [two kinds of sap holes](#). The round ones are deeper and the woodpeckers stick in their bills so they can reach the sugary concoction with their tongues.

Squarish holes are shallow and the sapsuckers need to maintain these to keep the sap flowing. They may spend half or more of their time tending to and feeding from the sapwells.

You can recognize the sapsucker drill holes because they tend to make them in rows in trees, such as birches and maples. The tulip poplars in the photo had numerous closely spaced rows lower on their trunks and then rows that were further apart higher up the tree. Some birds choose not to be horizontal artists, however, making vertical rows with more randomly placed sapwells above them.



Avian pointillists cont.



The patterns are interesting and not only useful for the avian artists – other species also enjoy these sugar buffets such as ruby-throated hummingbirds, downy woodpeckers, bats and porcupines.



If you find that the sapsuckers are drilling into one of your favorite trees and you fear that it may cause damage, you can discourage them from using it by wrapping burlap or hardware cloth over the area they are tapping or by smearing a sticky repellent, such as bird tanglefoot, over the bark. Their handiwork may only damage areas directly around the sapwells, however, and if you leave them, you get to observe them using their handiwork!

Other nature-related observations can be found at Maria's blog:

<http://mybeautifulworldblog.com/>

Upcoming State Park Spring Bird Counts

April 26 - Kerr Lake State Recreation Area

Contact: Brian Bockhahn

birdranger248@gmail.com

April 28 - Falls Lake State Recreation Area

Contact: Brian Bockhahn

May 1 - Jordan Lake State Recreation Area

Contact: Norm Budnitz nbudnitz@gmail.com

or

Carol Chelette cncbrdr@yahoo.com

May 3 - Pilot Mountain State Park

Contact: Brian Bockhahn

May 5 - Mayo River State Park/Rockingham County

Contact: Brian Bockhahn

May 11 - Hanging Rock State Park

Contact: Jean Chamberlain

jchamberlain1@Windstream.net

Officers of the Chapel Hill Bird Club

Elected Officers

President: David Smith
(davidjudysmith@frontier.com)

Co-Vice President: Eddie Owens
(banjoman_57@yahoo.com)

Co-Vice President: Anne Dayer
(annedayer@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Patricia Bailey
(pbailey_489@yahoo.com)

Secretaries: Sue and Fred Schroeder
(fschroed@mindspring.com)

Appointed Officers

Bird Count Supervisor/compiler:
Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Field Trip Chairman: Bob Rybczynski
(rob.rybczy@gmail.com)

Bulletin Editor: Mary George
(mcgeorge44@gmail.com)

Webmaster: Will Cook
(cwcook@duke.edu)

Chapel Hill Bird Club
PO Box 51969
Durham NC 27717