

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

c/o C. W. Cook
418 Sharon Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514



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February 2000

Monthly Meeting

Monday, February 28, 2000, at 7:30 pm

Program — *Woodcocks*, presented by John Connors of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences

Location — Binkley Baptist Church, the Lounge. Binkley is on Willow Drive at 15-501 in Chapel Hill, near University Mall.

Woodcocks!

by Ginger Travis

February 28 our speaker is John Connors of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. He's a specialist on woodcocks, those football-shaped, earth-worm-eating, oddly endearing birds of wet woods whose mating cry — "*Peent!*" — will soon be heard throughout the land. (Woodcocks are one of those birds whose presence in the Triangle reassures us just a bit: we still have pockets of wildness left in this rapidly developing region.) Come celebrate the woodcock. As usual, at 7:15 p.m. we'll have refreshments and a quarter-hour social before our meeting begins. See you there!

Upcoming programs:

March 27 — Susan Campbell, our own newly licensed hummingbird bander, on N.C.'s hummingbirds.

April 24 — R. Haven Wiley, UNC-CH biology professor, on the upcoming second annual Orange Co. mini-breeding bird survey, plus prospects of starting a mini breeding bird survey in Chatham Co.

May 24 — Scott Hartley on the ecology of Weymouth Woods - Sandhills Nature Preserve, where a population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers is found (rescheduled from Jan. 24, the night the blizzard began).

Dues Notice - Last Chance!

If the date on your mailing label says 01/00, your membership has expired — please fill out the form at right and send it in ASAP.

Field Trips

Saturday morning trips leave the Glen Lennox parking lot (on the north side of 54 just east of the intersection with 15-501 in Chapel Hill) at 7:30 am sharp and return by noon. Reservations are not necessary. Beginners and visitors are welcome! Bring binoculars, boots (or old tennis shoes), a scope if you've got one, and be prepared for a hike. Field trips are scheduled for February 26 and March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29. Destinations have not yet been set. Contact Doug Shadwick (942-0479) for more details.

Driscoll's Rufous #2

by Susan Campbell

February 2 at 7:15 am I caught and banded the Driscoll's second winter hummer: an adult female Rufous. She was very feisty and a beautiful little bird. The juvenile male that I had previously banded (my first in NC) was still in the yard but avoided my trap like the plague. I had hoped to recapture him to check his weight and get more photos (he actually looks like a male now; he had only hints of a gorget and a few rufous back feathers on Nov. 30). However, his memory of the first banding experience proved to be too good.

Anyone who is on the area should visit the Driscoll's yard [Lakeshore Drive in Chapel Hill]. The hummers are wonderful but so are their other yard birds. They have quite the feeder setup and regularly attract Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Blue-

Membership Information

Calendar-year (Jan.-Dec.) dues for most individuals and families are \$15; for students, \$10. If you wish to renew for more than one year, multiply the annual dues rate times the number of years. Please send your check (payable to the *Chapel Hill Bird Club*) to club treasurer Fran Hommersand, 304 Spruce Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. If you have questions, please call Fran at 967-1745.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

E-mail _____

bird, Brown Thrasher, Fox Sparrow and the other NC winter regulars in good numbers.

Thanks to Tom and Barbara for their willingness to share their birds with all and in particular, the opportunity to band their hummingbirds!

Big Bird in Chatham County

by Martha Brinson

Saturday afternoon (Jan. 22) the doorbell rang. When I answered, the man said, "Lady, there's an ostrich in your front yard!" (Sounds like the setup for a Groucho Marx one-liner!)

I looked over his shoulder, and sure enough, there was an ostrich, big as life, looking at me and nervously racing back and forth in the snow, 20 feet away.

"Hmm," I replied. "This is a first. I wonder how you call one of these. Here boy? (whistle, whistle)?" Moments later he dashed off down a side road. A sheriff's car and police car sped by in hot pursuit. I assume he was caught and returned to the ostrich farm seven miles away.

Then all of a sudden, it dawned on me . . . I burst out laughing to my husband, Bob: "Hey! That's yard bird number 86!" (Okay, okay, I know it doesn't really count, but I jotted it down in my notebook anyway!)

Greater Scaups at the Confusing RDU Airport

by Harry LeGrand

On Sunday, Dec. 12, I visited Brier Creek Reservoir at the Raleigh-Durham airport. I saw four male Greater Scaups, plus one or two female Canvasbacks, among the usual hundreds of Ring-necked Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, and a few others. This is the lake where Greaters have appeared, in numbers up to several dozen, in recent winters. Because Aviation Parkway has been re-routed and crosses the middle of the lake, you can get a lot closer to the birds, but also a lot closer to traffic. To check the upper end of the lake now involves a very convoluted route. But, that's often a good area.

To visit the lake, turn north onto Aviation Parkway from I-40, and stay on Aviation -- not turning to the airport or to I-540. Pull over on the right opposite the lake. You will have to walk across the median and the southbound lanes to view the lower part of the lake where most of the ducks are. You can see most of the upper part of the lake from farther along Aviation Parkway.

If you want to check the upper reaches of the lake: Stay on Aviation. Do NOT turn onto I-540. Aviation T's at Globe Road. Take a right and you will come to the uppermost end of the lake. To check the next part of the lake, go back toward Aviation a bit, and turn onto Kitty Hawk Drive. This road T's into Nelson Road, and then turn left to check the lake. To get back to Aviation, you have to backtrack. Nelson Rd. goes OVER Aviation; there is not an interchange.

If you don't want to check the upper end of the lake, continue on Aviation, and make a U-turn or turn around at the stoplight at Globe Road. Again, resist the temptation to veer off onto I-540. You can pull over on Aviation headed south, but there is a guardrail next to the emergency lane, so you won't feel as comfortable as pulling over off the northbound lanes.

By the way, old Aviation Parkway no longer runs along the western runway. IT IS BLOCKED OFF. You cannot now check the small ponds that often had waterfowl last year. The eastern ends of Nelson and Globe are also blocked and are dead-ends. Thus, in the DeLorme atlas, the Aviation Parkway in it no longer exists. Aviation makes a diagonal cut across the lake to the NW, passes under Nelson, and T's at "Hillsborough" (Globe Road). Where "Hillsborough" and Nelson touch the old Aviation, there are gates.

Don't ask me how to get to the fields at the north end of the runway, where the Rough-legged Hawk was seen about 2 years ago! It ain't easy from the south! Plus, about 1/3 of the field is now a parking lot, so it's not worth the trouble to visit there. It isn't hard to visit from US 70 on the north, but there are so many roads now between US 70 and I-40, many of which are limited access, you will easily lose your way.

Close Encounter with a Kinglet

by Lucretia Kinney

This fall and winter I have had a lone male Ruby-crowned Kinglet coming to eat suet in my yard, and he has been especially active around the suet since the snow storm. Yesterday evening about 5:15, I went out in the yard in all the rain to put more suet in the forks of the twigs in my rose-of-Sharon bushes so that there would be plenty for the small birds to eat in the morning. (The starlings don't eat the suet that is in these lightweight forks.) As I reached the first rose-of-Sharon, I suddenly realized that the kinglet was perched on the next plant, unaware of me, trying to get the last bit of grease left there. His feathers were bedraggled from the rain, and even his red cap drooped. I very slowly stretched out my hand holding a large piece of soft suet towards him. As he became aware of it, he reached out and pecked it, and then realizing that it was attached to a person, he flew to a nearby tree where he watched me distribute the suet in the bushes. As I moved on to another area, some yellow-rumped warblers flew in for a last bite of the day, and he joined them. It was a real delight to have such close contact with this little bird.

Club officers

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