

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

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



Vol. XXVIII, Nos. 6-9

September 1999

Monthly Meeting

Monday, September 27, 1999, at 7:30 pm
(NOTE NEW TIME)

Program —

Identification and Misidentification of Hawks,
presented by the legendary Mike Tove

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

Hawk Workshop at September Meeting

by Ginger Travis

The first fall meeting, on September 27, will feature Mike Tove on hawks. Here's what Mike says about the program:

"It is not exactly a talk per se, it is more a workshop and everyone is encouraged to bring their field guides and a pencil or pen. It should be different from what you expect." And it's bound to be interesting to all who enjoy raptors.

And an innovation: We'll have cookies and juice at 7:15, which is just a few minutes before the new regular meeting time — 7:30 pm. So come early and bring your sweet tooth.

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. Contact Doug Shadwick (942-0479) for more details.

18 Sept. - No field trip because of the **Chatham County Fall Bird Count**. Contact Will Cook (967-5446) if you would like to participate.

25-26 Sept. - Field trip to the mountains for warblers and hawks. We'll visit the Mahogany Rock hawk watch and cruise the Blue Ridge Parkway for warblers. Contact Doug if you would like to join us.

The rest of these are tentative, based on last year's schedule:

2 Oct. - Mason Farm

9 Oct. - Cane Creek Reservoir, the most underbirded good birding spot in Orange County.

16 Oct. - Jordan Lake.

23 Oct. - Eno River State Park (Cole Mill Rd. access).

30 Oct. - Brickhouse Road near Falls Lake (the "sparrowfields").

Elections held at May 24 meeting

The following officers were elected at the May meeting (by acclamation):

President — Magnus Persmark

Vice-President (Chapel Hill) — Ginger Travis

Secretary — Judy Murray

Treasurer — Fran Hommersand

Spring Count Results

by Will Cook

Chapel Hill had a fairly average count, both in species and numbers, despite being hampered by a strong, chilly breeze out of the northeast. (See the end of this issue for the Spring Bird Count Tabulations.)

New to the count was a **Tricolored Heron**, seen by Ken Knapp and Alan Johnston. It was a banner spring for unusual herons — Durham also had a Tri-

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 _____

colored, as well as Great and Cattle Egrets, while Jordan Lake had Great, Snowy, and Little Blue Heron.

Kent Fiala spotted our second-ever "Brewster's" Warbler (Blue-winged x Golden-winged hybrid); the only other one was in 1970. Other goodies included Common Snipe, Bank Swallow, Sedge Wren, and Gray-cheeked Thrush.

We counted record highs for Great Blue Heron (tie), Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, and Blue-winged Warbler (an amazing twelve!). Others seen in unusually high numbers were Veery, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Pine Warbler. On the other hand, it was a poor count for both Rock and Mourning Doves (less than half of last year's numbers), Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, E. Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, American Redstart, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird (I know you all are missing the cowbirds!).

Unfortunately, I was called away on business (to Texas!) and couldn't participate this year. Thanks to Jeff Phippen for covering Mason Farm for me on short notice (and producing some mighty fine finds).

Ant-eating Tanager at Hummingbird Feeder

by Steve Shultz, Cary

The hummingbird activity in the yard has necessitated the addition of two more feeders. One of the new feeders brought an unexpected surprise this morning (July 19) in the form of a male Summer Tanager! We have seen and heard a tanager throughout the summer, but never in our yard (we mainly have pine trees). At first I thought the tanager was attempting to drink the sugar water, but closer observation showed that he was plucking the ants from the feeder! Pretty neat way to start off the week. I have not had a chance to make ant moats for these feeders yet, maybe now I'll hold off a bit!

Wasp-eating Summer Tanager

by Shelley Theye, Chatham Co., 6/11/99

The other day I observed a male Summer Tanager eating eggs (?) from a paper wasps nest built under the front overhang. He couldn't see me because of the reflection in the front door glass. I had a close-up view as he sat on the front porch rail and then flew about 6' up to the nest, grabbed an egg or larval sac, flew back down to the rail, ate it, then repeated this 5 or 6 more times till he had eaten them all. After he finished the wasps were back at the nest looking it over and I think laying more eggs.

Vicious Yellowlegs

by Kent Fiala

On July 18 at Pea Island I saw a remarkable incident of bird behavior. I was watching a Semipalmated Sandpiper in the scope at fairly close range, when, minding its own business, it passed near a Greater Yellowlegs. The yellowlegs snatched its left

foot and lifted the entire bird in the air, dangling by its foot! After being released, the Semi flew a short way off and stood completely still for a couple of minutes, standing on its right leg only. It then began foraging while hopping on the one leg, as they sometimes do anyway, and was soon running around on both legs none the worse for the wear.

Sightings – A Busy Spring and Summer!

Mar. 13: Rufous Hummer Still in Hillsborough

by Ted Zoller

"Tequila," the Rufous Hummingbird, is still showing at the feeder in Hillsborough as of this morning. [was this the last sighting?-CWC]

Mar. 31: Fox Sparrow Departure Date

by John Frederick

Early in March I had up to six under my feeders in suburban Durham. By March 20 I was only seeing two, and my last sighting of one was March 31.

May 15: Forest Hills Park, Durham

by Randy Emmitt

I birded the park for 2 hours early this morning with a few newbie birding friends. We found it to have many mulberry trees with one really ripe and the rest nearly ripe. The birds foraging on the berries were 20+ Cedar Waxwings, 10+ Song Sparrows, 4 Gray Catbirds, 1 Scarlet Tanager, and loads of robins. We also found a nest in a tree cavity with a titmouse feeding her young. Also along the creek we had 2 migrants species: 2 Northern Waterthrushes and 2 Spotted Sandpipers. The only other warblers heard were 2-3 Black-and-white Warblers.

May 18: Late White-crowned at Mason Farm

by Jeremy Hyman

On the morning of Tues May 18, I was very surprised to find an adult White-crowned Sparrow at Mason Farm. This was only the second White-crown I've ever seen at Mason Farm, and certainly the first in spring. The bird was along the road between the middle field and the east field on the eastern side of the loop.

[This is the latest local report ever!]

May 18: Gray-cheeked Thrush in Duke Forest

by Will Cook

This morning I did a little birding in Duke Forest (Orange Co., NC) with Arundhati Das. I was surprised at the number of migrant passerines: Magnolia Warbler - 2, Blackpoll Warbler - 1 fem., Black-and-white Warbler - 1, Am. Redstart - 2, Veery - 1 singing, and Gray-cheeked Thrush - 1, singing its whis-per-song.

May 20: More Late Migrants

by Will Cook

Went out again this morning (5/20) to Duke Forest gate 5 (Durham Co.) and heard a couple of late

migrants -- 1 Black-throated Green and 2 Black-throated Blue Warblers. Also 1 imm male Black-and-white Warbler near the Phytotron Building (Duke) singing a bizarre song that sounded more like a Prothonotary Warbler song!

May 21: Late Harrier at RDU

by Jeff Phippen

Today (5-21) near the RDU airport I saw a nice adult male N. Harrier cruising the fields. Yesterday I saw a Swainson's Thrush in the Duke Forest in Orange Co.

May 21: Late Swainson's Whisper-song

by Will Cook

Another late migrant today at noon on the Duke campus (in the redcedars between BioSci and the Phytotron) -- a Swainson's Thrush singing its whisper-song. Definitely one of my favorites.

Also, same spot, a migrating Yellow-billed Cuckoo (I've never seen one in this spot before).

Cooper's Hawk Journal -- Nest in Raleigh Suburbs

by Joseph Covington

May 27: I've decided the nesting birds across from my front yard are Cooper's Hawks. I had thought they were more deep woods birds than to be nesting within sound distance of the Raleigh Beltline (North Hills). The clinching characteristic that identified the birds is the call. They certainly look too big for sharpies, and sharpies appear on some maps not to be nesters in this area (although on the Chapel Hill breeding list). At this point my biggest question is that one of the parents seems to be clearly in immature plumage. Can a Cooper's breed before assuming full adult plumage? If anybody wants a look, they are at 800 Richmond St. (short street between Yadkin and Davidson), at the top of the pine to the right of the driveway.

June 7: I've been away and just noticed that the Cooper's Hawks have at least one chick peeking his head above the nest. This is the nest in suburban Raleigh, near the Beltline (in the crown of a tall pine). I found the answer to my question about immatures breeding in Erlich: a certain percentage of female Cooper's do breed. The contrast between cap and nape in the male are for me easier to use to distinguish from Sharpies than tail ends, plus the frequent call is clearly different from Sharpie's.

June 22: At 5:30 this afternoon the two baby Cooper's hawks in the front yard flapped their wings, jumped onto the rim of the nest, and flew (crashed) from limb to limb until they were two or three loblollies away from the nest tree. I have not been diligent in observing them. Can I have been lucky enough to have witnessed their first flight or have they tested their wings before and returned to the nest? Their pathetic, mouse-like squeaks should make their presence easy to track as long as they are in the area. They only move a few feet at each stop, pausing to pull out

some more of that embarrassing baby down that clings to every stick of the nest and is raining down onto the ground. Two weeks ago they were white, downy little turkeys. Now they have the long striped tails and breast streaks of immature Cooper's hawks, closely resembling their subadult plumage mother except for more dark facial markings. No cat is going to get these fledglings; they flap from crown to crown. As long as the adults continue to bring plucked chickadees or chipmunks, their future looks relatively secure.

June 29: Each evening I watch the kettle of Cooper's Hawks that hang out at 800 Richmond St. Maybe kettle is not the right word, but it seems bizarre to me that this bird that was so elusive when I was a new birder (and when I did see it was in the category of was it or wasn't it) is constantly visible, vocal, and always in the same place. The 2 young flit from pinetop to pinetop during the entire early evening, with the adults appearing from time to time. I believe the 2 are still being fed in the nest, the only time they return there. Their range, however, is only 50 yards or so away, and always in the row of pines along the street. They fly to the next tree, spread their wings and preen, and then go on to the next one, with a few squeaks. I wonder if there are birders who are familiar with immature bird calls, very different from the adults.

June 7: Orange Co. Backyard Birds

by Janine Perlman

There's been at least one Broad-winged Hawk flying and calling near our house for a few days; have gotten several long and excellent looks, though when it's out of sight I keep thinking one of the dogs is crying. Also heard a Barred Owl at 4 pm today.

June 12-13: Orange County Mini-Breeding Birds

by Will Cook

This past weekend I conducted a mini-breeding bird survey on two routes in Orange County, NC. See UNC ornithologist Haven Wiley's web site <http://www.unc.edu/~rhwiley/mbbs/> for full details and summarized results. On each of the two routes I recorded 54 species and about 400 birds. Here are a few highlights:

On Saturday (June 12) I did route 5 in southwestern Orange County. The most unexpected bird was an adult male Baltimore Oriole. I saw it on Dairyland Road, just east of Anilorac Farm. It flew overhead and landed in a tall Sycamore tree (which seems their favored nesting tree along the New River). Baltimore Orioles are not known to nest around here, but there is one breeding season record from Jordan Lake (6/14/93). A little further on along Dairyland Road, at Anilorac Farm, there were three Grasshopper Sparrows singing. Grasshopper Sparrows are also regular at Maplevue Farm, further east on Dairyland Road (and not on my route). Extra credit: what do you get when you spell Anilorac backwards?

On Sunday Rachel Harden helped out by recording the observations. It was so much easier with the help! We did route 10 in central eastern Orange County. Most unexpected were a Cooper's Hawk (carrying a small rat and being harassed by Barn Swallows), Whip-poor-will and Barred Owl (we started at 5:37 am), and a Grasshopper Sparrow. The Grasshopper Sparrow was on New Sharon Ch. Rd. at a large farm field.

June 16: Very, very late White-throat in Raleigh

by Erik Thomas

I saw a White-throated Sparrow on the North Carolina State University campus (in Raleigh) on Wednesday (June 16). It was at the east end of the big quad near the tower, between Tompkins and Leazar Halls. This is a spot where White-throats often hang out during the cold months. It was pretty tame—I walked past it only a few feet away.

June 16-24: Yellow-crowned Night-Herons

first report by Rob Gluck, 6/16/99

Stopped briefly at Little Crk. Impoundmt.(hwy 54) at noon today(6/16) and was rewarded with 2 adult Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (also a veritable slew of Great Blues).

update by Rob Gluck, 6/24/99

Several folks e-mailed me to say they were unable to find the y-c nt.-herons at Little Creek impoundment since reported last week, but tonight one adult was poised atop a snag very close-in (to dike) when I stopped there at 6pm. Other regulars there right now include several very homely-looking (eclipse or juvenile?) Wood Ducks, Red-shouldered Hawk family, Red-headed Woodpekers, and Kingfishers.

Little Creek impoundment is off hwy 54 just beyond a hwy guardrail that is on your right if travelling west on the hwy, and 50 yds-or-so prior to the large sign announcing you are approaching Chapel Hill.

[last reported sighting here was 6/26/99]

June 27: Mississippi Kite in Durham Co.

by Will Cook

I did a little birding near Jordan Lake on Sunday 6/27/99. The star attraction was a Mississippi Kite over the impoundment on Farrington Road, near the intersection with Stagecoach Rd. (Durham Co.). It swiftly kited off towards the south.

June-July: Great Egrets Roost at Jordan Lake

by Jeff Phippen

I counted 52 Great Egrets from the Hwy 751 bridge at Jordan Lake on Saturday 12 June. They're easiest to see when they come in to roost for the evening after 6 pm or so.

by John Frederick

I would have posted this Saturday evening if I knew how infrequent Great Egrets are in June. About 8 p.m. on Saturday evening (June 26) I counted 93

Egrets roosting in trees to the east while crossing the 751 bridge over Jordan Lake. They looked like snow on the distant trees. It was a stunningly beautiful sight. Did anyone else happen to see them? They were very obvious looking to the east.

by Mike Schultz

I also noticed a large group of egrets at the 751 crossing on Jordan Lake last week-end. I had no bins with me then, so I went back to check them out last night (Tue. June 29). I counted 101 birds, all Great Egrets, some with breeding plumes. Does anyone have any ideas where these birds have come from? Are they our usual, but early, post breeding wonderers, or could they possibly be breeding/have bred/tried to breed in an unknown local area?? Would it be correct to assume that if there were nesting going on, the birds would not be roosting away from the nests? Another person at the lake last night said they have been there at least two weeks.

by Karen Bearden

I wanted to check out the Great Egrets birders were writing about on Jordan Lake along the 751 bridge close to Chapel Hill. We arrived Saturday July 3 at about 7:45 pm. There were 76 egrets at first. By the time we left I estimated 114. Beautiful! We also saw Barn and Cliff Swallows, an Indigo Bunting singing pretty, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird loving the trumpet vine blooming along the edge, Great Blue and Green Herons, and a Bald Eagle.

On July 7 Joe and I witnessed a new experience for us. As we pulled into our church parking lot in Raleigh we noticed a Cooper's Hawk standing on the edge of the parking lot. We stopped in our car to look. Suddenly, he flew up into a bush, grabbed something and flew off into the pine trees. A Mockingbird chased after him scolding, so we figured it was a baby Mockingbird in a nest. Later we checked out the bushes and found 2 empty nests.

by Walker Golder, National Audubon Soc'y, Wilmington, NC, wgolder@audubon.org

Some have inquired about unusually large numbers of great egrets inland from the North Carolina coast and asked if nesting along the coast had been disrupted. Great Egrets do nest inland as well as along the coast, so it is not unusual to adults inland during the breeding season.

Although it is difficult to say with certainty, the large numbers of egrets inland this season is likely due the disruption of nesting activities along the coast, which was caused by a strong northeaster during late April and early May. This was a very strong storm with 4 days of 20-40mph winds (gusts to 60), cold temps and steady hard rain (13 inches in Wilmington). The storm hit about the time most Great Egrets were late in incubation or with small chicks, thus they were less likely to reneest. In addition to Great Egrets, we also lost many small herons and egrets, and pelicans.

July 3: Common Merg at Jordan Lake

by Will Cook

This morning (7/3) I did a little birding at Jordan Lake. Highlights:

1 female **Common Merganser** at Farrington Road bridge, by the old road in the water. This is the first local report of this species for early July; however, it's not really unexpected at this location! On 7/28-8/15/90 two flightless immatures were seen here. They stayed on through at least 9/7/90. A female Common Mergs was seen here on 7/27/96, and it stayed on at least until 9/7/96 (the day after Fran). 1 or 2 have been reported here every late summer/early fall since.

3 Least Sandpipers at Farrington Road bridge, on the partially exposed old road in the water. The only earlier local fall report was of 6 on 7/2/86.

1 Sharp-shinned Hawk over NC 55 near Apex (Wake Co.)

On July 2, I took a look at the Great Egret colony at the NC 751 bridge. I counted them three times between 7:45 and 8:20 pm — each time I got a higher number as more came into view. At first, when they were all in a tall pine tree, I got about 75. Then, as they started to move into low dead bushes near the water, I got 97. After they all moved out of the tree and into the bushes, I counted 107. No other herons except for a Green and the usual number of Great Blues. The egrets are east of 751 and can only be seen from the northern end of the bridge.

A first for me -- a Red-shouldered Hawk flew by with long, dangling legs — bizarre! It took me a couple of seconds before I realized the legs didn't belong to the hawk, but to a big bullfrog that the hawk was carrying!

Also 1 Cooper's Hawk flying across 15-501 near New Hope Creek (Durham Co.)

The Common Merganser was relocated in the same spot by Steve Shultz on 7/11 and 7/17/99.

July 5: Falls Lake LB Herons

by Randy Emmitt

Judy Murray and I braved the heat today by launching my canoe just south of the I-85 bridge. We headed out at 8 am and returned at 1 pm and boy did it get hot by then!

We saw 2 immature Little Blue Herons from about 100 feet in the canoe, both were panting heavily and not very nervous of having us so close. These were found just above the RR tracks where they appear to be every year. Also we had about 30-40 Great Egrets and maybe a few more Great Blue Herons. Kildeer numbered over 100 easily. We saw up close (20 feet away) in the canoe 3 Least Sandpipers on the way back.

We saw many Ospreys, including several with huge fish flying towards their nests. We saw 2 man-made nests and one 20 foot high Osprey-made nest all with young. Missed seeing any other eagles or hawks.

Ducks were plentiful with most being Mallard crosses. We paddled into several flocks most not quite matching the standard Mallard look. We saw some that to me resembled Black/Mallard crosses from the bill being a bluish orange.

As for other birds we saw Tree Swallows, Eastern Kingbird, Goldfinch, Red-eyed Vireo, heard Indigo Bunting and a few Prothonotary Warblers and many other more common species.

Butterflies were nearly none to be found even with buttonbush blooming like crazy many places we checked. These are all we found: 1 American Lady, 1 Horace's Duskywing, and 1 Dion Skipper (some-what rare in these parts). Photos of all of these butterflies can be found on my butterfly web page <http://www.naturevision.com>

The shortage of butterflies might have been due to the hundreds of Eastern Pondhawk Dragonflies all around the buttonbushes.

NCSU Dairy Pond Summer Shorebirds

by Steve Shultz

5/21 - 1 Semipalmated Plover, 2 Least and a solitary Solitary Sandpiper

7/11 - 1 Spotted Sandpiper

7/14 - 1 Solitary, 10 Least Sandpipers

7/15 - 1 Short-billed Dowitcher

7/18 - 1 Pectoral Sandpiper

July 23: Mississippi Kite in Raleigh

by Derb Carter

A Mississippi Kite was flying up the Crabtree Creek greenway inside the beltline north of downtown Raleigh this morning at about 8 am.

July 31: Big Day Reddish Egret

by Will Cook

On Saturday 7/31 I decided to do a half-hearted attempt at a big day, since there wasn't one listed for NC for July and I wanted an excuse to go look at the Wood Storks anyway.

At the end of the day (7 pm) I birded the Sunset Beach area and found the usual immature dark-morph Reddish Egret at the west end of the island. To get to the spot, cross over the bridge from the mainland, take a right, go to the end of the road and park where you can (this may be the most challenging part!), take the last crossover to the beach, and walk down the beach (to the right) until the sand dunes peter out. Walk a short distance over to the saltmarsh side and scan for the egret. I saw it at low tide in the remaining trickle of water.

Other birds at this spot included 10 Wilson's Plovers and 2 Whimbrels, along with Black-bellied and Semipalm Plovers, Least, Semi, Western, and Spotted Sandpipers. Birding was pretty slow -- it was hard to find Sanderlings and I completely missed Willet!

I checked the usual spot at Twin Lakes for the Wood Storks, but saw none there, though I did see a

couple of Wood Storks fly by over the marsh across from the second lake.

After listening to the dawn chorus in Chapel Hill (which included the only Wood Thrush of the dat) I started off the day along Dairyland Road west of Chapel Hill and found several singing Grasshopper Sparrows plus the usual field birds. Blue Grosbeaks seemed to be singing everywhere. Near Cane Creek Reservoir I spotted a Kestrel flying by -- a rarity around here in the summer. At the lake there were lots of Cliff Swallows nesting on the dam, which I don't remember seeing there before. It looked like someone had scraped a bunch of the nests off one section.

By the time I got to Mason Farm at 9 am, the birds were pretty much finished singing for the day -- I saw many times more biting flies than birds. I spent a couple of hours seeing next to nothing at other land-bird sites near Jordan Lake, then headed for Fort Fisher. I stopped by the dairy ponds on Lake Wheeler Road on the way to pick up my only Cowbird of the day. There were a few shorebirds there, including a Semipalmated Sandpiper. Common Grackles were even more scarce than Cowbirds -- I got lucky and saw a small flock flying over I-40 in Sampson County. Where are all the Grackles?

The Fort Fisher area was pretty dull, though I did pick up all the usual terns except for Black Skimmer (which I missed that day).

Overall it was a miserably hot (104 F at RDU), relatively birdless day, but I still managed to get 106 species. Warblers were almost completely silent -- I got 4 species in all, only 1 of which sang (C. Yellowthroat). It should be pretty easy to beat this mark, especially by doing it in early July when most things are still singing and choosing a cooler day!

Aug. 3: Avocet and Radio Eagle at Jordan Lake

by Lee Van Malssen

Stopped at the 751 bridge sometime on Aug. 3. I noticed something large soaring above the water and realized it was an immature, possibly subadult Bald Eagle. However, there was something quite strange about it. There was a radio transmitter implanted on its back. Does anyone know if any of the Jordan Lake eagles would have this and if not who I would notify that one was seen. It banked right over my head so I was able to see the transmitter pretty well. As it was soaring over the water on the side where most of the egrets are I noticed the sun glinting off something metallic on its back. As it went over my head it looked just like a transmitter. Too weird.

I scanned the shore after the eagles flew off to the treetops and noticed something different -- a pair of **American Avocets** had come in. Behind them was a lone yellowlegs. A few swallows were out over the water. by then I was beginning to melt so gave up and went home.

I'm hopeful someone out there will have info on the weird eagle with the transmitter.

reply by David Allen

Florida Wildlife Conservation (Formerly Florida Fish and Game Commission) is the only group I can find at this point that has any transmitters on eagles. In Fact, Brian Milsap of FWC says several of their eagles are on Lake Jordan now. They have a web site that is a little out of date, but you can track their eagles on a map to see where they all are: <http://www.state.fl.us/fwc/> or you can call Brian directly 850-488-3831.

Aug. 28: Avocet and Summer Ruddy Duck

by Karen Bearden

Joe and I spent most of the day birding in the Raleigh area with our birding friend, Lena.

It was our first time visiting Harris Lake Park, a new park in south Wake County. Lots of active blue-birds, a kingfisher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Pine Warbler, meadowlark, and the first surprise bird of the day -- a Ruddy Duck! Such a cute bird with the easy identification of the tail sticking up!

We also visited the 751 bridge over Jordan Lake to see Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons. Feeding in the water close to a flock of yellowlegs was the other surprise bird, a beautiful **American Avocet!**

[The American Avocet was seen again by Lee Van Malssen on Aug. 31.]

Aug. 7: Jordan Lake Mudflats

by Will Cook

This morning I surveyed the New Hope Creek mudflats at Jordan Lake. Water level is very low -- almost as low as the low point last year. There were a fair number of shorebirds about, along with lots of waders:

GBH - many
Great Egret - many
SNOWY EGRET - 1
Little Blue Heron - 7 (all white)
Green Heron - 1

Killdeer - many
Greater Yellowlegs - 3
Lesser Yellowlegs - 1
Solitary Sandpiper - 15
Spotted Sandpiper - 1
Semipalmated Sandpiper - 3
Least Sandpiper - 4
Pectoral Sandpiper - 4

Aug. 21: First CHBC Trip of the Season

by Will Cook

A group of a dozen or so explored the New Hope Creek mudflats at Jordan Lake NC today (8/21). The lake is very dry, so we saw nothing from the old rail-

road peninsula. We headed south towards the lake and eventually (a mile down the shore) found the mudflats and shorebirds. Highlights:

- good numbers of shorebirds, though nothing rare. We saw about 4 Semipalmated Plovers, which is the most seen this early in the season here. Also Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary, Spotted, Semipalmated, Least, and Pectoral Sandpipers, and lots of (presumably) Short-billed Dowitchers
- 6 Caspian Terns sitting with some egrets
- 2 Snowy Egrets among the many Greats
- a flock of 7 Blue-winged Teal (most missed this)
- 1 Merlin - earliest local record ever (by 10 days)!
- 1 imm male Baltimore Oriole - earliest local record ever (by 2 days)
- a good variety of neotropical migrants (some of which may be local residents), including a female Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, a stunning Prothonotary (aren't they all?), Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Red-eyed Vireo, and a flock of 6 E. Kingbirds. Lots of Pine Warblers and E. Bluebirds on the mudflats.

Aug. 21: Hudsonian Godwit and Buffy at Falls Lake

by Will Cook

The morning of 8/21, Chris Eley and Les Todd discovered a molting adult **Hudsonian Godwit** at Falls Lake, near the Hickory Hill Boat Ramps on Redwood Road. Chris relocated it in the evening and noted the black underwing-coverts to confirm the ID. Hudsonian Godwits are very rare inland -- this is only the fourth report for Falls and Jordan Lakes and the other reports were all in 1988. Chris and Les also saw a Buff-breasted Sandpiper in the area.

The Hudsonian Godwit was still present on 8/22, but in a slightly different location, across the lake from yesterday's spot. To get to the new spot, take I-85 north to the first exit after the Falls Lake bridge (186), turn right on 15, then take the next right. Park near the gate at the end of the road. Continue walking on the road past the gate to the end of the road. Continue from there along the powerline to the lake. The godwit was on the sandbar near the I-85 bridge, to the north and east of the bridge.

The bird was last reported on 8/23 by Chris Eley, seen from the Hickory Hill Boat Ramps.

Aug. 22: Early Chestnut-sided in Chatham Co.

by Kate Finlayson

While Chris and I had breakfast on the screen porch, he spotted a first fall (probably female) Chestnut-sided Warbler with cocked tail feeding in a small sweetgum at the edge of our yard. May have even been two of them. This is the first migrator through that we have seen, and the first Chestnut-sideds ever. A female Scarlet Tanager and two juveniles were also very active in our butterfly bushes this morning. And an immature (I think) Ovenbird has been hanging out with other birds near the feeders for several days. I worry maybe one of the neighbor's cats got "Mom."

Aug. 22: Earliest BTB Warbler in Orange Co.

by Janine Perlman

A male Black-throated Blue Warbler had a leisurely peanut butter breakfast at our deck feeder this morning.

On 8/27 another male Black-throated Blue Warbler ate at our peanut butter late in the afternoon. (The previous one hung around for 2 days.) This guy had two distinct white spots per wing, one approximately on the wrist joint. Is that a usual variation?

Aug. 28: Marbled Godwit at Jordan Lake

by Will Cook

On the morning of August 28, fifteen people, on the second CHBC trip of the season, made the long trek to the Morgan Creek mudflats at Jordan Lake. Here's what we found (numbers are approximate):

- Semipalmated Plover - 6
- Killdeer - many
- Greater Yellowlegs - 2
- Lesser Yellowlegs - 10
- Spotted Sandpiper - 5
- Marbled Godwit** - 1
- Semipalmated Sandpiper - 50
- Western Sandpiper - 5
- Least Sandpiper - 75
- Pectoral Sandpiper - 20
- Short-billed Dowitcher - 3

Baltimore Oriole - 1

There are only a handful of Marbled Godwit records at Jordan. Except for the 6 with Hurricane Fran, the last one was seen in 1988.

It's not the easiest spot to get to: Park near the gate at the end of Old Hope Valley Farm Road. Continue walking past the gate 1 mile to the next gate. A few hundred yards past that gate, the road forks — follow the right fork, which is an old RR grade. Follow the RR grade trail until you see a trail going off to the right. Follow that until you can see the lake through the woods. Walk to the water and follow the shoreline to the right until you get to the mudflats. It's a hike!

Unfortunately, since Dennis dropped 10 inches of rain on us, all the mudflats are gone for the year.

Club officers

President: Magnus Persmark (933-2255, emp34157@glaxo.com)

Vice President (CH): Ginger Travis (942-7746, Ginger.Travis@unc.edu)

Secretary: Judy Murray (942-2985, jmurray.uncson@mhs.unc.edu)

Treasurer: Fran Hommersand (967-1745)

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Publicity Chairman: Ginger Travis (942-7746, Ginger.Travis@unc.edu)

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<http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/chbc.html>

1999 SPRING BIRD COUNT TOTALS

4/25 5/9 5/2 — Chapel Hill Observer Party Number —

Species	Dur	JL	CH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
LOON, Common			2																								
GREBE, Pied-billed																											
CORMORANT, Double-crested	342	178	156								2				9	81	47					16	1				
HERON, Great Blue	90	36	23								2		2			1	2	3	8			4					1
EGRET, Great	4	6																									
Snowy		1																									
HERON, Little Blue		3																									
TRICOLORED	1		1															1									
EGRET, Cattle	1																										
Green	1	16	11	1				1	6	1							2										
VULTURE, Black	26	26	26	12	1		1				2		1	1					7	1							
Turkey	40	96	131	18	12	2	7	2	8	4	4		5	2	4	7	8	12	9	2		5	2	14	1	1	2
GOOSE, Canada	84	53	227	6	2	6	5	15	20	28	51		2		6	2	5		14	6		22		11	2	8	16
DUCK, Wood	42	53	35	17					2						2	1			6			4		3			
MALLARD	37	50	64			4	9		7	12	6							3	6	2		7			8		
TEAL, Blue-winged	10																										
SCAUP, sp.		1																									
MERGANSE, Common		1																									
OSPREY	9	20	5														1	1	1			2					
EAGLE, Bald adult: 5 imm: 6	3	6	11												4	1		5	1								
HARRIER, Northern		1																									
HAWK, Sharp-shinned		1	4				1																1		1		1
Cooper's	1	4	5										1					1	1	1					1		
Accipiter sp.			1									1															
Red-shouldered	15	32	26	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1			1			1	1	3		2	2	1		
Broad-winged	3	4	2																		2						
Red-tailed	19	24	34	6	1	2	1		2	1	1	1	2			1	3	3	1		1	1	2	3	1		1
KESTREL, American		1	1																								1
TURKEY, Wild	3	2																									
BOBWHITE, Northern	2	22	5													5											
COOT, American		2																									
KILLDEER	27	50	30	8		2	2	1		1	2							1				1	2			1	9
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser																											
SANDPIPER, Solitary	3	8	10	4	1	1	1		2		1																
Spotted	4	36	16	8									1					2				5					
Least																											
Semipalmated		2																									
SNIPE, Common			1										1														
WOODCOCK, American	1																										
GULL, Bonaparte's		9																									
GULL, Ring-billed	134	150	8				1		1						3	3											
Herring																											
TERN, Caspian		1																									
DOVE, Rock	28	36	22	12			4		1							3										2	
Mourning	74	191	177	17	3	7	8	10	10		15	6	3	2	7	2	7	12	13	6	3	4	7	3	10	16	6
CUCKOO, Yellow-billed	1	65	7									1		3		2			1								
OWL, Eastern Screech-		1																									
Great Horned	2	4																									
Barred	7	14	2													1	1										
NIGHTHAWK, Common																											
CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW		6																									
WHIP-POOR-WILL		36	7														6							1			
SWIFT, Chimney	45	149	104	3		17	3		7	3	1	12	1			3	3	29	2	10		2		6		2	
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated	13	20	26	1	1	1		1	1				4			1	1		1	1				1		12	
KINGFISHER, Belted	6	8	10			1		1		3						1	1		1			1					1
WOODPECKER, Red-headed	6	25	7							1			2			1			3								
Red-bellied	54	166	127	5	8	10	8	2	8	2	8	17	3	3	4	3	5	6	4	3	3	1	3	3	10	5	3
Yellow-bellied SAPSUCKER			1									1															
Downy	18	54	40	2	2	3	3		1	2	2	5	2	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	1		2		2		1
Hairy	4	9	14	1		1			7				1			1	1		1		1						
"Yellow-shafted" FLICKER	12	21	27	1	1		4	1	3	3	2	1				2	1	1	2	1		1			3		
Pileated	3	20	11	2					3			1		1				1						2			
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern	1	55	7			2						1						1	1			1					
FLYCATCHER, Acadian	10	22	17	3			3		1			1	6			1	2										
PHOEBE, Eastern	11	45	39	5	5	1	1	2	3	2	2		1		2		3	2	2	1	1	1	2	3			
FLYCATCHER, Great Crested	23	110	36	3	2	2	2	3	2	1		2	1	1		3	1	2	2	2		4	1	2			
KINGBIRD, Eastern	24	102	51	2	3				12		3		2			2		9	2	2		6	3	5			
SHRIKE, Loggerhead																											
VIREO, White-eyed	27	28	38	1	3		3				2	2	12	1	2	1	1		4		2		4				
Blue-headed	2	4	1														1										
Yellow-throated	10	16	5	1					2					1								1					
Red-eyed	186	357	209	18	18	8	24	6	14	2	10	13	3	7	2	12	12	10	12	7	7	5	5	8		6	

1999 SPRING BIRD COUNT TOTALS

4/25 5/9 5/2 — Chapel Hill Observer Party Number —

Species	Dur	JL	CH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
CARDINAL, Northern	202	311	504	19	16	51	37	10	25	16	32	31	5	10	14	18	23	12	24	21	15	5	42	8	33	20	17	
GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted		8	10	1	1								2	2				2								2		
Blue	7	77	35	11				1				2	1		1	2	5	3	2	3						4		
BUNTING, Indigo	40	216	152	6	4	4	4	5	15	2	7		20		4	23	4	6	10	1	3		4	9	5	16		
BOBOLINK		14	40	39																1								
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	40	87	72	24	2				3	6	7		2			7			6	2		4		5			4	
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	11	84	39	16	5				4							1	2	3		6				2				
BLACKBIRD, Rusty	1																											
GRACKLE, Common	187	314	276	16		32	16	2	22	41	22	15	4	1	17	3	9	18	6	13	3	1	6	10		11	8	
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	115	107	63	10	5	1	2		6		2		8	2	2	6	1		9			1	4	2	1	1		
ORIOLE, Orchard	13	46	16	1	2				1		1							4		4		3						
Baltimore		4	8	1	1				3						3													
FINCH, House	22	58	171	3	5	10	6		23	13	30	7	3		2	1	3	1	9	3			6		14	26	6	
Purple																												
GOLDFINCH, American	105	274	305	10	10	15	30	6	11	11	18	15	18		1	8	3	10	18	6	2	3	7	2	50	40	11	
GROSBEAK, Evening																												
SPARROW, House	50	38	59	4		13	10		7	6	5	3						3									8	
TOTAL SPECIES	122	132	125	79	64	54	57	49	75	56	63	57	79	41	38	82	66	60	76	54	38	55	49	49	42	44	34	
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	4984	8812	8681	579	430	525	455	221	541	337	500	425	363	155	192	565	351	424	437	248	143	223	309	252	346	422	238	

Dur = Durham count 4/25/99 CH = Chapel Hill count 5/2/99 JL = Jordan Lake count 5/9/99

Chapel Hill weather: low 45, high 70; no precipitation; wind NE 10-15 mph; partly cloudy.

Number of Groups	9	22	24	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Number of Participants	14	58	51	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	4	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	11	1	
Party Hours: Total	54.5	150	154	10	7	9	8	3	10	6	9	4	9	3.5	4	9	9	6	5.8	6	4.5	8	6	6.5	3	3.5	4	
Party Hours: On Foot	41.5	113	105	8.5	5	5	4	3	7	1	5	3.5	9	3	3	8.5	8	5	4.8		3	1	4	3	3	3.5	4	
Party Hours: By Car	13	21.3	42	1.5	2	4	4		3	5	4	0.5		0.5	1	0.5	1	1	1	6	1.5							
Party Hours: By Boat		13.5	7																									7
Party Hours: By Bicycle		2																										
Party Miles: Total	168	324	463	29	26	25	17	4	45	41	44	5.5	9	14	16	10	28	25	19	24	23	6	24	20	2	3	4	
Party Miles: On Foot	39	74.3	89.5	4	5	5	4	4	5	1	4	4.5	9	1.5	2	7	8	2.5	4		3	1	4	2	2	3	4	
Party Miles: By Car	129	237	369	25	21	20	13		40	40	40	1		12	14	3	20	23	15	24	20			20	18			
Party Miles: By Boat		9	5																									
Party Miles: By Bicycle		4.0																										
Owling Hours	1.8	6.0	1.25						0.3								0.5	0.5										
Owling Miles	0	23	1																									

Party Areas Party Members

1 1, 2, 4	Pam Timmons, Perry Haaland, Kevin Powell
2 3,5	Les Todd
3 6, 7	Roger Kohn, Ramona Conyers
4 8, 13	John Frederick, Jonathan Steere
5 9	Norm Budnitz
6 11, 12	Kent Fiala
7 14, 17	Barbara Roth, Tom Driscoll
8 15, 18	Bob Chase, Russell & Ruth Roberson
9 16	Franchesca Perez, Fran Hommersand
10 19, 20	Jeff Phippen, Ken Harden, Haven Wiley, Joanna Vondrasek
11 21	Cynthia Fox
12 22S	Anson Cooke, Dwayne Cooke
13 24Na	Doug Shadwick
14 24Nb	Sandy Cash, Judy Murray
15 24S	Ken Knapp, Alan Johnston
16 25, 15 (part)	Mike & Lois Schultz
17 26	Pat & Pete Hobson
18 27	Magnus Persmark
19 27 (U. Lake)	Kathy Roggenkamp, Anne Beckwith
20 28	Tom Driscoll
21 30	Walton Haywood, Monica Nees
22 31	Jay Rabb, Ruth Harris, Oliver Orr
23 32	Maury Graves, Dick & Pat Ballard, Beth Duncan, Paul Ferster, Marie Graves, Eleanor & Fred Kilgour, Barbara Roth, Elvin Strowd,
24 9, 10,	Terry Roberts

Bobbie Wilkerson

Finley Golf Course