



The Bulletin

November 2025
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The Holidays are Almost Here...

Boom, just like that Thanksgiving is around the corner and the end of year rush of holiday festivities are in full swing. My inner glutton loves all of the focus on food for the next six weeks, my physician, however, would like me to lay off the pecan pie for breakfast tradition (we don't even talk about Halloween...)

Our bird walks this time of year are focused on our winter friends. As I regularly share, the Cedar Waxwing is one of my spark birds. I distinctly remember looking at one and going from "that's a brownish yellowish thing" to "Holy Cow, look at that mask, look at that tail that has been dipped in yellow paint". Those birds still give me a stir. I saw some in my yard this morning and stopped for a minute to take them in.

Our bird walks continue on the first and third weekends of the month for a walk to a local birding site. These walks are a great opportunity to bird with experienced birders and work on our identification of our migrants and winter species. Details are on the field trips page of our website.

Finally, the Christmas Bird Count season is upon us as well. The Chapel Hill count (12/21) that we coordinate (thanks Will!), the Durham count (12/14), and the Jordan Lake count (1/4) are all close by and always need people to help. Look at our website for the Chapel Hill count and the Carolina Bird Club website for those further afield.

I hope to see you at our membership meeting on November 24.

Cheers,
Bo Howes



Red Shouldered Hawk. Photo Courtesy of [Kelly Mieszkalski](#)

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

SARA LIPSHUTZ--TERRITORIAL AGGRESSION IN FEMALE CAVITY NESTERS

When: Monday, November 24, 2025 at 7:15pm
(light refreshments served at 7:15, program to
start at 7:30)

Where: Binkley Baptist Church, 1712 Willow
Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 or on [Zoom](#),



RSVP: Let us know you are coming by responding to our [Facebook event](#). To
attend by Zoom, register [here](#).

ABOUT THE NOVEMBER PROGRAM.

Uncovering the genomic bases of phenotypic adaptation is a major goal in biology, but this has been hard to achieve for complex behavioral traits like aggression. We leveraged the repeated, independent evolution of obligate cavity nesting in birds, to test the hypothesis that pressure to compete for a limited breeding resource has facilitated convergent evolution in behavior, hormones and gene expression. Our experimental design compared species pairs across five avian families (thrushes, swallows, sparrows, wood



warblers, wrens), each including one obligate cavity-nesting species and a related species with a more flexible nest strategy. We find behavioral convergence, with higher levels of territorial aggression in obligate cavity nesters, particularly among females. Across species, levels of testosterone in circulation were not associated with nest strategy nor aggression. Phylogenetic analysis revealed shared patterns of brain gene expression, limited to a small percentage of the genome. Altogether, we find that behavioral convergence in response to

shared ecological pressures is associated with largely independent evolution of gene expression across different avian families, punctuated by a narrow set of convergently evolving genes.

Sara Lipshutz is an Assistant Professor in the Biology Department at Duke University. Her lab's research focuses on the evolution of behavior across weird and wonderfully diverse species of birds. This work bridges “muddy boots” experimental fieldwork with a variety of molecular and computational approaches in population genomics, transcriptomics, and neuroendocrinology.

Find the lineup of future speakers on our [here](#).

We Have Stickers!

We are excited about our new logo and hope you want to help us show it off. Members who come to program meetings will find a vinyl sticker tucked into their membership badge. Come to the meeting to pick it up! Extra stickers are available for purchase (at the meeting) for \$3 each or 2 for \$5. Bring cash or check.





SAVE THE DATES!

The dates for the local Christmas Bird Counts have been set. See below for dates and details about how to find out more information for each event. Reach out to the designated contact below to participate!

12/14/2025 - Durham Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Contacts: [Bob Lewis](#)

Web: [Durham Christmas and Spring Bird Counts](#)

12/20/2025 - Raleigh CBC

Contact: [Brian O'Shea](#)

12/21/2025 - Chapel Hill CBC

Contact: [Will Cook](#)

Web: [Chapel Hill count circle map](#) | [Procedures](#) | [Tips](#)

1/2/2026 - Falls Lake CBC

Contact: [Brian Bockhahn](#)

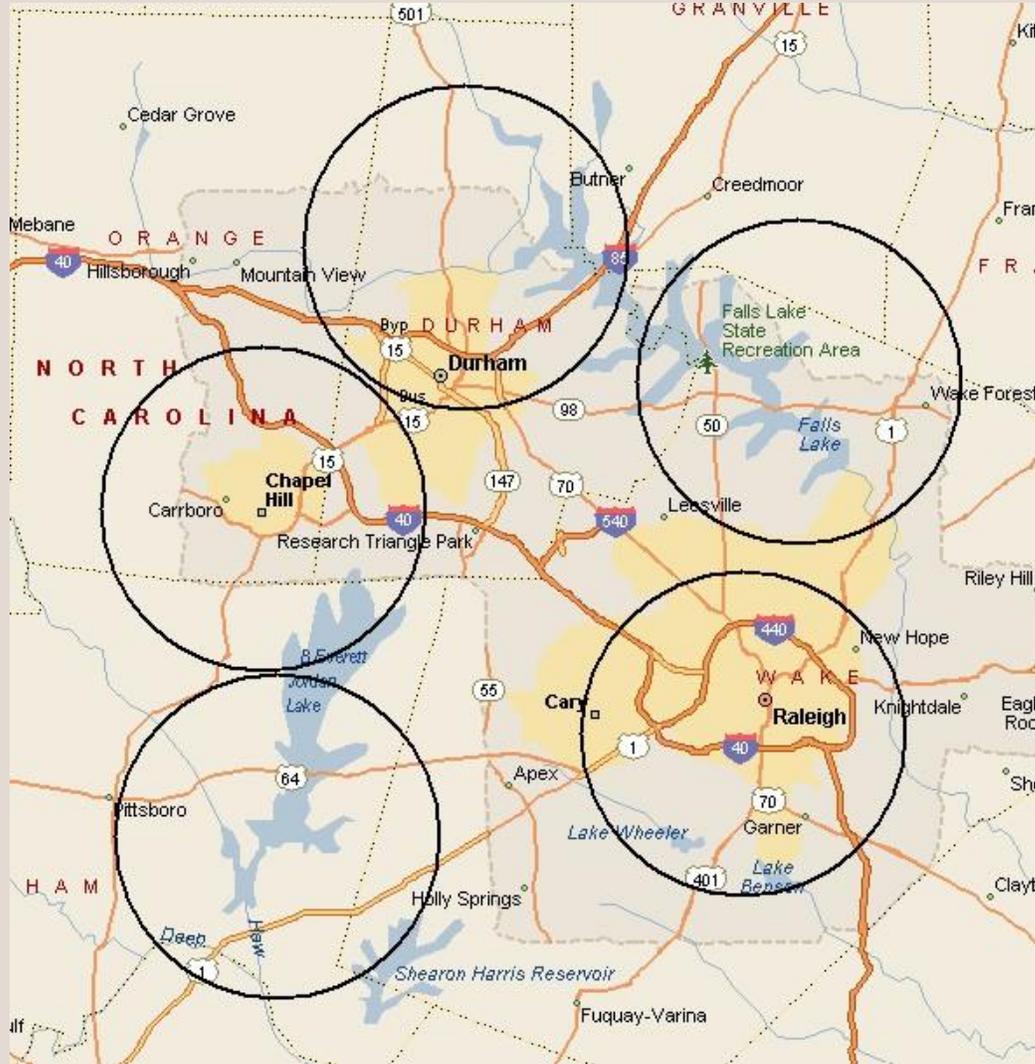
1/4/2026 - Jordan Lake CBC

Contact: [Tom Driscoll](#)

Web: [New Hope Bird Alliance Counts](#)

1/5/2026 - Kerr Lake CBC

Contact: [Brian Bockhahn](#)



Field Trips

The Chapel Hill Bird Club is leading bird outings/field trips during the 1st and 3rd weekends of each month. Our field trips are open to all. Details of field trips are emailed to all members via the CHBC listserv, posted on our [website](#) and on our [Facebook page](#). Thank you to the New Hope Bird

Alliance for posting our outings on [their calendar](#), too! Contact [Jim Capel](#) with questions about our field trips or to volunteer to lead a future outing for the Club.



Participants at the New Hope Bottomlands outing on 11/16 were treated to a great look at a yellow-bellied sapsucker. Photos courtesy of Bo Howes

2025-2026 Officers

Elected Officers

President:

[Bo Howes](#)



Bo Howes



Carolyn McAllaster



Jenny Devieu

Vice-president:

Jenny Devieu

Vice-president:

Carolyn McAllaster

Treasurer:

Dorothy Hodgson

Co-Secretary:

Mia Burroughs

Co-Secretary:

Roger Shaw



Do Hodgson



Mia Burroughs



Roger Shaw

Appointed Officers

Bird Count

Supervisor/Compiler:

[Will Cook](#)



Will Cook



Jim Capel



Kelly Mieszkalski

Field Trip Coordinator:

Jim Capel

Bulletin Managing Editor:

[Kelly Mieszkalski](#)

Webmaster:

[Will Cook](#)

The purpose of the Chapel Hill Bird Club is to provide engagement and educational opportunities for area birders of all experience levels. We offer interesting educational programs, local birding field trips, Christmas and spring bird counts, and connection to other members via a Facebook group. Members have access to like-minded people including experts who can answer your questions. Whether you watch birds in your yard or travel to the ends of the earth to chase rarities, our club offers something for you. We are a friendly group and welcome all to join us, especially new birders! Our members are mostly from the Research Triangle area of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, Cary, Pittsboro, and surrounding towns.