Chapel Hill Bird Club
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The Bulletin

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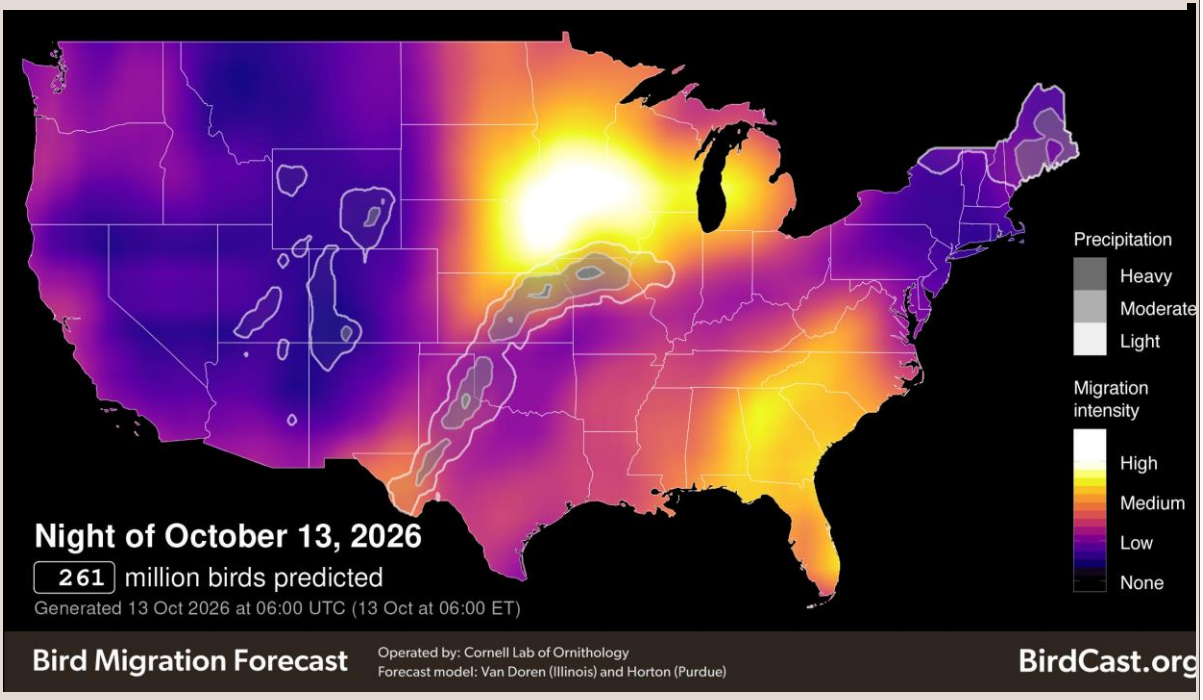


Image captured from BirdCast.org

Fall Migration is Here

I have neither heard nor seen a White-throated Sparrow this fall. Same for any Kinglets. I suspect this means I haven't been out birding enough, as I have heard from others that these winter friends are showing up and will soon be dominating our checklists. No need to hurry these things along though. The Chimney Swifts are still putting on a show on the UNC campus and at other approachable spots across our region. The confusing fall migrants are popping at Brumley North and Ebeneezer Point so many rarities the GroupMe can't keep up!

The Chapel Hill Bird Club kicked off our season of speakers with a visit from Biel Macedo, a postdoctoral associate at Duke University who is studying evolution and genomics in female ornamentation in birds. Don't let this title scare you, Biel was engaging as he shared his passion for his work. We continue with our academic theme to start the year with Leilton Luna who will share his research into using genetics to understand and protect bird diversity. Come see us on the 26th!

As usual 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 and in this newsletter below.

Finally, we are announcing our annual multi day MLK weekend field trip in this newsletter. Look for details and sign up quickly as these trips always fill up.

Cheers,

Bo Howes



Araripe manakin. Photo by Ciro Albano

October Program: *Leilton Luna: Birds in a changing world: Using genetics to understand and protect bird diversity*

When: Monday, October 26, 2026 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.

What can a bird's DNA tell us about its past, its future, and its chances of survival? In this talk, Leilton Luna will explore how modern genetic tools



can help us understand bird evolution and conservation in a rapidly changing world. Using examples from his research on endangered and declining birds—from the critically endangered Araripe manakin to ruffed grouse and Amazonian birds— he will share how genetics can reveal hidden patterns of diversity, adaptation, inbreeding, and population decline. In this talk Leilton will offer a glimpse into how the latest advances in genetics are helping us better understand and protect the bird's diversity.

Speaker Bio: Leilton Luna

Leilton Luna is a research scientist at Duke University and an incoming Assistant Professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. His research combines ecology and genomics to understand how species adapt, diversify, and persist in a changing world. He has a particular interest in endangered species, with much of his work focused on birds. By combining observations of birds in the field with information hidden in their DNA, his work aims to better understand bird evolution and inform conservation efforts. Learn more about Leilton's work on his website: https://leiltonluna.com/





Photos courtesy of Leilton Luna



2026 MLK Field Trip group photo courtesy of Loren Hintz

Joint New Hope Bird Alliance/CHBC Field Trips for MLK Weekend, January 2027

The New Hope Bird Alliance and the Chapel Hill Bird Club are joining together to offer all our members an MLK weekend choice of field trips, January 16-18, 2027. NHBA will be traveling to the NC Outer Banks, while CHBC will go to Huntington Beach State Park in South Carolina. You

are invited to sign up for one or the other, as our expert trip leaders help you explore the best birding hot spots in both venues. For the CHBC trip, preference will be given to members. Just send an email to David Anderson for the Outer Banks, or to Bo Howes for Huntington Beach. We will sign you up and then send further details. Even with two trips, space is limited, so respond as soon as you can. We are asking a donation of $75 for either trip. We are offering a couple of scholarships for students or others who need help with funds for the trips. See below for student scholarship application information. For questions about the trips, please contact David Anderson or Bo Howes.

Application for CHBC Student Travel Grant for MLK Weekend Field Trips

Deadline: November 15, 2026

The Chapel Hill Bird Club will **provide a travel grant of $300** (to help cover the costs of travel, food, and lodging) **plus a waiver of the requested $75 donation** for two students to participate in a CHBC sponsored overnight weekend birding trip. The CHBC Student Travel Grant is open to students (undergraduate or graduate) who are current members of the Chapel Hill Bird Club. Priority is given to students who have participated in organized CHBC or New Hope Bird Alliance walks, meetings, and other activities and who have not received a travel grant from CHBC in the past three years.

To apply, please submit an email application with “CHBC Student Travel Grant” in the subject line to Bo Howes (bohowes at gmail.com) and Do Hodgson (dolohodgson at gmail.com) that:

1. Provides contact details (name, address, email, phone number)
2. Confirms that you are a current member of the Chapel Hill Bird Club
3. Confirms that you are currently a student (undergraduate or graduate) at a nearby college or university: What is your institution? What program are you in and what is your current status (first year, PhD, etc.)?
4. Describes your involvement with the Chapel Hill Bird Club and/or New Hope Bird Alliance, including participating in walks, attending meetings, volunteering on committees, etc.

For the January 2027 CHBC trip to Huntington Beach, **the deadline for applications is November 15th, 2026**.

Contribute to Our Monthly Bulletin!

Do you have a recent birding trip (near or far) that you want to share? We would love to hear about it and see your photos in a future issue of the Bulletin. Just email Kelly Mieszkalski.

Field Trips



Recent field trip at Rollingview of the Falls Lake State Natural Area in Durham County.

Photo courtesy of Jim Capel.

Join us on one of our bird walks held during the first and third weekends of each month. Jim Capel led our last bird walk on October 4th at Rollingview of the Falls Lake State Natural Area in Durham County. The group braved less than ideal weather conditions (see photo above!) but still managed to see 34 species including 7 warblers and 4 shorebirds. See complete eBird checklist here.

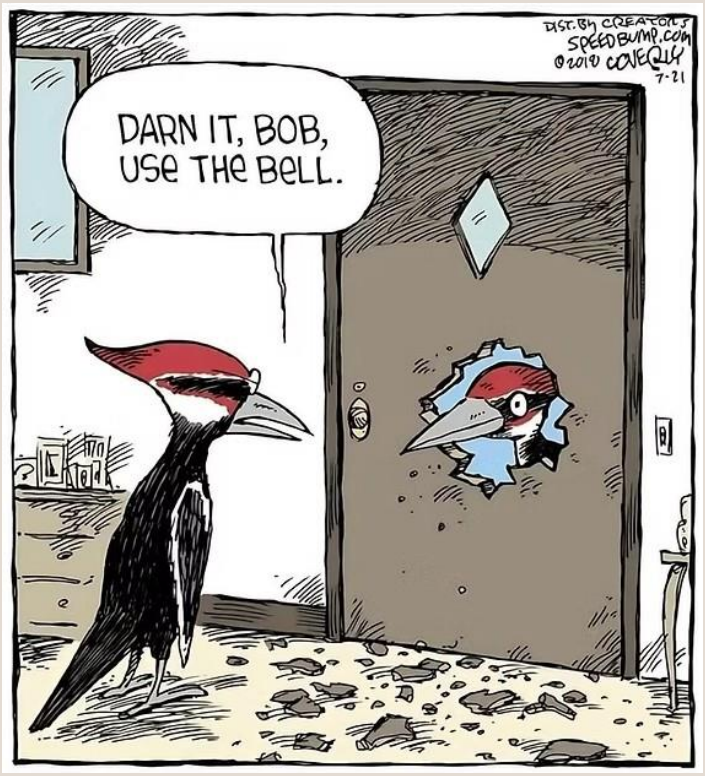
Our next bird walk will be held this Sunday October 18th at Ebenezer Point at Jordan Lake from 8-11 am. Ebenezer is 2.3 miles south of Hwy. 64 on Beaver Creek Road (SR1008) on the east side of Jordan lake. There's a well-marked entrance on the right. More information, including map coordinates, is here. Contact Bruce Young for questions.

Outings usually last 2-3 hours. No reservations or sign-up needed. If there is a large turnout for any particular outing, we may split into two groups. We do recommend carpooling for families or friend pods; while we love pets, there is a ‘no-pet’ policy for bird outings. New birders and birders of all skill levels are welcome.

Please wear long pants, socks, and sturdy shoes (ticks and chiggers may be present). Sun and bug protection are also recommended. Bring snacks and water if you like. Heavy rain will result in cancellation.

Check our bird walk schedule for more information.

Monthly Funny



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.