

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

November-December, 2002

(Vol. XXXI, Nos. 11-12)

c/o Ginger Travis
5244 Old Woods Rd.
Hillsborough, NC 27278

November 25 meeting

When: Monday, Nov. 25, 7:15 p.m. for refreshments; 7:30, meeting begins.

Where: The lounge at Binkley Baptist Church in Chapel Hill. Binkley is at the corner of Willow Drive and the 15-501 Bypass (east side of Chapel Hill) next to University Mall.

Program: "Avian Adventures: The Life and Art of John James Audubon," presented by Joseph Covington, both a birder and the director of education for the North Carolina Museum of Art.

The story of Audubon's life in pursuit of birds is so full of adventures in the wilds of the young United States and the royal courts of Europe that it sounds like a novel. He discovered new species (Carolina Chickadee) and created the greatest feat of artistic publishing in American history. The best of his birds are vividly lifelike works of fine art that capture the species in their characteristic habitat.

Joseph Covington learned his basic birding skills with the Chapel Hill Bird Club in the late 1980s. Join us for a little bit of bird history and wonderful art!

Audubon's prints on display in Raleigh

by Karen Bearden

Twenty-three plates and two bound folios from the Museum's copy of "The Birds of America" by John James Audubon are on exhibition at the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) in Raleigh through December 1, 2002. The Museum's CD-ROM "Audubon's Birds of the Carolinas" can be seen in the Museum's learning center and is available in the Museum store. Through the NCMA "Save a Bird" campaign, participants may help restore the Museum's collection of Audubon's prints by adopting a bird of their choice for \$750. Sponsors receive a commemorative document of their support and credit in wall labels when the books are placed on view, plus, an invitation to a reception at the Museum when the restored volume featuring their bird is placed on display. For more information contact the Museum at 919-839-6262, ext. 2125 or check their website www.ncartmuseum.org.

Note: No meeting in December.

Our next meeting after Nov. 25 will be Jan. 27. The January program will be "Basics of Bird Anatomy" by club members Norm Budnitz and Will Cook. Be there!

Saturday morning field trips

Trips continue Saturday mornings, except Nov. 30, from now till the Christmas bird counts start. Meet at Glen Lenox shopping center in Chapel Hill for departure at 7:30 a.m. sharp. Glen Lenox is on the north side of Hwy. 54 just east of the Hwy. 15-501 Bypass. Trips usually are over by noon. Bring binoculars and scope if you have one, wear stout shoes, and be prepared to do some walking. Trips are free; beginners and visitors are definitely welcome! If you want details about the destination of the trip du jour, call Doug Shadwick: 942-0479.

Three-day coastal field trip, Jan. 18-20

Every year over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, Doug Shadwick leads the ice-box brigade to Pea Island, Lake Mattamuskeet, the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and assorted other places down east where waterfowl winter and anything can turn up – a Rough-legged Hawk, a Golden Eagle, an "Audubon's" Warbler, a Ross's Goose, maybe even a Short-eared Owl. Who knows? The group usually stays for two nights at a motel in Nags Head or Manteo. You can go along for all or part of the weekend. No fee for the trip – just the expenses of lodging, food, and gasoline. Beginners and new members will be warmly welcomed. This is a great crash course in the premier winter birding spots in coastal North Carolina. Weather is quite unpredictable and can range from frigid to balmy. If you're interested in the trip, call Doug: 942-0479.

Give a CHBC membership

Many of us are coming up on renewal time in January 2003. (Membership is on a calendar year basis.) And besides a gift to ourselves, membership in the Chapel Hill Bird Club can be a great gift to a budding birder. Benefits include interesting programs at eight monthly meetings, weekly field trips, the

newsletter, and camaraderie with local birders at all levels – in a welcoming, inclusive group. Membership dues for one person or family are \$15 per year, or \$10 for a student. Make your check payable to the **Chapel Hill Bird Club**. Mail it to **Ruth Roberson, 38 Stoneridge Place, Durham 27705**. You can easily join for two or more years – just multiply number of years times annual dues.

Christmas Bird Counts

There are 5 local counts and many other counts from the mountains to the coast, most of which welcome volunteers, if you're in a traveling mood. (For non-local counts, see the Carolina Bird Club website, which is supposed to post a list of all counts in North and South Carolina: www.carolinabirdclub.org) On our local counts, beginners are invited to take part – the more eyes the better. Beginners will be teamed with more experienced birders. To participate, call the contact person for the count(s) you want.

15 Dec. (Sun.) Durham, contact:

Mike Schultz (mschultz@duke.edu or 919-490-6761)

21 Dec. (Sat.) Raleigh/Wake County, contacts:

John Connors (John.Connors@ncmail.net or 919-755-0253)

John Gerwin (ncs1416@mindspring.com or 919-715-2600)

Susan Campbell (ncaves@utinet.net or 910-949-3207)

22 Dec. (Sun.) Chapel Hill, contact:

Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu or 919-660-7423)

28 Dec. (Sat.) Falls Lake, contact:

Brian Bockhahn (birdranger@excite.com or 919-676-1027)

29 Dec. (Sun.) Jordan Lake, contact:

Carol Williamson (cncbdr@aol.com or 919-383-2364)

Upcoming – Swan Days at Lake Mattamuskeet and a birdathon too!

The first weekend in December brings the 9th annual Swan Days festival at Lake Mattamuskeet in Hyde County – December 7-8 this year. The congregation of waterfowl at Lake Mattamuskeet is fantastic – swans, geese, and ducks – their abundance feels primeval. The festival offers lots of wildlife viewing opportunities, workshops, crafts for sale, and good eats. Chapel Hill writer Phillip Manning will be signing two of his books there, *Afoot in the South* and *Islands of Hope*.

A new feature of this year's festival will be a birdathon – a competition among teams to tally the most bird species seen and heard. The birdathon will take place on December 7. The team to beat will be the Merlins: Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter and Ricky Davis. But why not give them a run for their money.

For more information on Swan Days, see www.hydecountry.org/events/swan_days.htm

CHBC cleans Old Hope Valley Farm Rd.

by Karen Bearden

On November 9, twelve CHBC birders flocked together for a good cause—to clean up trash along Old Hope Valley Farm Road. Among the recycled soda bottles and cans were large items such as a water heater, sofa, shower floor, shingles, buckets of concrete, refrigerator, and many tires. Even though we were picking up trash in Durham and Chatham Counties, problems developed with leaving the trash at the facility on Martha Chapel Road, since no one was a Chatham county resident. The trucks had to make a longer trip to another facility instead. We had a chance to see and hear a few birds while working: Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Goldfinch, Carolina Wren, White-throated Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, and Carolina Chickadee. People helping on the beautiful fall day were: Judy Murray, Hal Snyder, Jane Rinkley, Joe and Karen Bearden, Pat and Joe Wheelan, Jerome Brewster, Rob Tiller, Doug Shadwick, Mike Swaim, and Bob Rybczynski. Thank you!!!

Wings over Water 2002

by Lena Gallitano

Wings over Water - birding and kayaking - what better way to spend a nice weekend on the North Carolina coast! Alligator National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) has always allured me with those black waters, wetland flora and the potential for birds. When I discovered two kayak trips fit my schedule for Saturday and Sunday mornings, leaving room for a moonlight paddle at Kitty Hawk Woods, I found it to too irresistible to stay at home.

Whipping Creek, on the southern side of the Refuge, was Saturday morning's destination. The Creek opens up into a large lake before it narrows again and connects with the Alligator River. The short paddle from the put-in to the lake was lovely with many overhanging trees and branches but making for some difficult maneuvering in several locations. A pair of Wood Ducks flushed and Kingfishers were in abundance as we got closer to the lake. While we waited for everyone to gather, a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers made sure we saw them with their chattering calls, and an Osprey flew

overhead. The lake itself was beautiful with a large number of cypress trees on the eastern shore. The ANWR volunteer guides were taking us to a rookery where we found many stick nests in the cypress trees that were free standing but near the shore. They had seen Anhinga there during the summer but, alas, they had departed for warmer environs when we arrived. A few paddlers spotted a small alligator and near the entrance to the other end of the creek, we spotted a turtle basking in the warm Carolina sun on an old cypress knee. Several Turkey Vultures glided in the distance and the Kingfishers greeted us a second time on the paddle out. All in all, a beautiful morning and a nice adventure although the absence of birds was surprising - but perhaps they just found it difficult to compete with the chattering paddlers!

Since the day had been so warm and beautiful, the moonlight paddle from Kitty Hawk Woods promised to be awesome with a pretty sunset and a full moon rising. Just as we were about to launch, there was a very impressive flight over Albemarle Sound - the US Air Force Thunderbirds made several low passes in formation - I love watching everything with wings! As we make our way through the canals and channels with marshes on either side, we could hear hundreds of Red Wing Blackbirds settling in for the night and an occasional Great Blue Heron would announce its disapproval of our presence. A raptor, possibly a Merlin, flew up and perched in a tree as we passed but with the low light and distance, it was primarily a silhouette. The tide was high and the light fading so we had to be content with watching the full moon rise although I'm sure we were among numerous rails and other marsh birds. The moon's reflection on the water and lighting the marshes was the perfect ending to a beautiful day.

After two delightful paddles, I didn't think it could get any better but then I had never paddled on the kayak trails of the ANWR from the Buffalo City Road put-in. What a treasure to have in North Carolina! Four marked trails are available from this put-in and we took the red trail. This trail immediately intersects with Milltail Creek and opens up into a large lake. The Creek is lovely with many lily pads and more hardwood trees than cypress lining the banks. After paddling up the Creek, we turned back, followed the opposite shore and then cut across to enter the canals and creeks for the remainder of the trail. Silence was my impression as we entered the creeks - only once did we hear a few chickadees, Red Bellied Woodpecker and Tufted Titmouse - silence was the overwhelming impression of the woods - no traffic noise, no airplane noise and very little people noise. It was stunning in its silence and solitude. I can hardly wait to go back to explore the other trails.

Wings over Water - more water than wings for me but it was a great opportunity to explore new areas of the coast, and yes, I'll be back as often as possible to explore this remote, beautiful part of North Carolina. For new paddlers, Wings over Water is a great opportunity to try a rental canoe or kayak. In the meantime, the trails from Buffalo City Road are available for paddling at any time if you have your own canoe or kayak, and the marshes from Kitty Hawk Woods also have public access. Whipping Creek, on the other hand, will have to wait for the Wings over Water celebration in 2003. Grab a paddle; it's a great way to explore our State!

N.C./U.S. first!: White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*) found at Falls Lake by CHBC members Karen Bearden and Jill Froning.

In case you missed the story at our last meeting or on Carolinabirds, here's a real saga. On Oct. 22, Karen Bearden and Jill Froning found a White Wagtail at Sandling Beach, Falls Lake. They called in Will Cook and Jeff Pippen, who helped them clinch the ID. Will took digital photos, now posted at his website. The bird stayed all day but was never seen again after 10/22. A fair number of birders managed to get to Falls Lake in time, thanks to Jill's relaying the message by cell phone to someone who helpfully posted it to Carolinabirds. (Let's hear it for cell phones, listservs, digital cameras and spotting scopes!) Here are the details in people's own words (all from emails to Carolinabirds). G.T.

Karen Bearden [10/22]: It was an exciting, surprising afternoon!! Because of the events falling into place, we were at the right place, at the right time. Jill Froning was scheduled to pick me up at 10 am this morning for a little birding at Falls Lake SRA before the Partners In Flight (PIF) meeting at Blue Jay Point County Park. Road construction problems delayed Jill, so we didn't leave my house in Raleigh until 11:20. My goal for the day was to look for loons on the lake. Jill has never birded at Falls Lake before. We stopped at the Visitor Center to scan the lake (nothing), but saw both kinglets, White-throated Sparrows, and Black-throated Blue Warblers in the parking area. On to Sandling Beach where I was thrilled to see six loons together, not too far from shore, with at least two more in the distance. Jill spotted two ducks as I was admiring the loons. It took awhile to identify them because of the distance, and neither one of us had brought bird books!! Joe and I always have a book in the car, so I wasn't prepared. At 12:20 pm I said we had 10 minutes to eat our lunch in order to get to the PIF meeting. We sat on a bench to eat lunch and Jill said what's that bird. It was along the edge of the water bobbing its tail, so I said probably a Spotted Sandpiper. We both

lifted our binocs and knew right away it wasn't a sandpiper!!! This bird looked like a Mockingbird with a black V like a Meadowlark, and bobbing like a Spotted Sandpiper!! Jill said is it a wagtail? Neither one of us had seen one, and remember, we don't have a book!!! I called Joe at work who only happens to have a Western Peterson book. We were getting pretty excited about the possibility of a wagtail, and it was almost time for the meeting. When we arrived at Blue Jay Park, we asked the park staff for a bird book!! Turns out Denise (thank you!) had a Sibley Guide (yeah!). That's when we knew for sure it was a wagtail. So, the meeting had begun already, and I stuck my head inside looking for John Gerwin. I didn't see him, but noticed Will Cook and Jeff Phippen. So now I'm trying to get their attention without disturbing the speaker of course. Her part of the program ended, and suddenly Will looked up at me and I motioned him to the door. He gave me a puzzled look (CUTE!!), so I motioned again. When I gave him the message, he got Jeff, told Dave Lee, and we rushed back to Sandling Beach. Gosh, would it still be there, will they believe us if it's not, were thoughts going through my head (and I predict you too, Jill?). Jeff didn't have his binocs, but thankfully Will had his digital camera. We pulled up and the wagtail was still there!!! YEAH!!! Now we're all excited!! I said my heart is beating so fast and Jeff shows me the goose bumps on his arm!! We knew we were looking at a rare, special bird!! The bird continued walking, bobbing, and occasionally hopping up to catch bugs, back and forth on the beach close to the shore. Two cell phones started getting a lot of use calling up birders to spread the word. Harry, Derb, Ricky, Russ, Joe (he finally made it, because we don't count a life bird until we both see it!!), and Patricia came. Then the PIF meeting finished and Judy, John, and Chris showed up. As Joe and I were leaving at 5:10 Josh and Norm had just arrived, plus we think we saw Kent on our way out. . . . By the way, if you look in Sibley's Guide on page 419, the consensus so far was a first winter female White Wagtail. Will's photos will be the proof we need for verification. THANKS FOR THE GREAT DAY, JILL!!

David Sibley to Will Cook [10/23]: I was very interested to look at the wagtail photos you posted from NC, since the separation of White and Black-backed can be very tricky and both species have been recorded in eastern North America. I was shocked, however, to see that the NC bird has no dark eyeline, which excludes both Black-backed and the Siberian form of White Wagtail. As far as I know this bird is a first documented *North American* record of any of the "white-faced" subspecies of White Wagtail! The most likely is the European subspecies *M. a. alba* which nests as far north and west as Iceland, but I

don't know enough to rule out the British form (Pied Wagtail, subspecies *M. a. yarellii*) or to know if there are other subspecies farther afield that could be confused. No matter what, it is a first for North America. Congratulations! A very exciting record and nice photos.

Will Cook [10/25]: I posted a query on the Frontiers of Field ID e-mail group (<http://listserv.arizona.edu/archives/birdwg01.html>) asking for opinions on the subspecific ID of the White Wagtail and got about a dozen replies. Their consensus was that the bird is definitely of the nominate subspecies, *Motacilla alba alba*, citing many of the features Mike Skakuj mentioned.

This is not the first documented record for North America, as David Sibley originally suspected, since there was an adult photographed in Quebec on 4 May 2002. There may also be a sight record in Nova Scotia. There's a dot for White Wagtail in Michigan in the Sibley guide, but this is listed as *Motacilla alba lugens* on the official Michigan list. I checked the 1957 AOU check-list (the last edition to mention subspecies) and the only records of *M. a. alba* mentioned for North America are as a breeder in Greenland and as accidental in northern Ungava (Quebec). This bird may still be a first for the United States!

The South Carolina White Wagtail (April 1998), by the way, was identified as an adult male of the Asian subspecies *M. a. ocularis*. So when *M. a. ocularis* and *M. a. alba* are split, those of you who saw both can add another tick to your North American list! (I am not THAT lucky.) The photos of the Falls Lake bird are at <http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/pix/whitewagtail.html> (Are any photos of the SC bird online?)

Two local Calliope Hummingbirds

by *Ginger Travis*

On Oct. 15, an immature male Calliope Hummingbird showed up in Sharon Funderburk's yard in Franklin County. It is still there and looks likely to stay for the winter. Sharon had a Rufous Hummingbird for three years in a row before this year's Calliope – probably no coincidence, because she has a garden full of salvias. (Her favorite salvias are hybrids or selections 'Anthony Parker,' 'San Carlos Festival,' and 'Tutti Frutti.' She also has *Salvia leucantha* -- Mexican bush sage -- and that good old hummingbird magnet, pineapple sage, *S. elegans*. In fact, Sharon recently opened a nursery as a sideline to her regular job as a crop consultant. At Rare Bird Nursery she offers many of the salvias she grows in her yard.)

Sharon lives 11 miles east of Louisburg and welcomes people to come see the hummingbird.

Contact her for directions if you want to see her Calliope: 919-853-2716 or coney@mindspring.com.

On the other side of the Triangle, an adult male Calliope showed up Nov. 7 in my Orange Co. yard. Same deal – there is a great big pineapple sage plant in my backyard that bloomed in late September. This is the second winter a western vagrant has shown up. Last year's was an immature female Rufous Hummingbird. (Actually, there was another bird too, an atypical immature male Ruby-throated, that moved on.) This year's Calliope may or may not stay. It became scarce for a while after Nov. 10, when Will Cook got excellent digital shots through a scope (see www.duke.edu/~cwcook/pix/calliope.html). It is still occasionally seen.

People can try for this bird if it continues in residence. Please contact me first: 919-942-7746 or ginger@athena.dev.unc.edu from Monday to Thursday (email at work only).

There's a good book called *Hummingbird Gardens* by Nancy Newfield (a well-known hummingbird bander) and Barbara Nielson. For those who want to attract winter hummers, this book might be a good investment. Or just plant masses of salvia!

Hummingbird banding report

by Susan Campbell (to Carolinabirds, 10/31)

Dear Hummingbird Enthusiasts,

It is that exciting time of year once again--winter hummingbird season! With the temperatures cooling, the reports will really begin to roll in over the next few weeks. So, before it gets too busy, I want to give you an update of my activities and hummingbird happenings across the state.

Last Winter

The winter of 2001-2002 was fantastic for hummingbird activity in our state. In summary, last year across North Carolina I managed to band 12 Rufous, one Black-chinned, and 16 Ruby-throateds. I banded my first Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds (both juvenile males) last season as well. The Calliope was at a feeder in Winston-Salem (Forsyth Co.) all winter. The Broad-tailed, our first state record for the species, spent from late October through mid-April in Gibsonville (Guilford Co.). We also had the first state record Broad-billed Hummingbird, another immature male, but unfortunately, it did not stay long enough for me to catch it.

I encountered a good number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds last winter. One particularly interesting individual was an inland immature male Ruby-throat that I banded in Hillsborough (Orange Co.), a very rare find during the cooler months. On somewhat a different note, I managed to confirm a northern extension of the wintering range of Ruby-

throateds along the Outer Banks, well up into northern Dare County. I caught several in Manteo, saw multiple birds in Kill Devil Hills and banded two at feeders in Kitty Hawk. Further south, numerous Ruby-throateds were again reported in the Morehead City area and around Wilmington. I managed to get to a greater proportion of these hummers this year but still a good number went unbanded as time ran out in February. I hope to be able to spend even more time along our coast this winter in order to catch and study a greater number of these birds. This is a very unique situation and we know so very little about this species during the non-breeding season. I really look forward to taking greater advantage of the opportunities to band and observe Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at this time of year.

Recaptures

Recaptures of banded birds are as exciting to a bird bander as capturing new or rare species of birds. I was reunited with three familiar Rufous over the winter, two in Hampstead (Pender Co.; one male and one female) and one in Vass (Moore Co.). The Hampstead birds I had banded as juveniles the year before. The Rufous in Vass however had been banded as an adult two years before, making him at least three years old last winter.

Catching a bird banded elsewhere by a different bander is even more exciting. Last January I had not one but two such events! I found a banded adult female Rufous Hummingbird at a feeder in Pinehurst that had been banded three years previously in Louisiana by a colleague in a well-known winter hummer haven near Lake Pontchartrain. And shortly after that I recaptured an adult female Black-chinned Hummingbird in Wilmington that had been banded by Gary Phillips, my subpermittee, in Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina about ten weeks earlier!!

Fall Highlights

Selasphorus (Rufous-type) hummingbirds have already been spotted at a number of feeders in the last couple months. However most of these birds have been only passersby, migrating to points unknown. I did manage to catch a handsome adult male Rufous in Hendersonville (Henderson Co.). More recently I was able to catch two female Rufous Hummingbirds that continue to be seen: one in Lewisville (Forsyth Co.) and one in Pinehurst (Moore Co.). Also we have what I expect to be three Rufous back at feeders they have used for multiple winters: a male in Vass (Moore Co.) and one in Hampstead (Pender Co.) and a female in Shelby (Cleveland Co.). With colder temperatures forecast for this weekend, I suspect I will hear about the presence of more of these hardy hummingbirds very shortly.

Of even greater interest, an immature male Calliope Hummingbird has been seen daily since

October 15th in a yard in Castalia (Franklin Co.). He is using the vast array of Salvias planted there. Interestingly, this is the same yard where I banded a Rufous back in 2000. However with frost predicted over the weekend, I am hoping that the hummer will find the feeder so that I may be able to catch him in the near future. It would be the third banded Calliope in two years in North Carolina. So far, several birders have been to see this feisty little beast and he has put on quite a show, 'bugging' in his favorite tree and chasing other feeder birds around the yard. I have a feeling this is just the beginning of another very exciting winter here!

More News

For anyone that has not yet heard, we now have a hummer web page up and running in North Carolina. The North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, with whom I am a research affiliate, has created a great site: www.naturalsciences.org/nchummers/. It contains a variety of information about the species of hummingbirds found thus far in our state and is loaded with specifics (including photos), about my banding activities.

Acknowledgements

I must add that last year I had help from two other winter hummer banders who are relatively new on the scene: Gary Phillips and Rusty Trump. Gary spends most of his time banding hummingbirds along the northern coast of South Carolina near his home in Conway. Rusty travels from Suwanee, Georgia throughout the state in search of winter hummingbirds. Rusty banded a few hummers (two Rufous; one each in Franklin and Bryson City) in the mountains and Gary banded a number of hummers (6 Ruby-throats & 4 Rufous; in both Hampstead/Wilmington and Morehead City/Beaufort) along the coast. Both Rusty and Gary are very talented banders who through their commitment and dedication have proven invaluable in our quest to understand more about wintering hummingbirds in North Carolina.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to The Museum (for public relations work including creation and maintenance of the web site as well as loan of banding equipment) and the Hummer Bird Study Group (Clay, Alabama; for travel funds) for their continued support in my endeavors. I would also like to thank the private contributors who have donated funds to make my work possible over the past four years. Without you and the graciousness of the many hummingbird hosts and hostesses, this work would not be possible. I am indebted to you all. Please keep in touch!

So, keep a feeder up and your eyes peeled. Better yet, tell all your friends about the fantastic phenomenon of winter hummingbirds across our state. And please let me know if you see or hear of

any hummingbirds between now and March 15th. Best wishes,
Susan Campbell
Whispering Pines, NC
(910) 949-3207

Briefly noted, exciting fall feeder birds

compiled by G.T. from Carolinabirds

Nov. 11, Kent Fiala spotted a female-plumaged Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his feeder in Orange Co. "I tried to make it a Black-headed, but couldn't," he says. This is a late occurrence for the species.

Nov. 17, Lena Gallitano in Raleigh was doing her first observation period for Project Feeder Watch when she was startled to see an adult Baltimore Oriole in her yard. She thought it was a one-day wonder, but it returned Nov. 18. She has put out jelly and oranges to try to hold its interest.

Nov. 18 Shelly Theye in Chatham Co. reports an adult male Baltimore Oriole apparently in residence at her feeder again for the winter. (An oriole overwintered in her yard the last two years.) She puts out jelly, baked goods and a peanut butter/cornmeal mix for the oriole. Can't argue with the results!

Stories wanted – got any?

We could use some writeups in the Bulletin on local birding destinations that don't appear in the local Triangle guide – I'm thinking, for example, of the Bolin Creek greenway in Chapel Hill, the Horace Williams trails recently alluded to in a posting, I believe, by Rob Gluck, and the new New Hope Creek trail accessed behind Githens Middle School. There are probably dozens more. If you've got a favorite in-town or near-town spot in Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Durham or Raleigh, how about telling folks about it? Just write it up. Call or email me if you'd like to discuss an idea: 942-7746 and ginger@athena.dev.unc.edu. You don't have to be an experienced writer – that's what editors are for!

Other ideas for stories are welcome too. (I've always wanted to read a how-to piece about wading a marsh – especially since John Fussell's coastal guide recommends marsh-wading in search of rails. Any experienced waders out there to take this on?) Or you can review a book about birds, write about the natural history of a bird species, or send in a trip report.

If you want to mail me a story, my postal address is 5244 Old Woods Rd., Hillsborough 27278.

Happy holidays and good birding!