

THE BULLETIN

Chapel Hill Bird Club

April 2004

(Vol. XXXIII, No. 4)

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

Next meeting: Monday, April 26

When: 7:15 p.m., refreshments; 7:30 p.m., meeting begins.

Where: The lounge, Binkley Baptist Church, corner of Hwy. 15-501 Bypass and Willow Drive next to University Mall in Chapel Hill.

Program: Haven Wiley, professor of biology at UNC and founder of the mini-breeding bird surveys for Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties, will talk about what the surveys are intended to accomplish and what they've found so far. Folks who are interested in joining the existing surveys or starting them in new counties are encouraged to attend! The most recent Carolina Bird Club newsletter had an article by Haven encouraging CBC members to start mini-breeding bird surveys in their home counties in N.C. and S.C. The survey methods are adapted from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surveys used nationwide to track populations of breeding birds. However, the mini-surveys are designed to study the breeding birds at the county level (where local policy is made), so routes stay within county boundaries. Hey, there's lots more! Come to meeting and find out.

Saturday field trips ended 4/17

Weekly Saturday trips ended last weekend because spring bird counts start April 25. Many thanks to Doug Shadwick, the long-time field trip coordinator and leader, and also to Rob Rybszinski, Bruce Young and Will Cook, who fill in as leaders. The free, weekly field trips, open to all, are a core activity of our club, and what the leaders contribute is indispensable. Thanks, guys!

May 17 picnic, elections

The May 17 picnic will be our last meeting of the spring. (We resume meeting next September.) Along with the traditional potluck picnic, we'll hold our annual election of officers. New this year will be a bird walk (we hope) to be led by Doug Shadwick. So here's the drill: bring a dish you can share, a beverage for yourself, and your own plate and utensils (to minimize throwaways). The food has

been great the last three years, and we usually keep a list of picnic birds. Be there!

Location: Ebenezer Point state recreation area at Jordan Lake. Ebenezer is on SR 1008 (Mt. Carmel

Church/Farrington/Beaver Creek Rd., as it changes names) 2.3 miles south of Hwy. 64. Turn right onto the main park road and follow it all the way to the end (the point). There are picnic tables under a shelter and restrooms nearby.

Slate of officers: At this time it looks as though the slate will comprise our current officers, who are willing to continue: president, Joe Bearden; vice-president RDU, Karen Bearden; vice-president Chapel Hill, Judy Murray; secretary, Amalie Tuffin; treasurer, Ruth Roberson. However, we'll have the final slate for you in the May Bulletin.

Spring bird counts

Here's the schedule. New recruits are always needed. Novice birders will be teamed with old hands. There is no fee to participate. So what are you waiting for?

Chapel Hill, Sunday, 9 May 2004

Contact: Will Cook, (919)382-9134

Email: cwcook@duke.edu

Durham, Sunday, 25 April 2004

Contact: Mike Schultz, (919)490-6761

ross.gull@verizon.net,

Falls Lake, Monday, 26 April 2004

Contact: Brian Bockhahn, (919)676-1027

Email: Brian.Bockhahn@ncmail.net,

Jordan Lake, Sunday, 2 May 2004

Contact: Carol Williamson, (919)383-2364

Email: cncbrdr@yahoo.com,

Kerr Lake, Wednesday, 28 April 2004

Contact: Brian Bockhahn, (919)676-1027

Email: Brian.Bockhahn@ncmail.net

Raleigh/Wake County, Saturday, 8 May 2004

Contact: John Connors, 919-755-0253 (h)

Email: John.Connors@ncmail.net,

Wildathon, in print, in life

Coming up soon is the annual fund-raising event by the local Audubon chapters to benefit Mason Farm Biological Reserve, the Audubon coastal breeding bird sanctuaries, and other worthy projects. The basic

format is teams of birders trying to identify as many birds as they can within a day or another defined time period, with their supporters giving so much money per bird or just a flat donation. The format now includes identifying lots of other wild creatures too – pretty much anything goes for a good cause. There's an entertaining article by Jeff Beane in the April issue of *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine. Jeff and his team do a 24-hour Wildathon every year and identify birds, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibilians. If you are interested in participating on a Wildathon team or simply giving money to support birds in North Carolina, then get in touch with Karen and Joe Bearden (representing Wake Audubon) at chickadeebirders@earthlink.net or Bobbie Collins-Perry, (representing New Hope Audubon) at 403-8345 or bobbiecp@yahoo.com. Also, Brian Bockhahn, a ranger at Falls Lake and a fine naturalist, is going to do a local one-man 24-hour Wildathon. To find out how to support him, email cbockhahn4@earthlink.net.

Last newsletter in May?

If your mailing label reads "Jan. 04," it's past time to renew your membership in the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The May Bulletin will be your last. To stay current, just make your check for \$15 payable to the **Chapel Hill Bird Club** and send it to **Ruth Roberson (treasurer), 38 Stoneridge Place, Durham 27705**. To renew for more than one year, multiply the number of years times \$15. We have had a couple of delays this spring in updating our membership list, and we're sorry if you have already renewed without your mailing label reflecting that fact. If you think we have failed to update you, by all means call Ruth Roberson at 919-489-4888. We'll straighten it out.

Eagles at Falls Lake

by Brian Bockhahn

from two postings to Carolinabirds, 3/26 and 3/30

Ed. note: Previously there was only one documented eagle nest site at Falls Lake.

Paddled my canoe north of I-85 this morning (like 4+ miles) and found what I was looking for, the long awaited second active Bald Eagle Nest at Falls Lake. It was way way up by the confluence of Knapp of Reeds and the Eno in a dying pine tree, should be in the Durham SBC circle. I digi-scoped pics of one adult nearby, and the other sitting in the nest incubating. It stood up once, muted, then bent down towards the center of the nest with its tail pumping behind it, re-positioning eggs maybe? Still think there could be another nest up in the Ellerbe Creek confluence area, there was another adult Bald Eagle perched out that way early, but then flew off to the NW.

The Corps of Engineers rented a plane and flew over Falls Lake and found a third nest north of Ellerbe Creek in some open water expanse, I think it is pretty much un-named. **THREE TOTAL ACTIVE NESTS!**

This will get to be more than the Corps and I can monitor....so if there are any serious local birders interested in taking a turn on the monitoring program (like once a month, once during a 7 day period) let me know. Spotting scope necessary, both new sites can be viewed by land through private authorized access only. Serious replies only.

Brian Bockhahn

Falls Lake State Park Ranger

Falls & Kerr Lake CBC Compiler

BW Wells Association President

cbockhahn4@earthlink.net

www.ncsparks.net

www.geocities.com/birdrangerbb

Counting Loons

by Ginger Travis

For you CHBC members who just can't get enough bird counts, here's one to consider this July: Maine Audubon sponsors an annual count of the state's loons. Why not help out?

I happened to read about the event last year when I was in Belgrade Lakes, Maine. The *Waterville Morning Sentinel* (July 20) reported that the July 2003 count was the 20th since 1984. Visitors from around the country took part, along with the usual Maine residents – in all, more than a thousand counters on 300 lakes and ponds.

Bottom line: The Maine loon population is now said to be stable for sure and possibly growing. The estimated 2002 population for southern Maine (below the 45th parallel) was 2,555 adults and 282 chicks. Other nearby states are said to be seeing similar results. Massachusetts had no breeding pairs several years ago but now has about a dozen. New Hampshire and Vermont have recovering populations, according to the same article.

Boaters on Maine's lakes are regularly cautioned against approaching loons too closely, and people who fish are asked not to use small lead sinkers. (Ingestion of lead is supposed to be the leading cause of loon mortality in Maine)

If I were going back to New England this July (instead of wallowing around the Triangle in our heat, humidity, and ozone), I'd check with state Audubon offices up there about the count dates to see if I too could put on a red-and-black checked lumberjack shirt and ride around in a motorboat at dawn. If any CHBC members actually try this, please send me a report for the Bulletin!