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Brown-headed Nuthatch by Doug Pratt

Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

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Next Meeting Monday, March 27, 2017

Time and location: 7:15 pm refreshments;
7:30 pm meeting. Olin T Binkley Baptist
Church, corner of Highway 15-501 Bypass
and Willow Drive, behind University Mall,
Chapel Hill, NC

Members and guests are welcome to gather for dinner at the K & W Cafeteria (University Mall) at 6 pm before the meeting. Go to the back room of the cafeteria to join the group after making your dinner selection.

March 27, 2017 Program Why Conservation Needs Social Science: Understanding Human Behavior

Speaker: Dr. Ashley Dayer

Solutions to our bird conservation challenges require changing human behavior rather than changing bird behavior. To effectively engage people - including private landowners, policymakers, average citizens, and cat owners - in conservation, we must understand human behavior and its drivers.

Dr. Dayer will describe how the social sciences are advancing the understanding of human dimensions of bird conservation. She will share a case study about early successional habitat conservation on private lands and discuss how social science information is best applied to design effective conservation strategies and projects.

About the Speaker: Dr. Ashley Dayer is an Assistant Professor of Human Dimensions in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech. Dayer is a conservation social scientist with a research program focused on understanding people's and organizations' conservation behavior, especially related to private lands habitat conservation, human-wildlife conflict, endangered species management, citizen science, and conservation funding. As part of this research, she and her students explore the role that policy tools and educational interventions can play in influencing behavior.

Dr. Dayer is actively engaged with the bird conservation community. Prior to coming to Virginia Tech, she worked as a Conservation Social Scientist at Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She serves as the Co-Chair of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's Human Dimensions Subcommittee, on the Board of Directors of the Society for Conservation Biology Social Science Working Group, and as a member of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's Human Dimensions Working Group. She works closely with multiple migratory bird habitat joint ventures that implement international bird conservation plans at the regional level.

Bird Photography Milestones

by Jeff Maw

Editor's Note: In December, 2016, Jeff Maw posted to Carolinabirds about his goal of taking magazine quality photos of at least 1000 species of birds and posting them to his Flickr account. The editor asked Jeff if he would share his quest with our readers; he agreed to do so; and his milestones article follows. Thanks Jeff!

I do not remember how it all started. What I do remember is that my parents fed birds in the backyard when I was young and I developed a love of watching them through the window. I have always been interested in photography so when I was learning how to take photographs it seemed natural to learn by shooting pictures of birds. I am somewhat of a perfectionist and found I obtained a lot of fulfillment when I took, what I considered, a magazine quality shot of a particular species. Somehow, this developed into a lifetime goal of taking "Magazine Quality" pictures of 1000 species of birds.

When I decided on this goal I was not really thinking of how difficult it would be to achieve. I have been actively working on the goal for about 7 years and I am currently just shy of 300 species which I have or will post on my Flickr site. In total, I have taken photographs of over 1200 species, giving me a success rate of about 25%.

I am lucky that I get to travel occasionally for work, giving me the chance to add to the list without dedicated travel and expense. I was also lucky enough to travel to Colombia and Ecuador on a CBC

sponsored tour. On each of those trips I was able to add about 20 species.

Recently, I went on a trip to Costa Rica with my wife where I estimate I was able to capture over 50 species. I accomplished this by staying and visiting locations that cater to Bird Photographers. (Dave & Dave's Nature Pavilion, Laguna del Lagarto and Batsu) Each location places natural perches in close proximity to the feeders. This creates an opportunity to not only see the different species but to also take pictures of them in natural settings.

Additionally, I have been able to visit several ranches in South Texas that also cater to Bird Photographers. These ranches build a water feature, like a pond, about 10 feet in diameter. A blind, or hide, is built into the ground allowing the photographers to shoot activity at the pond at ground level. The vegetation is cleared out behind the pond giving clean backgrounds to the photographs. A broadcast feeder next to the ponds keeps the birds fed during daily feedings. Perches are constructed around the pond with branches, cactus and flowers. These perches provide photographic opportunities when the birds come to feed or drink.

Bird Photography Milestones continued

Techniques I have learned in the field have allowed me to create my own bird Photography studio in my backyard. I have "planted" a 16 foot 4x6 post three feet deep, leaving a 13 foot limbless tree about 20 feet from my kitchen window. The top of the post is about level with the bottom of my window. On the post I have placed two platform tray feeders and a suet feeder.



Top section of post level with Kitchen window



Feeder with natural perch

I then attach different perches above the feeders giving birds something to land on when they come into feed. These perches are replaced periodically depending on the type of picture I have in mind and the different species I am targeting. On top of the post I generally have a moss covered log that is attached perpendicular to the post like the top of the letter "T". Finally, to the side of the post I have a Woodpecker perch that is attached to a metal arm screwed into the back of the post. The woodpecker perch and the top moss covered log have holes drilled into them which I fill with suet. The different types of perches allow me to take pictures of birds on the type of branches they would normally use in their daily activity. I take these pictures while sitting on a stool with my camera resting on the bottom of the window sill.



Moss covered log on top of post

Bird Photography Milestones continued

Below are some sample pictures taken during a one hour time period this past Saturday.



Dark-eyed Junco on the moss covered log



Red-bellied Woodpecker on the moss covered log. Shortly after I sat down with the camera the grackles descended on the perch and tore up the moss leaving half of the log uncovered



Red-breasted Nuthatch not on species appropriate perch placed above tray feeder



Tufted Titmouse on species appropriate perch placed above tray feeder



Red-breasted Nuthatch and Dark-eyed Junco captured on upright perch to the side of the post

Bird Photography Milestones continued

In the winter, and for ground dwelling species, I use a platform feeder that I place about 4 inches off the ground on a stool. I then place perches over the feeder using branches that have been zip tied to tomato pegs and pounded into the ground at an angle. Sometimes, I will place a log on the back of the feeder. I then position myself and camera in a camouflage hunting blind about 15 feet away from the feeder setup. The perches and log provide an opportunity for the bird to be off the ground with clean backgrounds.



Brown Thrasher on log placed on back of tray feeder and photographed from hunting blind

Examples of prior posted pictures taken on species appropriate perches.



Pine Warbler



Hermit Thrush



Carolina Wren

Bird Photography Milestones continued

I have found Birding and Photography to be extremely relaxing and rewarding. I appreciate all the assistance and friendship I have received from the CBC community and look forward to future interactions. If anyone has any questions or feedback please feel free to reach out to me via E-Mail.

E-Mail address - Jmawnster@gmail.com Flickr site - www.flickr.com/photos/jmawnster/

My criteria on "Magazine Quality" shots

1. The photo has to be in sharp focus. In particular, the eye has to be in focus. I have found I take sharper photographs more often when I use a tripod.
2. The photograph should be taken at eye level with the bird. Level as if it was being seen by another of its same species. Not like a human would be looking up or down at it.
3. The bird needs to be making a connection with the viewer. This is most often done by a side shot where the bird is looking at the viewer. Not flat or parallel to the viewer but with a slight angle of the head turned toward the viewer.
4. Or an action shot creating interest in the activity.
5. Picture should contain clean backgrounds and no distracting elements.
6. Interesting perches. Perches should be angled to draw the eye into and across the photograph. Ideally the perch should be small enough that the particular species can wrap their feet around it.
7. Wild birds with no human elements such as fence posts, feeder, etc...

I shoot with a Nikon D500 camera, Nikon 300mm F4 lens with a 1.4 extender. This gives me a reach of about 630mm.

Welcome New Member

Susan Lyon Stone, Carrboro, NC

Saturday Field Trips

Bob Rybczynski leads field trips for the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The trips are every Saturday, except during the summer, and leave at 7:30 a.m. from the Glen Lennox Shopping Center on Highway 54 in Chapel Hill

A New Bird-focused Pastime for 2017?

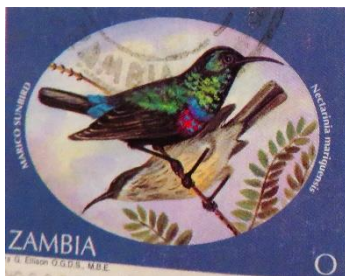
by Maria de Bruyn

Many birders are focused on a few goals when they go out looking for birds – increasing their life-lists, finding a nemesis bird that has continued to elude them, celebrating new birds to add to their yard lists, getting a great photographic shot, exploring a new nature area, etc. But there are other ways to celebrate birds as well and one idea that might help get young people interested in them is to help them begin a bird stamp collection. Or you might find it fun for yourself.



The US Postal Service is doing its bit for stamp collectors with their newest set of stamps issued this month – beautiful songbirds, including golden-crowned kinglets, cedar waxwings, Northern cardinals and red-breasted nuthatches.

Many other countries also regularly issue stamps honoring popular, unusual and particularly beautiful birds found within their borders. African countries have featured some beauties.



Bird-focused Pastime continued

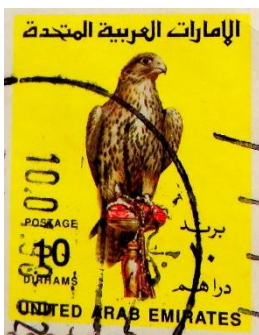
In the 1990s, I received lots of “snail mail” from developing countries when I managed a resource center focused on documentation from those nations. Many organizations and individuals sending me envelopes and parcels did not have postage machines, so they put colorful postage on their mailings and quite a few of those stamps featured birds.



Many of the stamp depictions aim to portray the birds realistically but others are more impressionistic.



Raptors appear to be a favored subject.



Some stamps not only provide common names but scientific names for the pictured birds.

Bird-focused Pastime continued



Nowadays, with the advent of electronic documentation and books, and with email, Twitter and other social media slowly replacing typed or handwritten letters and cards, many of us receive much less “old-fashioned” mail than in years past. Granted, digital messaging is cheaper and faster and some venues allow you to select a “stamp” to add to an ecard, like [care2](http://care2.com), so that you can have a bird stamp anyway.

The Internet can also help with collecting paper stamps, too, however. There are online purveyors of bird stamps from whom you could purchase items to add to a collection:

<http://www.bird-stamps.org/>

<https://www.postbeeld.com/stamps-shop/bird-postage-stamps>

<http://www.birdtheme.org/>

http://www.avionstamps.com/ambrowCart/shop/show_products.php?search=Birds



And there is an online [society dedicated to bird stamp collectors](http://www.bird-stamps.org/). So, if you're looking for a new pastime to while away some time when the weather just doesn't invite you outdoors to see birds in person, there is an avian-focused option! And maybe you can persuade friends and family to send you some snail mail to support your new avocation.

Future Meetings

Thanks go to Eddie Owens and Anne Dayer for lining up a stellar group of speakers this year. The following is a list of speakers for our upcoming meetings:

April 24, 2017, Dustin Foote

- **Topic:** Falconry: An Ancient Art in Modern Times

May 22, 2017, David and Judy Smith

- **Topic:** Pantanal: The Wonderful Wetland of Brazil

Officers of the Chapel Hill Bird Club

Elected Officers

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Co-Vice President: Eddie Owens
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Co-Vice President: Anne Dayer
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Secretary: Vacant

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