

Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

January 2018 – Volume 46 number 1

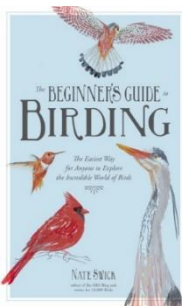


Upcoming meetings (Spring 2018)

Chapel Hill Bird Club membership meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month, September through May. (No meeting in December; May 2018 meeting on third Monday.) Refreshments are available at **7:15 pm**, meetings start at **7:30 pm**. **Location** is the Olin T. Binkley Baptist Church, corner of Highway 15-501 Bypass and Willow Drive, behind University Mall. **Address:** 1712 Willow Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Meetings are free and open to the public.

Members and guests are welcome to gather for dinner at the K & W Cafeteria (University Mall) at 6:00 pm before the meeting. Go to the back room of the cafeteria to join the group after making your dinner selection.

1/22/18



Nathan Swick – The Field Guide in the Digital Age, an Evolution

The field guide is one of the most indispensable tools in the birder's toolbox, but the form has evolved over the years as birders' needs have changed. From Audubon to Peterson to the digital realm, we'll take a look at what works, what doesn't, and why.

Swick is author of the ABA *Field Guide to Birds of the Carolinas*. He serves as editor of the American Birding Association (ABA) blog and has been a birder for more than 20 years.

2/26/18



Dr. Richard Mooney – From song to synapse: The neurobiology of birdsong

Dr. Mooney's research examines the role of auditory experience in the development of brain and behavior. He and his colleagues have identified how auditory experience alters the structure and function of nerve cells.

Dr. Mooney has served as a George Barth Geller Professor of Research in Neurobiology at Duke University since 2010. He earned a B.S. in Biology from Yale University and a Ph.D. in neurobiology from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech).

3/26/18



Julie J. Thomson – Birds in American Art

Birds have been the subject of, and the inspiration for, many American artists. This presentation will provide an overview of birds in American art from the nineteenth century through today. Artists to be discussed include John James Audubon, Genevieve Estelle Jones, Charles Willson Peale (left), Eliot Porter, Andy Warhol, and Barbara Bosworth. Birding knowledge will come in handy as we pay close attention to how birds have been identified in some of these works of art.

3/26/18—continued

Julie J. Thomson is an independent art historian and curator who lives in Durham. Julie began birding in 2010 while living in New York City, an interest she has continued as she moved to Houston and then back to Durham. She has worked for various art museums including the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke. Julie currently works at Duke University Press. You can visit her blog at <http://juliejthomson.blogspot.com/>

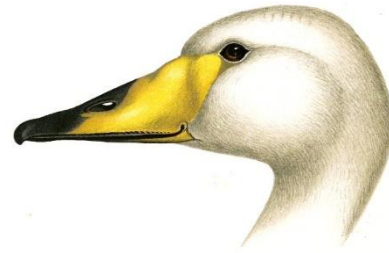
04/23/18



Keith Kennedy – Japan’s Winter Wildlife

A winter trip to Japan provided a unique opportunity to experience both its culture and its incredible scenery and wildlife. Wildlife viewing and photography opportunities were exceptional, including "snow monkeys" sitting in thermal pools, and Hokkaido's beautiful Red-crowned Cranes. Additional highlights were Steller's Sea-Eagles on drifting pack ice, Whooper Swans, Blakiston's Fish-Owl, red foxes, and Sika deer.

Keith is a retired entomologist who has been pursuing bird and insect photography for over ten years. He and his wife Sharon recently relocated to Raleigh from Wisconsin, where they lived for 30 years.



5/21/18



Bob Lewis – A Bird’s Rainbow

Many birds are brightly colored, and others use patterned feathers for camouflage. How do these colors originate? What’s the difference between colors from pigments and physical colors? From Yellow warblers to Anna’s Hummingbirds, each species makes unique use of the feather colors it possesses. Bob will unravel some of the mysteries of color in birds with a little chemistry, a bit of physics, and a lot of brightly colored photos.

Bob trained as a chemist and worked for Chevron for 33 years. He’s taught birding classes in the Bay Area for over 20 years, and served as the chair of Golden Gate Audubon’s Adult Education Committee. He loves to travel and photograph birds, and has recently returned from a trip to Peru, chasing the brightly colored birds of that area.

Dues notices to go out this month

The Chapel Hill Bird Club fiscal year goes from January to December. Folks who have paid their dues through January 2018 will be receiving notices that their Bird Club membership payments are due now. Your dues support the provision of meeting space and other worthwhile projects.

See page 5 for renewal form and information on the budget.

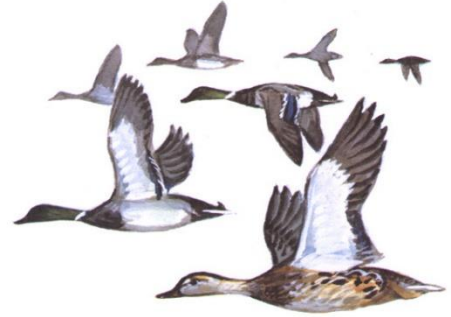


Field trips (2017-18)

The Chapel Hill Bird Club conducts regular field trips during fall, winter, and spring, usually on Saturdays. The general schedule for field trips can be found at:

<http://chbc.carolinanature.com/fieldtrips.html>

Specifics for any given trip will be posted on Chapel Hill Bird Club Facebook page one or two days beforehand. (Notices are no longer posted to the carolinabirds e-mail list.) Specifics will include the destination, meeting details, need for special gear, lunch, etc. Most trips are to areas within 25 miles of Chapel Hill and finish by noon, but they may range further afield and return later. The field trip chair is open to suggestions for new locations. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on field trips.



Jordan Lake, NC, 2017 Christmas Bird Count

The Jordan Lake Christmas Bird Count was held on December 31, 2017. The temperature stayed below freezing all day (27-30 °F), which wouldn't have been too bad if it hadn't also been a bit windy (5-10 mph). But at least it did not rain like last year. There was some ice coverage on non-flowing waters (perhaps 10%).

We reported 90 species (plus 2 others seen in the count period but not on count day) and counted 48,015 individual birds. Both the species count and the individual bird count were very close to our 10-year averages of 91.9 and 54,000, respectively. The dominant factor, as usual, was the vast number of Ring-billed Gulls that roost on the lake, estimated to be 33,000 this year by Tracy Feldman and Eddie Owens.

A note about the Ring-billed Gull count: Estimating the gulls that roost in the central part of the lake is not an easy task. Most of the gulls spend the daylight hours at the South Wake County Landfill and then fly west to gather and roost for the night in the main part of the lake between Ebenezer and Vista Points. Before they take off in the morning, it is possible to scope them from Ebenezer with the sun at your back. One technique is to count a 'scopeful' of gulls and then pan across the whole flock and estimate how many 'scopefuls' there are. With heat distortion, gulls being in front of other gulls, and gulls just plain moving around, there is room for a lot of error. Therefore, the 33,000 reported really should be plus or minus several thousand. As a result of this potential for error, the 100 gulls here or there reported by other parties are swamped out by the main flock. So, I subtract those other numbers when I make the final report. However, please continue to count the gulls in your areas and include them when you submit your checklists. Those data may prove to be useful to someone in the future.



Scott Winton and Mark River recently published an article addressing the nutrient transfer by the gulls from the landfill to the lake: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2017.05.076>, and I recently posted a blog about this topic called "Gull Poop" on the New Hope Audubon website:

<http://www.newhopeaudubon.org/blog/gull-poop/>.

Jordan Lake count (continued)

Fifty-eight birders (10-year average: 55) in 22 parties (average: 23) put in 109 party-hours (average: 123). That's approximately 440 birds per party-hour, compared to our 10-year average of 434 b/ph. So, despite the wind chill, our numbers were fairly typical. Respectable job, folks! We had several new high species counts:

- Northern Shovelers—37 (previous high was 20 last year)—Peg O'Neil-Ross found a herd of 36!
- Redheads—30 (5 in 2011)
- Red-breasted Mergansers—27 (14 in 1984!)
- Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers—77 (tied the old record from 2014)
- Northern Cardinals—423 (squeaked past the 420 from 2015)



The only miss of a regularly occurring species was Wilson's Snipe, though Jim Capel, Mark Kosiewski, and Tommy Richey reported its close relative, an American Woodcock. Observers also found some relatively unusual species:

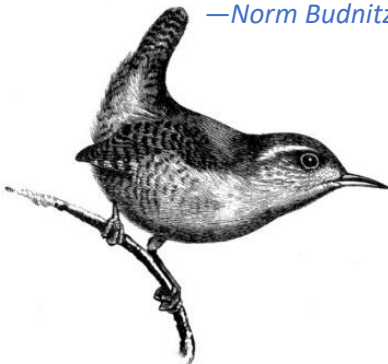


- Canvasbacks (4)—Loren Hintz and Margaret Vimmerstedt
- Redheads (30)—Loren Hintz and Margaret Vimmerstedt and, independently, Brian Bockhahn
- Greater Scaup (1)—Brian Bockhahn
- Osprey (1)—Josh and Sterling Southern
- Lesser Black-backed Gulls (4)—Brian Bockhahn
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1)—Loren Hintz and Margaret Vimmerstedt
- Black-and-white Warbler (1)—Brian Bockhahn

We had 58 birders in 22 parties. We put in 109 party hours (80 on foot, 29 by car), 213 party miles (72 on foot, 141 by car), and 3 hours nocturnal birding. Two years ago, we suffered from extensive rain events prior to our count, resulting in a very high lake level—i.e., too much water on the ground. Last year, it was too much water falling out of the sky on the day of the count. This year it was just plain cold. Next year, maybe it will be pleasant, with balmy temperatures. Or maybe not!

Thank you all for counting.

—Norm Budnitz, compiler.



Mary Kay's Vegetarian suet recipe

- 1-1/2 cups of vegetable shortening
- 3/4 cup of peanut butter
- 1 cup of quick oats
- 1/2-1 cup of grits
- bag of dried tropical fruit (from dollar store)
- optional: nuts or bird seed

Melt the shortening and peanut butter together and stir until completely combined. Put in the other ingredients and stir so that everything is covered. Pour the mixture into your containers and refrigerate. Some people store the cakes (or balls put into a muffin tin) in the freezer but I keep mine in the fridge as they go fast.

Chapel Hill Bird Club
Membership Form 2018

Give a hoot, renew today!



Name(s):

Mailing address:

City/state/ZIP code:

Preferred phone:

E-mail address:

Subscription length: 1 year 2 years Renewal?

(\$15 per year for individual/family, \$10 per year for student.)

Make check payable to "Chapel Hill Bird Club" and mail to:

Patsy Bailey
277 Mint Springs Road
Pittsboro NC 27312

The State of Our Budget

The Chapel Hill Bird Club (CHBC) is a tax-exempt organization starting the 2018 calendar year in stable financial health. We collect yearly dues of \$15 and so far, dues and other donations have been sufficient to keep us in the black and paying our few bills. Our three major expenses are:

1) a \$73.50 monthly room rental to Binkley Baptist Church where we typically meet 8 months out of the year, 2) the expense of updating our projector equipment once a decade or so, and 3) most years we make small donations to speakers who have to travel to Chapel Hill for the occasion, or to hummingbird bander Susan Campbell. We just purchased a new Epson projector (PRO Ex9210), leaving us with a balance of \$1,101 and an active membership of 70.

—Patsy Bailey, Treasurer

Welcome new members

Gary Hofing of Durham

Officers of Chapel Hill Bird Club – 2017-18

Elected officers

President

Mary Kay Robinson
marykayrobinson47@gmail.com

Co-Vice President

Jim Capel
jim.capel@mindspring.com

Co-Vice President

Maria de Bruyn
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Treasurer

Patricia Bailey
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Secretary

Edith Tatum
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Appointed officers

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Bird count supervisor/compiler

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Field Trip Chair

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Editorial notes

Artwork used here is either public domain or subject to fair use.
Some details for this issue: Junco, Rufous Hummingbird, Sapsucker, Ring-billed Gulls, Carolina Chickadee, Great Horned Owl—LA Fuertes; Black-and-White Warbler, Winter Wren—GE Lodge; Red-headed Woodpecker—R Ridgway; Mallards—Bob Hines; other works—various 19th century illustrators.

Document updated: 19 January 2018

