

Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

April 2018 – Volume 46 number 4



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.

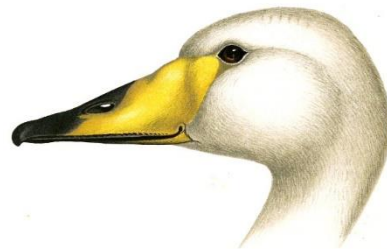
Members and guests are welcome to gather for dinner at the K & W Cafeteria (University Mall) at 6:00 pm before the meeting. Go to the back room of the cafeteria to join the group after making your dinner selection.

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.

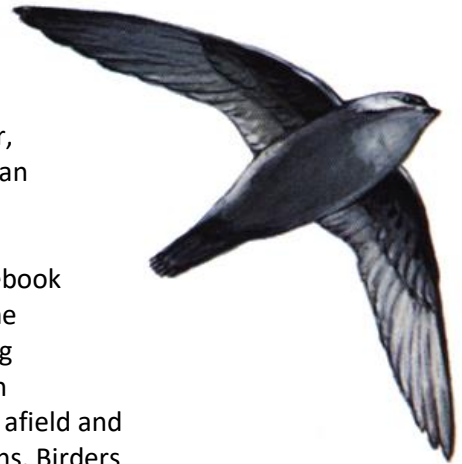
He's taught birding classes in the Bay Area for over 20 years and served as the chair of Golden Gate Audubon's Adult Education Committee. He loves to travel and photograph birds, and has recently returned from a trip to Peru, chasing the brightly colored birds of that area.

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.



Birding by ear – “recruiting” new birders among low-vision adults

—*Maria de Bruyn (text and photos)*



In an effort to improve the situation of aging adults in Orange County, a governmental Master Aging Plan (MAP) has been adopted with one part focused on outdoor spaces. A small committee comprising county staff and two community representatives (of which I am one) discusses ways to implement the MAP outdoor space goals. Late last year, the county social worker for the blind, Kim Tyler, mentioned that older adults with limited vision would like to get out into nature reserves but opportunities were limited. This led me to the idea of seeing whether they might be interested in learning to bird by ear, which many well-sighted birders also do.

Kim and I made a plan; we introduced the idea to a support group for adults with limited vision and there was great enthusiasm. Many of those present remembered family members who told them about birds – Kim told me about her father showing her a bird nest he had found in which a bird had woven a dollar bill that it found somewhere. Others mentioned parents identifying birds and one woman related that she was trying to learn the birds in her yard by sound.

We set a date for a walk at Mason Farm Biological Reserve during spring migration, several CH Bird Club members offered to participate as guides and at the start of April, Jim Capel, Kathleen Snipes and I had a preparatory session with the support group. We described the kind of things to listen for in bird calls and songs: single notes or combinations, pitch, kind of sound (raspy, melodious). And then we played the sounds made by various common birds in our area – Carolina chickadees, tufted titmice, Northern cardinals, white-throated sparrows, American robins and Carolina wrens.



Our listeners showed their interest with numerous questions and requests to hear particular birds such as crows, blue jays and woodpeckers – some commenting on how

the red-bellied woodpeckers like pecking on house gutters, which we explained helps amplify their sound during mating season. They enjoyed hearing the concerts that Northern mockingbirds put together with imitations of other birds as well.



On 17 April, we gathered for our outing, only to find that the 3-5 inches of rain a couple days earlier had led to flooding of the ford entrance to Mason Farm. In addition, Mother Nature had decided to bring back winter temperatures in the 30s, which made for a very chilly spring morning. But our intrepid group decided to proceed and we changed our venue to the NC Botanical Garden.

Bob Rybczynski led the group and other Bird Club members added interesting bits of information as well: Judy and David Smith, Loren Hintz, Jim Capel, Kathleen Snipes. We were greeted by a very vocal American robin and listened to Northern Cardinals and house finches calling. The squeaky toy sound of the brown-headed nuthatch was a distinctive sound for the guests to hear.



We described how important birding by ear is for the breeding season surveys done by car and talked about habits of birds like the Louisiana water thrush, as well as why birds sing and call. Bob let us hear the song of the Henslow sparrow, whose one note indicates a fondness for brevity!

One of our guests had been studying bird calls with a Cornell audio course and we had passed on the Audubon app and Cornell website during the preparatory session. Support group members who had not been at the session also asked for the links and some people indicated that they would have liked to participate in the walk but couldn't on the day chosen. We ended the walk with tentative plans to do another such walk later in the year, preferably when it is a little warmer! (All photos are from the NCBG that morning.)



Officers of Chapel Hill Bird Club – 2017-18

Elected officers

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Publisher

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Editorial notes

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