



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

CBC Newsletter

ISSN No. 0162-7120

For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.

Volume 62

December 2016

Number 6



Cape Hatteras Lighthouse

CBC Winter Meeting & 80th Anniversary Nags Head, NC January 27-28 2017 By Christine Stoughton-Root

Join us as we begin the celebration of the Carolina Bird Club's 80th year. Our winter meeting, January 27-28, 2017, will make a return to Nags Head on the Outer Banks, arguably the best time to bird the area. Cold weather is what brings in all those wonderful winter birds.

/Continued P. 2

In This Issue

- CBC Outer Banks Field Trips Itinerary & Description -P.2
- Proposed Membership Fees Increase-P.8
- My Gray-cheeked Thrush Program-P.9
- Scholarship Opportunities for Young Birders- P.10
- An Invitation from Down Under- P. 10
- Meeting Registration Form- P.11

CBC Spring Executive Committee Election

We will need candidates for President, Treasurer, Secretary, a Western NC at large member, and both Eastern NC at large seats. The incumbent Eastern NC Vice President Sherry Lane is eligible for election. SC at Large Member Steve McInnis is also eligible for re-election.

Here is the list in more detail:

President to serve up to two one-year terms. The president nominee must be a present or recent past board member. Irvin Pitts is not eligible for re-election.

Eastern NC Vice President for one three-year term. **Sherry Lane is an appointed incumbent so eligible for election.**

Treasurer for one-year term eligible for three terms. Incumbent Samir Gabriel is not eligible for another term.

Secretary for a one-year term up to three terms. Doris Ratchford is not eligible for another term.

Western NC Member at Large for a two-year term. Incumbent Karyl Gabriel is not eligible for another term.

Eastern NC Member at Large for a two year term eligible for two terms. Christine Stoughton-Root is not eligible for another term .

Eastern NC Member at Large for a two year term eligible for two terms. **Jeri Smart is eligible** for a second term but not seeking a second term.

CBC Newsletter (USPS# 023-534), December 2016, Volume 62, Number 6. Published bimonthly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc. 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst, NC 28374. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *CBC Newsletter*, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst, NC 28374.

CBC Winter Meeting & 80th Anniversary Nags Head, NC January 27-28 2017

By Christine Stoughton-Root



American Oystercatcher

Our last two meetings to the OBX netted 181 and 177 species. Species included 23 ducks, 18 shorebirds, 15 sparrows, eight warblers and six from the rail family. There's always a chance for rare birds like Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Common Redpoll and Ash-throated Flycatcher. Who will it be this year?

We will be headquartered at a new location: the refurbished Ramada Plaza, Nags Head Ocean Front, 1701 S Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, NC. All rooms have microwave, refrigerator and WIFI, and include a hot breakfast starting at 5:30am. The cost is \$70 for ocean view rooms and \$60 for street side, plus tax. This price is also good for several days before and after the meeting.

For reservations, call 252-441-2151. Be sure to mention Carolina Bird Club to receive this rate.

Our field trips will cover the numerous hot spots in the area. These include three national wildlife refuges: Pea Island, Alligator River and Mattamuskeet. Two more in-

land spots will be Roanoke Island and Palmetto Peartree Preserve. We'll go to Bodie Island, Oregon Inlet, Pea Island and Hatteras Point. Brian Patteson will be repowering his boats this winter. So as of this time we are unable to offer the pelagic trips. If that changes we will offer registration for these trips at a later date.

The following workshops will be offered: Shorebird ID, Photography "Getting the most out of the camera you have," eBird and Beginners Birding.

Friday evening will start with a cash bar. Speaker for the evening is Nate Swick on "The Next 10: Predicting First Records in NC & SC. His new guidebook, *"ABA Field Guide to Birds of the Carolinas."* will be released in November and will be available for purchase and book signings.

Saturday evening starts with cash bar and dinner buffet. The buffet is \$26 and will offer a vegetarian option. The guest speaker is Keith Kennedy. Keith is a recently retired entomologist who has been pursuing bird and insect photography for over 10 years. A number of his images have appeared in Audubon Magazine, Outside Magazine, North American Nature Photographers Association Impressions, Entomological Society of American calendar, Natural History magazine, BioScience, Natures Best Magazine, and the Raleigh News & Observer. One of his images was recently honored in a wildlife photography exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum. He and his wife Sharon, an avid birder, recently relocated to Raleigh from Wisconsin where they lived for 30 years.

Both our speakers will be leading field trips and workshops.

Outer Banks Meeting Field Trip Itinerary

Friday, January 27

Morning - Half Day

- Trip 1 – Palmetto Peartree Preserve and Alligator River NWR - 6:45am
- Trip 2 – Pea Island NWR/North and South Ponds – 7:15am
- Trip 3 – Pea Island NWR/Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet - 7:15am
- Trip 4 - Pine Island Sanctuary and Points North – 7:00am
- Trip 5 – Roanoke Island – 7:30am
- Trip 6 – Ocean Watching – 7:30am
- Trip 7 – Beginners Birding – 8:00am

Afternoon – Half Day

- Trip 9 - Palmetto Peartree Preserve and Alligator River NWR – 1:00pm
- Trip 10 - Pea Island NWR/North and South Ponds – 1:00pm
- Trip 11 - Pea Island NWR/Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet – 1:00pm
- Trip 12 – Pine Island Sanctuary and Points North - 1:00pm
- Trip 13 – Roanoke Island – 1:15pm
- Trip 14 – Ocean Watch – 1:15pm
- Trip 15 – Photography Workshop/Field – 1:00pm

All Day

- Trip 17 – Mattamuskeet – 6:45am
- Trip 18 – Hatteras Point, Hatteras Island & Pea Island – 6:45am
- Trip 19 – Pocosin Lakes NWR – 7:00am

Saturday, January 28

Morning - Half Day

- Trip 22 - Palmetto Peartree Preserve and Alligator River NWR - 6:45am
- Trip 23 - Pea Island NWR/North and South Ponds – 7:15am
- Trip 24 - Pea Island NWR/Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet – 7:15am
- Trip 25 - Pine Island Sanctuary and Points North – 7:00am
- Trip 26 - Roanoke Island – 7:30am
- Trip 27 - Beginners Birding – 7:30am
- Trip 28 - Shorebird ID Workshop/Field – 7:15am

Afternoon – Half Day

- Trip 30 - Palmetto Peartree Preserve and Alligator River NWR – 1:00pm
- Trip 31- Pea Island NWR/North and South Ponds – 1:00pm
- Trip 32 - Pea Island NWR/Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet – 1:00pm
- Trip 33 – Pine Island Sanctuary and Points North - 1:00pm
- Trip 34 – Roanoke Island – 1:15pm
- Trip 35 – Ocean Front – 1:15pm
- Trip 36 – eBird Workshop/Field – 1:00pm

All Day

- Trip 38 – Mattamuskeet – 6:45am
- Trip 39 – Hatteras Point, Hatteras Island & Pea Island – 6:45am
- Trip 40 – Pocosin Lakes NWR – 7:00am

There are many diversions in the area for non-birding spouses. Aside from the beautiful beach as far as you can see, the Wright Brothers National Memorial in nearby Kill Devil Hills and historic Manteo, with the Elizabethan Gardens, are just a short drive away. Three lighthouses, Currituck Beach, Bodie and Cape Hatteras, are less than an hour away. Manteo also has a reproduction of the lesser-known Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse.

Winter on the Outer Banks is always special. Bring warm clothes, a sense of humor and adventure. We hope to see you there.

Please note: South Pond on Pea Island is off-limits at all times. We will have access for this meeting, and only if you are on the specified trips. No one is allowed in that area at other times. Also, certain impoundments around Lake Mattamuskeet are off-limits and have signs posting such. We will have access to some of these areas, but only on designated trip.

/Continued P. 4

Outer Banks Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

HALF-DAY FIELD TRIPS

Trips - 1, 9, 22, & 30 - Palmetto Peartree Preserve and Alligator River NWR. “P3” as the locals know it. We will look among the seven species of woodpeckers present for the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. During our search we should see a good assortment of woodland and edge species including kinglets, warblers, nuthatches, and sparrows. Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl and Bald Eagle are real possibilities. Learn more about P3 by visiting <http://www.conservationfund.org/projects/palmetto-peartree-preserve>. After birding P3, the group will drive through Alligator River NWR searching primarily for raptors and sparrows, although many species will be possible, including waterfowl and shorebirds. This refuge may be the best place in the state to find Ash-throated Flycatcher. Rough-legged Hawks and a Swainson’s Hawk have wintered here in the recent past. Black Bears, Bobcats and Red Wolves are all possible. Another possibility is Short-eared Owls over the fields just before dusk. You would need to stay later than the afternoon trips are scheduled.

Approximate Travel Time: 1:10

Facilities: There are lots of birds but few restrooms in this part of the world, but they can be found (Visitor's Center on Roanoke Island, service station at western end of Alligator River bridge, and porta-johns at entrance to Milltail Road in Alligator River NWR.)

Access: P3 walking on uneven surfaces. Alligator NWR partial driving routes and walking on occasional trails with potentially uneven surfaces.

Trips - 2, 10, 23, & 31 - Pea Island NWR, North and South Ponds. Drive down to the entrance area of South Pond. Park carefully along the roadside. If you are there in advance of the guide, wait by the road. We will scan flocks of common birds hoping for such species as Eurasian Wigeon, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, American Bittern and American White Pelican. In the grassy strips and in the shrub edges along the way, we should find sparrows and warblers. After leaving South Pond, we will visit nearby North Pond to continue our search. This area has seen quite a few rarities over the years, including Glaucous Gull, California Gull, Hudsonian Godwit, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Cave Swallow and Brewer's Blackbird, just to name a few. Anything is a possibility at Pea Island! We'll scope the ocean across from the Visitor's Center for sea birds. If time permits, we may stop by Oregon Inlet or Bodie Island on the trip back. A spotting scope comes in quite handy in these areas. Even in January, mosquito protection may be advisable. **Remember: South Pond is off-limits except with the approved guide.**

Approximate Travel Time: 30min

Facilities: Restrooms at Pea Island Visitor Center

Access: Mostly improved trail, potentially uneven surfaces of grass and sand.

Trips - 3, 11, 24 & 32- Pea Island NWR, Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet. At the north end of Pea Island are the Oregon Inlet and the Bonner Bridge. We'll check the inlet out to the rock groin, looking for species that include Great Cormorant, Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpiper, Piping Plover, Glaucous Gull, “Ipswich” Sparrow, Razorbill and many more. This is “hallowed ground” to birders and many rarities have shown up here over the years. On the north side of the bridge is the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, where we will scope the inlet for Long-tailed Duck and other diving ducks. Common Eiders and Brant have been seen here as well. We'll continue on to Bodie Lighthouse Pond where we will scope for waterfowl, shorebirds, and waders from the observation platform. Eurasian Wigeon and Cinnamon Teal have been seen here. The boardwalk that cuts through the marsh is good for rails and marsh wrens.

Approximate Travel Time: 25min

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Bodie Island boardwalk/observation platform. Pea Island improved trails. Oregon Inlet walking on soft to hard packed sand.

Outer Banks Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

HALF-DAY FIELD TRIPS

Trips 4, 12, 25 & 33 - Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary and Points North. We will explore this former hunting mecca for waterfowl, shorebirds, marsh birds and raptors—Bald Eagle is a distinct possibility. Afterwards, we'll head north and bird around the Currituck Lighthouse and N.C. Center for Wildlife Education. A boardwalk will take us to the edge of Currituck Sound where we will scan for waders, shorebirds, terns and waterfowl. King Rails and other marsh birds are a possibility. The forest edge can be good for overwintering passerines as well. Time permitting; we may scan the nearby ocean for scoters, loons and grebes. If you have not ever birded this area of the Outer Banks, this field trip will provide an experience you will be able to use in your future trip.

Approximate Travel Time: 40min

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Improved trails potentially uneven surfaces.

Trips - 5, 13, 26 & 34 - Roanoke Island. We'll begin at the north end of the island where we will search the woodland edges for winter species such as Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, Brown Creeper, White-throated Sparrow, and hope to turn up over-wintering warblers. Ovenbird, Northern Parula, Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers have all been seen in recent winters, as have Baltimore Oriole, Painted Bunting and Western Kingbird! Wintering Ruby-throated Hummingbirds should be present as well. After that, we will visit the Roanoke Marshes Game Lands in search of saltmarsh species such as Marsh Wren, Seaside Sparrow, and Clapper and Virginia Rails. The freshwater impoundment should hold a few shorebirds and waterfowl for us to view, along with Belted Kingfisher and a raptor or two. Then we will stop by the harbor in Wanchese Village at the south end of the island and scan the surrounding sound and marina for gulls, loons, grebes, and diving ducks. In the past Two Glaucous Gulls were spotted. Wear comfortable shoes because you are going to cover a lot of ground on this field trip.

Approximate Travel Time: 25min

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Sidewalks and trail with potentially uneven surface

Trips - 6, 14 & 35 - Nags Head Ocean Watch. A scope is essential for this trip to scan the Atlantic for the winter birds that feast on the bounty of the ocean. If you don't have a scope, there should be plenty in the group. Your leader will select some premium locations from which to watch the action, including Jannette's Pier. Loons, grebes, scoters and other sea ducks, gulls, gannets are likely.

A fee of \$2.00 is payable at the time of arrival to walk out onto Jannette's Pier.

Approximate Travel Time: 15min

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Beach/Boardwalk Pier

Trips- 7 & 27- Beginning Birders- Workshop/Field. The first half of the workshop is held at the Ramada followed by a field trip. This is designed for those new to birding, but all levels of birders are welcomed. Birding techniques will be discussed including how to view a bird, what type of diagnostic marks to look for, how to “pish”, the importance of habitat, how to act, and even what to wear. The leader will explain what to look for in binoculars, scopes, field guides and answer any questions you may have.

Approximate Travel Time: Starts at Ramada

Facilities: Restrooms and heat

Access: Field portion to be determined

/Continued P. 6

Outer Banks Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

HALF-DAY FIELD TRIPS

Trip 15 – Bird Photography Workshop/Field. *“Getting the most out of the camera you already own.”* Provided by guest speaker Keith Kennedy a brief classroom discussion on the following topics:

Equipment options for beginning bird photographers especially lens selection; composition/cropping; sun angle; exposure consideration; importance of background; backing up—saving your images.

After the classroom session and weather permitting, we will take a small group of people to a nearby location for an in-the-field bird photography experience with hands-on instruction.

Approximate Travel Time: 5 min. Field Trip-To be determined

Facilities: Heat and restrooms

Access: Field portion to be determined, will be reasonable

Trip 28-Shorebird ID Workshop/Field.

Workshop – The shorebird workshop will focus on key characteristics, such as overall profiles, foraging behaviors, and habitat, which can aid birders on all levels to quickly and confidently identify a species. We will review all shorebird families, but our primary focus will be Charadriidae (plovers) and Scolopacidae (sandpipers). If you’re interested in refining your “peep” identification skills, then please join me in this discussion-based workshop.

Field Trip – Bodie Island Lighthouse and the north end of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge.

These barrier island locations can offer ideal foraging habitats for many resident and migratory shorebird species. Bodie Island Lighthouse is the most northern site on Cape Hatteras National Seashore and offers an observation platform, which overlooks a freshwater marshland. Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, a refuge managed by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, provides an excellent shorebird foraging habitat on the northern end. Both sites provide a great opportunity to focus on silhouette and foraging behavior identification. Target species at both locations will be American Avocet, Black-bellied Plover, yellowlegs, Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, and Purple Sandpiper! Other shorebirds we may observe include Willet, Dunlin, Wilson’s Snipe, Sanderling, dowitcher, and Whimbrel.

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (Bodie Island), 45 minutes (Pea Island)

Facilities: Restrooms

Access conditions: This trip will involve moderate walking, boardwalk/observation platform at Bodie Island Lighthouse; trail with potentially uneven surface at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Trip 36 eBird-Workshop/Field . The first half of this workshop will be held within the Ramada Inn. This workshop will explain the many features, functions, and accessibility of this free, on-line checklist program. eBird has revolutionized the way the birding community reports and access information about birds and where to find birds. Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society launched eBird in 2002. You will still need to bring your outer gear as you will go outdoors the second half and apply your new skills.

Approximate Travel Time: 5min

Facilities: Heat and restrooms

Access: Field portion to be determined.

Trip - 17 & 38 - Mattamuskeet NWR. A birder's paradise, Mattamuskeet can be incredible. One of the best spots in the state for Golden Eagle, we will bird the Lake Landing area for Tundra Swans and other waterfowl, shorebirds and waders, sorting through the more common species and hoping for something rare, such as Cackling Goose, Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, or “Common” Teal. In recent winters American White Pelicans have been seen here. There is a good chance we will be allowed access to some of the off-limit areas. We will also bird along the causeway, famous for its overwintering passerines. In just the past few winters the causeway has hosted at least 13 species of warblers, including Ovenbird, Black-throated Blue, Yellow and Nashville. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Baltimore Orioles are to be expected; in the past we have had Ash-throated Flycatcher and Bell's Vireo. A Black-headed Gull is present most years, too, usually seen near one of the culverts that pass under Hwy. 94. Side trips on the way back to the coast may include Stumpy Point Bay and Alligator River NWR.

Approximate Travel Time: 1:30

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Driving and walking on potentially uneven surfaces.

Outer Banks Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

FULL DAY FIELD TRIPS

Trips – 18 & 39 - Hatteras Point, Hatteras Island, Pea Island.

The guide will rendezvous with the CBC party at the lighthouse parking lot. We will cover the Point Campground, the Salt Pond and the beach, sorting through the gull flocks in search of Thayer's, Iceland, Glaucous and California Gulls. Lesser Black-backed Gulls should be common. Peregrine Falcon is often seen here as well. We will scan the ocean for loons, grebes, scoters and other water birds, hoping for alcids or other rarities. Common Eider, Black-headed and Little Gulls and Eared Grebe are also possibilities. In the past we have had great looks at Iceland Gull, Dovekie and Razorbill. The salt pond usually hosts good populations of birds. Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, Hudsonian Godwits and a Sprague's Pipit may be present. Your leader will plan some side trips on the way back depending on what has been seen that morning at points north. Please note: We will be walking to Hatteras Point, about two miles round trip.



Hudsonian Godwit

Approximate Travel Time: 1:10

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Packed and soft sand

Trips - 19 & 40 - Pocosin Lakes NWR. Pocosin Lakes is famous for huge flocks of wintering Snow Geese. We will search through them for Cackling, Ross's, and Greater White-fronted Geese. Red-winged Blackbird flocks can number in the thousands, a spectacle in itself. We will look through them with hopes of spotting a Yellow-headed Blackbird. Overhead, we'll keep an eye out for Golden Eagles—this is one of the most reliable spots in the state for these awesome birds. Other possibilities include other waterfowl and farm field and edge species, such as sparrows, pipits and Horned Larks. There is a lot of territory to cover on this trip with potential side trips on the way back.

Approximate Travel Time: 1:45

Facilities: Restrooms

Access: Trail with potentially uneven surface

Trip Tips

You may obtain more information on the trip thru the CBC web site and The North Carolina Birding Trail Coastal Plain Trail Guide and on other internet websites of the above parks and locations.

- Field trips are limited to 16. The Photography and Shorebird ID indoor workshops are open to unlimited participants for the indoor portions only; you may sign up at the time of your arrival. However the field trip and hands on portion of the Photography is limited to the first 10 people who sign up at registration.
- All trips will leave from the hotel. If the trip leader is to meet you at the site, one person will be assigned as the guide to get you to the site. Site directions will be available at registration. If you plan to meet your trip at the site please make a notation on the field trip sign up sheet along with your contact number. Keeping in mind stops may change with opportunities.
- Be sure to pack a lunch and snacks for the all-day trips and due to the tight schedules, you might want to pack a lunch for the half-day trips also. Each trip is noted as to availability of public restrooms.
- Field trip directions will be included with your registration packet. **PLEASE** bring those with you on each trip.
- We attempt to carpool as several sites have limited parking. So please consider contributing towards gas if you are a passenger, out of courtesy for the driver and use of their vehicle.

Notice of Proposed Dues Increase—By the CBC Executive Committee

After discussion at its Annual Planning Retreat, the CBC Executive Committee recommended an annual dues increase of \$5 to Individual and Family Memberships. The increase will help maintain the current high level of programs and service the Club offers its members. The Club has not seen an increase in dues since 2013 when the life membership was increased to its current \$500 level from \$400. Individual and Family annual memberships were last increased December 2011.

The Club relies primarily on volunteers and the Executive Committee to be careful stewards of the Club's resources. Nevertheless, the Club's annual operating expenses exceed revenues from membership fees and seasonal meetings. While the Club relies on revenues from bonus field trips to fully cover the operating budget shortfall, we aim to price field trips to be affordable for members and the number of field trips offered varies from year to year. The proposed fee increase will help defray some of the operating shortfall and, together with bonus field trip revenues, protect the Club's future viability, including staging quality seasonal meetings and maintaining the Chat and Newsletter, the Club's publications. The proposed increase would take effect after the spring seasonal meeting (Winston-Salem, NC April 27 - 29, 2017) at which the Executive Committee will present the following recommended dues schedule to the membership as is required by Club by-laws:

Article II Section 4 of the by-laws of the Carolina Bird Club states:

"The dues schedule (the frequency and amounts to be collected) shall be established by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership. A notice through the Newsletter of proposed changes in dues schedules shall be provided the membership prior to the meeting for which action is contemplated."

Recommended Dues Schedule to be approved at the Spring 2017 meeting:

Individual or Nonprofit: \$30
Family: \$35
Student: \$15
Patron: \$50
Business: \$30
Associate Life Membership: \$100
Life Membership: \$500

Further, the Executive Committee enacted a \$5 increase in seasonal meeting registration fees, beginning with registration for the Winter 2017 Nags Head meeting. An increase in seasonal meeting registration fees last occurred December 2013. The Executive Committee also established a reduced seasonal meeting registration fee of \$15 for members of the Young Birders Club.

Upcoming Book Review –Steve Shultz's full review will be in the CBC February 2017 Newsletter.

However, with the holiday season fast approaching, Britain's Birds might be just the gift your favorite birder will hope to find tagged with their name!

Britain's Birds: An identification guide to the birds of Britain and Ireland

Rob Hume, Robert Still, Andy Swash, Hugh Harrop, and David Tipling

ISBN 978-0-691-15889-1, 560 pages, Flexibound

2016, Princeton University Press, \$35.00

"Ron Hume, Robert Still, Andy Swash, Hugh Harrop, and David Tipling collaborated to create a beautifully presented guide that deserves a spot on any birder's bookshelf. Every species recorded in Britain and Ireland is included; and in addition to serving as an excellent field guide to expected species, the tome provides fascinating commentary on the distribution of North American birds as vagrants to Western Europe." **Steve Shultz**



My Backyard Gray-cheeked Thrush Program—

By Brian K. Pendergraft



Rose-breasted Grosbeak

It was December 30, 1988 when I decided to look in more depth at a budding interest in birds. I purchased a birding diary to document the famous “Life List”. This led me into a world of birding that I have loved ever since. The life list was the opportunity to learn about species and travel to wonderful places in North America. Now approaching 630 ABA species, my passion for birds has reached new heights. While I don’t fanatically chase life birds, I do take the time to pick up one when I can, as I did in central Texas this spring for the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo.

A few years ago, good friends of mine (Dan Hudson, Steve Shultz, and Lewis Burke) started looking at the year list idea, whereby a birder documents as many species as they can in one year. I absolutely love this concept because it gives me another shot at seeing numerous species each and every year. Multiple looks at a species only enhances one’s birding knowledge!

Depending on whether I travel outside of North Carolina or not, I typically see anywhere from 250-400 species in a year. This concept gets me “out there” enjoying even the most common species, and I have become a better birder because of the year list idea.

But when it comes right down to it, “backyard” birding is truly my passion. I started keeping monthly records of backyard birds in 1996 in Cary, NC, where I had a third acre in a residential neighborhood. Three years later, I moved to northern Wake County near Falls Lake on a three-acre plot and have selectively cultivated it creating a National Wildlife Habitat; the first and foremost goal to attract many more species. I removed pines to provide more bird-friendly hardwoods a chance to thrive and become more visible to passing birds during spring and fall migration. I planted numerous bushes and shrubs to enhance nesting habitat and added flowering plants to attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Feeding stations provided varieties of food and all-important watering stations. A growing numbers of common species visit the yard, and more transient species stop during spring and fall. I have recorded 126 species in the yard, including flyovers but most have been seen in the habitat that I have created.

In October 2005, I ticked my first “yard” Gray-cheeked Thrush, and after seeing the birds every subsequent year, I began to think about the idea of a Gray-cheeked Thrush “Program”. My intention was to offer an easy birdwatching experience for birders who wanted to learn more about the most elusive “brown” thrush in North Carolina. This, the most northernmost nester of the eastern thrushes, is more often seen during fall migration here in the central Piedmont, but in low numbers, and many birders don’t see one at all most years. On my property, the Gray-cheeked Thrush has been both reliable and cooperative due to numerous mature eastern dogwoods and the red berries they produce in September and October. Along with the Wood Thrush, is the Swainson’s Thrush, and the Hermit Thrush. It is possible to see four thrush species in one day in the middle of October. Instead of tramping all over the Blue Ridge Parkway and hoping to see or hear a Gray-cheeked, a birder could spend a couple of hours here and get up-close and personal with the regularly occurring NC thrush species.



Gray-cheeked Thrush

Finally, after years of studying the comings and goings of all “my” thrushes, including identification, feeding habits, and most importantly, arrival dates and length of stay, in 2013, I invited birders to visit. Thirty birders responded to the open invitation and right away I realized that I may have something unique. This was a very enthusiastic group of birders anxious to learn more about the thrushes, and for many, the Gray-cheeked Thrush was a life bird. Each subsequent year the program grew, with many birders coming back each year and the birds almost never let us down. **/Continued P. 10**

The 2016 Gray-cheeked Thrush program began on the first of October. Ninety birders signed up for program's eight days and my expectations were high. The month of September was a rewarding prelude: The Swainson's Thrushes started to arrive during the first week. A pair of Veerys showed up on the fifth, but they only hung around for a couple of days. Wood Thrushes became frequent visitors for the berries during the middle of the month. Scarlet Tanagers, Red-eyed Vireos, and the first Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were tearing up the berries in late September. Warblers seen before the October First Program included Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black and White, Northern Parula, Hooded, Yellow-throated, and Worm-eating. The month of September yard count was approaching a record 67. After a very warm late summer, the temperatures finally began to drop. Rain was plentiful in the spring and early summer, but late summer brought weeks of blue skies and no precipitation. So, was the Gray-cheeked Thrush going to show up?

On September 20th, the first Gray-cheeked arrived feasting on berries before heading south. When the program started on Saturday, October 1st, I only had one Gray-cheeked. Fifty-seven birders flocked to the yard from the 1st through the 5th, many for the second, third, and fourth years. Almost everyone left with glorious looks at the Gray-cheeked Thrush, as well as Swainson's and Wood Thrushes. The late pulse of summerlike temperatures may have decreased the overall numbers of thrushes and warblers, but each day we were able to see some "good" birds.

It was an absolute joy and privilege to have everyone participate in the program this year. I think most folks left with a little more knowledge and an increased enthusiasm for the thrushes. Although the overall numbers of birds are down so far, as many birders know, it only takes one to make it a lifer. This program gives me the opportunity to work closely with good people and share my knowledge and enthusiasm with the thrushes. It's a great feeling to have a simple program like this one that attracts birders from all across the state of North Carolina. Warblers are my favorite bird species, but the thrushes are not far behind. My habitat allows me to regularly see a species that can be difficult to find and bring the birding community closer to it. I've already been asked again to be sure that I have another Gray-cheeked Thrush program in 2017!

Scholarship Opportunities for Young Birders in the Carolinas—By Mickey Shortt

Young birders in the Carolinas are invited to apply for two scholarship opportunities in 2017. One scholarship will be offered for young birders attending bird-related events such as birding camps and banding programs. Another scholarship will assist young birders in attending a Carolina Bird Club seasonal meeting. More details including how to apply for both of these scholarships will be posted on our website



www.carolinabirdclub.org in the coming weeks.

The application window to apply for the birding camps scholarship will open January 1 and close on April 1. For inquiries please contact the Young Birder Committee by e-mail:

ybc@carolinabirdclub.org.

An Invitation from Down Under

Greetings, CBC Members.

I am a biology professor at James Cook University in Australia. My main areas of scholarly expertise are ornithology and avian behavioural ecology.



A Traveller's Guide to Feathers

In addition to my other

responsibilities, I have recently added a new section to my website under the title *A Traveller's Guide to Feathers*. Each week, I summarize the key points of a newly-published paper concerning birds from a scholarly journal. It seems to me that most bird enthusiasts rarely have access to the newest and most exciting finds from the world of ornithology. *A Traveller's Guide to Feathers* is meant to remedy that. All of the content with none of the jargon.

My writings are meant for bird enthusiasts who are curious about the latest advances in the field. The studies are global in scope, and consider birds of all types from penguins on Bouvet Island to snake-eagles in Israel. Visit glenchilton.com

**Best wishes from Down Under,
Glen Chilton**

Registration online begins on 12/3 at 2:00pm.
Please visit the CBC website, www.carolinabirdclub.org for the latest registration information.

CBC Outer Banks, NC Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone (____) _____ - _____ Evening Phone (____) _____ - _____

Email(s) _____

Meeting Registration (Member) _____ x \$30 = \$ _____

Meeting Registration (Non-Member) _____ x \$35 = \$ _____

Buffet Dinner _____ x \$26 = \$ _____

Field Trip Sign-up	A.M. 1 st /2 nd Choice	P.M. 1 st /2 nd Choice	All-day 1 st /2 nd Choice
Friday	/	/	/
Saturday	/	/	/

To pre-register for field trips, place the trip number(s) in the Boxes to the right. Meeting registration at the door costs \$40.

Total Enclosed = \$ _____

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trip leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip.

I will release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) the Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and/or Club field trips. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of any such minors and that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature _____ Date _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send it to: CBC, 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst, NC 28374

Before sending in this form, check the website at www.carolinabirdclub.org to see if any of your trips are full, rescheduled or cancelled.

Cancellations for the meeting will be refunded if received by Friday, January 13, 2017.

NOTE: Processing of mail-in registrations will not begin until one day after online registration opens. Register online for the best availability of field trips. Cancel by contacting the Headquarters Secretary at hq@carolinabirdclub.org. If you need to cancel after the refund cutoff date, please notify the Headquarters Secretary so we can give your field trip space to someone on the waiting list.

If you registered for the buffet and elect the vegetarian option, check here: _____ # persons _____



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
1809 Lakepark Drive
Raleigh, NC 27612

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pinehurst, NC 28374
and additional mailing offices.

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Winter 2017 - Nags Head, NC
Spring 2017– Winston-Salem, NC

CBC Board Members

President, Irvin Pitts, Lexington, SC
pittsjam@windstream.net

Vice-Presidents

Teri Bergin, Mt. Pleasant, SC
Sherry Lane, Wilmington, NC
Steve Tracy, Gastonia, NC

Secretary

Doris Ratchford, Todd, NC

Treasurer

Samir Gabriel, Huntersville, NC

NC Members-at-Large

Karyl Gabriel, Huntersville
Mickey Shortt, Linville
Jeri Smart, Rolesville
Christine Stoughton-Root, Merritt

SC Members-at-Large

Lewis Burke, Columbia
Steve McInnis, Columbia

Immediate Past President - Katherine Higgins, Wilmington, NC

Editor of The Chat- Don Seriff, Charlotte, NC

Website Editor- Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

Headquarters Secretary- Carol Bowman, Pinehurst, NC,
hq@carolinabirdclub.org

CBC Newsletter Editor- Vivian Glover, Orangeburg, SC,
newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org

Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of
December, February, April, June, August, and October.

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The **CBC Newsletter** is published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Founded in 1937 the membership is open to anyone interested in birds, natural history, and conservation. **Current dues are:** Individual & non-profit, \$25; Family, \$30; Student, \$15; Patron, \$50 and up; Sustaining & businesses, \$30; Life, \$500; Associate Life (in household with Life Member), \$100 (both Life memberships can be paid in four annual installments).

Membership dues of \$25 include \$4 for a subscription to **CBC Newsletter** and \$5 for a subscription to *The Chat*. **Cost for CBC bird checklists**, including postage: 10@\$5.45, 25@\$13.40, 50@\$27.00, and 100@\$54.00.

Submit application for membership, change of address, and payment for checklists to: CBC Headquarters Secretary, 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst, NC 28374. Copyright © 2016.

Printed on 100% recycled paper at Carolina Printing.