



CBC Newsletter

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For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

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Register Now for the CBC Winter Meeting in Southport, NC!

John Voigt

The Carolina Bird Club winter meeting will be held in Southport, NC in the lower Cape Fear River area (which includes Wilmington, NC) January 27-28th, 2012. Registration will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 26th at the Wingate Hotel in Southport. The CBC, and specifically the CBC Southport planning team, extend a warm welcome to members and guests to join us for a fun-filled weekend of birding.

Southport offers some of the state's top winter coastal birding sites and often leads NC and SC in species seen on Christmas Bird Counts. With the meeting less than a month after the local Count, we'll hope to see most of the species recorded!

Look for a variety of field trips, interesting speakers, some in-the-hotel TV presentations, and additional information on birding the general area if birding Friday and Saturday isn't enough for you!

We plan to visit sites near the host hotel and also range to well-known sites including Ft. Fisher, Wrightsville Beach, Bald Head Island, Carolina Beach State Park, Oak Island, Airlie Gardens, Sunset Beach, Brunswick Town, Boiling Springs, and Greenfield Lake. (And there are other trips too!) Details for all the fieldtrips are included inside this issue.

You'll have many interesting habitat choices with the field trips. Ocean-watching for all three American scoter species and the hope of a rare grebe or sea duck,

shorebird sites, maritime forests with warblers like Orange-crowned, parks and fields with winter sparrows, Longleaf and Loblolly pine forests where the target birds include Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, and maybe a Henslow's Sparrow. Add to this marshes, lakes, and a trip to recently burned pine forest. So many choices!

Our host hotel is the three-year-old eco-friendly Wingate Hotel in Southport. Discounted rates for the hotel have dropped since the last Newsletter. King or two-Queen beds are now \$77.00 plus tax. Call (910) 454-0086 and mention booking code CGBIRD to obtain this rate. The rate should be available up to three weeks prior to the meeting date. After this time, rooms may be available at prevailing rates. The Wingate is located at 1511 North Howe Street in Southport (NC Highway 211).

Included with our discounted rate is a hot breakfast, which will start at 5 a.m. The breakfast has a hotel cook who restocks items including eggs and breakfast meats. Rooms include complimentary WiFi. The one thing the hotel doesn't have is a large meeting room. We'll be heading a few blocks towards the Cape Fear River for our Friday and Saturday nights' activities.

Our Friday night speaker will be Mark Buckler. I'm sure many of you know that Mark is our new Vice President for Eastern NC. Mark will begin by describ-

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Birding With A Helmet On

Jon Rouse



I jumped into the truck with binoculars and bird book in hand. I was going for a quick drive looking for birds. I knew the local hotspots spots as I had been in the area before. I had driven the road several times before back in 2009, during my first tour as a civilian contractor supporting the war effort. The road was actually the base perimeter of Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan. During my 2009 four-month tour I had seen 47 species of birds including some of my favorites such as Long-tailed Shrike, Hoopoe, and several different raptors including the Short-toed Snake-Eagle. I was able to get some very close photos and looks at one of these magnificent birds due to the fact that three local Afghan falconers had caught one two days before my visit with them. The base hired these locals to help prevent bird strikes by aircraft coming to and taking off from the base. I find it ironic that the ancient craft these men practiced every day was preventing millions of dollars of modern aircraft from being damaged or destroyed. One of the falconers was going to take the eagle back to his compound as a pet but not to train it to hunt. One of the falconers told me that this species does not respond well to that type of training.

But now I was transiting through Bagram to a base near the Pakistan border for my next tour. After a quick eighteen hours on the ground and a short flight, I arrived to my new home for the next four months, or so I thought. Immediately upon exiting the plane I felt a significant rise in the temperature, but also more green trees and bushes than I had seen at Bagram Air Field. It was May, so the hot season was in full force. My initial feeling was hot, but lush. This feeling was proven true when, after getting settled in, I took a walk around - with binoculars and bird book in hand of course. I was immediately rewarded by a flash of bright blue and red near a water channel that ran through the base. I thought 'roller' but as the blur of color settled down and landed on a fence post, I was staring through my binoculars at not one, but a pair of White-throated Kingfishers. As I continued around the perimeter I noticed lush green irrigated fields and orchards butting up to the base fence. There is even a major creek or small river lined with reeds that runs just off the fence. This place was not the Afghanistan

I had experienced in 2009. That was brown and dry with an occasional small irrigated field. On my quick walk I had seen ten species of birds of which five were lifers, including my favorite bird of this part of the trip, the Black Drongo. Over the course of the next few days, my early mornings and early evenings were spent walking the perimeter. I saw nineteen different species with nine of them being lifers. What a start to a four-month trip! The area and climate were going to be great for my bird list. But all good things come to an end, and mine ended abruptly when my orders were changed. At six o'clock in the morning of my fifth day on the ground I was told to get on the next plane out to Bagram Air Field so that I could get on another plane to get to my next location. I was at Bagram before noon. My layover in Bagram ended up being two days, but it was time well spent as I found a pair of Snow Pigeons playing in the breeze and a Wire-tailed Swallow swooping back and forth over the base fence.

My new destination was to be on the other side of the country. I was to land at Camp Bastion/Camp Leatherneck and then catch the next thing out to my next new home. But sometimes intentions and schedules don't match up, so I spent six days at Camp Leatherneck waiting for my next flight. Birding was a bit sparse as there is not much life in that part of Afghanistan, but I did find more birds in one day than a friend of mine had seen during three tours at Camp Leatherneck. It just goes to show if you look hard enough, you may get lucky.

After nearly a week of waiting, I finally made my way to my new location. Ironically, I took an Osprey to my destination. The Osprey is one of the newer airframes in the military. It is a plane that lands like a helicopter, or a helicopter that flies like a plane. Regardless, it was a first for me. To some people quiet, desolate places are not good, but I immediately liked my new spot upon exiting the Osprey. Yes, it was hot and dry, as it was now June in southwestern Afghanistan, but because the base was so well laid-out and open, I never felt crowded. For me as a birder, the jewel of this place was the gray-water pond where the

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CBC Southport Meeting Field Trip Schedule

Friday, January 27

All Day Trips

- Trip 1 - Ft. Fisher/Federal Pt/Kure Bch/Aquarium - 6:30 AM
- Trip 2 - Bald Head Island - 6:30 AM
- Trip 3 - Ocean Isle and Sunset Beaches - 6:45 AM
- Trip 4 - Burns/Sparrows/Other Species- 6:00 AM
- Trip 5 - Wrightsville Beach and Piers - 6:15 AM

Morning Half-Day Trips

- Trip 6 - Ft. Caswell/Oak Is./Fish Factory Rd -7AM
- Trip 7 - Brunswick Town/Park/Funston Farms - 6:45 AM
- Trip 8 - Airlie Gardens - 7:00 AM
- Trip 9 - Greenfield Lake/Hotspots - 6:15 AM
- Trip 10 - Wilmington Spoil & Impoundments - 6:45 AM
- Trip 11 - Carolina Beach et. al. - 6:30 AM

Afternoon Half-Day Trips

- Trip 12 - Oak Island West End - 1:15 PM
- Trip 13 - Wilmington Spoil & Impoundments -1 PM
- Trip 14 - Greenfield Lake/Hotspots - 1:00 PM
- Trip 15 - Boiling Spring Lakes/Southport - 1:15 PM

Saturday, January 28

All Day Trips

- Trip 16 - Ft. Fisher/Federal Pt/Kure Bch/Aquarium - 6:30 AM
- Trip 17 - Bald Head Island - 6:30 AM
- Trip 18 - Sunset Bch/Bird Is./Little River - 6:45 AM
- Trip 19 - Burns/Sparrows/Other Species- 6:00 AM
- Trip 20 - Wrightsville Beach and Piers - 6:15 AM
- Trip 21 - "Target Birds" Grand Tour - 6:15 AM

Morning Half-Day Trips

- Trip 22 - Ft. Caswell/Oak Is./Fish Factory Rd -7AM
- Trip 23 - Brunswick Town/Park/Funston Farms - 6:45 AM
- Trip 24 - Airlie Gardens - 7:00 AM
- Trip 25 - Greenfield Lake/Hotspots - 6:15 AM
- Trip 26 - Wilmington Spoil & Impoundments - 6:45 AM
- Trip 27 - Carolina Beach et. al. - 6:30 AM

Afternoon Half-Day Trips

- Trip 28 - Oak Island West End - 1:15 PM
- Trip 29 - Wilmington Spoil & Impoundments - 1 PM
- Trip 30 - Greenfield Lake/Hotspots - 1:00 PM
- Trip 31 - Boiling Spring Lakes/Southport - 1:15 PM

Directions to the Host Hotel:

The Wingate is located at 1511 North Howe St. in Southport (NC Highway 211). Coming from Myrtle Beach you take NC Highway 211 into Southport. The Wingate is located just south of the intersection with River Rd. SE (NC Highway 87). Coming from points north, including Wilmington, you take either NC Highway 87 south or NC Highway 133 south. Highways 87 and 133 merge just north of Southport. From the point NC 133 and NC 87 merge it's less than ½ mile to the Wingate. The hotel is a little hard to find the first time you go there. You'll need to look to your right as the hotel is just off the highway on the right. If you drive south on Highway 211 into Southport and pass J. Arthur Doshier Memorial Hospital, you've gone about two blocks too far south.

Planning Notes:

Unless otherwise noted, all field trips leave from the host hotel. We encourage carpooling to reduce the number of vehicles on the road, and this also helps in parking at the birding sites. If you are willing to drive and take some old or new birding friends along, please let your trip leader know when you meet.

On trips that involve ocean-watching or shorebirds, a spotting scope may be helpful. If you don't have one, don't worry, there should be plenty to go around, but having your own may enhance your viewing opportunities.

Dress for the weather! Field trips generally run rain or shine, so make sure raingear is part of your packing plans.

Southport Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

John Ennis and John Voigt

Trips 1, 16: Ft. Fisher/Federal Point/Kure Beach/NC Aquarium

(Restrooms available)

These well-known hot-spots offer some of the best winter birding on the North Carolina coast. The ocean here is attractive to many birds because of the biologically-rich hard-bottomed areas just off shore. This trip also offers the chance to see winter passerines around the fort area. At Federal Point we'll look for grebes, shorebirds, terns, gulls, and raptors. Kure Beach will have you looking out in the ocean for gannets, loons (2+ species) and all 3 North American scoter species. The ocean here has seen rarities including grebes (other than Horned), alcids, rare sea ducks, and possibly a Purple Sandpiper. Trips will leave the hotel at 6:30 a.m. and then take the 7 a.m. Southport/Ft. Fisher ferry. **There is a \$5 fee per car each way for the ferry.**

Trips 2, 17: Bald Head Island

(Restrooms available)

Bald Head Island offers a fun day with more than just birds to look at. You've got the 20-minute ferry ride, the wonderful homes on the island, and both the Cape Fear River and ocean to take in. The birding in winter can be very interesting. Northern Gannets are seen over the ocean, and we will look for scoters and the occasional jaeger. In the wooded areas you can hope for an Orange-crowned Warbler or Blue-headed Vireo. Bald Head Island is a bit unlike any other place in NC. Cabbage palmettos are common - this is their northern limit. It's more like being in SC than NC. The island also features a lighthouse, Old Baldy, the oldest lighthouse in NC. Unfortunately going to Bald Head Island is going to cost you. Signing up for this field trip has you agreeing to all the costs associated with going to Bald Head Island. The current round trip ferry cost is \$23 per person. Parking at the ferry terminal is \$8 per car (maybe \$2 a person if you car-pool). Golf carts will be rented as it's a 3 mile walk/drive to places we'll visit. Current golf cart rates for 4 are \$60.50 (budget something over \$15). *Your Southport CBC planning team will attempt to lower the cost of golf cart rentals but can't promise anything at this time.*

Trip 3: Ocean Isle Beach/Sunset Beach

(Restroom availability between stops)

We leave the hotel at 6:45 a.m. and meet at the Ocean Isle Beach pier at 8:00 a.m. for ocean-watching. We will then travel to the east end of the island to a public parking area and take a short walk to Shallotte Inlet to look for sea ducks, shorebirds (possibly Piping Plover), gulls, and terns. We will check out a newly constructed boardwalk through the scrub and salt marsh to look for Orange-crowned Warbler, maritime sparrows, raptors, and rails. Depending on tides, we may be able to scan the extensive flats and exposed oyster bars along the tidal creeks at the west end of the island. Other stops will include the Ocean Isle Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant for ducks and gulls, and Twin Lakes at Sunset Beach for ducks, Anhingas, and night-herons. Time permitting there will be other quick stops at local birding sites.

Trips 4, 19: Growing-season Burns/Sparrows & Other Species (*Wet trip; Strenuous*)

(Limited restroom availability except at lunchtime)

This trip will visit areas burned during the past nine months. It may include areas where wildfire burns occurred (such as the Holly Ridge area), and may also visit areas where prescribed burns were conducted. Locations will be selected based on scouting observations prior to the meeting. Travel time to the first stop may be slightly over an hour. Be prepared for strenuous walking in wet, forested areas. Boots for walking in wet areas are appropriate. We will hope to see/hear Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, maybe a Bachman's Sparrow (tough in the winter because they don't sing), and dream of a Henslow's Sparrow. Time permitting a bit of ocean watching at Topsail Island may be included.

Trips 5, 20: Wrightsville Beach & Piers

(Restrooms available)

From Mason Inlet on the north end to Masonboro Inlet on the south end, this trip features ocean and jetty scanning for rarities. Targeted areas, observed from the beach or end of Johnny Mercer's Pier, include the legendary loon flock off the island's north end that extends to pier. There are no guarantees, but this flock has consistently produced write-ins on the

Southport Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

Christmas Count plus many rare winter bird sightings with birds such as Pacific Loon, Thick-billed Murre, Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, etc. Shorebirds and waterbirds observed at the inlets and jetties may include Purple Sandpiper, Piping Plover, and Great Cormorant.

Trip 18: Sunset Beach/Bird Island/Little River Inlet & Jetties (*Strenuous*)

(Limited restroom availability during beach walk)

Leaving the hotel at 6:45 a.m., meet the leader at the Sunset Beach Pier parking lot at 8:15 a.m. We will then drive to a small public parking area at the west end of the island. From here we will walk to the Little River Inlet and jetties, ocean watching along the way, about 4.5 miles round trip. Target birds will be all three North American scoters, eiders, Purple Sandpipers, loons, alcids, grebes, and shorebirds. After the beach hike we will visit the famous Twin Lakes and Lake Medcalf to check the diverse waterfowl flocks. Waterfowl, Anhinga, night-herons, and other waders should be easy to see. As time permits there will be quick stops at other local birding spots. Bring weather-appropriate gear, water, and snacks for this trip. Other than the long beach hike itself there will be restrooms, restaurants, and convenience stores available. *This trip is for those who enjoy an extended winter walk on the beach.*

Trip 21: "Target Birds" Grand Tour

(Restroom availability between stops)

Have you ever attended a CBC meeting and found out some bird species you'd really like to see were seen the 1st day of the field trips (and wish you could hit those spots the 2nd day)? Here's your chance! Signing up for this trip means going to hot spots where there's some chance to see rarities found the day before. There's no itinerary for this trip and it could include considerable time driving between stops. This field trip will target the rarest birds seen the 1st day. (Hope you see a couple of life birds!)



Trips 6, 22: Ft. Caswell/Oak Island/Fish Factory Road

(Restrooms available)

From the beachfront of Caswell Beach to the lawns of Ft. Caswell and on to the salt marshes and woods of Fish Factory Road, participants will be treated to broad mixture of seabirds, shorebirds, raptors, sparrows, winter songbirds, ducks, waders, terns, and gulls. This route, borrowed from the Southport Christmas count, is very productive and usually yields a few surprises! Time permitting and if accessible, a quick stop at the Yaupon Beach Pier may be included. *Individuals will be charged \$3 for a grounds pass at the fort.*

Trips 7, 23: Brunswick Town/Brunswick Nature Park/Funston Farms

(Restrooms available)

This route may offer Brunswick County's widest variety of winter birds. Winter specialties at Brunswick Town include Rusty Blackbirds, woodpeckers, owls, and many species of overwintering songbirds. Up to seven species of woodpeckers plus American Woodcocks and Winter and House Wrens are possible. Bald Eagles, Anhinga, and several varieties of ducks and scoters are likely on the Cape Fear River or nearby Orton Pond. After the Brunswick Town stop, we will drive through the Funston Farms area searching for Eastern Meadowlark, Wilson's Snipe, American Pipit, and sparrows. This trip will end at Brunswick Nature Park on Town Creek where species observed may include Golden-crowned Kinglet, Blue-headed Vireo, and Fox Sparrow.

Trips 8, 24: Airlie Gardens

(Restrooms available)

Established in 1901, Airlie Gardens is a valuable cultural and ecological component of New Hanover County and North Carolina history. You'll have the opportunity to view 10 acres of freshwater lakes and the grandeur of the 462 year-old Airlie Oak. Waterbirds such as ducks, egrets, herons, kingfishers, cormorants, and Ospreys are common. Watch for winter passerines as you walk around the well-kept grounds. On any given day it is easy to spot more than 30 species of birds while traversing the gardens. *Individuals*

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Southport Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

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will be charged a \$3 for a grounds pass (the usual fee is \$5).

Trips 9, 14, 25, 30: Greenfield Lake & Wilmington Winter Hotspots

(Restrooms available)

Wilmington has many great winter hotspots! Following routes that will include many sites on the Christmas Bird Count, we will visit places such as Greenfield Lake and Oakdale Cemetery. Each of the four trips may follow a different route depending heavily on what's being seen the week of the Southport meeting, morning versus afternoon, and rare bird sightings. Some of the best birds regularly seen include Anhinga, Sora, Winter Wren, Rusty Blackbird, and maybe a rare winter sparrow. Expect extended walks, mostly on paved trails.

Trips 10, 13, 26, 29: Wilmington Spoil Island/Impoundments

(Very limited restroom availability)

This normally closed, restricted site will allow us special access to their impoundments for the CBC meeting. The impoundments are excellent for waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, owls, sparrows and pipits. The trip is limited to 15 participants and 4 vehicles. Because we will use unpaved roads atop dikes, please indicate on the registration form if you will volunteer to drive your high-clearance vehicle.

Trips 11, 27: Carolina Beach SP, City Lake, Pier

(Restrooms available)

Carolina Beach State Park and other nearby sites offer varied habitats that are fairly close to each other (the island is slightly more than a mile wide here). The state park's unique setting will have you scanning the marina area to check out the Cape Fear River and the Intracoastal Waterway. There are shrubby spots to look for winter passerines. Waterfowl will be viewed at freshwater pond sites. You'll also have the opportunity for some ocean watching from the pier. With sites close together, you'll spend a lot of your time birding and less time driving between stops.

Trips 12, 28: Oak Island West End

(Restrooms available)

Expect waterbirds in large mixed flocks at the western tip of Oak Island and the Lockwood Folly inlet. Birds may include several tern species, ducks, and Black Skimmers. Surrounding marshes and mudflats should yield several species of shorebirds plus raptors such as Peregrine Falcon and Northern Harrier. Time permitting, a quick stop at a pier or one of several small nature centers may be included on the way back to the hotel.

Trips 15, 31: Boiling Spring Lakes/Southport

(Restrooms available)

The first stop will be The Nature Conservancy's Boiling Spring Lakes Preserve, known for overwintering songbirds, sparrows, and waterfowl. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and the other seven species of NC woodpeckers are possible. Afterwards, we will return to Southport and bird as many hotspots as time permits, including the waterfront/marina area, Smithville Burying Grounds, community ponds, and Shepard Road area fields. These sites host overwintering and resident raptors, sparrows, shorebirds, terns, and waterfowl. The exact stops on this portion of the trip will be dictated by Southport Christmas Count results.

SC Mottled Duck Study Begins

Nemours Plantation Wildlife Foundation, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Mississippi State University, and Ducks Unlimited recently began a three-year study to collect information on Mottled Duck ecology and nesting success in South Carolina. Introduced to the state from 1976 to 1981, approximately 1,200 Mottled Ducks were released along the coast at four sites. The SC population of Mottled Duck is now estimated to be about 20,000. Female Mottled Ducks will be fitted with radio transmitters and studied over a three-year period. It is hoped the project will provide valuable conservation data on Mottled Duck survival, movement, nesting habits, and brood-rearing success.

Southport Meeting (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

ing what's going on with the Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary and Center where he is the director. Mark will then launch into his main presentation on wildlife photography.

Saturday night's speaker is Walker Golder, Deputy Director of Audubon NC. A native of the NC coast, Walker grew up exploring the marshes, tidal creeks, and beaches near his home on Wrightsville Beach. Walker was hired by Audubon as the first manager of the newly-created North Carolina Coastal Islands Sanctuary program. Under his management, the program has grown to 21 locations protecting tens of thousands of birds and their habitats. Walker will be speaking about the numerous sanctuaries here in coastal NC.

Something a little different for Southport will be in-the-host-hotel videos. One video that will be featured is from Dr. Douglas Tallamy who has authored a book, *Bringing Nature Home*. The book's theme is the use native plants in landscaping so that our declining song bird population can begin to thrive again. The video of Dr. Tallamy's talk is on the same topic. He gives examples, both numerically and visually, to support the importance of native plant use, and does so in an extremely entertaining manner. We may also make other "fun" bird related videos available. Who knows, you may get to watch *March of the Penguins* with some new or old friends if the weather is inclement or you've got a little down time!

If your Friday or Saturday field trip is all day, we recommend you carry your lunch. Registration packets will contain directions to the locations of the field trips offered during the course of the weekend. Some local reference books are recommended. *The North Carolina Birding Trail - Coastal Plain Trail Guide* can be used to study up on the Southport area sites you will be visiting. Falcon Press's *Birding North Carolina* and John Fussell's *A Birder's Guide to Coastal North Carolina* are standards for birding this area of North Carolina. You can also check out the CBC's website (www.carolinabirdclub.org) where descriptions of several of the sites we'll visit are listed

with more detail than can be described in this article.

"Pack-a-sack", introduced at a recent meeting, will again be held at the Southport meeting. You'll have the opportunity to put some snacks in zipper bags if you attend the Friday night event. The local Cape Fear Audubon Society sponsors this activity.

Including young field trip leaders will also be a focus in Southport. Hopefully there will be two college-age students leading field trips. Also, Daniel Hueholt, a high school student from Wilmington, will be leading some of our trips. If you're lucky enough to be on one of our "young gun" led trips you'll hopefully be caught up with their enthusiasm.

The CBC will hold our usual buffet dinner on Saturday evening beginning at 6:30. Advance reservations are required for attending the dinner in order to facilitate planning. The buffet cost is \$25 per person, including tax and gratuities, which is due with your meeting registration. Please note that Sunday, January 22, 2012 is the last date for any refunds for registration or dinner cancellations. There are three entrée choices listed on the registration page to choose from. Choices are roast beef, ham, or chicken salad. Side dishes for the Saturday evening dinner include herb red potatoes, steamed asparagus, yeast rolls, dessert, tea, and coffee.

Winter CBC meetings on the coast can include some inclement weather. We can only hope for the sunny skies and reasonable temperatures that often occur, but be prepared for anything.

Please direct any questions or concerns about this meeting to John Voigt via e-mail at: jvoigt@coastalnet.com

To conclude, I'm hoping that you'll attend the 1st ever CBC meeting in Southport. It's a special setting that our club has never been able to come to before, mainly because of facility issues for a group our size. The main issue, a suitable hotel, has been solved with the recently built Wingate Hotel. Hope to see you there!

Huntington Beach State Park Field Trip Nets 92 Species

Steve Shultz

The September 10th CBC Bonus Trip to Huntington Beach State Park along the Grand Strand of South Carolina enjoyed pleasant weather, a welcome break after a scorching summer. While the beautiful weather was not overly conducive to seeing numbers of passerine migrants, shorebirds put on a decent show, the waders were nothing less than spectacular, and a shark made an appearance.

Highlights from the trip include the amazing sight of a staggering number of waders in Mullet Pond early in the morning. By mid-morning most of the birds departed and a visitor might wonder what all the fuss was about, but a few hours earlier hundreds and hundreds of herons, egrets, and other waders virtually



Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks ply the shallows



Enjoying a close encounter with a Clapper Rail

covered this small impoundment in white. The herons, egrets, and Wood Storks mixed with a young Reddish Egret, two pink Roseate Spoonbills, and several species of terns to feed on a significant concentration of small fish. Successful catches were often followed by gangs of hungry waders chasing the lucky fisherman. Who knew Wood Storks were so bullyish? We even watched one stare down an alligator for a treasured roosting spot... and win!

Shorebirds of various sizes and types padded around the muddy margins of Mullet Pond, including an uncommon "inland" sighting of Red Knot and the more expected Stilt and Pectoral Sandpipers among the more common species. Plenty of Black Terns patrolled overhead, and recently arrived Blue-winged Teal formed the vanguard of the dabblers that will take over the pond come winter.

The slog to the jetty was generally unremarkable except for a 3–4 foot shark seen and watched for 5–10 minutes as it pursued a school of mullet that could be seen each time a wave crested.

While the jetty crew surveyed the tern roost at the inlet, some of the others beat the bushes for migrants, coming away with nice finds including a Least Flycatcher that was a write-in on the park's bird list, always a nice feeling. For Painted Bunting fans, plenty of "green ones" fed at the Education Center feeders.

Huntington Beach truly is a great birding spot along the northern South Carolina coast. If you happen to be in the area, stop by, I'll bet you will be glad you did!

Welcome New Members!

Mary Alice Bowers
Marietta, SC

Joseph Geary
Asheville, NC

Helen and James Gibbs
Bennettsville, SC

Bob and Nancy Haussler
Waxhaw, NC

Marie McFadden
Clover, SC

Birding With A Helmet On



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base waste water was deposited was just off the perimeter. Any place that has a regular occurrence of water, especially in the desert, will attract wildlife, especially birds. Jackpot!! Four months here will be easy. Another bonus is that my tent is only a twenty-minute walk away. My happy discovery makes my twelve plus hour workdays easier since I have a great opportunity to see birds that I have not seen before. I walk out to the pond three to four mornings and at least one evening a week just to see what may be out there. So far my favorite birds have been the three species of Sandgrouse (Pin-tailed, Crowned, and Black-bellied). I have learned the difference in their calls and flight patterns enough to know which one is coming in for a drink even before I use my binoculars. Other favorite visitors at Poo Pond (my local name for it is catching on even for the non-birders), have been three Gray Herons, a Slender-billed Gull, a pair of Common Redshanks, and several Citrine Wagtails. During my observations, I have been given some stark reminders of where I am. More than once, I have seen plumes of black smoke to the west that were evidence of supply trucks that had been attacked and were burning. One morning, I heard a large explosion several kilometers away that turned out to be an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blowing up a civilian trucking company vehicle on one of the nearby highways. So the birding may be good, but my eyes are always on the next ridge.

With September fast approaching, I am looking forward to a few things. The migration will be well on its way by then, so there is no telling what different birds I will see adding to the sixty on the trip list with thirty five of them being lifers. But the main thing that I am looking forward to is getting back to my family in North Carolina and being with them.

As my time to go back to the States and my family gets nearer, I often reflect on the unique opportunity I have had. Unfortunately, due to the war and local conditions, not many people have ever had the opportunity to spend time birding in Afghanistan. It is a shame that more people do not get a chance to travel to Afghanistan because it has such diverse environ-

ments and 499 bird species, partly due to the fact it is a major thoroughfare for migration. I feel fortunate to have been able to have spent collectively over eight months in-country with chances to observe and document several species, many for the first time for me. The work that is being done over here is important and lots of sacrifices have been made, and I am proud to be part of it. I am just fortunate to be able to find some enjoyment and distraction in the form of birding. When I leave this place I will be packing my binoculars and bird book for the trip, but I will also be carrying back some interesting war stories and bird memories to share.

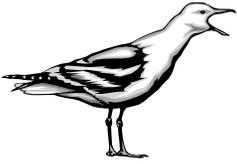
Nebraska and Outer Banks Field Trips in Waiting List Status

Both the “Sandhill Crane Migration” trip to Nebraska (March 28-April 1, 2012) and the Outer Banks Field Trip (December 10-11, 2011) are currently full, however we do keep a “wait list” of folks who would like to attend and are able to fill a vacancy due to cancellation. Members of the wait list will be notified one way or the other with regard to their ability to attend, and no deposit is required to take a spot on the waiting list. So if you missed out on grabbing a confirmed slot, consider signing up for the waiting list, you never know when someone else’s plans may change!

If you would like more information on these trips, visit the Field Trips section of the Club’s website at www.carolinabirdclub.org/trips or contact Steve Shultz at 919-779-2826 or via e-mail at: sshultz@nc.rr.com.



The opinions expressed in the CBC Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Carolina Bird Club or its members, but are those of the authors who have contributed material. All CBC members are encouraged to submit content for publication. Submitted articles may be edited for style, content, or length prior to publication. Submissions may be made in electronic format to newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org, or by mail to the address on the back cover.



Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Field Trip February 18, 2012

The Carolina Bird Club is offering a chance to bird one of the more interesting sites along the mid-Atlantic coast, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel.

The complex's four manmade rocky islands act as a magnet for sea ducks, gulls, and other birds. With luck we should be able to leisurely study each of America's three scoter species, (birds more often than not seen in distant, fast-moving lines), enjoy the spectacularly plumaged male Long-tailed Duck, search for shorebirds (including Purple Sandpiper) on the rocks, compare the various plumages of Great and Double-crested Cormorants, and hope for a rarity or two like Common Eider, Common Goldeneye, King Eider, or one of the uncommon gulls.

After spending the morning birding the islands we will continue to the Eastern Shore of Virginia to search for wintering passerines, shorebirds, and whatever else we can find.

Date: Saturday, February 18, 2012

Cost: \$30

Limit: 14 participants

Logistics: The trip will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the south toll terminal at the CBBT in Virginia Beach, VA. The \$30 registration fee covers the police escort on the CBBT and guided birding throughout the day. Not included are lodging, meals, tolls, or fuel expenses. Par-

ticipants will likely wish to spend Friday night in Virginia Beach. At this time of year hotel rooms are plentiful and inexpensive. We will combine to as few vehicles as possible Saturday morning for the trip to the bridge islands. There is a toll of \$12 to cross the bridge, and \$5 to return. Participants will be required to provide government-issued photo ID at the CBBT if requested.

To Sign Up: E-mail Steve Shultz for a registration form (sshultz@nc.rr.com) or if you have questions. You can also call 919-779-2826. The form and trip fee must be sent to the CBC HQ Secretary no later than 4 weeks prior to the trip in order to provide the Bridge Tunnel Authority with a listing of participants.

The CBBT can be a great place to bird! If you've never been, it is a rewarding experience. Even if the birding is slow (which is usually not the case) the possibility of wintering seals, seagoing ships, and spectacular scenery make the trip worthwhile. Participation is limited to CBC members (but you can join at the same time as you register for the trip!)

Please let Steve know of any questions and look forward to seeing you there!

Get your CBC T-shirt, Sweatshirt and More With the Updated CBC Logo!

What better way to celebrate the new logo than to buy your very own hat, t-shirt, or hoodie? **The CBC now has an online store for ordering these and more!** Check it out by clicking on the "Online Store" link at: <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org>

A variety of casual-wear items for men and women are available. You choose the size and color! The perfect holiday gift for that hard-to-shop-for birder on your list

The most recent editions of the Newsletter and The Chat are online on the CBC website. All CBC members will use the same username and password to access these publications. The username is "**member**" and the password is "**birdfun**". This is a membership benefit, please don't share the password with non-members! The password will be changed from time to time, but can always be found in the most recent print edition of the Newsletter.

Go to <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/newsletter> to access the Newsletter, and <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat> to access The Chat.

CBC Southport Winter Meeting Registration Form

January 27-28, 2012

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone (____) _____

Evening phone (____) _____

Email _____

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

Meeting Registration (Member) _____ x \$20 = \$ _____

Meeting Registration (Non-member) _____ x \$25 = \$ _____

Saturday Buffet Dinner (each) _____ x \$25 = \$ _____

*To pre-register for field trips, place the trip number(s) in the boxes above.

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. Meeting registration at the door costs \$30.

I release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) 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 to:
CBC, 1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh, NC 27612**

Please note that Sunday January 22, 2011 is the last date for any refunds for registration or dinner cancellations. Cancel by contacting the Headquarters Secretary (contact info is on the back page of this newsletter). If you have 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 trip 10, 13, 26, or 29 "Wilmington Spoil Island/Impoundments" and have a high clearance vehicle and are willing to take passengers off-road on this trip, please check here

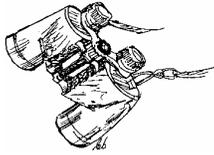
If you registered for the Saturday evening buffet please indicate your choice of entrée. Indicate the number beside each option. For example if you registered for two buffets above and both want ham, enter the number "2" beside "ham".

Ham _____

Roast Beef _____

Chicken Salad _____

If you would be willing to lead or co-lead a field trip that you are registered for, please check here



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

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 offices



Upcoming CBC Meetings

Southport N.C. January 27-28, 2012
 Raleigh, NC May 4-6, 2012

CBC Board Members

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 Lexington, SC 803-996-0480
 mclark66@sc.rr.com

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Website Editor, Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC
Editor of *CBC Newsletter*, Steven Shultz
 4201 Sentimental Lane, Apex, NC 27539
 919-779-2826, newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org
 Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of December, February,
 April, June, August, and October.

Headquarters Secretary, Dana Harris, Bloomingdale, IL
 630-453-8270, hq@carolinabirdclub.org

CBC Website: www.carolinabirdclub.org

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