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

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CBC Winter Meeting - Nags Head, NC January 30-31 Ron Clark

Our winter meeting, January 30-31, 2015, will make a return to Nags Head on the Outer Banks. One can expect a warm ocean breeze, temperatures in the upper 60's and the pleasure of walking barefoot in the sand along the beach. One can expect that, but would likely be wrong. Although that scenario is possible, a better guess is cold and breezy with even a slight chance for snow, which happened two meetings ago. But that's why we go there. Cold weather is what brings in all those wonderful winter birds that make this trip worth it. Our last two meetings to the Outer Banks netted 177 and 186 species. Species totals last time included 23 ducks, 18 shorebirds, 15 sparrows, seven warblers, and six birds 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.

Our roost for the meeting is the recently refurbished Comfort Inn South at 8031 Old Oregon Inlet Road. All rooms have microwave, refrigerator, and WIFI. Also included is a hot breakfast served in a private room starting at 5:30. The cost is \$66 for oceanfront rooms and \$56 for street side, plus tax. This price is also good for days before and after the meeting. For reservations, call 252-441-6315. Be sure to mention the Carolina Bird Club to get this rate.

Our field trips will cover all the known hot spots, which are numerous in the area. These include three

National Wildlife Refuges (Alligator River, Mattamuskeet, and Pea Island) as well as Bodie Island, Oregon Inlet, Cape Hatteras Point, Roanoke Island, Palmetto Peartree Preserve, and more. At Pea Island we have special permission to offer trips to South Pond, which is off-limits except on guided tours. We also have a pelagic trip led by Brian Patteson on the docket. Some of the birds seen on the last winter CBC meeting pelagic include Red Phalarope, Sooty and Manx Shearwaters, Atlantic Puffin, Great Skua, Razorbill, Dovekie, Little Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake and Common Murre. For the novice birder we plan to offer Beginner's Bird Walks, an excellent opportunity to learn about birding techniques, optics, and more, all in one of the most scenic parts of the North Carolina coast.

Friday night's program will feature a hummer of a presentation by Susan Campbell, well-known hummingbird bander. Saturday evening starts with a dinner buffet that includes a cash bar. The buffet cost is \$25 and will offer a vegetarian option. Our speaker for the evening is Elaine Lubosch, the Education Committee Chair for the Network for Endangered Sea Turtles.

For non-birding spouses, there are many interesting places to visit. Aside from the beautiful beach, the Wright Brothers National Memorial in nearby Kill Devil Hills, and historic Manteo, with the Elizabethan

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Magee Marsh



Just east of the Panama Canal near the village of Gamboa a small songbird with russet and bay markings forages in the lush, tropical vegetation. For several weeks the bird, spurred by an unusual sense of hunger, ravenously fed on the tiny, abundant, insects common to the rainforest. The bird, an adult male Bay-breasted Warbler, now weighs significantly more than when he arrived here a little over five months ago, and this additional weight, in the form of fat, will be of crucial importance over the next few weeks. The next evening, as the sound of a Greek bulk freighter's horn echoes across the darkening backwaters of Gatun Lake, the warbler takes flight on a southerly wind and wings north.

After a long and arduous two-day flight, for the winds changed direction in the early morning hours of the second night, the Bay-breasted alights in a patch of scrubby lowland jungle. Nearby a busload of tourists embarks on a guided tour of the ruined Mayan city of Ek Balam, but the bird takes little note, instead associating with a small group of Northern Waterthrush, Tennessee, and Magnolia Warblers. Together the mixed flock forages in the flowering trees and stores energy for the next stage of their collective journey. As night falls a light southerly wind beckons, and the warbler, along with scores of other northbound migrants, leaves the Yucatan jungle behind and faces a night that most humans find incredible, an open water crossing of nearly six hundred miles by an animal that weighs only slightly more than 12 grams. But the bird simply wings on, following a path blazed by ancestors thousands of generations before. The path takes the warbler across the Gulf of Mexico, the blackness below dotted here and there by brilliant jets of flame as waste gases burn off from oil platforms hundreds of feet below. Some birds become distracted by these bright beacons of light and lose their way, but the Bay-breasted has crossed the Gulf before and ignores the lights below, focusing solely on gaining latitude on the journey north.

A week later, after casually moving with the pace of spring foliage across the Deep South and into the Midwest, the bird encounters a pair of obstacles, and in

combination, these conditions mean that no additional migration will occur tonight. For just after the Baybreasted begins to cross the third and final significant body of water on its journey, a series of thunderstorms coalesce into an organized front that brings gusting north winds and heavy precipitation. The warbler drops below the scudding cloud deck and retreats back to the south in search of a suitable place to ride out the inclement weather. Just inland from the Lake Erie shoreline a patch of greening foliage beckons, and the bird, along with a dozen others faced with the same choice, drops into the welcoming tangles of the woodlot.

As the sun rises the warbler begins to forage low in the understory, for here there are plenty of small insects to enjoy, and up higher, where the Bay-breasted often feeds, the leaves of spring have yet to unfold. Just over a dozen feet away from the feeding warbler a small boy of thirteen stands on a raised, wooden boardwalk and raises his new pair of binoculars to gaze in wonder at the brightly colored jewel. Ever since his grandmother presented him with a field guide to birds and the binoculars for his birthday last month, the boy had been looking forward to the promised weekend visit to a place his dad heard was good for birds in the spring. This moment would be the genesis of a lifetime hobby for the boy, who, at this point, is being jostled by a group of newly arrived birders from the Port Clinton Unified Baptist Church, who, in their excitement over a smartly-plumaged Wilson's Warbler, fail to notice the young lad. When he regains his footing and refocuses his binoculars, the Bay-breasted is gone, but soon a brilliant male Cape May Warbler moves into view, the second of nineteen warbler species the young boy would see that morning.

The Bay-breasted, completely unaware of the impression it made on the young birder, feeds for another day before winging north and east across Lake Erie and into Canada. By sunrise it has settled into a patch of boreal forest just west of Lac Saint-Jean in Quebec and begins singing, for a new nesting season has begun.

Magee Marsh



The boy, the warbler, and the church group all converged on the wooden boardwalk at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area in Ottawa County, Ohio during mid-May. This boardwalk may be the most famous spot in North America from which to watch the parade of Neotropical migrant passerines in spring, and hundreds to thousands of birders from all across the United States, Canada, and beyond come to be entertained by the show. In years past Point Pelee, just across the lake in Ontario, enjoyed a reputation as "the place to be", but birding conditions on the narrow, triangular peninsula jutting south into Lake Erie are highly conditional on weather conditions, while the spectacle at Magee Marsh is generally more predictable and produces a steadier flow of birds. High Island, Texas may produce better birding during fallout conditions, but visitors are equally likely to encounter relatively quiet woodlands when weather conditions are not conducive to trans-Gulf migrants stopping as soon as they reach shore. For the traveling birder who must plan a visit before local weather conditions are known, Magee Marsh offers an excellent opportunity to view spring-plumaged warblers (including the borealnesting and circum-Gulf species that are less commonly found in the Carolinas in spring), tanagers, thrushes, vireos, cuckoos, and more.

In addition to excellent diversity (many days in May produce 25+ species of warbler) and numbers of birds, the birding itself is very easy. A flat, ½ mile raised, wooden boardwalk with handrails winds through a woodlot set just back from the shore of Lake Erie. And this woodlot is often chock full of birds. The boardwalk features benches spaced along its length, and is wheelchair accessible. Especially during early to mid-May and during times of inclement weather, the birds forage close to the ground, making for easy viewing. In many cases the birds are so close that binoculars are useless, and on a recent visit we were able to take rather decent photographs of warblers with smartphones, devices not known for their telephoto capabilities.

About the only issue with birding along the boardwalk is that it can get crowded. Very crowded. The apex of spring migrant passage through northern Ohio occupies a fairly short portion of the May calendar, and

numbers of birders peak with the anticipated maximum flights of birds. On these days it can be hard to move even a few yards along the boardwalk, but the birding is not as closely tied to the time of day as in some locations, so arriving very early or visiting later in the day when some of the crowds have dispersed may be rewarding. On our recent visit in the lateteens of May, we had no issues with crowds and were able to move about freely. However, reports from the prior week, when the Biggest Week in American Birding festival was in full swing, indicate the crowds at that time were impressive.

Choosing the best time to visit Magee Marsh depends somewhat on the expectations and hopes of the traveler. Migration varies from year to year, so the results of prior years may not necessarily reflect future conditions, but in general, the maximum number and diversity of birds occurs somewhere around the second week of May. Some years feature a steady flow of birds with few peaks and valleys, while others have waves of birds arriving and departing. But in most cases the numbers and diversity of birds will impress visitors. Birders hoping to find uncommon and highly sought after species such as Connecticut, Mourning, and Kirtland's Warblers may wish to visit slightly later, from the end of the second through the third week of May, as earlier in the month may be too early for these later arriving species. A later visit also increases the chances to see numbers of boreal breeding birds including Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers. Several online resources provide week by week and species by species information so that visiting birders can tailor their trip to the birds they most want to see. Good places to start research are http:// www.mageemarsh.org/ and http:// biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/.

Logistically, visiting the western lakeshore of Ohio in mid-May entails few road bumps. Aviators can choose to fly into a variety of nearby airports including Detroit, Cleveland, Akron-Canton, and Toledo, with Detroit and Cleveland enjoying direct air service from major airports in the Carolinas. Automobile aficionados can make the drive from Raleigh to Magee Marsh in just under ten hours (nine hours from Char-

(Continued on page 4)

Magee Marsh

lotte and twelve from Charleston).

Magee Marsh itself is not particularly close to any significant lodging, but both Port Clinton and Toledo are less than a half hour's drive to the east and west, respectively. Hotels often sell out during the busy birding season, so book early to avoid disappointment. Most of the major chains, as well as some enchanting local establishments, have properties within a short drive of Magee Marsh.

Similarly, restaurants are not to be found in abundance near the major birding areas, so travelers may wish to pack a lunch to enjoy at the wildlife area. Considering that we saw over fifteen species of warblers from a single picnic table, this might not be a bad choice. Otherwise, eateries abound in both Port Clinton and the townships bordering Toledo. For a quick lunch option, a popular submarine chain shares an outlet with a local grill featuring fish, burgers, and sandwiches just 12.7 miles west of Magee Marsh on Ohio Route 2.

Birding in the area is by no means restricted to the Magee Marsh boardwalk. The Magee Marsh Wildlife Area and adjacent Crane Creek Wildlife Area feature a to the birds! number of walking trails, and the road leading to the lakeshore passes through productive wetland areas where nesting Trumpeter Swan and Sandhill Crane might be glimpsed along with lingering and breeding waterfowl and migrating shorebirds. Just to the west of Magee Marsh is Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, offering ten miles of walking trails and an auto tour route that takes visitors by impoundments and wetlands. Bitterns, rails, waterfowl (including the reintroduced Trumpeter Swan) and migrant shorebirds are all possibilities, and on a recent visit we enjoyed rare-forthe-area Eared Grebe and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Birders can stop in at visitor centers at Magee Marsh, Ottawa NWR, and the Black Swamp Bird Observatory (located at the entrance to Magee Marsh) for up-todate birding news.

Continuing west toward Toledo, both Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area and Maumee Bay State Park offer birding opportunities including the chance to pad trips lists with waterbirds and raptors. Detailed descriptions and maps of these areas, and others along the lakeshore,

can be found online at <u>http://www.bsbo.org/</u> <u>BIRDING/LocalBirdingHotspots.aspx</u>.

Birders wishing to pair a trip to Magee Marsh with Point Pelee, Ontario can easily visit both locations during a single trip. Drive time from one to the other is just about two hours, presuming there are no significant delays at the U.S./Canada border.

A visit to the western Lake Erie shore in Ohio during the late-April to late-May period should impress even the most jaded birder. Whether new to the hobby, an "old-timer", a warbler fanatic, or just someone who enjoys birds, the Magee Marsh boardwalk and adjacent areas promise life-long memories and the opportunity to mingle with hundreds of like-minded folks. I hope you have a chance to visit and see for yourself

the magic of Magee.

Bay-breasted Warbler on the Magee Marsh boardwalk taken with an iPhone. You really are that close to the birds!



The Newsletter and The Chat are online on the CBC website. The most recent editions of each are only accessible to CBC members. To access the "members only" content, you must first create a ogin and password. This can be done at <u>http://</u>www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/register.html.

Once you have your login and password established, you can login at <u>https://</u> www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/login.html.

Bonus field trip to Dominican Republic

8 days, 7 nights Jan3rd – 10th, 2015 Starting from Santo Domingo

Lead by Scott Winton and Natalia Ocampo-Peñuela

Bird this beautiful Caribbean island in search of its 32 endemic bird species through cloud forests, foothills and coastal wetlands

- 10 SPOTS

SIGN UP BEFORE OCT 1 ST

Cost:

\$1950

Includes: lodging, ground transportation, food, guides Does not include: Airfare to Santo Domingo, travel insurance

To see the complete trip itinerary and reserve your spot, visit www.carolinabirdclub.org



CBC Bonus Trip to the NC Outer Banks December 6-7

Widely considered at the top of the list for early winter birding sites in North Carolina, the Outer Banks of Dare County are home to thousands of win-

tering swans, ducks, geese, shorebirds, waders, gulls, and more.

Join members of the Carolina Bird Club as we explore the Bodie Island lighthouse area, Oregon Inlet, Pea Island NWR, the ocean beaches of Hatteras and Bodie Islands and other "hotspots". The trip will focus on waterfowl and shorebird identification as well as building a broad trip list including everything from grebes to sparrows.

The trip starts Saturday, December 6, at 7:30 a.m. in the Bodie Island Lighthouse parking lot. Saturday will be devoted to birding along the immediate coast. Sunday will include a stop at Alligator River NWR and potentially Mattamuskeet NWR. Detailed information including directions, lodging choices, dining opportunities and more will be provided to registrants.

Birds that you can expect to see include loons, numbers of Tundra Swans and Snow Geese, most of the dabbling ducks that winter in eastern North Carolina, chances to see sea ducks including all three American scoters, gulls, wintering passerines, and winter shorebirds including American Avocet and possibly Purple Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher and Piping Plover. Alligator River NWR may provide an opportunity to see Black Bear, raptors, shorebirds (if water levels are right) and numbers of Tundra Swan and waterfowl.

Logistics:

The fee for this field trip is \$25 and advance registration is required. Participation is limited to 15. Participants are responsible for lodging and meals. A number of motels, hotels, and other lodging are available in Nags Head north through Kitty Hawk. We will attempt to carpool in order to reduce the number of vehicles caravanning to the birding sites. Spotting scopes are useful if you have one. Dress for the weather and in layers. If we are enjoying a warm early winter, mosquito repellant may be useful.

Lunch on Saturday will likely either be at a seafood restaurant or KFC. If you prefer, bring a bag lunch. A variety of restaurants are open for Saturday dinner.

To register for this field trip contact Steve Shultz at sshultz@nc.rr.com or (919) 629-7226. Upon confirmation of your slot on the trip you will be sent a registration form/waiver that can be submitted with your trip fee. Note that there is a modest fee to walk out on Jeanette's Pier.

Outer Banks Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Gardens, are just a short drive away. Three lighthouses, Currituck Beach, Bodie Island, and Cape Hatteras, are less than an hour away, and while all are closed to climbing in the winter, you can still wander the grounds and gaze up in wonder at these sentinels of the sea. Manteo also features a reproduction of the lesser-known Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse.

The next Newsletter will have more information on the meeting, including trip descriptions, times, and registration information. Winter on the Outer Banks is always special. Bring warm clothes, a sense of adventure, your life list, and make your reservations now.

We hope to see you there!

Birder's Book Review

Steve Shultz



Wildlife of the Caribbean Herbert A. Raffaele and James W. Wiley ISBN 9780691 153827, 304 pages, paper 2014, Princeton University Press, \$19.95

Tempted by one of those offers for a cheap off-season cruise? Need to unwind and are thinking about one of those all-inclusive resorts on [insert name of Caribbean island here]? While packing your sunscreen, snorkel, and swimsuit you may ask yourself... what sort of animals/fish/birds/trees might I find while I am enjoying the tropical breezes on my portside balcony/lanai/ chaise by the pool. Heretofore birders had a fairly easy time of identifying the feathered creatures of the Caribbean with guides such as *A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies* (also by Raffaele) or even the venerable and similarly titled *Birds of the West Indies* by James Bond (yes, that's where Ian Fleming got the name for a certain spy you may have read about.)

Coral reef fish have their own guides, and botanists could pack a hefty tome describing the tropical foliage. Unfortunately, by the time all the assorted field guides are collected, travelers more or less have to pack another bag for their burgeoning library, and with airlines charging fees for almost everything, that bag can be light on the wallet at the same time as it is heavy on the shoulder. So the market existed for a guide covering most of the flora and fauna the casual Caribbean tourist or resident might encounter. But a general guide to wildlife ranging from dolphins to damselfish to doves was lacking. Until now.

The just-published *Wildlife of the Caribbean* aims to fill the gap of a general guide to common wildlife that would be of use to non-specialists while in the Caribbean.

The travel-sized (5x8 inch) 304 page book covers plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates, and mollusks. Roughly divided into two sections, the first addresses terrestrial plants and animals while the second reviews marine plants and animals. The plant, invertebrate, and mollusk sections feature photographs, while the mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, and fish chapters utilize color drawings. A 25-page introduction introduces readers to the islands' biology, climate, geography, and conservation challenges.

With a 304-page book covering such a broad range of subjects, the text accompanying each entry is necessarily somewhat limited. Bird entries, for example, typically provide two paragraphs of information,



one on key identification characteristics, and the other on range and habitat. My only quibble here is that the range descriptions are fairly generic, and without a listing of species found on each island or island group, it may be harder to identify in advance what species to expect. If one uses the guide as a key to identify plants or animals already observed, it should function well. Note that the guide covers the main Caribbean islands, but not the associated Caribbean mainland of Central or South America or outlying areas such as San Andres/Providencia and the ABC islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao.

Species accounts cover the more common and most likely to be encountered species, so not all plants and animals encountered are covered. For example of the many types of sharks inhabiting the Caribbean, only two are portrayed in the book. In most cases, while you may not arrive at precisely the species encountered, you can at least get close, and with that knowledge refine your identifications when broader resources become available.

Wildlife of the Caribbean would make an excellent gift to a Caribbean-bound traveler, a perfect resource on a cruise ship, the coffee table of a vacation rental, or in the backpack of a day-tripper.

Online Membership Directory

The Carolina Bird Club plans to publish an online membership directory beginning in 2015. In the past, we have published a paper directory from time to time but have not done so since 2005. The online directory will have all the benefits of a paper directory, plus the benefit of always being up-to-date, and of course the benefit of being much less expensive to publish. The directory will be accessible only to club members, not to the public.

The information that is displayed in a directory entry can include name, city, state, zip code (but not street address), email address, phone number, and member type (individual, family, life, etc.), and you will be able to search for matches with any of these, for example you can search for members who have a given zip code. You can view what your own directory entry will look like by going to:

https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile/.

We recognize that some members may prefer not to share their contact information with other members. For this reason we are providing a way for you to opt out of the directory, and this is why we are announcing the rollout several months in advance, so that you

have plenty of time to opt out if you choose to do so. If you prefer to exclude some or all of your contact information from the online directory, you can choose to do so at any time by going to https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile/ and selecting the types of information that you want excluded. You can choose not to appear in the directory at all, or to appear with items of your choice excluded. The defaults if you make no choices are that your name, city, and membership type are displayed, and your email address and phone number are private (not displayed).

Information sharing is reciprocal; you can only see the types of information about other members that you allow to be displayed for yourself. For example, until you change your own preferences to allow your email address to be displayed, you will not be able to see email addresses of any other members, whether they have chosen to share their email address or not

We hope that you find this new feature helpful in communicating with Club members and a "green" way to reduce the amount of paper used in publishing member directories!

2014-2015 Committees

During the annual planning meeting, which took place **Bonus Field Trips** in Charlotte, North Carolina in mid-August, the following committees were appointed. Committees typically focus on or manage one aspect of the Club's operation and report, or make recommendations to, the Executive Committee.

Members with questions regarding any of the topics for which a committee has been formed are welcome to contact any of the committee members noted.

Finance

Karyl Gabriel, Samir Gabriel, Christine Stoughton-Root

Grants

Christine Stoughton-Root, Samir Gabriel, Jeff Click

Scott Winton, Steve Shultz, Ron Clark, Jeff Click

Young Birders

Scott Winton, Jesse Pope, Matt Janson, Nathan Swick, Lewis Burke

Nominating

Ron Clark, Jesse Pope, Irvin Pitts

Conservation

Scott Winton, Doris Ratchford, Irvin Pitts



Welcome New Members!	Robert & Linda Balance Waynesville, NC	Linda Allman Columbia, SC	Jerry Batchelor Sanford, NC	Kathryn Palmore Brownsboro, AL
The Carolina Bird Club warmly wel- comes the following	Tim Tapio Raeford, NC	Jean Dilworth Waxhaw, NC Jamie Saunders	Christi Mobley Winterville, NC Lois Heebner	David & Betty Lou Chaika Chapel Hill, NC
new members:	Joei, Aspen & Quoc Ai Chang	Hoffmann Pittsboro, NC	Pineville, NC	Thomas Hartman Columbia, SC
Patti & Glenn Liming Asheville, NC	Statesville, NC	Michelle Kievit	Camille Yates	Richard McCracken
Thomas Richey Chapel Hill, NC	Loti Woods Palm Beach, FL	Zebulon, NC	Fort Pierce, FL	Susan Mitchell Charleston, SC
Anne Palyok Columbia, SC	Sue & William Perry	Jennifer Horton Carboro, NC	Joan & Dave Baker Greenville, SC	Deceased Member
	Asheville, NC Danny Taylor	Tammy Barbour Wilmington, NC	Leland, Aline, Amy & Sam Ferguson	Betty Sue Gandy Haw River, NC
Zoe, Bill, Jayson & Jason Norris	Lenoir, NC	Susan Miller	Blythewood, SC	
Conway, SC	Paul Hanna Raleigh, NC	Haw River, NC	Amy & Kevin McLane	
Dr. Letitia Ballance & Melissa Watkins Balsam, NC	Daniel Kaplan	John Hibbard & Anna DeFelice	Wilmington, NC	The second secon
Buisuin, IVC	Durham, NC	Apex, NC	Mary Morgan Columbia, SC	H. Douglas Pratt

Did you Know?

The 2014-2015 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, better known as the Duck Stamp, features the Canvasback. Wildlife artist Adam Grimm of Burbank, S.D depicts a pair of these handsome divers on the stamp that went on sale in June.

Not only does the stamp looks great, but proceeds from the sale of the \$15 stamps go to the purchase of habitat for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge system. Since 1934 more than \$850 million dollars has been raised to protect more than 6 million acres of wetland and associated habitat.

In addition to the Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, birders may also may wish to consider purchase of the Junior Duck Stamp. This year's version features the King Eider as depicted by sixteen year old Si Youn Kim of Tenafly, NJ. Proceeds from the \$5 stamp are used to support conservation education.

Stamps are available through a variety of outlets including online purchase online, many sporting goods and retail stores, through the American Birding Association, and at some post offices and national wildlife refuges. Visit <u>www.fws.gov/duckstamps/stamps.htm</u> for more information and <u>www.fws.gov/juniorduck/</u> <u>curriculum.html</u> for information on the Junior Duck Stamp program.

Wings Over Water

Time is running out to register for the 2014 Wings Over Water, a celebration of wetlands and wildlife in eastern North Carolina. Don't miss keynote speaker Noah Strycker, Associate Editor of *Birding Magazine* and author of *Among Penguins: A Bird Man in Antarctica*. Fly to <u>www.wingsoverwater.org</u> for details!





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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Winter 2015 - Nags Head, NC Spring 2015 - Clemson, SC

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CBC Website: www.carolinabirdclub.org

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