



CBC Newsletter

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

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Bird the South Carolina Low Country - April 25-28, 2024

By Richard Hayes

The Spring Seasonal meeting of the Carolina Bird Club will be held in the South Carolina Low Country, headquartered in Charleston, at Homewood Suites Charleston Airport, 5048 International Blvd. This affords quick and easy access to some of the best birding spots in the Low Country and is a short drive to historic downtown Charleston. A city rich in history and nationally acclaimed for its beautiful landscapes and well-preserved architecture, we will gather for our meeting the weekend of April 25-28. Check-in begins the afternoon of the 25th, and field trips will continue Friday through Sunday.

Charleston's proximity to some of South Carolina's finest and most treasured natural coastal resources allows us to offer trips to habitats ranging from wild, scenic beaches to longleaf pine savannas. We expect excellent birding, and our field trips are being designed to offer participants the opportunity to enjoy the best this region has to offer. We will offer birding trips south to the ACE Basin, north to the Santee Delta, and inland to the Orangeburg Sod Farm. Destinations include the Sea Islands (Kiawah and Seabrook), Charleston Harbor (Pitt St., Patriot's Point, Ft. Moultrie), Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, Dewees Island, and Folly Beach area hotspots (including little known Ft. Lamar), state wildlife management areas north and south, Francis Beidler Forest and Pine Bluff (new Audubon SC tract), Black River Cypress Preserve, and Caw Caw Interpretive Center.

Shorebird migration should be going strong, and we will seek out these southbound migrants as well as many of the other marsh and seabirds associated with rich coastal environments. Spring along the coast can also be particularly exciting for songbird migration, and we will explore some of the area's "migrant traps" in search of these species. Wading birds will be abundant, with Roseate Spoonbills now occurring year-round in South Carolina. This will be a great meeting to bring your spouse as we will have events for them to go see Charleston and its many tourist attractions. The booking link for hotel reservations is: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/carolinabirdclub2024homewoodsuites/> Reservations must be made by March 27. The group code for reservations is 919. Registration for the meeting opens on March 16.

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Early Winter Bonus Trip to the Outer Banks a Hit Once Again!

By Susan Campbell

A dozen intrepid CBCers spent the weekend of December 2nd and 3rd hitting some of the best hotspots in and around Dare Co. NC. Thirteen stops netted 105 species in spite of the weather. Foggy conditions made viewing a challenge most of the weekend. Highlights included killer looks at a foraging Virginia Rail at Bodie Island, a huge raft of Redheads at Pea Island, the full complement of marsh sparrows at Split Pea, American Pipits at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and wintering Ruby-throated Humming birds at Karen Lebing's home. We also visited the handsome (but uncountable) Black Swan that has been a regular at a small pond in Avon.



Old friends reunited and new friends were made. And the seafood (as well as the Holiday decorations) at Basnight's Lone Cedar on Saturday evening did not disappoint.

Many thanks to Steve Shultz for putting together another superlative birding adventure!





Carolina Young Birders Club

Opportunities for Young Birders

Carolina Bird Club offers scholarships for birders 19 and under living in the Carolinas, who are members of the Carolina Young Birders Club.

Scholarships provide assistance in attending bird-related events, such as camps, workshop, training programs or CBC seasonal meetings.

For more information, visit www.carolinabirdclub.org

A Case for Pocket Parks – Western Flycatcher Discovered in Downtown Durham

Article and Photos by Alex Nickley

Morris Green Park is a pocket park in downtown Durham surrounded by medium high-rise buildings that seem to keep sprouting up like mushrooms... or like cliffs rising from tectonic forces of development and displacement. It is a pleasant surprise to see the hackberries, persimmon and willow oaks that remain in a bustling urban landscape. And it's these trees and the open patches that surround them that no doubt attracted the vagrant Western Flycatcher that found itself thousands of miles off course from its normal wintering grounds in the middle of a burgeoning southern-ish city. Or perhaps it wasn't off course at all, just destined to find Morris Green Park with its hackberries and bugs just as I found it for its vibe and sunshine. Let's go with that.

This flycatcher with its bold white eye-ring and lemon undersides will lure numerous first-time visitors to Morris Green Park. There are not many chances a resident of North Carolina will have to lay eyes on Western Flycatcher. In fact, there are only four records for the entire state. So, now's your chance to check off that state or county list with an amazing bird as it happily sallies from one branch to the next.



How was this bird detected? Quite randomly. In fact, I was simply on one of my typical bike forays to distract my mind from headier topics of love or loss (mostly love) starting from Garrett Rd to downtown. This ride incorporates Sandy Creek Park, a place I appreciate for many reasons, not least of which the corridor it provides on the ride to Pickett Rd. and then Chapel Hill Street to get one safely downtown. Bike routes y'all... like pocket parks, they provide essential spaces for interstitial nature and positive flows. Check out all that wax myrtle! The Yellow-rumped Warblers swim in and out as if through a lush coral reef. They are the fish; the air is the sea.

As I was doing pull ups trying to clear my mind, I noticed what looked like a Ruby-crowned Kinglet at first. Faint impression of lemony yellow, greyish head and white eye-ring. But something seemed not quite right. That flight, that posture, that size. This is not Ruby-crowned Kinglet and it's not anything else. Better get the bins. As soon as the bird came into closer view, I knew it was a flycatcher. And knowing my birds, I knew this must be something very special indeed.

What about this park and where did it come from? I first discovered it because I used to drink beers at the craft shop across the way. It's nice sitting on the patio when the redbuds are in bloom. Or when it's Christmas and you can view that roofing factory with its vintage Christmas window decorations from a bygone era. How nice. That old house next door reminds me of a nail house or “钉子户,” an old structure that obstinately avoids looming urban development as if in defiance. And it is having character, and staying power. And it stays.

And the park is kind of like that with its willow oaks, persimmon, hackberries and occasional mega-rarity bird from the Western U.S.! By the way, who is Morris Green? Google is failing me. Anyway, here's to the pocket parks, the chance encounters, bike rides, birding and second looks! And love too. And love.

Check out the checklist:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S157889182>

Directions: To get to [Morris Green Park](#)

Park off Morris Street just south of the original (OG) Durham Bulls Park



Dovekie Invasion!

Article and photos by Andrew Thornton

Dovekies are here! On December 22nd, Jeremy Braun reported a Dovekie at the Duck Research Pier in Duck, NC. Since then, the smallest alcid in the world have shown up in numbers unlike anything in recent decades. Already there are daily reports from most of the regular spots, with a few birds here and there sitting cooperatively around some of the more popular piers, including Jennette's in Nags Head and Johnny Mercers in Wrightsville Beach. The numbers of birds moving along the coasts are the really big story, though, with several thousand reported already this winter, more than the last 6-7 years combined! Combing through past data, the only large number reports close to shore in early winter were observed by John Fussell in 1966, making this a truly spectacular phenomenon.

Dovekies are fascinating little balls of black and white feathers. Weighing in at just 150 grams, about the size of a chunky Mourning Dove, and about 20 cm long, they're a bit shorter than a typical American Robin. And yet these birds live on the open ocean, consuming huge numbers of tiny crustaceans and avoiding predators as best they can. Their stubby wings blur in flight, zipping over the ocean like a tiny monochromatic elongated softball. Thankfully, they are relatively easy to identify. Shape and pattern can be confused with the typically much more common Razorbill, but the Razorbill's white underwings and longer shape makes separating them in flight pretty straight forward, while on the water the Dovekies' diminutive size and the tiny bill make it a cinch.



As part of any large movement, there are always going to be more encounters with weak or injured birds. There are reports of Dovekies sitting on the beach, as well as wildlife rehabilitation facilities receiving weak birds. This is always sad to see in person, and if you come across a bird that looks unwell, your best bet would be to contact a local licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

For those wanting to join in and see some of what might be the largest movement so far this century, piers and inlets seem to be the best bet for seeing birds fairly close up, but they are practically



everywhere along the coasts. A scope may be required for seeing flying birds. While there are large numbers around now, there is no guarantee they will last through the winter. There are records of Dovekies breeding as early as February on islands off the coast of Greenland, and many of the reports in North Carolina have been of northbound birds. Luckily, it still seems pretty easy to find them, so we can hope they will be around for the next couple of months. It should be a very interesting winter offshore!

Carolina Bird Club Elections

Greetings Fellow Birders!

With the new year comes exciting news for all Carolina Bird Club Members - Elections!!! I know this is a highlight of your continued membership to the CBC, and we are delighted to announce that the slate of potential new board members is just about exactly the same as they were last time (and we are all awesome!).

Up for re-election we have:

Susan Campbell, President

Richard Hayes, SC Member-at-Large (second 2-year term)

Betsy Kane, NC Member-at-Large (second 2-year term)

Paul Laurent NC Member-at-Large (second 2-year term)

Karaleigh Reichart Secretary (third 1-year term)

We have a new nominee for Treasurer, **Mark Songer**, who is a relative newcomer to the club. He sent this background by way of introduction:

"Mark is a resident of Greenville SC since April 2023 and has learned a lot from the past three CBC meetings about birding in the Carolinas. He has been a volunteer treasurer for nonprofits focused on nonpartisan voter education and environmental advocacy while living in Key West, Florida for 19 years. His career also included working as CFO and finance director for nonprofits in Key West at the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys and an AIDS service organization. Mark and his wife Lois have shared the past 36 years and found lots to like about living in downtown Greenville, with abundant opportunities for entertainment, interesting restaurants and wonderful parks that take advantage of the scenic Reedy River. He is looking forward to supporting the CBC education and conservation programs."

We are also thrilled to announce that **Kevin Burke**, the famous birder from Hendersonville, is interested in joining our august ranks as a North Carolina member-at-large. According to Kevin:

"Kevin Burke is originally from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. He grew up running around in the woods and trails of Shenandoah National Park. His family spent many summers camping and hiking in the park. One of Kevin's favorite activities was jumping in the river and turning over every rock to see

what was underneath. This eventually earned him the nickname "Hellgrammite Kid." This early exposure to the natural world has vaulted into a lifelong obsession with the outdoors. Kevin was introduced to birding while spending summers in Rhode Island at his grandmother's house. She would point out all the feeder birds and help him identify them. These early encounters helped foster a love for birds. An early Ornithology class at Hocking College in Ohio rekindled his love for birds. He has been birding every day since. He went on to get a Bachelor of Science in Ecotourism and Conservation Ecology from the University of Idaho.

Kevin has been involved with leading bird trips in some capacity for almost 20 years. He has led birding trips all throughout the United States, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. His birding journeys have also taken him to some spectacular locations such as Portugal, Colombia, The Bahamas, and Canada. This is truly a lifelong obsession. He currently resides with his family in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Kevin's wife and two kids also enjoy birding. They have fun kayaking, hiking, and camping in the mountains that surround their home. One of their favorite activities is jumping on the paddle board and kayaks and leisurely floating the French Broad River near their house."

If you have a friend or fellow birder who would like to volunteer to join the Board of the Carolina Bird Club, just send us their name and contact information. We are always on the lookout for folks who are interested in getting more involved with the club.

--Respectfully submitted by the CBC Nominating Committee



Snow Buntings were a major field trip attraction at the Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting. As many as 26 individuals were reported during the weekend of January 19 to 21 around the Oregon Inlet Life Saving Station. Other weekend highlights include Black-headed Gull, Ash-throated Flycatcher, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Clapper Rail, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird, among many other species. Photo by S. Dowlan.

Welcome New Members

Tim Carstens
Sylva, NC

Jacquelyne Adams
Tracy Roof
Fletcher, NC

Joan Bakarich
Cornelius, NC

Phillip Julian
Supply, NC

Stephen Brooks
Carey Jefferson
Durham, NC

Taylor Caudle & Allison Hunt
Dallas, NC

Katherine Kezon
Columbia, SC

Kim Jernigan
Burlington, NC

Kevin Burke
Hendersonville, NC

Leigh Anne Wilson
Asheboro, NC

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Cary, NC

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Catharpin, VA

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Barnardsville, NC

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Emry McKinney
Raleigh, NC

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Matthews, NC

Mark & Teresa Thomas
Spruce Pine, NC

Stacy & Joseph Weiss
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Lexington, SC

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Evangelyn Buckland
Wilmington, NC

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Asheville, NC

Bobbi Fife
Leland, NC

Michael Moss
Kill Devil Hills, NC

Deceased Member
Walter Kent





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Raleigh, NC 27612

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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Spring Meeting at Charleston, SC – April 25-28, 2024

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www.carolinabirdclub.org

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Cost for CBC bird checklists, including postage: 10@\$5.45, 25@\$13.40, 50@\$27.00, and 100@\$54.00.

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