



# CBC Newsletter

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

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April 2024

## **CBC Spring Birding Weekend in the South Carolina Lowcountry**

**April 25 through April 28, 2024**

**by Richard Hayes**

The Spring Seasonal meeting of the Carolina Bird Club will be held in the South Carolina Lowcountry, headquartered in Charleston. This affords quick and easy access to some of the best birding spots in the Lowcountry 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 Bear Island and Donnelly WMA and 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, Folly Beach area hotspots (including little known Fort Lamar), Francis Beidler Forest and Grassland (new) and Santee WMA, Black River Cypress Preserve, and Caw Caw Interpretive Center. Wading birds will be abundant, with Roseate Spoonbills are now occurring year-round in South Carolina. There will be several opportunities to see the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker!

We will also offer boat rides to Bull Island (extra cost) and a rarity chase on Sunday. In addition to our exciting slate of field trips led by knowledgeable local birders, participants have an opportunity to enjoy excellent evening presentations on bird-related topics. We are even planning trips in the Charleston area for your spouses from shopping on King Street, horse carriage rides, and plantation tours! So, make your plans and register soon!

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Our meeting headquarters is the Homewood Suites by Hilton Charleston Airport, 5048 International Blvd, North Charleston. It is conveniently located near I-26 and I-526, providing quick access to birding hotspots in all directions, and only 15 minutes away from downtown Charleston. Special room rates are being offered to CBC members for \$139/night (not including taxes). To reserve a room, contact the Homewood Suites directly at 1-[843-735-5000](tel:843-735-5000), and be sure to identify yourself as a Carolina Bird Club participant. Any requests for special room arrangements may be made at the time of your reservation.

The reservation cut-off date for these rates is March 27, 2024, so please don't delay. Check-in time is 3:00 p.m., Check-out time is 11:00 a.m. There is not a restaurant, but many good restaurants can be found within a mile! Registrants arriving on Thursday evening, April 25th, may pick up their registration packets that evening. The hotel will be the location for our evening programs and other social events related to our meeting.

Join us on Friday evening to experience the amazing banding exploits of our own Susan Campbell. Susan Campbell is a wildlife ecologist who has worked across North Carolina for over twenty years. Most of her experience is with birds although she specializes in species interactions, habitat and conservation. Susan is a writer and educator as well as a researcher. She is a research affiliate with the NC Museum of Natural Sciences and is the North Carolina repository for hummingbird records and information. For over twenty years, she has been studying not only Ruby-throated Hummingbirds year-round here but also wintering hummingbirds in the colder months. Furthermore, Susan's research will be one of the foci of the fledgling Cape Fear Bird Observatory that she helped found during 2021.

Saturday evening at our banquet, we will hear about the exploits of one of South Carolina's best-known naturalists, Aaron Given! Aaron has been a Wildlife Biologist for the Town of Kiawah Island since 2008. He grew up in Oswego, IL (a far suburb of Chicago) and graduated with a B.S. in Zoology from Southern Illinois University in 2000. Aaron went on to attend Southeast Missouri State University where he received a M.S. in Wildlife Biology in 2005. In graduate school, he studied the wintering ecology of yellow rails in coastal Texas. This is where he got his first exposure to bird banding and was fascinated with being able to study and observe the birds in such fine detail.

His primary research interest is in ornithology, with a special focus on avian ecology and management, passerine migration ecology, and secretive marsh bird ecology. Aaron is a member of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee and is also a statewide eBird reviewer, but focuses on Charleston and Berkeley Counties of South Carolina. Aaron is also serving as 2nd Vice President of the Eastern Bird Banding Association. When not working, he enjoys birding, creating wildlife habitats in his yard, and managing a small flock of chickens in his backyard.

A more in-depth program agenda will be provided to registrants at check-in. We hope you will join us for an exciting weekend of birding and presentations!



## CBC Spring Birding Weekend Trip Schedule

### FRIDAY HALF-DAY MORNING TRIPS

- 1 Francis Beidler Forest and Grasslands
- 2 ACE Basin NWR
- 3 Bear Island WMA
- 4 Donnelly WMA
- 5 Edisto Nature Trail
- 6 Lighthouse Heritage Preserve (Folly Isl.)
- 7 Francis Marion National Forest

### FRIDAY HALF-DAY AFTERNOON TRIPS

- 8 Caw Caw Interpretive Center
- 9 Seabrook Island
- 10 Mingo Point/Kiawah Island Boat Tour
- 11 Dewees Island
- 12 Old Santee Canal Park
- 13 Ft Moultrie/Sullivan's Island
- 14 Pitt Street/Patriot's Point

### FRIDAY ALL-DAY TRIPS

- 15 Santee WMR Cuddo/Bluff
- 16 Cape Romain/Bull Island
- 17 Black River Cypress Preserve
- 18 Botany Bay

### SATURDAY HALF-DAY MORNING TRIPS

- 19 Caw Caw Interpretive Center
- 20 Santee WMR Bluff Unit
- 21 Bear Island WMA
- 22 Donnelly WMA
- 23 Edisto Nature Trail
- 24 Ft Lamar/Melton Demetre Park

### SATURDAY HALF-DAY AFTERNOON TRIPS

- 25 Mingo Point/Kiawah Island
- 26 Dewees Island
- 27 Orangeburg Sod Farm
- 28 Old Santee Canal Park
- 29 Ft Moultrie/Sullivan's Island
- 30 Pitt Street/Patriot's Point

### SATURDAY ALL-DAY TRIPS

- 31 Cape Roman/Bull Island
- 32 Santee Coastal Reserve and Delta
- 33 Black River Cypress Preserve

### SUNDAY

- 34 Rarities

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## CBC Spring Birding Trip Descriptions

### HALF-DAY FIELD TRIPS

**Trip 1 – Francis Beidler Forest and Grassland** (Audubon, SC). This Audubon sanctuary contains a portion of what is considered the largest remaining old-growth cypress-tupelo swamp in the world, known as Four Holes Swamp. Participants will experience the majestic wonder of this swampland along a 1.75-mile boardwalk. Birds we hope to find include Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, as well as other wading birds, including Wood Stork, a variety of woodpeckers, owls, and migrating songbirds. A Limpkin was recently observed and photographed here. Beidler has also opened a Grassland sanctuary -- by maintaining native grassland habitat, we are creating a space that is attractive to birds like Painted Buntings and Northern Bobwhites.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 30 minutes. **Facilities:** Restrooms available **Access:** \$12/person fee. Participants should be prepared for possible mosquitoes by wearing appropriate clothing and bringing insect repellent.

**Trip 2 – ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge:** The ACE Basin NWR lies in the heart of the ACE Basin, “One of the last great places on Earth.” We will bird the Grove Plantation area, in which habitat types are mixed hardwood-pine, bottomland hardwood, longleaf pine, and early successional grasslands/field. The location hosts a diversity of waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and passerines. This area is known for Wood Storks, Bald Eagles, other raptors, and the exceptional diversity of migratory land birds.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 1 hour. **Facilities:** Restrooms at Refuge Office.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, snacks, and water as needed. No fee.

**Trips 3 & 21 – Bear Island Wildlife Management Area:** Managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Bear Island ranks as one of South Carolina’s top birding destinations. It consists of 17,000 acres in the heart of the ACE Basin, a multi-partnered complex of significant wildlife resources and habitats. It is also an Important Bird Area. Bear Island consists of brackish managed wetlands, marshes, hardwood and pine forests, and open fields. It is accessed by miles of dikes that offer opportunities to see a variety of birds such as Mottled Duck, birds of prey including Barn Owl, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork, American White Pelican, Least Bittern, American Avocet and others. Depending on water level conditions, Bear Island can be excellent for migrating shorebirds and transient songbirds.

**Approximate travel time:** 1 hour 15 minutes. **Facilities:** No public restrooms are available at Bear Island. Please bring lunch, drinks, and snacks. **Access:** We will mostly be driving and walking dikes in the area. Participants should be prepared for full sun exposure and mosquitoes by wearing appropriate clothing, insect repellent, and sunscreen. No fee.

**Trips 4 & 22 - Donnelly WMA** - Managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Bear Island ranks as one of South Carolina’s top birding destination, birds include the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Wood Duck, Mottled Duck, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Anhinga, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, Mississippi Kite, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Purple Gallinule, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Greater Yellowlegs Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher Long-billed Dowitcher, Forster’s Tern, Black Tern, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red Cockaded Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow-Rumped Warbler Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Bachman’s Sparrow, Painted Bunting, and Rusty Blackbird.

**Approximate travel time:** 45 minutes. **Facilities:** Restrooms available.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. No fee.

**Trip 5 & 23 – Edisto Nature Trail:** The Edisto Nature Trail is in Jacksonboro and is a premier SC nature trail. There are two loop trails, the longest being about 1.5 miles. Walking can be slippery and on uneven ground with roots. This area supports open mature pines, hardwood forests, bottomland hardwoods, and bald cypress stands. Forest species abound here; vireos, flycatchers, thrushes, warblers, and hawks and owls.

**Approximate Travel time:** 50 minutes. **Facilities:** There are no facilities, a truck stop is approximately 1 mile from the trailhead, with adequate restrooms, food, and drinks.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. No fee.

**Trip 6 - Lighthouse Heritage Preserve (Folly Island):** Lighthouse Heritage Preserve is a county park located at the north end of Folly Island. It is the site of an old Coast Guard station, provides a resting and foraging area for passerines migrating, and is a migrant “trap” during periods of active migration along the coast. There is extensive maritime forest, beach and dune habitat, open ocean, and extensive

exposed mud flats and exposed sand bars at or near high tide. All of these areas provide excellent habitat for resident and migrant species. Shorebirds, terns, gulls, and passerines.

**Approximate Travel time:** 1 hour. **Facilities:** Restrooms, snacks, drinks, and food are available prior to arriving at the Preserve in the town of Folly Beach.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. There are many places locally on the island to obtain food and water.

**Trip 7 - Francis Marion National Forest:** There are Red-cockaded Woodpeckers here along with other open mature pine species: Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Summer Tanager. The drive goes through the swamp where we will find migrant passerines and other forested wetlands species. This trip is mostly for forest birds, both upland pine and forested wetlands, and includes mature and early successional habitats of these forest types.

**Approximate Travel time:** 45 minutes. **Facilities:** There are no restrooms here, but there are convenience stores on the way that provide restrooms, water, and snacks.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. There is a store in Awendaw that provides restrooms, food, and drinks. No fee.

**Trips 8 & 19 – Caw Caw Interpretive Center-** Located near Ravenel, this Charleston County Park is situated on land that was once historic rice plantations. The park consists of 1,000 acres of diverse coastal habitats including cypress/tupelo swamps, a tidal saltmarsh, freshwater and brackish water impoundments, and upland and bottomland forests. The property is accessed by six miles of trails and offers easy and quality birding. Over 250 species of birds have been documented in the park, and we hope to find marsh and wading birds, owls, vireos, wrens, migrant warblers, and other passerines.

**Approximate travel time:** 45 minutes. **Facilities:** Restrooms available.

**Access:** \$2/person fee to enter the County Park. This trip will involve easy to moderate walking.

**Trip 9 – Seabrook Island:** This is the largest sea bird nesting area north of Florida and an important site on the bird migration map. The diverse ecosystem of freshwater ponds, salt marshes, maritime forests, and natural beaches attract a large population of year-round resident birds and migratory birds in each season. Pack your binoculars, sunscreen, sunhat (and bug spray!), and explore the best birding spots on Seabrook Island.

**Trip 10 – Mingo Point/Kiawah Island and Boat tour** (maximum of 12 persons): This special trip will include birding in a maritime forest, with a visit to a bird banding station and birding at the new Johns Island County Park. We will most likely see a good variety of migrating passerines (warblers, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos). We then will board a boat for 2 hours, birding the Kiawah River. The Kiawah River and its surrounding tidal creeks, oyster beds, and mud flats provide an abundant array of migratory, shore, and wading birds. Come join us as we cruise the saltmarsh and witness the daily life of the river's avian species. Cost is \$45.

**Trips 11 & 26 – Dewees Island:** Dewees Island is a private island that is zoned for Natural Resource Management. There is a conservation easement over the island and there are many ongoing conservation projects on the island with many local partners. Birding will be done by golf cart and access is by ferry. This island has pristine habitats of beach and dune, where at high tide shorebirds, terns, and gulls congregate. Other pristine habitats are the tidal marsh and maritime forest. Old House Lagoon holds waterfowl, and wading birds are numerous, and this is one of the best spots for Roseate Spoonbill. During migration shorebirds abound, along with passerines in the forests, and raptors in the skies.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 45 minutes. **Facilities:** Ferry cost is \$40.

**Trip 12 & 28 – Old Santee Canal Park:** Old Santee Canal Park commemorates the area's rich history and habitat. Among its attractions are the Stony Landing House, built in 1843, and four miles of boardwalks

that meander through the quiet backwaters of Biggin Creek and its surrounding swamp. Beyond its historical offerings, the park has become a popular destination for bird watchers, hikers, paddlers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. The park has many rich habitats, from pine trees, mixed hardwoods, open fields, and freshwater swamp, which allow for a wide diversity of species any time of year. The location along the Cooper River and proximity to Lake Moultrie make it an ideal spot during spring and fall migration. Currently boasting 170 species on eBird, come discover this hidden gem. Likely birds include migrant warblers, wading birds, owls, raptors, and ducks.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 30 minutes. **Facilities:** Restrooms, AC, water fountain.

**Access:** \$3/person, \$2/seniors.

**Trip 13 & 29 – Fort Moultrie/Sullivan’s Island:** Fort Moultrie and Breach Inlet are on Sullivan’s Island, with Fort Moultrie now known as the migrant hotspot around the Charleston Harbor. Fort Moultrie supports grasslands, maritime forest, beach and dune, the Intracoastal Waterway, and includes a nature trail through the forest bordering the dunes and beach. Migrating passerines and grassland birds can be in high numbers here, along with migrating hawks, falcons, and eagles. Breach Inlet is located between Sullivan’s Island and Isle of Palms, and is well known for migrating shorebirds (especially Red Knot), terns, gulls, with some sea ducks and seabirds later in the season. Recent rarities here were Gray and Tropical Kingbird.

**Approximate Travel time:** 35 minutes. **Facilities:** Yes, at Ft. Moultrie Visitor Center **Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. There are many places locally on the island to obtain food and water. No fee.

**Trip 14 & 30 – Pitt Street Causeway/Patriot’s Point:** These hotspots are in Mount Pleasant, SC. Pitt Street Causeway will be birded at low tide when the mudflats are exposed, attracting shorebirds, wading birds, terns and gulls. Reddish Egret is sometimes found here. This is a great spot for swallows, wrens, warblers, and raptors during migration. Patriot’s Point is nearby, is known for migrating passerines, and there is an observation platform overlooking the harbor for views of water birds and waterfowl.

**Approximate Travel time:** 45 minutes. **Facilities:** There are no restrooms at these places, but there are numerous convenience stores nearby with restrooms, food, snacks, and drinks.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. No fee.

**Trip 20 – Santee National Wildlife Refuge (Bluff Unit):** Situated on the north shore of Lake Marion, opposite the town of Santee, this NWR has about 71,000 acres of open water and marsh and about 3,000 acres of uplands. Vast open fields are managed primarily for wintering waterfowl. Wright’s Bluff Wildlife Trail, with a short boardwalk, also includes a high observation deck which offers sweeping vistas. Raptors, including Barred Owls and Bald Eagles, are here year-around, as are numerous Wood Ducks. The Bluff Unit is especially good for migrating shorebirds and passerines. Top Ten SC Birding Hotspot!

**Approximate travel time:** 30 minutes. **Facilities:** No public restrooms are available at the refuge but there is a nearby service station with facilities, and some food and drinks.

**Access:** Some birding is by car, but mostly on foot on trails and service roads. Participants should be prepared for mosquitoes by wearing appropriate clothing and insect repellent, and please bring sunscreen. No fee

**Trip 24 – Fort Lamar/Melton Demetre Park:** Fort Lamar and Melton Demetre Park (Sunrise Park) are two little known yet very productive birding areas in the Charleston Harbor. Fort Lamar is a Civil War era fort on James Island. It is primarily maritime forest surrounded by tidal marsh and can be full of migrant passerines - 22 species of warblers have been observed here. Surrounded by tidal estuary, wading birds, terns, and other marsh associated species are also found here. Sunrise Park is also on James Island and on the southern side of the harbor, with open views of the shoreline and harbor. Migrating passerines, waterfowl, water birds, and passerines can be found in this small area. **Approximate Travel time:** 40

minutes. **Facilities:** Restrooms are available at Sunrise Park, but not Ft. Lamar. There are numerous convenience stores/service stations along the way to provide facilities.

**Access:** Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. There are many local places to obtain food and water and lunch if necessary. No fee

**Trip 25 – Mingo Point/Kiawah Island:** Mingo Point and destinations on Kiawah Island offer extensive salt marsh, maritime forest, and dunes and beaches to locate resident and migrating birds. Mingo Point provides habitat for gulls, terns, wading birds, raptors, warblers, and dozens of other passerines that migrant along the coast. A walk out to the high tide roost on East Beach should produce high numbers of species, including shorebirds, terns, gulls, and wading birds, possibly Reddish Egret.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 1 hour. **Facilities:** Restrooms are available at Mingo Point and just outside the entrance to the gated communities.

**Access:** Birding at Mingo Point is an easy walk, and birding on Kiawah Island proper will be by van or driving and stopping. No fee.

**Trip 27 – Orangeburg Sod Farms:** The Orangeburg Sod Farms are privately owned, allowing visitation by birders. This area is well known for its sometimes-spectacular shorebird migration, with specialties such as American Golden-Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Other local residents include grassland and open field species such as Northern Bobwhite, Common Ground Dove, Horned Lark, Loggerhead Shrike and others.

**Approximate travel time:** 45 minutes. **Facilities:** Restrooms and food stops will be available in route.

**Access:** Birding at the sod farms will involve mostly roadside stops but conditions can be muddy. Do not drive on the sod and birders must respect the grounds and work crews to have continued access to this area. No fee.

**Trip 34 – Search for Rarities:** Attempts to relocate rarities that had been seen over the weekend

### **FULL DAY FIELD TRIPS**

**Trip 15 – Santee National Wildlife Refuge (Bluff and Cuddo Units):** The Bluff and Cuddo Units of the Santee National Wildlife Refuge encompass open water, hardwood and pine forests, freshwater marsh, cultivated fields, old fields, impoundments, and cypress swamps. This refuge is known for waterfowl and water birds, but the forests, vine tangles, and fields are especially productive for migrating passerines and many grassland species.

**Approximate travel time:** 30 minutes. **Facilities:** No public restrooms are available at the refuge but there is a nearby service station with facilities, and some food and drinks.

**Access:** Some birding is by car, and some on foot on trails and service roads. Participants should be prepared for mosquitoes by wearing appropriate clothing and insect repellent, and please bring sunscreen. No fee.

**Trip 16 & 31 – Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and Bulls Island:** Located 20 miles from Charleston and accessed only by boat, Cape Romain NWR's 66,000-acre ecosystem of barrier islands and saltmarsh habitats extend 22 miles along the coast. This is the gem of the South Carolina coast and a must for birding in the low country. This special resource is part of the Carolinian-South Atlantic Biosphere Reserve, being of international significance due to its high conservation value and educational importance. It was also recently designated part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. Participants on this trip will explore by boat the saltmarsh estuaries at different tides, seeking out concentrations of migrating shorebirds, marsh (sparrows and rails) and wading birds, gulls, and terns. After exploring the estuaries and marshes, we will then debark for land-birding on Bulls Island, where we hope to pick up migrating raptors and songbirds, including warblers, vireos, tanagers, flycatchers, etc. Our boat leaves at 7:30 a.m. and our estimated return is 3:30 p.m. to Garris Landing. Nearly 300 species have been observed here. Please arrive 30 minutes prior to departure (7 a.m.). This

field trip is a special charter through Coastal Expeditions and there is a \$60.00/person fee, and cash, check, and cards (fee) are accepted on site at Garriss Landing.

**Approximate travel time:** 45 minutes to Garriss Landing, located at the end of Bulls Island Road near the small village of Awendaw. **Facilities:** Public restroom at Garriss Landing and near the Dominick House on Bulls Island. **Access:** Some of our time will be spent on open water in a boat in route to Bulls Island. At Bulls Island, expect a long hike that is easy to moderate walking conditions and through loose, possibly muddy soils. Depending on weather, participants should prepare for full sun exposure and carry insect repellent. Bring any food, lunch, and water/drinks. \$65 fee.

**Trip 17 & 33 – Black River Cypress Preserve:** Black River Cypress Preserve is in Georgetown County and is a private property conserved by The Nature Conservancy. It is approximately 500 acres and includes extensive Bald Cypress stands in the Black River watershed. Other habitats include mature pine stands, bottomland hardwoods, and early successional shrub/scrub areas. This area is being developed for passive recreation and very much under-birded. Expected species are mature forest and early successional migrants, as well as the many resident species. One thousand-year-old cypress trees are here, as are many oxbow lakes. Forested wetland and forest species are numerous here, as are hawks and owls. **Approximate Travel Time:** 1 hour 10 minutes. **Facilities:** There are restrooms at the entrance. Food, drink, and snacks should be obtained ahead of time or along the route.

**Access:** There are several miles of trails within the Preserve, all with relatively even surfaces. No fee.

**Trip 18 - Botany Bay Plantation Heritage Preserve/ Wildlife Management Area:** Botany Bay Plantation Wildlife Management Area is managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The property is 4,630 acres and is a mix of pine and hardwood forest, agricultural fields, coastal wetlands, and a barrier island. We will drive leisurely through the maritime forest and observe resident and migrant passerines, including flycatchers, warblers, vireos, thrushes, buntings, and sparrows. The vast sunflower and cropped fields provide habitats for many seed-eating species. We will spend some time looking for these species and Common Ground Dove. We will then take a short round trip hike of approximately 2 miles to the beach at low tide where we hope to see many shorebirds feeding in the relict marsh. Approximately 30 species of shorebirds have been recorded at Botany Bay, and this will be the peak of shorebird migration. Participants should be prepared for mosquitoes by wearing appropriate clothing and insect repellent, and please bring sunscreen.

**Trips 32 – Santee Coastal Reserve and Delta:** Designated an Important Bird Area, Santee Coastal Reserve encompasses 24,000 acres of varied habitat, including pine forests, freshwater, brackish and tidal wetlands, and agricultural fields. Look for species typical of longleaf ecosystems, including Bachman's Sparrow and Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Waterfowl, rails, and a variety of marsh wading birds, bitterns, and migrating shorebirds and passerines are expected. The Big Well wetlands behind the office are now specifically managed for shorebirds. Santee Delta is an adjacent 1,700-acre resource containing remnant historic rice fields and bottomland hardwoods. It can be very good for rails.

**Approximate travel time:** 1 hour 15. **Access:** Mostly birding by car on the entrance road to the office complex, but most by walking on dirt roads and dikes once parked. Participants should be prepared for mosquitoes by wearing appropriate clothing and insect repellent, and please bring sunscreen.





## Important Tips for the Spring Trips!

- The times listed are when the cars are lined up in the parking lot and leaving. Please be there at least 10 minutes early and identify yourself to the leader.
- Field trip leaders cell phone numbers will be provided. · If you decide not to go on a trip, either scratch through your name beforehand on the supplied lists or show up at the meeting place and tell someone.
- Please be sure to check the trip sheets at the registration desks for any changes to the field trip details! · There will be a sheet with all directions for your trips emailed to you in advance and copies will be provided at registration with field trip sheets.
- All trips depart from hotel in the parking lot. Look for the placard with your trip number. There will be a sheet with all directions for your trips e-mailed to you in advance. Please bring it on each trip as caravans sometimes break down, and, if so, you'll still be able to get to the trip site. Get the leader's cell number before you leave, just in case.
- Plan to take snacks and beverages with you, and be sure to pack a lunch for the all-day trips.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent should be brought along on all trips.
- Please check weather conditions for the need of rain gear.
- We try to take as few vehicles as possible on field trips in order to save fuel, make caravanning easier, and to make better use of the limited parking that exists at some stops. Please plan on carpooling, and if you would like to drive and have room for new or old friends, please let your trip leader know when you arrive for your outing.



*CBC birders at Botany Bay, South Carolina at the in September, 2023. Photo by Al Hooks*

**CBC Spring 2024 Charleston, SC Registration Form**  
**Registration begins Saturday, March 16th @ 2pm.**  
**Register online for best availability of field trips at**  
[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Registration (Member) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Registration (Non-Member) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Buffet Dinner (A Vegetarian dish is on the buffet line)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ x \$45 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

To pre-register for Field Trips, place the trip number(s) in the boxes to the right of the days.

Meeting registration at the door costs \$45.

**Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to:**

**1800 Meadow Ave., Banner Elk, NC 28604**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Processing of mail-in registrations will not begin until online registration opens.

Special Hotel pricing ends on **March 27, 2024**. The Homewood Suites group code is **919** and the Booking link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/carolinabirdclub2024homewoodsuites/>

**Room Cancellations will be refunded if made by noon on March 27, 2024**

**Cancel your CBC registrations by noon on April 15, 2024 --please contact the Headquarters Secretary at [hq@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org).**

# A Fun CBC Winter Meeting at the Outer Banks

By Susan Campbell

The Club had yet another very successful weekend of winter birding and socializing on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Well over 100 participants spent Friday, Saturday and a good part of Sunday bundled-up ogling a variety of species from hawks to hummingbirds, swans to Razorbills and more. A few mammals tried to steal the show in places: at least one Red Wolf on Alligator River NWR as well as pair of Otters and a Beaver at Mattamuskeet.

The tally for the weekend was 168 species. Bird highlights included the continuing flock of Snow Buntings at Oregon Inlet, Common Eider, Dovekie, and Parasitic Jaeger at Jenette's Peir, Harlequin Ducks at Duck Peir, Anhinga and Least Bittern at Mattamuskeet, Sandhill Cranes at Pungo, Ash-throated Flycatchers (yes! still more than one present there!!), Black-headed Gull and Cackling Goose at Alligator River and a California Gull at Coquina Beach.



*Black-headed Gull, Alligator River N.W.R., Dare County, N.C., 19 January 2024. Photo by K. Fiala*

Friday evening featured a social and an entertaining and informative butterfly presentation by Jeff Pippen. This was followed Saturday evening by our banquet and keynote by Evan Buckland. Evan, who is Co-founder and Managing Director of the Cape Fear Bird Observatory gave us an overview of Painted Buntings along the Carolina coast. Following her talk, over 100 items were raffled off in support of our Young Birders Fund. Fun was had as old friends re-united and new friendships were forged all as a result of our common love of all things feathered!



*Orange-crowned Warbler, Duck Boardwalk, Dare County, N.C. 20 January, 2024. Photo by S. Dowlan*

The Comfort Inn provided our lodging and main venue. As always, they worked hard to provide early breakfasts, a spacious registration area and banquet facilities as well as bargain room rates.

Many thanks to the planning committee for their efforts. Also, a big "hats off" to the volunteer trip leaders. Without their enthusiastic dedication and support the weekend would not have happened."





# REPORT BANDED BIRDS!!

By Craig Watson and Lindsay Addison (Audubon North Carolina)

Birders are a passionate and knowledgeable group of people. With field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes in tow, they drive for miles and hours searching for, locating, and photographing birds. However, often when a birder finds a bird with a band or a flag, the level of curiosity and challenge rises to the next level! Birders ask themselves: should I get the band number? Will I be able to read the numbers or letters? Will I be able to record the color combinations properly? Then, the big question: WHAT DO I DO WITH THE INFORMATION ONCE I GET IT?

This has long been a point of confusion for birders, and here we hope to alleviate those concerns and steer you in a great direction for gathering band information and reporting it to the proper place. I've been birding for almost 45 years, and I admit it is still confusing to me where to report a band once recorded in the field. There are so many species banded and flagged, and so many different sites (or not) for birders to attempt to submit banding schemes and numbers. This should help you, as it has already helped me as I learned about this during the Christmas Bird Count season, discovering a flagged Red Knot on Edisto Island, SC.



*Red Knot. Photo by Craig Watson*

SPOILER ALERT! REPORT ALL BANDED BIRDS TO [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov)! THERE! YOU KNOW THE ESSENTIALS! FOR MORE DETAILS, READ ON!

## **Bird Banding**

Bird banding is the practice of placing small rings, or bands, on a bird's legs in order to learn more about their movements and demographics. It's been around for over 100 years (read more about its history here [www.usgs.gov/news/featured-story/usgs-celebrates-100-years-bird-banding-lab](http://www.usgs.gov/news/featured-story/usgs-celebrates-100-years-bird-banding-lab)). **This scientific pursuit is overseen by the Bird Banding Laboratory, which is housed in the U.S. Geological Survey. Together with the Canadian Wildlife Service, they administer the North American Bird Banding Program.** All banding activities require permits in order to ensure the birds' health and safety, and each banded bird receives a metal band issued by the Bird Banding Lab with unique 8- or 9-digit number engraved on it. Some receive additional markers that are easier to see and read in the field, while the bird is alive and free. Therefore, all birds banding activities North America are permitted through the Bird Banding Lab and thus it houses **ALL** of the information that is needed to retrieve information relative to resightings.

With all these bands and numbers, all banding projects require data collection and data management as well—which is where birders can contribute and provide essential information. Banding research projects collect their own data when each bird is captured, but an important component of banding is resighting the marked birds, and this can be done by the researchers themselves, their colleagues, or birders and other people who just so happen to be in the right place at the right time.

## **What You Might See**

Most typically, birders or other nature-observers will notice one or more bands on a bird's leg or legs. Most birds will have a metal band that can appear gray or even white, if the sun is reflecting off of it in a

photograph. These bands are very unlikely to be legible even with a spotting scope when the bird is alive. However, if you come across a dead bird, it's worthwhile to inspect its legs for a metal band (but also wise to take sanitary precautions when around deceased animals).

Some birds, however, will have additional markers that are intended to be "field-readable." Usually these are colorful plastic leg bands that are designed to be much more easily noticed and read when the bird is alive. Some species may have other types of markers, such as neck collars on geese or (patagial) wing tags on vultures. Depending on the banding project, the plastic bands may have letter and/or number codes on them. A spotting scope or camera with a telephoto lens can often capture these codes with a little persistence and patience. During band reading, it's important to remember not to flush the birds, just as pursuit of the perfect photo or the best look at a rarity is no excuse for disturbing the bird(s). It's also not uncommon for a birder to come in from the field and find a band in a photo that they didn't notice in the field, as was the case with the flag on the Red Knot above!

### **What Species Have Bands**

Any bird might have a band, but some species are more likely than others to be banded. Among the songbirds, not many will have field-readable bands. A notable exception in the Carolinas is the Painted Bunting. Various projects have marked them over the years, and you may notice a colorful pattern of bands on their legs.

Shorebirds (sandpipers, plovers, and their relatives), along with gulls and terns, are often found to be banded in the Carolinas, as multiple projects in- and out-of-state have focused on them. Commonly banded coastal species include the Piping Plover, Red Knot, American Oystercatcher, Black Skimmer, and Royal Tern. They tend to be amenable to band reading, as they often prefer to stand or walk. A band (or many bands) are often present among flocks of these species in the Carolinas.

### **What Information Is Needed**

First, if there is only a metal band on the bird, and you **cannot** read the band number, you don't need to do anything (except keep looking for a bird with a field-readable band!). **If you find a metal band and CAN read the 8 or 9 digits, record the number and get ready to report the band!** When you notice a field-readable band or other marker on a bird, take note of which leg(s) the band(s) are on and where on the leg the band was. In other words, was the band on the bird's left or right leg and was it above or below the joint. If there were letters/numbers on the band, what were they? Good field notes and/or photos are always helpful. You will also want to note the date and location of your observation.

### **How to Report a Banded Bird!!!!**

With so many different projects, how does a birder know what to do with their band observation? Who should they tell about it? Fortunately, because the **Bird Banding Lab** oversees all banding activities in North America and issues all permits for putting field-readable markers on birds, it also has an online portal for anyone to report a banded bird. Their staff confirm the observation and inform the permit holder of the resighting. The address is [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov). This is your one-stop shop for all band reporting, so it's easy to remember and easy to do. Let's repeat this, this is your one-stop shop for ALL band reporting! You will receive information about the bird's history, and if you need

**USGS** science for a changing world **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION**  
AWARDED TO  
**JAMES WATSON**

**Banding Data**  
Band Number 1332-67473 51K Banded 05/23/2016  
Species Rufa Red Knot Sex UNKNOWN  
Age of Bird HATCHED IN 2015  
Location DELAWARE, USA

**Bander**  
STATE OF DELAWARE - NONGAME  
SAMANTHA ROBINSON  
610 HAY POINT LANDING RD  
SMYRNA DE 19777

**Encounter Data**  
Location CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES (Inc: BOTANY BAY PLANTATION WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA) Encountered 01/02/2024

any assistance with reading the band or interpreting the website, you can contact a staff person via email and/or upload photos with your observations.



*Banded Sanderling. Photo by Pamela Ford*

Banding Lab.

You might wonder, but what if you saw a bird that wasn't banded under the Bird Banding Lab's authority? The Bird Banding Lab has contacts with other bird banding agencies around the world, so no matter what country your bird originated in, they have resources to match the bird with its bander and make sure the bander receives your observation. The photo of this Sanderling here shows a banding scheme that fits this category. This bird was banded in Peru, and photographed on Harbor Island in Beaufort County, but was easily tracked down using connections with the Bird

### **But There's Always More**

There are some species that have well established and long-running banding programs and therefore have additional avenues available for reporting bands. In the Carolinas, two such species are the Piping Plover and American Oystercatcher.

**Piping Plovers** are a federally listed species that occurs in three populations in the U.S. and Canada: the Great Plains, the Great Lakes, and the Atlantic coast. Each population has its own banding pattern and within the Atlantic population there are actually several different banding schemes. Each pattern is used by a different research entity, and they have established email addresses where banded Piping Plovers can be reported. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a website to help people determine which email address they should report their banded plover to, based on the banding pattern used. That address is

[www.fws.gov/story/congratulations-spotting-banded-piping-plover-now-what](http://www.fws.gov/story/congratulations-spotting-banded-piping-plover-now-what). There is a handy primer on Piping Plover bands and, as you scroll down, a list of contacts. This Piping Plover was discovered in Turks and Caicos (TCI) with a black flag, tracked down to origin in Newfoundland and wintering in TCI at the same location annually.



*Piping Plover in the Turks and Caicos Islands, banded in Newfoundland. Photo by Caleb Spiegel.*

**American Oystercatchers** have their own working group, a coalition of site managers, researchers, and others who work on oystercatcher conservation and science. In the early 2000s the group established a banding scheme for the species and in 2012, they launched the American Oystercatcher Band Database which collects resightings of banded oystercatchers from both working group members and the public alike. If you see a banded oystercatcher and want to try out reporting there, the address is [www.amoywg.org](http://www.amoywg.org). Look for the "Banding and Resighting" tab at the top menu. This oystercatcher was banded in Georgia as an adult in the winter of 2016. Its banders learned where it was spending its summer when it was photographed in 2018 on Wrightsville Beach by Samuel Cooper





*Banded American Oystercatcher. Photo by Sam Cooper.*

be 100% sure that your sighting makes its way back to the biologists who are eagerly waiting to hear where “their” banded birds have been and provide you that same information!

[www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov)

### **Other Projects**

For some other projects you may actually know the bander—such as if you have had a Painted Bunting banding project visit your feeder. Those banders may ask you to contact them directly. If you’re unsure, you can always ask and see what they prefer.

Finally, there are some other websites that take sightings of banded birds, and even some social media groups for people to share images of banded birds, but the resources above, particularly

**[www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov)**, are the best way to



*In the U.S., the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), part of the United States Geological Survey, provides scientists with aluminum bands and keeps records on all banded birds. Scientists must submit an application to receive bands from the BBL. This activity is referred to as “ringing” in the United Kingdom. Plastic color bands can be used as auxiliary markers to aid in identifying individual birds.*



### **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](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)**



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## Upcoming CBC Meetings

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

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