



CBC Newsletter

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

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CBC Sandhills Bonus Trip A Success!

by Steve Shultz

On the rare occasion that one awakens to a dewpoint of 47 degrees on June 1 in eastern North Carolina, one might expect brilliantly comfortable weather. And if that person happens to be standing at Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve in Southern Pines, they might also expect to enjoy rare flora and fauna associated with the Carolina Sandhills. Habitat dominated by, and managed for, Longleaf Pine and Wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) that harbors Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow and more.

Members of the Carolina Bird Club did just that, enjoying exploring Weymouth Woods, Moore County "horse country", publicly accessible edges of Ft. Liberty, the Sandhills Game Lands, McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery and more during the second (annual?) early summer bonus field trip to the Carolina Sandhills.

Once introductions occurred and ground rules were established (few, mainly consisting of "have a good time", "ask lots of questions", and "don't fall in") the group set out to find that rarest of the Southeastern woodpeckers, Red-cockaded. And while the pair that nested within sight of the visitor center fledged young two weeks prior, we successfully located the family unit, with prolonged views of "feeding the babies". Bachman's Sparrow proved more challenging, so the group moved to the visitor center to enjoy a hummingbird banding demonstration, with lucky participants releasing their "very own" tiny bird after all participated in the weighing and measuring process.



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After lunch it was time to find that sparrow, the one that can hardly be found outside of breeding season when it sings its beautiful song from among patches of wiregrass and hopeful oaks (which probably won't be spewing acorns anytime soon, as this habitat requires frequent burning to maintain the sparrows, woodpeckers, and other residents of longleaf pine savannah). Three to four songsters serenaded, with one sitting conveniently close by for an extended photo opportunity. Nearby canebreaks provided the chance to enjoy the area's breeding warblers, vireos, and cuckoos, while groups of woodpeckers foraged on the (slight) ridge above.

Sandhills sand might reasonably be thought of as leftover dune and beach from times with higher sea level, but most believe that the white, fast draining soil originated as outwash from mighty glaciers to the north, molded into low dunes and ridges by furious winds that blew across a lightly vegetated outwash plain.



But thoughts of soil history were largely pushed aside by tasty food and beverage at Bell Tree Tavern, where the group collected to discuss the day and nosh on bits and morsels before discussing plans for the evening.

Yes, while almost dark, the birding was not over quite yet, as the opportunity to look and listen for nightbirds beckoned. Common Nighthawks started the show well before dark, "peenting" and booming over the pines. They had to share the sky with low-flying Blackhawk and Apache helicopters (these aluminum birds not being countable on our eBird checklists). Once darkness settled in, Chuck-wills-widow took over, with one bird providing fine views and a life look for many.

Sunday dawned with a dewpoint of 56, still quite amazing for what is often the hottest part of the state, allowing for comfortable exploration of the Sandhills Game Lands. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers picked and pecked through the

pinetrees, Bachman's Sparrow sang, warblers along Drowning Creek sat briefly for identification and categorization, and folks had the unusual opportunity to view and photograph Red-headed Woodpecker and Orchard Oriole sharing the same couple of twigs. We hoped to hear bobwhite and did one better by seeing a male flutter across a field to peek out from thick hedgerow vegetation.

The trip ended after a tour of McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery in Richmond County. Here the highlights were up in the air, well above rows of shallow, square catfish ponds. Bald Eagle and Osprey (not the aluminum kind) vied for air superiority while Mississippi Kites escorted an interloping Red-shouldered Hawk out of their personal space, and then perched nearby for all to ogle.

A species countdown led to a round of "best birds of the weekend" (though we agree that all birds are "the best".) And while this year's edition of the CBC Sandhills Bonus Trip is in the books, it's not too early to start thinking about next year!

New Fall Meeting Concept for Our Seasonal Weekend in September

Instead of getting together at a single location in North or South Carolina, members will have the option to choose from one of six birding events spread across two consecutive Saturdays. At each location a leader will guide participants to local hotspots and experience fall migration at its finest. The Old North State hosts the first meet-up, on the 21st of September, and given the southerly nature of migration at this time of the year, our friends South of the border will host an outing the 28th of September. And with options spread across two weekends, why not attend both! In each state we will have three areas where our "day trips" will occur: one each in the mountains, along the coast, and inland.

We hope that by offering several meet-up locations for a day of birding, we will attract new members - both close to these locations and those from further afield - as well as provide interesting options for existing supporters. Also, we hope that this new format will improve opportunities for families of members who work and cannot manage our Friday to Sunday weekends join.

North Carolina Coast - Saturday September 21, 2024

Gathering location: **North River Wetland Preserve**, 973 US 70 Beaufort, NC. We will meet at the entrance, cars will be parked, and we will car pool from the entrance. North Carolina Coastal Federation members are allowed access for free and non-members are asked to pay a fee of \$5 per person per day.

Meeting Time: 7:00 a.m.

Leaders: John Fussell, Les Coble and others will assist.

Stops: NRWP (no facilities stop at gas station before gate) and Fort Macon State Park (full facilities are available).

Other details: Bring along your sun screen and bug spray. There will be time between locations if you wish to pick up a quick lunch or feel free to pack one to enjoy ocean side at Ft Macon. A list to consider for lodging will be available July 1, please email cssrbdr@gmail.com for these details.

An evening gathering for dinner and/or birding at dusk may take place.

South Carolina Coast- Saturday September 28, 2024

Gathering location: **Huntington Beach State Park**. Enter HBSP, cross causeway, curve right then turn left into first parking lot. Fifteen minutes to Murrells Inlet. Entrance fee is \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors (age 65 and older), and \$4 for youths age 6-15. Entrance is free for children 5 and younger.

Meeting Time: 7:15 a.m.

Leaders: Julie Davis

Stops: The causeway, Mullet Pond, the Education Center feeders, Kerrigan Trail and overlook, the Carriage Trail between Mullet and Mallard Ponds, the salt marsh boardwalk and an overlook on the marshy end of Sandpiper Pond (good for rails and bitterns). We will also visit the beach briefly but will

not make the trek to the jetty. Groups will leave the park to explore the adjacent oyster recycling area and the Murrell's Inlet Pier.



Other details: We will be looking for shorebirds, rails, wading birds, hawks, migrating warblers, owls, and falcons. And of course, any unexpected or rare visitors! We encourage all to join the group after a day of birding for a nice dinner and fellowship at a local restaurant. Moderate walking required.

North Carolina Mountains - Saturday September 21, 2024

Gathering location: **Food Lion parking lot**, 381 S. Main Street, Sparta, NC. No use fee is required for the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Meeting Time: 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Susan Campbell, Ryan Justice, Brian Pendergraft, and Steve Shultz

Stops: We will be going where the birds are! Most of the day we will be birding along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Stops will be made at overlooks and eBird hotspots in the area. We plan to drive both north and south from the BRP access along NC 21. Heading north will take us up to Cumberland Knob area. South will mean stops in and around Mahogany Rock. Our group(s) will no doubt spend some time at the hawkwatch there later in the day. Our priorities include locating a variety of southbound warblers and thrushes as well as raptors, among others.



Other details: Important: please bring a picnic lunch to enjoy along the way. Our location at midday is uncertain but it will be scenic—and hopefully, birdy! There will be an evening gathering before dusk in Alleghany Inn parking lot. The address is 341 N. Main Street. This is a good spot to catch Common Nighthawks moving through. Also, the school chimney across the road is a known Chimney Swift roost site. We recommend staying at the Inn if you are from out of town. This motel is very reasonable and has always been “birder friendly.” Call DIRECTLY (336-372-2501) for reservations! Any online reservation system that you may find does NOT work.

South Carolina Mountains - Saturday September 28, 2024



Gathering location: **Table Rock State Park Nature Center**, 20 Table Rock State Park Rd, Pickens, SC. Entrance fee is \$6 for adults, \$3.75 for seniors (age 65 and older), and \$3.50 for youths age 6-15. Entrance is free for children 5 and younger.

Meeting Time: 8:30 a.m.

Leaders: Paul Laurent

Stops: We will bird the 2-mile Lakeside Trail (an easy trail) in search of migrating warblers and

waterfowl. From here we will make the short drive to the Table Rock Viewpoint to see who is hanging out at higher elevations and enjoy the great view. We will make a quick stop on the edge of Grant Meadow to look for open land species before having lunch at one of the picnic shelters.

Other details: Make sure you bring a bag lunch or be prepared to forage for mushrooms and such! After lunch we will head south to Devils Fork State Park, where we will bird the 1.5-mile Oconee Bell Trail. While the rare wildflower will not be in bloom, we will be looking for mixed flocks of warblers along the creek and pond. We will check the lake for migrating waterfowl. At the end of the day, anyone who is interested will head over to Jocassee Valley Brewing Company for dinner. They have rotating food trucks and a great selection of craft beer.

North Carolina Piedmont - Saturday September 21, 2024

Gathering locations: Ebenezer Church State Recreation Area. Meet at the swim beach parking lot near the bathhouses. Entrance fee is \$7 per car, \$5 for senior citizens 62 years of age or older.

Meeting Time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: Sandy Cash, Bo Howes, Marc Ribaud and others

Stops: The Triangle is a huge, well-birded area. There are many habitats and places worth visiting, and many possible routes linking them together. The exact routes will be determined closer to the Meet-up.

Durham to Chapel Hill Area:

- Falls Lake Redwood Road area at 36.060394, -78.805975
- Falls Lake Hickory Hill Boat ramp at 36.058122, -78.775011
- Falls Lake Rolling View area at 36.013940, -78.728668
- Brumley North, parking lot at 36.033741, -79.041565
- Meadow View Road Pond at 35.978121, -79.143427
- Cane Creek Reservoir at 35.948296, -79.239878
- Jordan Lake Seaforth area at 35.727304, -79.035340
- Jordan Lake Ebenezer Beach area at 35.708568, -79.023254



Raleigh Area:

- Lake Crabtree County Park: 35.845392, -78.800725
- Mid Pines Road area at 35.725184, -78.694073
- Dorothea Dix Park at 35.770630, -78.655331
- Lake Wheeler Park at 35.693906, -78.700729

Other details: We hope to have evening gatherings. Many people will be around Sunday morning to chase rarities. There are many motels in the area, easily booked online.

South Carolina Midlands - Saturday September 28, 2024



Gathering location: Congaree National Park, 100 National Park Road, Hopkins, SC 29061. No, there is no entrance fee for Congaree National Park. Parking is also free.

Meeting Time: 7:30 AM

Leaders: Jen Roberts

Stops: We'll start at Congaree National Park and bird the boardwalk in the morning, hoping to finish before the mosquitoes get too bad. From there,

we'll move north, checking the fields at Whitehouse Road Loop and onto the Riverwalk in downtown Columbia. We'll stop for lunch at a local brewery. For those that want to continue birding, we'll move north to the Lake Murray Dam as well as check out any recently reported rarities.

Other details: Some locations may be changed based on where the birds are that week and are at the leader's discretion.



**Registration is Now Open for the Annual
Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival
on North Carolina's Outer Banks!
October 22-27 and December 6-8, 2024**

www.wingsoverwater.org

This year's keynote speaker and special guest is Kenn Kaufman. He will be with us for several trips in addition to presenting the Saturday night program about his new book titled *The Birds That Audubon Missed*. The Carolina Bird Club is a major sponsor of this event. Over 90 birding, paddling, photography, art and natural history programs, covering 6 northeastern North Carolina counties and six national wildlife refuges.

CBC Fall Meeting 2024 Registration Form
Registration Begins Saturday, August 17, @ 2pm.
Register online for Best Availability of Field Trips at
www.carolinabirdclub.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Cell Phone# _____ Email Address _____

Meeting Registration (Member) _____ x \$25 = \$ _____

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

Meeting Registration (Student) _____ x \$10 = \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Meeting registration at the door costs \$35.

<u>North Carolina</u> 9/21/2024	Please Check One	<u>South Carolina</u> 9/28/2024	Please Check One
Sparta (Mountains)		Table Rock (Mountains)	
Raleigh/Durham (Piedmont)		Congaree (Inner Coastal Plain)	
Morehead City (Coast)		Huntington Beach (Coast)	

If you plan to attend both weekends, please make sure to place a check mark beside the location you would like to participate for both NC and SC (i.e. mountains, coast, piedmont, etc.).

***Registration cost is per weekend attended.**

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to:

CBC, 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.

Cancellations will be refunded if received by 6pm September 14.

Cancel by contacting the Headquarters Secretary at hq@carolinabirdclub.org.



Carolina Bird Club
1800 Meadow Ave.,
Banner Elk, NC 28604

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at Banner Elk, NC 28604
and additional mailing offices

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Winter Meeting at Emerald Isle, NC – January 16-19, 2025

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www.carolinabirdclub.org

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Membership dues include access to publications: the *CBC Newsletter* and *The Chat*, which is only available on line. Tax deductible as allowable by law.

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

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