



CBC Newsletter

ISSN No. 0162-7120

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

Volume 71

Issue 1

February 2025

Carolina Bird Club to Offer Local Bird Walks in 2025!

The Carolina Bird Club Board is initiating free bird walks in the mornings in the Carolinas. One or two will be offered each month and may be scheduled on weekends or weekdays. These walks will be advertised here in our newsletter, as well as on the club's website. Announcements will be made on our social media platforms as well as through local bird organizations, bird stores, etc. Leaders will include Board members as well as anyone interested in planning and leading a walk. Contact Club President, Susan Campbell, if you have a date and destination that we can advertise.

These walks are free for members as well as their guests. We hope our informal meet-ups will give Carolina birders more opportunities to get to know one another as well as the local avifauna.

Our first walk will be led by Steve Tracy on Saturday February 15th at 8 am. The group will bird Rankin Lake in Gaston County, NC. It will be an easy two-mile walk around the lake. The trail is asphalt so smooth and easy going. And there are restrooms available. Contact Steve directly via (704) 616-9274 if you are interested or would like more details.



CBC Newsletter (USPS# 023-534), February, 2025, Volume 71, Number 1. Published bimonthly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 1800 Meadow Ave., Banner Elk, NC 28604. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *CBC Newsletter*, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 1800 Meadow Ave., Banner Elk, NC 28604

The Outer Banks Bonus Trip Summary

December 14 - 15, 2024

by Paul Laurent, Susan Campbell and Steve Shultz

The Outer Banks of North Carolina is one of the best winter birding spots in the U.S. Tens of thousands of ducks and other waterfowl overwinter here, as well as huge numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers, various sparrows, and other passerines. The CBC Bonus Trip began on Saturday, December 14th with relatively warm weather but 25 mph winds. We had an incredible amount of interest in this trip, so we ran two groups at once. We all met at Oregon Inlet, where we split up for the day. Sadly, the Harlequin Duck that has been frequenting the fishing pier was nowhere to be seen. However, we remarked that the area was quite birdy in spite of the weather: a good omen we hoped!

Susan's group birded the inlet where there was an abundance not only of Double-crested Cormorants but also lots of gulls and even Northern Gannets foraging at close range due to the northeasterly wind. We had our first looks at a loafing Lesser Black-backed, a species originally confined to Europe, that is becoming more and more common in winter along the coast.

The second group, led by Paul, headed south toward 'the cut' - a low spot in the dunes that gives us a great view into the center of the North Pond at Pea Island. Several Snow Geese were there, along with lots of Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, and the rare and elusive Canada Goose! From here we continued south to the South Pond at Pea Island. The ducks were all hunkered down out of the wind at the far end of the pond, so views were initially poor. All of a sudden something spooked them (no eagles were in sight), and well over 10,000 Redheads and other ducks took off and whirled across the sky for several minutes before heading toward New Field and North Pond. It was a truly spectacular sight to see that many ducks in flight all at once, and it gives a small glimpse into historical accounts of "ducks blocking out the sun". It was bittersweet knowing that this amazing sight was just a tiny fraction of what used to be here.



Both groups converged at the Pea Island Visitor Center to escape the wind for a bit, and got to use their very nice scopes to look at a pair of lingering Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, and thousands of Northern Pintails among other ducks. All braved the wind once more to walk out along the dike. We enjoyed great views of a variety of ducks, Tundra Swans, American White Pelicans, and egrets. A few Eastern Meadowlarks even posed nicely for us along the way.

The whole group met up for lunch at Bodie Island Lighthouse, where we vainly thought we might escape the wind. Most folks sheltered in their cars for lunch. The boardwalk gave us a good view of a Bald Eagle chasing ducks, but it was far too windy for rails to be active. Susan's group spent a little time along the maintenance road searching for woodland birds. After a bit of a search, a few Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared. The calling White-throated Sparrows as well as Northern Cardinals and others remained hidden in the brush.



Since we figured the high winds were keeping the birds hunkered down, we headed to Jennette's Pier, where it was even more windy, to look for seabirds. We were rewarded with really close views of Northern Gannets, as well as lines of Black and Surf Scoters and a lone Red-throated Loon (plus several dolphins of course).

We ended the day at Alligator River NWR, where we saw tons of Tundra Swans, but not much else until dusk. There were several Black Bears foraging; watching them is always a treat. As the sun went down the few of us that remained were rewarded with a couple Northern Bobwhite calling from the edge of the field adjacent to where we were standing, but the heavy vegetation along the canal impeded our view. We did however catch sight of a number of American Woodcock that moved from the wet woodland into the fields to forage.



Dinner was delicious, at either at Blue Water Grill or Basnight's Lone Cedar, and then most of us returned to the Comfort Inn to collapse after an amazing day.

Both groups reconvened at Oregon Inlet again first thing on Sunday morning. Birding started off quite well - the Harlequin Duck returned to the Bonner Bridge Pier and everyone got great views of her. It was impressive to watch a few thousand cormorants and pelicans chasing a school of fish as well. And then the time came for both groups to split up and head separate ways.



Steve led a small, intrepid number of participants to Split Pea (at the south end of Pea Island) where after donning boots, they headed into the marsh. In spite of the wind, wrens and saltmarsh sparrows were active. Specific identifications were not easy or even possible in many cases, but the challenge was fun, nonetheless.

Paul's group next made quick stop at the photo blind that resulted in a couple of Mallard x Black Duck hybrids (spotted by our youngest participant Kai). Afterward they headed north to the Nags Head Woods where they enjoyed a break in the wind. They saw Golden-crowned Kinglets, Pileated Woodpeckers, and heard and got brief looks at a few Brown Creepers. The highlights were a big red-bellied water snake and a marbled salamander.

Everyone ended the weekend at River Road in Alligator River NWR. Unfortunately, even inland we experienced significant wind as well as light rain. Several American Kestrels were hovering over the fields and we were serenaded by Eastern Meadowlarks while Common Yellowthroats squawked from the tall grass but never came out to be seen. A Swamp Sparrow almost took Paul's eye out as it flew through the group. Other highlights included an American Bittern, a pair of Bald Eagles and the appearance of a hunting (i.e.



cruising) Peregrine Falcon. Steve's group actually had the "falcon trifecta" in a matter of hours: American Kestrel, Merlin and Peregrine. The finale was a flock of Tundra Swans flying through a perfect rainbow-- for both groups but in different locations!



We ended the trip tired, cold, damp, but very happy.

Slate of Club Officers Announced for Spring 2025 Voting!

The official slate of Officers for the CBC Board in 2025 has been finalized.

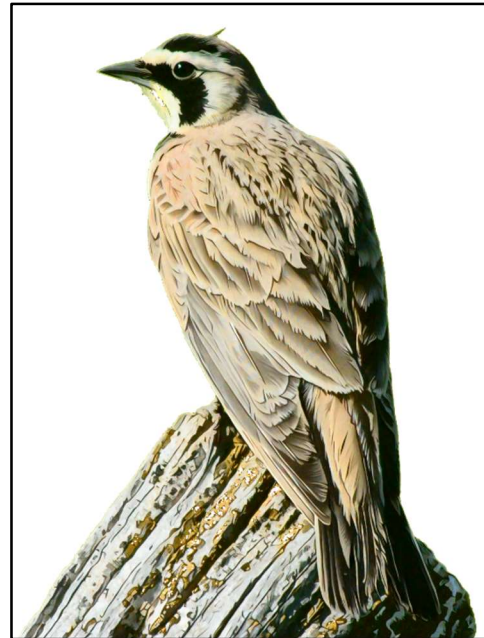
Nominated to fill openings:

President: Jennifer Roberts (Columbia, SC)
Western NC Vice-President: Mike Resch (Asheville, NC)
South Carolina Member-at-large: Matt Malin (Aiken, SC)
Secretary: Kathy Jones (Garner, NC)

And those who are willing to serve another term:
Eastern NC Member-at-large: Bob Lewis (Durham, NC)
Treasurer: Mark Songer (Greenville, SC)

Background biographical information on the candidates for vacancies can be found at the club website.

Respectfully submitted,
CBC Nominating Committee
Julie Davis, Paul Laurent, and Betsy Kane



Opportunities for Young Birders

Carolina Bird Club offers scholarships for birders 18 and under living in the Carolinas, who are members of the Carolina Young Birders Club.

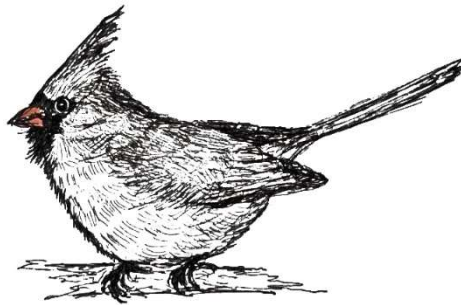
Scholarships provide assistance in attending bird-related events, such as camps, workshop, training programs or CBC seasonal meetings.

For more information, visit www.carollnabirdclub.org

Birders Book Review
The Birds and the Trees:
Stirrings in the Piedmont by Christine Sullivan

The Birds & The Trees

STIRRINGS IN THE PIEDMONT



WRITINGS AND DRAWINGS BY
CHRISTINE SULLIVAN

fresh eats after a rain. Carolina Chickadees crouch in twos and threes in the crutches of limbs. Plum trees are preferred bath houses for birds, spots where they dally and dance and preen. There, now, a-dee-dee-dee.”

Passages such as those this face drawings, drawings with enough detail to stir the mind, but not so much as to define the scene, rather the prose and artwork allow readers to fill in detail and color with their own perceptions of nature.

We start in winter, share the newness of spring, bask in the bounty of summer, the glory of fall, once again returning to a cold, crisp Carolina blue winter. Along the way Sullivan encounters new visitors and discovers the identity of trees that shelter, feed, and complement those feathered acquaintances, soon to be friends.

Sullivan’s work, presented in elongated, 9.5 x 7.5 hardback, spans 193 pages, roughly divided equally between brief “stirrings” and drawings. The first twenty odd pages describe Sullivan’s newfound awareness and appreciation for birds and trees, while the remainder of the book pairs art and prose. An appendix suggests resources for additional exploration and provides a check-list of birds and trees discovered over the course of the year.

Discover this and other works at birdbrainbooks.com or <http://www.christinesullivan.com>.

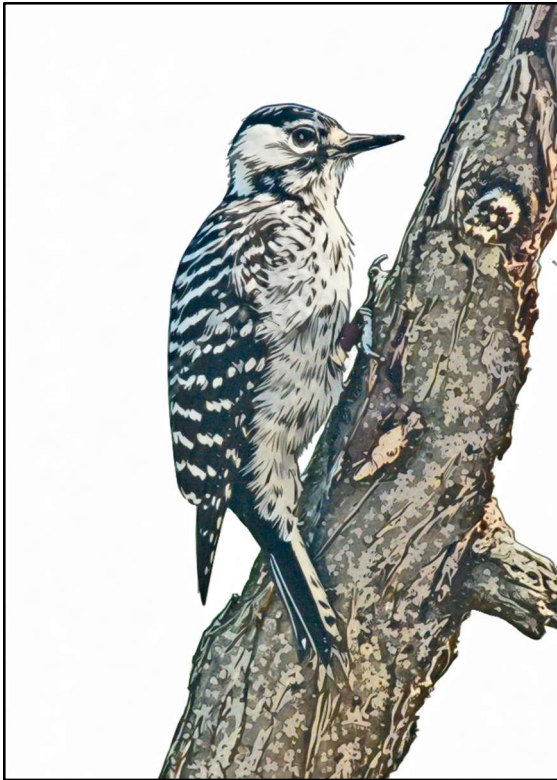
Steve Shultz

“There are stirrings in nature that whisper the air. The sittings of a band of jays or flock of swallows... A chickadee chipping away on a nearby twig. Even the metronomic tapping of a Pileated Woodpecker seems to summon us... We stir, too, as people. Our minds are always stirring, as are our hearts.”

So begins *The Birds and the Trees: Stirrings in the Piedmont*, featuring writing and pen and ink drawings by Christine Sullivan, a recent transplant to central North Carolina from Florida by way of Indiana. As part of the mental resetting that happens with significant relocations, Sullivan turns to the nature of the Piedmont for balance and inspiration. Exploring birds that find their way to and through her new patch of suburbia, and the foliage that hosts them, we are treated to a year of seasons through newly awakened eyes.

“Cardinals are busy under the brush, pulling

Interior Department Announces Downlisting of Red-cockaded Woodpecker from Endangered to Threatened



After five decades of collaborative conservation efforts between the Interior Department, federal and state partners, Tribes, the private sector and private landowners, the Department of the Interior announced on Oct 24, 2024 that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is downlisting the Red-cockaded Woodpecker from endangered to threatened status under the Endangered Species Act.

"The downlisting of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker marks a significant milestone in our nation's commitment to preserving biodiversity," said Secretary Deb Haaland. "Through decades of collaborative efforts from a wide coalition of partners, we have brought this iconic species back from the brink of extinction, ensuring that future generations will continue to see these incredible birds thriving in their natural habitats. This is another important accomplishment in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's implementation of the iconic Endangered Species Act."

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker is a territorial, non-migratory bird species that lives in mature pine forests in the southeastern United States. Once abundant from New Jersey to Florida, west to Texas and north to Missouri, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker's range dwindled to a few states by the 1960s, following more than a century of habitat loss. In the late 1970s, populations were at an all-time low of an estimated 1,470 clusters of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Today, the Service estimates there are 7,800 clusters ranging across 11 states from southern Virginia to eastern Texas. Read the full press release at <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2024-10/downlisting-red-cockaded-woodpecker-endangered-threatened>.



Managed Habitat
Holly Shelter Game Lands
Pender County, North Carolina



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

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Banner Elk, NC 28604
and additional mailing offices

Upcoming CBC Meetings

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

Spring Meeting at Fletcher, NC – April 26-27, 2025

Fall 2025 meeting in the South Carolina Low Country (exact destination TBA)

CBC Board Members

President

Susan Campbell, Apex, NC
susan@ncaves.com

Vice Presidents

Christine Stoughton-Root, Merritt, NC
Katie Greenberg, Arden, NC
Julie Davis, Pawleys Island, SC

Secretary

Karaleah Reichart, Raleigh, NC

Treasurer

Mark Songer, Greenville, SC

NC Members-at-Large

Kevin Burke, Hendersonville, NC
Betsy Kane, Washington, NC
Robert Lewis, Durham, NC
Paul Laurent, Banner Elk, NC

SC Members-at-Large

Richard Hayes, Charleston, SC
Jennifer Roberts, Columbia, SC

Immediate Past President: Steve Tracy, Apex, NC
Editor of The Chat: Steve Shultz, Apex, NC
Website Editor: Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC
Headquarters Secretary: Amanda Laurent, Banner Elk, NC, hq@carolinabirdclub.org
CBC Newsletter Editor: Steve Dowlan, Vilas, NC, newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org

Deadline for submission of Volume 71, Issue 2 is
February 15, 2025

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The *CBC Newsletter* is published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Founded in 1937, the membership is open to anyone interested in birds, natural history, and conservation. Current dues are: Individual & non-profit, \$30; Family and Business, \$35; Student, \$15; Patron, \$50 and up; Life, \$500; Associate Life (in household with Life Member), \$100 (both Life memberships can be paid in four annual installments).

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.

Join the CBC at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/>.
Enter change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile/>. Order checklists from: CBC Headquarters Secretary, 1800 Meadow Ave., Banner Elk, NC 28604. Copyright © 2025.