



CBC Newsletter

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

Volume 71

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August 2025

We Are Going to Beaufort, South Carolina for Our Fall Meeting, October 2 to 5, 2025!!!

Picturesque Beaufort offers some of the best birding along the South Carolina coast. Previous meetings in Beaufort we have tallied 203 species, which is a close second to the Outer Banks (204 species). Then, think of the field trips to Bear Island... Donnelley... Savannah NWR... Botany Bay WMA... These sites are hallowed ground to Lowcountry birders, and we will visit them all and more during the upcoming Carolina Bird Club 2025 Fall Meeting! We are staying at the Holiday Inn & Suites Beaufort -- Plan NOW on going! We will have over 25 field trips on October 3rd and 4th, including Bear island WMA, Donnelley WMA, Savannah NWR and Botany Bay WMA!



Friday night we plan to meet informally at a brewery, then all can sample a favorite restaurant in the shore town of Beaufort. On Saturday night we will have dinner at the Holiday Inn Suites in Beaufort, and the guest speaker will be Felicia Sanders! Since 2001, Felicia Sanders has worked for SCDNR as lead biologist for the Coastal Bird Conservation Program, developing the program into a four-person powerhouse that works across the entire coast to monitor, manage and research our state's seabirds and shorebirds. In recent years, Felicia Sanders and her team have played a leading role in several significant conservation success stories, including the discovery of the world's largest whimbrel night roost at Deveaux Bank and the restoration of Crab Bank Seabird Sanctuary. Ms. Sanders has been the principal investigator researching red knot migration strategies in South Carolina, work that has challenged existing notions of the significance of South Carolina beaches to red knots. Coastal bird biologist Felicia Sanders was recently awarded the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian honor, May 2025.

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The Holiday Inn Suites will host our registration, meetings and Saturday night buffet. We got excellent rates for this very popular resort. The cutoff for reservations under the group block will be September 15th. Contact the Holiday Inn Suites at 1-843-3793100. Be sure to mention the Carolina Bird Club in order to receive the group rates. **Registration opens Saturday, Aug. 23 at 2 pm and closes Sunday Sept. 21 at 6 pm.** I think you will find Beaufort to be a historic and beautiful area for the fall CBC meeting. Lots of field trips are offered with new additions. Finally, and best of all, you will bird a very birdy part of South Carolina!

Beaufort Field Trip Schedule

Friday, October 3

Half-Day Morning

- Trip #1 Harbor Island
- Trip #2 Fripp Island
- Trip #3 Nemours Plantation

Half-Day Afternoon

- Trip #4 Pinckney Island/Hilton Head
- Trip #5 Beaufort & Vicinity
- Trip #6 Hunting Island State Park
- Trip #7 Spring Island

All Day

- Trip #8 Savannah NWR
- Trip #9 Caw Caw/Edisto Trail (fee)
- Trip #10 Edisto/Roxbury Park

Saturday, October 4th

Half-Day Morning

- Trip #11 Harbor Island
- Trip #12 Combahee Island
- Trip #13 Spring Island (fee)
- Trip #14 Fripp Island (fee)

Half-Day Afternoon

- Trip #15 Pinkney Island/Hilton Head
- Trip #16 Hunting Island State Park
- Trip #17 Beaufort & Cypress Wetlands
- Trip #18 Coosawhatchie WMA

All Day

- Trip #19 Caw Caw/Edisto Trail (fee)
- Trip #20 Savannah NWR
- Trip #21 Webb WMA
- Trip #22 Hunting Island Lagoon Kayak Tour
(\$60 fees) (10 am to 3 pm)



Important Notes for Your Trip

- Just in case, bring your warm weather gear (sunscreen, hats, light clothing, etc.) as it can be warm in Beaufort this time of year.
- Be sure to pack lunch and snacks for the all-day trips and due to the tight schedules, you might want to pack a lunch for the half-day trips also. Each trip is noted as to availability of public restrooms.
- All field trips have a participation limit of 12.
- All trips will leave from the hotel. If the trip leader is to meet you at the site, one person will be assigned as the guide to get you to the site. Site directions will be available at registration. If you plan to meet your trip at the site, be sure to let your trip leader know in advance.

Field Trip Descriptions

Trip 1 – Harbor Island: Nestled between St. Helena and Hunting Islands in Beaufort County, Harbor Island is a 1,400-acre private community on the Harbor River & Johnson Creek. Three small ponds on the island provide a roost for egrets and herons and there is a rather large rookery in the spring. The south side of the island is good for shore birds. Some of the target birds are plovers, oystercatchers, skimmers, wading birds, and terns.

Approximate travel time: 25-30 minutes

Facilities: No Restrooms.

Access conditions: This trip will involve easy to light walking.



Trips 2 & 14 – Fripp Island: Fripp Island is a gated island and is adjacent to Hunting Island. Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Storks, herons, egrets, ibis, Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawks, Caspian & Common Terns, Black Skimmers, and eight warbler species have been seen late September and early October.

Approximate travel time: 45 minutes

Facilities: Restrooms available.

Access conditions: A guard and gate at the island entrance.

Trip 3 – Nemours Plantation – Nemours Wildlife Foundation, located on Nemours Plantation near Yemassee, South Carolina, is a great place for birding, many opportunities to observe various bird species in diverse habitats. The foundation manages tidal impoundments and pine savannas, which attract a variety of birds, and also cultivates habitats for species like the rails and Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

Trips 4 & 15 – Pinckney Island NWR & Hilton Head: Pinckney Island NWR is a 4,000-acre refuge that was once an early 19th century plantation. The island consists of salt marsh, forestland, brushland, fallow field and freshwater ponds. The great diversity of habitat makes for some great birding. Some of the target birds are waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, migrants and large concentrations of White Ibis, herons, and egrets. Fish Haul Creek Park is a good place to find shorebirds and terns. The target birds for the 0.3-mile boardwalk are Clapper Rail and Seaside Sparrow.

Approximate travel time: 45-50 minutes

Facilities: No Restrooms.

Access conditions: This trip will involve moderate walking.

Trip 5 & 17 – Beaufort & Vicinity: Port Royal Boardwalk Park, Broad River, Chechessee River Estuaries (RC) and Cypress Wetlands. Port Royal Boardwalk is 0.2 miles long. It runs through salt-marsh and mud flats and has a tall observation platform. West of Beaufort there is a series of broad tidal estuaries interspersed with salt marshes. Two of these, the Broad and Chechessee Rivers are easily birded from dry land. Some of the target birds are ducks, rails, ibis, gulls, terns, shore birds, herons, egrets, and migrants.

Approximate travel time: 15 minutes

Facilities: Gas stations between sites, and at Widgeon Point Preserve.

Access conditions: This trip will involve easy to moderate walking.

Trips 6 & 16 – Hunting Island State Park: This island is over four miles of beach, thousands of acres of marsh, tidal creeks and maritime forest, a saltwater lagoon and ocean inlet. There is a long fishing pier on the south end of the island. The Hunting Island Lighthouse stands 132.5 feet tall, giving breathtaking views of the Lowcountry marshland, the slash pine/cabbage palmetto/live oak forest, and the Atlantic Ocean. There are admission fees. Bring your state park pass if you have one. Some of the target birds are Painted Buntings, Piping Plovers, rails, tanagers, orioles, pelicans, oystercatchers, skimmers, terns, herons, and egrets.

Approximate travel time: 30 minutes

Facilities: Restrooms available, at several locations.

Access conditions: This trip will involve walking up to 4 miles.

Trips 7 & 13– Spring Island – Spring Island, South Carolina, is a fantastic location for birding, particularly due to its diverse habitats and commitment to conservation. The island features a mix of beaches, dunes, salt marshes, and freshwater areas, attracting a wide variety of bird species throughout the year. You can expect to see everything from songbirds and raptors to wading birds and waterfowl. (fee)

Trips 8 – Savannah NWR: (Restroom available at the main parking) Half Day Trips—Savannah NWR consists of over 29,000 acres of freshwater marshes, tidal rivers and creeks and bottomland hardwoods. The refuge provides nesting areas for Wood Ducks, Great Horned Owls, Bald Eagles, Osprey and Swallow-tailed Kites among others. The kites and storks will probably be gone by the end of September. As many as 13 species of duck either live in or migrate through this refuge. Other bird types found here include coots, moorhens, Purple Gallinules, Soras, egrets, herons, and shore birds along with other migrating bird species. This trip basically covers the 5-mile driving tour (Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive) with multiple stops.

Approximate travel time: 50 minutes

Facilities: No restrooms on Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive. Restrooms are only available at the Visitor Center, which is 4 miles away.

Access conditions: This trip will involve moderate to heavy walking.



Trips 9 & 19 – Caw Caw Nature and History

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 wading birds, rails, owls, vireos, wrens, migrant warblers, and others.

Approximate travel time: 60 minutes

Facilities: Restrooms available.

Access conditions: \$5/person fee to enter the County Park. This trip will involve easy to moderate walking.

Trip 11 – Harbor Island: Nestled between St. Helena and Hunting Islands in Beaufort County, Harbor Island is a 1,400-acre private community on the Harbor River & Johnson Creek. Three small ponds on the island provide

a roost for egrets and herons and there is a rather large rookery in the spring. The south side of the island is good for shore birds. Some of the target birds are plovers, oystercatchers, skimmers, wading birds, and terns.

Approximate travel time: 25-30 minutes

Facilities: No Restrooms.

Access conditions: This trip will involve easy to light walking.

Trip 12 – Combahee Unit, ACE Basin NWR: Over 2 miles of walking trails through wetlands, old rice fields, canals and estuaries. ACE is an acronym for Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto Rivers. The Combahee (pronounced Come-bee) will provide Wood Duck, Mallard, heron, ibis, Osprey, Wood Stork and Bald Eagles.

Approximate travel time: 35 minutes

Facilities: No restrooms.

Access conditions: This trip will involve light to moderate walking, on uneven surfaces.

Trip 18 – Coosawhatchie WMA– The Coosawhatchie Wildlife Management Area (WMA) opened on Aug. 1, 2024, and combines three properties into one sprawling natural resources treasure trove that includes mature upland pine woods and rare hardwood bluffs. It includes great Bachman's Sparrow habitat, shrike, Red-headed Woodpecker. Robin Carter wrote about this area 40 years ago!

Approximate travel time: 40 minutes

Facilities: No Restrooms.

Access conditions: This trip will involve moderate walking.



Trip 21 – Webb WMA -- Webb Center, a globally recognized Important Bird Area, comprises 5866 acres. Birds to look for include Least Bittern, Mississippi Kite, Purple Gallinule, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman's Sparrow, and Painted Bunting.

Trip 22 -- Hunting Island S.P. Lagoon Kayak Tour SPECIAL – 10 am to 3 pm – Beaufort Kayak will lead this 2 1/2-hour tour of the lagoon & estuaries near Hunting Island State Park. Paddling will be easy. Barrier island geology will be discussed, and a cast net demonstration will be given. Paddles, PFD and single & tandem kayaks will be provided. Their website: <https://coastalexpeditions.com>. **The Cost of this tour will be \$60**, payable to the outfitter at the site.

Approximate Travel Time: 35 minutes

Facilities: Restrooms available.



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.carolnabirdclub.org

Beaufort, South Carolina Registration Form

Registration opens Saturday, Aug. 23 at 2 pm and closes Sunday Sept. 21 at 6 pm.

Register Online for Best Availability of Field Trips at

www.carolinabirdclub.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Field Trip Sign-Up	A.M. 1st/2nd Choice	P.M. 1st/2nd Choice	All Day 1st/2nd Choice	To pre-register for field trips, place the trip number(s) in the boxes to the right of the days.
Friday	/	/	/	
Saturday	/	/	/	

Meeting Registration (Member) _____ x \$40 = \$ _____

Meeting Registration (Non-Member) _____ x \$45 = \$ _____

Dinner on Saturday evening _____ x \$45 = \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Meeting registration at the door costs \$45.

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 _____

Welcome New Board Members!

Jeff Hunter is the Southern Appalachian Director with National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) in Asheville, NC where he works on issues related to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

He spends much of his time coordinating a collaborative project focused on improving wildlife's ability to safely cross Interstate 40 in the Pigeon River Gorge, just outside of the Smokies.

Jeff had spent 20 years in the telecommunications industry when a thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail inspired him to realign his career with his conservation values. He left Verizon in New York State and headed for Chattanooga, TN in 2003 to lead the Southern Appalachian Initiative, a joint project of American Hiking Society and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program.

From 2008 to 2013, Jeff led the Tennessee Wild wilderness campaign focused on permanently protecting nearly 20,000 acres in the Cherokee National Forest, including 4.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The Tennessee Wilderness Act signed into law in December 2018 saw that project through to completion.

Prior to joining NPCA in 2015, Jeff led the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership in eastern California for two years, focusing on sage grouse habitat restoration in a high-desert environment overseen by the Bureau of Land Management.

Jeff holds a BA in environmental studies from State University of New York Empire State College. He and his wife Caara live in Burnsville, NC at the base of the Black Mountains.

Matt Malin arrived in Aiken, South Carolina in 2009 and stayed until 2011 for work when he was introduced to birding in the state by some good birding friends from Aiken County. We ran all over South Carolina, mostly in the west part of the state and ACE Basin. He returned in 2016 to Aiken, SC and has been there since and became a member of Carolina Bird Club.

He started birding as a youth in Bucks County, Pennsylvania at a local nature center and was taken to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary by his dad in the late 1970s to watch raptor migration. Then he was hooked! He has lived in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Colorado, Massachusetts, and has moved around the country and traveled to parts of the world as a geologist for work after college, and continued to watch birds. After 40+ years, it's just his "bad habit" hobby.

He has done Christmas Bird Counts, point count surveys for state agencies, NOAA seabird surveys, Breeding Bird Surveys, as well as assisted with shorebird and passerine banding, all of which he considered to have been great experiences. He was a member of the Cape Cod Bird Club Board as the Field Trips Coordinator, and he led field trips around Cape Cod year-round. Now that that he is in South Carolina, He would like to participate more in Carolina Bird Club activities and help others "catch the bug" and learn how much fun (and frustrating) birding can be. As a good friend of his once always said, "Keep your eyes to the sky."

Kathy Greene Jones grew up on her ancestral mountain farm in the small Watauga County community of Stony Fork, outside of Boone, NC. Her love of all things outdoors started when she would ride an old wooden sled into the woods with her grandfather and go gather berries and nuts with her grandmother.

They started her love of all things about the outdoors from the earliest times she can remember, and taught her to recognize plants, trees, berries, bugs, wildlife and of course birds!

Through the years, she considers herself to have been fortunate to live across North Carolina from the mountains to the coast and in between (she currently resides in Johnston County near Clayton), as well as spending four years in Columbia Falls, Montana, which afforded her the opportunity to see and fall in love with many different kinds of scenery, wildlife and birds and indulge in her passion...all things outdoors!

She really enjoys Carolina Bird Club and their trips and the continued learning that she gets from the members and she is looking forward to giving back to CBC wherever she can.



Warbler Road Bonus Trip Report

By Steve Shultz

A road paved with warblers? Almost! Virginia's famous "Warbler Road" has long been known as an opportunity to enjoy seeing and hearing most of the Southeast's montane breeding warblers in one day. Dropping from the crest of the Blue Ridge to the James River valley, this series of interconnected forest roads offers birders the chance to seek out and enjoy warblers, vireos, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Veery and more.

Ten members of the Carolina Bird Club enjoyed a productive visit to Warbler Road on the weekend of May 10-11, 2025, encountering 21 species of warblers. Early to mid-May is a perfect time to visit, as breeding birds are on territory, more northerly nesting birds are in transit, and the highest elevations have yet to fully leaf out, allowing for more leisurely looks at these little sprites than is often the case. Weather can be a factor in the spring, especially in the mountains, but our Bonus Trip lucked into a two-day period of sunny skies and mild temperatures between long days of rain, wind and fog. As expected, American Redstart took the crown of most common warbler with a conservative count of 152. Ovenbird "placed" at 62, with the "show" taken by Cerulean, with 56 of these beautiful birds seen or heard. Ceruleans are uncommon and local at favored sites in North and South Carolina, but reasonably abundant along the Blue Ridge in Virginia. A key goal of this trip was to provide everyone with good looks at this globally declining species, and I think it is fair to say that no one went home disappointed.

Other counts included 32 Black and White Warblers, 30 Hooded Warblers, 16 Worm-eating Warblers, one of which put on a fine show alongside a postcard-perfect boulder-strewn mountain stream, and 5 of those beautiful “firethroats” also known as Blackburnian Warbler. Kentucky Warbler, an often hard to spot but easy to hear species, allowed participants good views, although many of the 10 Blackpoll Warblers noted preferred to play hide and seek at the tippy top of tall trees. But a brilliant male Cape May Warbler who stopped for a break while



in route to distant lands was enjoyed by all.

After spending most of Saturday morning on the mountain, we switched gears in the afternoon and explored riparian habitat near the James River. Stately sycamores along mountain waterways are home to Warbling Vireo along with Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, all of which were seen well. One particularly bold (in color and personality) Baltimore Oriole dived and chattered at a Fish Crow until the big interloper had enough of the orange tough-guy and fled, the departure raising a cheer from picnicking CBCers who in this case were clearly rooting for the O's.

After a group dinner at the local purveyor of Mexican cuisine, participants returned to hostels to check checklists, organize photographs, or cheer a favored hockey team on TV. But no one stayed up too late since...

The group reconvened in early morning light at a local migrant trap featuring a small lake, walking trails, and bird-friendly variety of habitats. Northern Waterthrushes called from thickets along the water while Spotted, Solitary, and Least Sandpipers fed on muddy flats. Lingering waterfowl included Gadwall and Lesser Scaup, while orioles, Warbling Vireo, and Yellow Warbler sang from the trees.



Sometimes birding is less about finding something unusual or rare and more about seeing a common species doing something interesting. And the sight of Chimney Swifts drinking from the lake, creating tiny V-shaped wakes with each scooped-up mouthful, rates as one of the weekend's more impressive moments.

The trip ended after noon on Sunday at Apple Orchard Mountain with a species countdown and the now-traditional “awarding of the prize” to the participant who most closely guessed the number of species seen during the trip.

Warbler Road is a special place, and I hope that each of you gets a chance to mosey down the mountain listening to nature conduct an orchestra of warbler song, either here in Virginia, or at favored spot of your own.



Upcoming Birding Festivals in the Southeast

**August 1 – August 3, 2025 – Black Belt Birding Festival
Greensboro, Alabama**

<https://alaudubon.org/event/black-belt-birding-festival-2025>

**August 16, 2025 – Ijams Hummingbird Fest
Knoxville, Tennessee**

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/event/ijams-hummingbird-fest/>

**October 14 – October 19, 2025 – Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival
Manteo, North Carolina**

<https://wingsoverwater.org/#qref>

**February 4 – February 8, 2026 – Hammock Coast Birding Festival
Pawleys Island, South Carolina**

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/event/hammock-coast-birding-festival/>



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Banner Elk, NC 28604

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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Fall Meeting at Beaufort, SC – October 2-5, 2025

Winter Meeting at the Outer Banks, NC – January 23-25, 2026

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**Deadline for submission of Volume 71, Issue 5 is
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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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