



CBC Newsletter

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

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February 2026

2026 CBC Spring Meeting Teaser By Matt Malin



We are going to visit Columbia, South Carolina for our Spring Meeting April 23-26, 2026. We have not been to South Carolina's capital city in over 35 years, we last visited in the fall of 1988. Columbia offers a variety of habitats in the Midlands of South Carolina, from the Upper Coastal Plain to the Sand Hills and the Piedmont. We will concentrate on looking for migrants along the rivers that flow through Columbia, the Broad, Saluda and Congaree.

Field trips will include Congaree National Park, Santee NWR, Lynches Woods, and nearby State Wildlife Management Areas and Heritage Preserves, as well as some locations less familiar to non-locals. We are planning on staying west of downtown Columbia, at the Hilton Garden Inn – Columbia Airport. Plan NOW on attending!



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CBC Outer Banks Trip December 13 - 14, 2025

By Steve Shultz

Bird Photos by Dahlia Reppert

Intrepid members of the Carolina Bird Club visited the northern Outer Banks and Alligator River NWR in northeastern North Carolina the weekend of December 13-14, 2025, on our almost-annual “bonus trip” to that excellent birding location, enjoying the splendor of North Carolina’s wintertime coastal birdlife. Weather conditions were typical of December, which is say variable. Saturday was almost too nice, with calm ocean, warm temperatures, and essentially no wind. Sunday started partly cloudy and reasonably warm, but a fast-moving arctic front soon brought steady rain, wind, and falling temperatures.



We found the expected birds in expected places, although no truly rare species made their way onto our lists. Notable was an influx of Common Eiders, with one at Jennette’s Pier, an impressive four at the tip of the Oregon Inlet groin, and two more at Bonner Bridge. A number of participants independently enjoyed the “singing” saw-whet owl reported from the area. We watched Clapper Rails swim, Bufflehead buffle, and an Orange-crowned Warbler steadfastly refuse to show any suggestion of orange. Snow Geese stood stoically channeling their namesake, flakes of which would soon be falling in the area after the aforementioned front.

Weather conditions were perfect on Saturday (i.e. no wind) to try for maritime sparrows on Pea Island/Hatteras Island, and we enjoyed looks at all three (Seaside, Nelson’s and Saltmarsh)

along with Sedge and Marsh Wrens. Low tide meant finding the birds was a touch challenging, but just getting a calm day in December made the trek worthwhile.

Waterfowl numbers at Pea Island NWR were typical for that time of year. That is to say that the variety and numbers of ducks were good, but lower than end of November and early December, likely due to birds dispersing away from the refuge as food stocks are depleted. For example, the thousands of Northern Pintail present early in the season had moved on, and multiple hundreds of wigeon were reduced to just scatterings. But diving ducks often use the refuge ponds for loafing, and those departed pintails and baldpates had been replaced with thousands of Redheads and scores of scaup. The Redhead feed in Pamlico Sound and then stream into New Field and South Ponds at PINWR to loaf. The sight of so many birds impressed, especially when in flight, as happens if a marauding eagle, Peregrine, or black-backed gull strafes the flocks.



Sunday morning offered just a brief window of birdable weather, but it was mammals that stole the show. Two Red Wolves along Milltail provided “lifer looks” for many, and a quite large bear in the big corn field near the dump put an exclamation point on the “wildlife drive”.

Keep an eye out for more “bonus trip” offerings or join us at one of the seasonal meetings noted on the calendar in this edition of the Newsletter. Good birding!



Join the Leadership of the Carolina Young Birders Club!

Do you have a passion for birding, youth engagement, and conservation? The Carolina Young Birders Club is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to lead and inspire the next generation of bird enthusiasts in North and South Carolina. With 34 active members, a robust online presence, and established resources, this is your chance to make a meaningful impact!



Why Volunteer with Us?

- **Make a Difference:** Play a pivotal role in shaping the future of young birders and fostering a love for nature and conservation.
- **Gain Leadership Experience:** Develop your leadership skills and gain valuable experience in managing a vibrant community organization.
- **Leverage Existing Resources:** Benefit from our established website, newsletter, Facebook community, scholarship opportunities, and operating funding to drive the club's success.
- **Connect with Like-Minded Individuals:** Join a network of passionate birders and conservationists who share your enthusiasm for the natural world.

Your Role:

As a volunteer leader, you'll have the opportunity to guide the club's activities, engage with members, and bring fresh ideas to the table. Whether you're interested in organizing events, managing communications, or expanding our reach, your contributions will be invaluable.

Ready to Take Flight?

If you're ready to take the Carolina Young Birders Club to new heights, we want to hear from you! Please express your interest by contacting carolinayoungbirders@gmail.com. Join us in inspiring the next generation of bird lovers and making a lasting impact on our community. We look forward to welcoming you to our team!

Thank you for considering this request. I'm confident that with your help, we can find the perfect leaders to continue the club's mission. Looking forward to your thoughts!

Best regards,
Christine

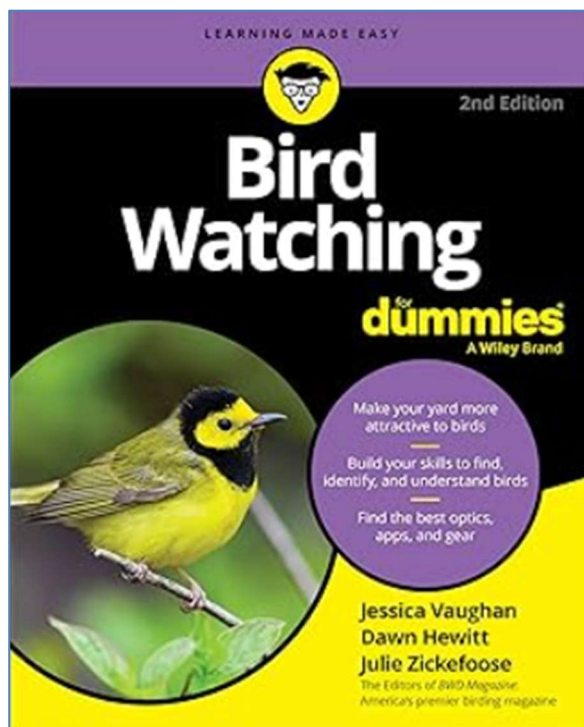


Who Are You Calling a Dummy, Dummy?

Bird Watching for Dummies

A Birder's Book Review

By Steve Shultz



No one wants to be a dummy. And since 1983, the *For Dummies* series of how-to, history, and self-help books have been educating readers on topics from home plumbing (the very first book in the series) to the politics of oil. That series focuses its lens on birding with the premier of *Bird Watching for Dummies, 2nd Edition* (hereafter referenced as BWFD) by Jessica Vaughn, Dawn Hewitt, and the estimable Julie Zickefoose. You may recognize this trio from their work at *BWD Magazine*, the current iteration of *Birdwatcher's Digest*.

This Newsletter space recently featured another review of a “beginner’s guide to birding”. That tome was ultimately evaluated as pretty on the table but missing content that would assist fledgling bird peepers. Can BWFD fill this void?

Using the popular and approachable format common to the series, the second edition delves into topics including backyard birdwatching and feeding,

selecting and using optics, photography, bird identification, taxonomy, bird behavior, bird song, gardening for wildlife, choosing and participating in field trips, lists and listing, some little thing called eBird, and much, much more. The one thing this is not is a field guide. You will still want one (or more) of those, but even here, BWFD offers content to help you choose the right guide.

And while 416 pages might sound daunting, the book leverages that series’ approachable style, mixing dialogue with “tips”, which help improve skills, “technical stuff”, to defines terminology and gives nerd-out detail, “warnings”, to help avoid common mistakes, and “remember”, that reinforces key messages. While primarily in black and white and printed on non-glossy paper, liberal inclusion of pen and ink drawings by Julie Zickefoose convey key concepts while adding art and beauty to the book. And since birds are anything but black and white (well, let’s ignore alcids and many seabirds for the moment) an insert section of color photographs is a nice addition. And yes, you can find information on finding those alcids and seabirds on pelagic birding trips by skipping to pages 262-263.

So, another book for beginning birders, right? Yes. But also no. This author, who cannot consider himself a beginner after thirty years in the field (though is by no means an expert), found plenty to consider, reinforce, and yes, learn while reading this thoroughly enjoyable volume. If you know someone interesting in birding, this is a great book. If you are into birding, this is a great book. I hope you find it in your hands, and that you enjoy as much as I did.

Bird Watching for Dummies, 2nd Edition (April 15, 2025)

Jessica Vaughn, Dawn Hewitt, Julie Zickefoose

416 pages, softcover

ISBN 978-1394297306

Executive Board seeking nominees for 2026

Annual elections are coming up in April! The CBC Board has three vacancies to fill in 2026: Eastern NC Member-at-large, Western NC Member-at-large, SC Member-at-large and Treasurer. Position descriptions can be found in the By-Laws section of the club website under the "About" tab.

Do not hesitate to contact any of the Nominating Committee if you have an interest or have specific questions:

Susan Campbell, Past President: susan@ncaves.com

Richard Hayes, SC Vice President: rhayes73@aol.com

Paul Laurent, Western NC Member-at-large: info@epicnaturetours.com

Matt Malin, SC Member-at-large: matt.j.malin@gmail.com

A Rare Appearance of a Snow Bunting In the North Carolina Mountains by Steve Dowlan

Standing tall in the northwest corner of Ashe County, North Carolina, Pond Mountain is not an easy place to get to. The access road is rather remote, unpaved, steep in spots, and a little rough on passenger car tires. In early November of this year, one bird made the trip worthwhile for over 40 birders who navigated their way to this otherwise seldom-visited spot to see and enjoy the presence of the county's first reported SNOW BUNTING. It was first reported on November 3, and stuck around for a full month. It was feeding at the edge of a concrete apron in front of a service building near the top of the access road, and would perch on one of the mowing implements when startled... but it rarely moved away from its preferred location. Many birders also were treated to several NORTHERN HARRIERS, and some who were willing to stick around for a spectacular sunset got to see a SHORT-EARED OWL as well, making the trip especially worthwhile.



[HTTPS://EBIRD.ORG/HOTSPOT/L3663903](https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3663903)

Upcoming Birding Festivals in the Southeast

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

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

February 28, 2026 - 24th Annual Burrowing Owl Festival
Cape Coral, Florida

<https://ccfriendsofwildlife.org/programs/burrowing-owl-festival/>

April 16 - 23, 2026 - Spring Birding Days
Little St Simons Island, Georgia

<https://www.littlestsimonsisland.com/events-and-programs/birding-days>

April 24 – 26 – Hatchie Birding Festival
Brownsville, Tennessee

<https://www.hatchiebirdfest.com/>

April 27 – May 2 - New River Birding & Nature Festival
New River Gorge National Park

<https://www.birding-wv.com/>





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Banner Elk, NC 28604

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Upcoming CBC Meetings

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

Spring Meeting at Columbia, SC – April 23-26, 2026

CBC Board Members

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jenroberts@aol.com

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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.

Join the CBC at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/>.
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