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# NEWSLETTER



for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 44

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Number 6

## Winter Meeting on the Outer Banks

The Carolina Bird Club winter meeting will be headquartered at Nags Head on the North Carolina Outer Banks January 29-31, 1999. Registration will begin at the Comfort Inn Oceanfront at 11:00 a.m. Friday, January 29.

The area offers outstanding birding. Winter is probably the best season. Some winters (such as 1993-94) have seen large invasions of alcids. There is an excellent chance of seeing Red-necked Grebe, or possibly a Harlequin Duck. We will search for a Ross' Goose among hundreds of Snow Geese. Eurasian Wigeons have been winter regulars at Pea Island over the past several years, and a knock-out male Cinnamon Teal has shown up at Bodie Island each of the last two winters. With any luck we could see Glaucous and Iceland Gulls at Cape Point and possibly a Thayer's or California Gull. Although a pelagic trip is being offered, remember that the above species are seen on shore. Interesting passerine sightings have included species such as Lark Sparrow and Lapland Longspur. We may be able to get good looks at both species of Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

A variety of field trips will be offered, each led by an experienced birder. None will require strenuous walking. Friday field trips are scheduled for the Nags Head/Pea Island area and also at several hot spots convenient to routes leading to the Outer Banks.

Much of Friday night's program following a social hour beginning at 5:00 p.m. will be dedicated to providing information on Saturday's field trips. **John Fussell** will give a short talk on the relationship of tides and weather to bird finding on the coast. John, a native of

Morehead City, NC, is the author of *A Birder's Guide to Coastal North Carolina*, an indispensable aid to those birding this area. Following the presentation of field trip information there will be a brief, bonus presentation by Jon Dunn, Saturday night's scheduled speaker, on identification of Alder, Willow, Yellow-bellied and Least Flycatchers.

The chief feature of Saturday night's program will be our speaker, **Jon Dunn**, an internationally recognized ornithologist and a personable individual. Among other accomplishments, he is one of the consultants for the *National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, coauthor of the splendid *Warblers* in the Peterson Field Guide Series. Jon is also a popular guide for WINGS bird tours. The subject of his talk will be "An Emphasis on the Sparrows of Eastern North America." He will deal with identification and behavior of sparrows in emphasizing the reading of the different genera; an approach first promoted by Kenn Kaufman.

A book signing time will be included in the schedule for both John and Jon. The club will have a variety of books for sale at a discount with profits going to CBC.

As has been the case for previous meetings in this area, the **Comfort Inn Oceanfront** in Nags Head (252-441-6315) will be our headquarters. This seven story motel is located at Milepost 17 on the beach road, 8031 Old Oregon Inlet Road. It is easily visible from the intersection of US 64/264 and NC 12 in Nags Head. The special double occupancy rate for our meeting is \$35 (bayside) and \$45 (oceanfront) plus tax. You may use the reservation form in the newsletter or call

1-800-334-3302 and identify yourself as a CBC meeting participant. **Deadline for reservations is January 15.**

In the event the Comfort Inn fills early there will be a few other motels open including the Quality Inn Sea Oatel, 0.4 mi. north of the Comfort Inn (252-441-7191, and the Duke of Dare Motel in Manteo (252-473-2175).

The Comfort Inn will provide an early continental breakfast, and your registration packet will contain a list of restaurants open at the time of our meeting. If your Saturday field trip schedule is such that you will be between Nags Head and Hatteras around mid-day it is highly advisable that you carry a lunch and drink.

The weather will be good. It is common knowledge that winter weather on the outer Banks can be rough. But sometimes the roughest weather can produce the best birds. On the other hand, there are often "blue bird days" in January. So either way the weather will be good. Just be prepared for either situation, meanwhile thanking God there will be no mosquitoes. Well, not many.

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## Machias Seal Island

by Jo Ann Martin

One destination many birders consider a must is Maine to see the Atlantic Puffins. To get the best look, leave Jonesport with Captain Barna Norton and his son, John, for Machias Seal island to see the puffins "up close and personal."

There were nine of us on Simon Thompson's Ventures tour who climbed aboard the *Chief* at 7:00 a.m., along with a reporter and cameraman from Canadian television and an AP reporter and his photographer. Captain Barna is in his eighties now, and a bit unsteady on the rocking boat, but he is still sharp and definitely in charge. His puffin excursion is meticulously planned and you do exactly what he says.

Machias Seal Island lies about 10 miles from Jonesport and is Canada's only remaining manned lighthouse station. But Captain Norton claims the island has been in his family since 1760 and Canada has no rights to it. He wears a small American flag on top of his hat to make sure everyone knows of his claim. This dispute brought the reporters on board for the day--to tell Captain Barna's side of the story.

There is no dock on the island; so the boat stopped several yards from land and we were loaded into a small motorboat in two groups and taken to the shore.



Getting from the motorboat to where the puffins gather was a major undertaking. The rocks are covered with slick, slimy seaweed, and footing is tricky at best. Two strong men were there to help, but people were still slipping forward and backward despite all their efforts to remain upright.

We were carefully herded up to a metal walkway that leads to the top of the island. We were instructed to take a stick from a pail to hold over our heads for protection from the squawking, dive-bombing terns which were nesting everywhere! We could walk on the mowed paths and the boardwalks, but we had to watch every step to avoid crushing eggs or chicks of both Arctic and Common Terns. It was

really quite a picture to see a single file of birders, sticks held high, following an old salt carrying an umbrella with an American flag attached to the top!

Two blinds were set up behind the rocks where the puffins nest, and groups of three birders were allowed thirty minutes in each blind to view the puffins. There were puffins everywhere--flying, preening, just hanging out with the others. One had a nest under our blind and came in twice with silver fish hanging out the sides of its bill, just like you see in pictures.

Hundreds of puffins were on the rocks, and a few Razorbills were there as well. Their black backs looked chocolate-brown in the sun, and we could even see the grooves in their bills. If we had done nothing else on this trip except go to Machias Seal Island to see the puffins, I would have come home happy. What a thrill it was to see hundreds of these little birds with their colorful, comical bills, some as close as ten feet or less, while listening to the patter of their little red feet on top of the blind!

After everyone had their turns in both blinds, it was time to leave the island. I have enjoyed many exciting birding experiences with Simon, but I will remember this as one of the best.

## Project FeederWatch

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has devised a number of programs to involve bird watchers in the collection of valuable data. The last issue of the Newsletter featured the 2nd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb. 19-22, 1999.

An older program is Project FeederWatch. It is a winter-long study of feeder birds conducted by volunteers across the country. A popular feature of FeederWatch results is the "top 10" list--the list of the 10-most-widespread species in each region as reported by

FeederWatchers. "The top 10 list is fun, but it also provides insights into birds and their habitats," says Wes Hochachka, a scientist at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. "For example, the birds visiting your feeder may seem common to you. But, if your region is the only place where a particular species is common, we need to pay attention from a conservation standpoint. A species' survival may depend on continually finding good wintering areas in that one region. A good example is the California Towhee,

which is a very common feeder bird in California that is found nowhere else."

There is a \$15 fee for enrollment in Project FeederWatch (\$12 for CLO members). Send your name and address along with your check to Project FeederWatch/BC, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, P.O. Box 11, Ithaca, NY 14851-0011. You may also call 1-800-843-BIRD to enroll or for further information. Reporting may be on paper data forms furnished by Cornell or online at <http://birds.cornell.edu>.

November 6, 1998. I received letters for this column!!!! But before I get into those, I must tell you that we saw several Ruby-crowned Kinglets in our yard on Halloween morning and a junco hopped across the back deck on November 1. Maybe the junco means we'll have a real winter this year with snow and cold temperatures--sweater weather.

The first letter came from **Judy Ayers**, a new member from Dobson, NC. She and her husband had one and a half clutches of bluebirds hatch out this summer. For several summers only the first batch of eggs has hatched and the second batch gets abandoned. This summer one egg from the second batch hatched and the Ayers found two unhatched eggs in the box when they cleaned it out. Anybody have any ideas why the second batch of eggs is usually abandoned?

One day in mid-summer, the Ayers watched an adult male bluebird at the birdbath. He kept jumping in and out of the water, acting like he was going to take a bath, but never staying in the water long enough to get wet, much less bathe. When he finally gave up, Judy went to the birdbath to see what was keeping the bluebird from bathing. She saw nothing, but when she checked the water, it was very hot.

The Ayers also had two broods of Red-bellied Woodpeckers coming to their feeders. Once the Ayers saw three young ones together, but after that they only saw one at a time. The fledgling would cling to a branch of the "feeder tree" while the male adult would pick out a sunflower seed from the feeder. He would go to the baby, crack open the seed and stick the kernel in the baby's mouth or he would put the seed on the limb and try to get the

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## Backyard Birding

with Frances J. Nelson

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baby to pick the seed up. After a couple of weeks, the babies were on their own getting seeds by themselves most of the time, but once in a while Daddy Bird would feed the young.

One other observance Judy mentioned happened in the spring when she and her husband saw dozens of Red-tailed Hawks flying low to the ground. The hawks seemed agitated because their flight pattern was erratic. Later, as the Ayers walked through the woods behind their house they found a partially eaten red-tailed hawk carcass. Feathers were scattered over a wide area suggesting the hawk had put up quite a fight. What could have done this?

The second letter came from **Dr. Christine Huzella**, Aiken, SC, who has raised two Mourning Doves. Her husband's dog, a Hungarian Vizsla, brought home two probably one-day-old doves, seemingly uninjured. No adults came around to claim the babies, so Dr. Huzella decided to try to raise them. She tried using baby formula and a cone to encourage the babies to feed themselves, but that didn't work. She contacted an expert bird rehabilitator in Jackson, SC, who demonstrated feeding the babies with syringes and suggested putting a heating pad in the box. The doves began to thrive. Dr. Huzella also noticed that one of the babies had had some kind of trauma to one of its eyes, but the lack of an eye didn't seem to bother it.

The syringe feeding slowed down to four

times a day, and Dr. Huzella was able to stop feeding the doves when they were three and a half weeks old. She put the doves outside in a tall pen during the day where they became entirely self-feeding and gained more weight. Two days later the doves were outside full-time. A hawk attacked the pen, but both doves survived the fright with only minimal damage--a few lost feathers.

Dr. Huzella released the birds when they were two months old. She left the pen open, but neither bird had been back inside. The birds, however, have stayed close by, watching bushes being pruned and checking out the barn at chore time. She did not band the doves but can recognize them, especially the one with the injured eye.

In addition to the dove story, Dr. Huzella said they have had unusual visitors this fall--fifteen immature White Ibis have been feeding in the fields around the house.

The last letter was actually a post card from **Maxilla Evans**, Waynesville, NC, who said they enjoyed their hummingbirds this summer. She had to put up another feeder because the birds were fighting over the first one so much. That increased the hummingbird show. At times the little critters were making so much noise with their flying back and forth and chattering the whole time that conversation between humans had to stop because the humans couldn't hear each other. Now that's a hummingbird show. I know it was wonderful to watch and listen to.

That's it for backyard birding. If you have news, please send it to me at 2061 Ferbow Street, Creedmoor, NC 27522, phone (919) 528-1156, or e-mail me at work: [fnelson@wpo.nccu.edu](mailto:fnelson@wpo.nccu.edu).

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## Backyard Bird Surveys

We would like to thank all of the individuals who participated in our Backyard Bird Survey in 1998. Currently we have received more than 75 surveys. These surveys were completed with varying degrees of detail, but all will be useful in compiling distribution information on the state's breeding birds. Surveys were returned from all parts of the state and documented the breeding season in 31 counties.

The Piedmont and Sandhills were the best covered. Fortunately, it was these areas for which we desperately needed more breeding information on the common species. All total, we obtained information on 111 species, many of which represented first county reports and minor range extensions. Several reports were of relatively uncommon breeding birds. These will certainly be very helpful in compiling our locality reports.

All of the survey information is being compiled and distribution maps will be available (soon, we hope) on the Museum Web page. This mapping program will be set up so that it can be continually upgraded. Therefore, we hope that even more people will participate in the survey next year.

**Dave Lee**  
NC Museum of Natural Sciences

# CBC Hawk Watch in Elkin



Hawk migration was extremely slow on hawk watch weekend, but 181 registered birders saw a variety of birds with 22 field trips to choose from. **Libba and John Watson**, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this year, greeted us at the registration table.

**Dennis Burnette** was the organizer, with great support from wife, **Lynn**, who did a great job designing field trip booklets. **James Coman** and the Blue Ridge Birders arranged field trips along the Blue Ridge Parkway, New River SP, and Grayson Co., VA. They also co-hosted the Friday night social with support from Alleghany and Ashe County Chambers of Commerce.

The Carolina Raptor Center had a nice display of books and provided close up looks at raptors, like Screech Owl, Ray Charles. **Gail Lankford** was busy selling CBC T-shirts and the summer 1986 issue of *The Chat* with the history of CBC.

The group bird count Saturday totaled 117 birds. Most trips saw a few warblers at a time, but a total of 24 species of

warblers were sighted such as Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Hooded, Magnolia, Wilson's, American Redstart, and Black-throated Green. **Will Cook** said, "Philadelphia Vireos, normally rare migrants, were the star performers of the weekend." Several groups saw Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Wild Turkeys, and Ruffed Grouse. Monarch butterflies were migrating high in the sky!

Highlight of the weekend were our featured speakers, **Clay and Patricia Sutton**, authors and naturalists from Cape May, NJ. Clay gave us techniques on "How to Spot Hawks" and Patricia told us how owls are all around and gave clues on "How to Spot Owls."

The climax Saturday night came when **Ivis Bohlen**, a new birder in need of binoculars, won the grand door prize of Pentax binoculars, donated by **Roy Halpin**. Congratulations Ivis, and welcome to the wonderful world of birding!

Next time Nags Head!!!

**Karen Bearden**



*Why is Ivis Bohlen smiling?*

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## New Members (continued)

**Viveca Richards**  
Piedmont, SC

**Elaine Rogers**  
Hillsborough, NC

**Steve Sholtz**  
Apex, NC

**Clyde E. Sorenson**  
Clayton, NC

**Lowell & Susan Strine**  
Pinehurst, NC

**Greg Townsend**  
Asheville, NC

**John & Marcia Watkins**  
Columbia, SC

**Linda White**  
Abingdon, VA

**Aaron Zaretsky**  
Weaverville, NC

**Life Member**

**Medhat M. Mohamed**  
Henderson, NC



*Speakers Clay and Patricia Sutton with meeting organizer Dennis Burnette*

# Field Trip Schedule

## CBC Winter Meeting, Nags Head, NC

### January 29-31, 1999

#### Departure Time

#### Trip

#### Friday, January 29

#### En route to Nags Head

9:00 a.m. - noon	# 1 Goldsboro Sewer Lagoons
12:00 noon	# 2 Pungo NWR
12:00 noon	# 3 Mattamuskeet NWR
1:00 p.m.	# 4 Lake Phelps/Pocosin Lakes NWR
2:00 p.m.	# 5 Alligator River NWR

#### After arrival in Nags Head

1:00 p.m.	# 6 Hatteras Point *
1:00 p.m.	# 7 Pea Island
1:30 p.m.	# 8 Bodie Island/Pea Island

#### Saturday, January 30

#### All-day trips

TBA	# 9 Pelagic Trip
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#### Departure Time

#### Trip

#### Saturday, January 30 (continued)

7:00 a.m.	# 10 Hatteras Pt./Hatteras-Ocracoke Ferry/Pea Island*
7:15 a.m.	# 11 Pea Island/Hatteras Pt.*
7:30 a.m.	# 12 Oregon Inlet/Pea Island/Hatteras Pt.*

#### Half-day Morning

7:15 a.m.	# 13 Oregon Inlet/North Pond
7:30 a.m.	# 14 Bodie Island/Pea Island
7:00 a.m.	# 15 Nags Head/Wanchese

#### Half-day Afternoon

1:00 p.m.	# 16 Bodie Island/Pea Island
1:30 p.m.	# 17 Wanchese/Nags Head
1:30 p.m.	# 18 Alligator River NWR

\* Participants with 4-WD vehicles appreciated

## Winter Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

This meeting's field trip leaders are not just guides familiar with the geography, but are also experts who will make the experience more rewarding. The first four trips listed below for Friday are to birding hot spots which are fairly conveniently located in relation to routes leading to Nags Head. Trips No. 6, 7 and 8 are recommended for those taking Saturday's pelagic trip.

**Notice:** South Pond on Pea Island is usually off-limits to everyone except National Wildlife Refuge personnel. We are privileged to make several visits to South Pond because the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is providing us with volunteer guides at the times specified in the trip descriptions below. Going into South Pond at any other time is strictly forbidden. Also, as a matter of ethics, it is requested that Saturday morning birding at Hatteras Point be limited to those participating in organized, scheduled trips. People birding "on their own" could easily spook the gull flocks and spoil the day for others. They should go in the afternoon.

### Friday Field Trips

**Trip No. 1: Goldsboro Sewer Lagoons.** This area is predictably productive in winter. There will be a good variety of waterfowl, and it is the only place in North Carolina where Eared Grebes are reliably present. For those coming on Highway 70 from the west, after reaching Goldsboro turn right onto Highway 117 South. Proceed 3.3 miles and turn left onto SR 581 (Arrington Bridge Rd.) and cross the Neuse River at 1.5 m. Immediately past the bridge turn off on a drive to the right where you will see your guide, **Gene Howe** (telephone no. 919-734-0629). Gene will be present from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.

**Trip No. 2: Pungo National Wildlife Refuge.** With any luck, the huge flock of Snow Geese will be in the fields near Pungo Lake, and among them is the best chance of spotting a Ross Goose - a North Carolina rarity. Golden Eagles have also been found at Pungo. It may be well to catch lunch Washington, NC before proceeding east on Highway 264 to the community of Pantego, where you will meet your guide, **Wade Fuller** (day telephone no. 252-638-2811). He will probably be in a white Ford pick-up or a white Jeep and will be at the corner of

Highways 264 and 99 North at Pantego for 12:00 Noon departure.

**Trip No. 3: Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge.** Mattamuskeet is legendary in regard to the variety and numbers of waterfowl. Good birding can be enjoyed on your own along the causeway which crosses the lake and down the road to the refuge headquarters. However, a more productive visit is to join well-known wildlife biologist **Kelly Davis** for a tour of the extensive eastern portion of the refuge, which is not open to the public. The fee for this trip is \$15.00 payable to Kelly and used largely to pay for rental of the van. Unfortunately, she can carry only 12 people. So one needs to contact her early by calling her at home 252-926-1881. Kelly has a new baby, so a late night call would probably not be appreciated. This three hour tour will begin at 12:00 noon at the refuge headquarters road which turns east off Highway 94 before 94 crosses the lake (highway 94 turns north off 264). Again, there are no restaurants at Mattamuskeet.

**Trip No. 4: Lake Phelps/Pocosin Lakes NWR.** Meet your guide at 1:00 p.m. at the Tyson Farms grain elevators. This spot is reached by turning to the right (south) off US 64 at Roper onto

Newland Road (SR 112) and going about seven miles to the intersection of SR 1183. The field edges in this area can produce some of the rarer sparrows. Lapland Longspurs have been found, and Lake Phelps often has a flock of Common Mergansers. This area is also winter home for Short-eared Owls; but staying until dusk to see the owls will cause one to be rather late reaching Nags Head, 75+ miles distant.

**Trip No. 5: Alligator River NWR.** Meet at 2:00 p.m. at the paved parking lot where Milltail Road meets US 64 in mainland Dare County about three miles west of the US 64/US 264 intersection. Then bird Creef Cut Trail to an observation platform overlooking a wildlife management area. There is a good chance of seeing Short-eared Owls along Milltail Road.

**Trip No. 6: Hatteras Point.** Meet guide Taylor Piephoff at the fish cleaning station at 1:00 p.m. Bird Pea Island on return to Nags Head.

**Trip No. 7: Pea Island (South Pond and North Pond).** Leave Comfort Inn parking lot at 1:00 p.m. and caravan to Pea Island down to the entrance of the road into South Pond--to be met by a US Fish & Wildlife guide before proceeding further. Do not park on the soft highway shoulders unless driving a 4-WD and do not enter gate until official guide is present. See admonition above under "Notice." After birding South Pond, turn around and bird both North Pond dikes. If time allows, stop by parking lot at south side of Oregon Inlet bridge or Bodie Island Pond on return to motel.

**Trip No. 8: Bodie Island/Pea Island.** Meet at the parking lot at Bodie Island Lighthouse at 1:30 p.m. and survey Bodie Island Pond for shorebirds, waders and waterfowl. Cross Oregon Inlet and go to the parking lot at the old Coast Guard station to look for Purple Sandpipers and Harlequin Duck. Then to the north and south dikes at North Pond.

### Saturday Field Trips

Please read the comments regarding restaurants, lunch, etc. on "Where to Eat" insert in registration packet.

**Trip No. 9: Pelagic Trip.** Point and time of departure have not been determined as yet but will be announced at Friday night's meeting, if not before. *Listen carefully.* This trip will probably be over subscribed; so early reservations are advised. The boat, *Miss Hatteras*, is spacious and comfortable but is limited to about 50 passengers. The trip is not restricted to CBC members. Reservations should be made with **Brian Patteson**, telephone no. 703-765-4484; PO Box 1135, Amherst, VA 24521. An application form is included later in this newsletter. The charge for this trip is at the reduced fee of \$70.00 for CBC members payable in advance to Brian. Participants will need to carry their own food and drink. Possible finds include alcids, Great Skua, Black-legged Kittawake, Northern Fulmar, Audubon's Shearwater and Red Phalarope, among others. See your September/October *CBC Newsletter* for further details. The trip should return by 5:00 p.m.

**Trip No. 10: Hatteras Point/Hatteras-Ocracoke Ferry/Pea Island (All-day)** Depart Comfort Inn parking lot at 7:00 a.m. and reassemble at fish-cleaning station (east of Buxton--see map in registration

packet) at 8:00 a.m. to bird Hatteras Point (4-WD's only past fish-cleaning station). Possibility of rare gulls at Hatteras Point. Catch ferry from Hatteras Village to Ocracoke and try to turn around and return on same ferry. Should see a variety of birds, including Brant, from ferry. White Pelican here some previous winters. Bird North Pond and south side of Oregon Inlet in afternoon.

**Trip No. 11: Pea Island/Hatteras Point/Pea Island.** (All-day trip) Depart Comfort Inn parking lot at 7:15 a.m. and proceed to South Pond. See admonition above under "Notice." Depart South Pond in time to arrive at fish-cleaning station (east of Buxton--see map in registration packet) at 10:30 a.m. and bird Hatteras Point. After a lunch break return to bird North Pond and Bodie Island pond in afternoon.

**Trip No. 12: Oregon Inlet/Pea Island/Hatteras Point.** (All-day) Depart Comfort Inn parking lot at 7:30 a.m. and bird north and south dikes of North Pond, moving on to meet guide at South Pond at 10:00 a.m. See admonition above under "Notice." Depart South Pond in time to arrive at fish-cleaning station (east of Buxton--see map in registration packet) by 12:30 p.m. to bird Hatteras Point. Return north to park at old Coast Guard station parking lot and bird south side of Oregon Inlet.

**Trip No. 13: Oregon Inlet/North Pond.** (Half-day) Depart Comfort Inn parking lot at 7:15 a.m. and go to old Coast Guard station parking lot to bird south side of Oregon Inlet (to include breakwater for Purple Sandpipers). Then bird north and south dikes of North Pond. Ocean watch opposite North Pond visitor's center.

**Trip No. 14: Bodie Island/Pea Island.** (Half-day) Depart Comfort Inn parking lot at 7:30 and bird Bodie Island pond and marina and south side of Oregon Inlet from old Coast Guard Station parking lot. Bird North Pond until about 12:00 noon.

**Trip No. 15: Nags Head/Wanchese.** (Half-day) Assemble at Comfort Inn parking lot at 7:00 a.m. and walk over to the beach side to ocean watch. Early a.m. is the most productive time for loons, grebes (possibly Red-necked), gannets, scoters, etc. Then drive to Wanchese harbor where your experienced guide will help you polish your gull id skills.

**Trip No. 16: Bodie Island/Pea Island.** (Half-day) Same as Trip No. 14 departing Comfort Inn parking lot at 1:00 p.m.

**Trip No. 17: Wanchese/Nags Head.** (Half-day) Reverse of Trip No. 15 departing Comfort Inn parking lot at 1:30 p.m.

**Trip No. 18: Alligator River NWR.** (Half-day) Same as Trip No. 5 departing Comfort Inn parking lot at 1:30 p.m.

Sunday trips to be announced based on Saturday's results.

**No Butterfly Trips Scheduled**

# 1998-99 Christmas Bird Counts

*(The 99th Christmas Bird Count is the world's oldest and largest citizen science program. If you would like to participate in one or more of the counts listed below for the Carolinas, contact the person indicated for further information.)*

## Friday, December 18, 1998

Congaree Swamp NM, SC	Robin Carter/Caroline Eastman	eastman@cs.sc.edu	(803) 782-8820
Rocky River, SC	Steve Patterson	SCBirder@aol.com	(843) 667-8199
Transylvania County, NC	Bill & Norma Siebenheller		(828) 884-5443

## Saturday, December 19, 1998

Columbia, SC	Robin Carter/Caroline Eastman	eastman@cs.sc.edu	(803) 782-8820
Clemson, SC	David Mizrahi	dmizrah@hubcap.clemson.edu	(864) 656-3584
Greensboro, NC	Elizabeth Link		(336) 273-4672
McClellanville, SC	Perry E. Nugent		(843) 556-3841
Mount Jefferson, NC	James Coman		(336) 359-2909
Polk County, NC	Simon Thompson	simon@teleplex.net	(828) 859-0382
Raleigh, NC	Susan Campbell	praxisnc@mindspring.com	(919) 715-2600 (work)
Raven Rock State Park, NC	Paul C. Hart	ravenroc@fayettevillenc.com	(910) 893-5184 (home) (910) 893-4888 (work)
Wayne County, NC	Eric Dean	edeangld@icomnet.com	(919) 736-7264
York/Rock Hill, SC	Bill Hilton, Jr.	bhilton@InfoAve.net	(803) 684-0255 (home) (704) 825-4490 (work)

## Sunday, December 20, 1997

Buncombe County	Marilyn Westphal		(828) 891-9896
Durham, NC	Mike Schultz	mschultz@acpub.duke.edu	(919) 490-6761
Lake Norman, NC	Taylor Piephoff	PiephoffT@aol.com	(704) 532-6336
Morehead City, NC	John Fussell	jfuss@mail.clis.com	(252) 240-1046
Southern Pines, NC	Libba Watson	weymouth@pinehurst.net	(910) 692-2167 (work)

## Monday, December 21, 1998

New Bern, NC	Bob Holmes		(252) 633-3003
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## Tuesday, December 22, 1998

Chester, SC	Albert Conway		(803) 329-3759
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## Wednesday, December 23, 1998

Long Cane, SC	Steve Wagner	swagner@lander.edu	(864) 388-8226
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## Saturday, December 26, 1998

New River, NC	James Coman		(336) 359-2909
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## Sunday, December 27, 1998

Chapel Hill, NC	Will Cook	cwcook@acpub.duke.edu	(919) 967-5446
Henderson County, NC	Wayne Forsythe	WForsythe@a-o.com	(828) 697-6628

*(continued on next page)*

## Christmas Bird Counts (continued)

Tuesday, December 29, 1998

Bodie/Pea Island, NC

Paul Sykes

(706) 769-9436

Wednesday, December 30, 1999

Cape Hatteras, NC

Harry LeGrand

Harry\_LeGrand@mail.enr.state.nc.us

(919) 832-3202

Litchfield/Pawleys Island, SC

Jack Peachey

ppaw@sccoast.net

(843) 347-5810

Thursday, December 31, 1999

Portsmouth Island, NC

Peter Vankevich

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## CBC Winter Field Trip

### Outer Banks Winter Birds

January 117, 1999

**Limit:** 20 participants (minimum age 16, minors must be accompanied by registered adult)

**Cost:** \$40 (\$35 CBC members and Friends of Museum) **Leaders:** John & Paula Wright, Phillip Cox

Join us for a leisurely trip that combines bird watching with a taste of the history of Nags Head. A visit to the Outer Banks at this time of year offers good opportunity to view large numbers of winter waterfowl along with loons, gannets, herons and raptors.

The group will meet Friday at 9:00 p.m. for an orientation session at the First Colony Inn, a restored bed and breakfast offering special rates. Mention that you

are with the Museum/CBC trip when making reservations (800) 368-9390.



Participants provide their own transportation to the Inn, food and lodging.

This trip is jointly sponsored by the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and Carolina Bird Club. To register, send name of each participant and a check payable to Museum Extension Fund to: Education Secretary, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, PO Box 2955, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555. Request registration for Program Number 030.

# Quest for # 700: Not Just Any Species Will Do

by Harry LeGrand

Most birders who search for birds across North America will eventually approach milestones of 600, then 700, and possibly even 800 species. I passed 600 years ago with a Baird's Sparrow in Manitoba. A 20-day trip to Alaska -- everywhere but Attu -- in May-June 1997 should have put me over 700, as I needed 31 species to reach that level. Alas, there were few Asian vagrants in spring 1997 (as opposed to a banner spring this year), and I ended with 694 species. A few species splits in the past year got me to 697 without lifting binoculars.

Ricky Davis and I decided to visit Washington and California this fall; he could get 15-18 lifers, but I could only count on two reasonable ones -- Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel and Island Scrub-Jay, a recent split. When I unexpectedly saw the Bulwer's Petrel out of Oregon Inlet, NC, in August, giving me 698, an awful thought raced through my mind. As we would be travelling to Washington first, doing two Westport pelagic trips, and then doing several pelagic trips and the Santa Cruz Island trip in California, I could envision a crowning moment of my birding career being the Island Scrub-Jay as lifer #700! Not a recent split for 700! I had to have a bonus bird for a lifer before I got the scrub-jay. Then again, what if I missed Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel again -- I missed it in Alaska -- and got the scrub-jay for only 699? Whatever the case, the scrub-jay would not be 700; I'd drop a previously seen bird, maybe some questionable split or something, before I would let ANYONE know that a recently-split bird would be 700. (By the way, no one should get #600, 700, or 800 by sitting around the house, tallying a species just split; you've got to earn it by seeing a species in the field.)

It didn't take long for things to fall in place for me. We flew out to Seattle on Friday, September 11, and by mid-morning on Saturday we were watching Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, #699 for me. Ricky had gotten a few lifers also, such as Pink-footed and Buller's Shearwaters, and

Black-footed Albatross. Not long afterward, one of the leaders yelled out Laysan Albatross, and we watched it fly rapidly away. I saw the black mantle and white underparts, but I couldn't make out the underwing pattern and bill color.

Nonetheless, what else could it be? It was #700, but I really wanted another look, as "what else could it be" and "the leader said it was a Laysan" didn't sit well with me. We were 35-40 miles offshore at that time, and Terry Wahl (the organizer) felt it was the time and place to lay the oil slick, to see if the Laysan would return and to see if other species would come to the fish oil. We waited downwind for a few minutes, watching Fork-tailed, Black-footed Albatrosses, and shearwaters materialize out of thin air. Then, a big black and white bird flew past the boat and landed on the water next to the slick. The Laysan had returned! What a view, especially when it sat next to the smaller Black-footeds.

The Laysan was indeed a bonus bird. It normally appears in October, and is uncommon even then and in winter. I figured that I would have to take a winter West Coast pelagic trip, or summer ferries in Alaska, to encounter this majestic bird.

Now that my goal was achieved ahead of schedule, it was time for Ricky to add to his list. The Sunday pelagic trip added him a bonus pair of Xantus' Murrelets, rare off Washington. The Laysan was seen again, but Ricky's hoped for Flesh-footed Shearwater, an iffy bird on any West Coast pelagic trip, could not be found. He did get a bonus stake-out bird, a Bar-tailed Godwit, and he found a Pacific Golden-Plover, rather scarce and easily missed. Ricky also added the ubiquitous Northwestern Crow, and he had so-so looks at Surf-bird and Wandering Tattler. But, we had plenty of chances for better looks at them along California's coastline.

Tuesday saw us flying to San Francisco and undertaking the 350-mile drive to Ventura, where we were to take the boat trip to Santa Cruz Island on Wednesday.

Ricky got good looks at Wandering Tattlers on Tuesday, and it was nice to find landbirds easily; western Washington, in my opinion, is the worst area in the lower 48 states for landbird numbers and diversity.

The boat ride with Island Packers was pleasant, but Sooty, Pink-footed, and Black-vented shearwaters were the only pelagic birds seen coming and going. Heavy El Nino rains during the winter and a sheep round-up in progress yielded a very unsightly impression of Scorpion Ranch, where the boat landed at the eastern end of Santa Cruz Island. Ricky, another birder, and I had to be accompanied by an Island Packers guide to get past the "mess" in order to reach the oaks in the dry canyon a mile from shore. For 1 + hours we hiked up the rocky canyon, with nary a jay in sight. This was farther up the canyon than the guide had been in quite a while before seeing jays. It was now after 1 pm, and we had to be back at 2:30 for the ride back. Finally, the guide spotted a small group of jays, and it was a relief, not at all a joy, at finding #701.

I had some hesitation about chasing the jay in the first place, as it was a recent split, and as it was 200+ miles down the coast from Monterey, our REAL destination in California. All I can say now is that I want to see all of the native breeding species in North America, and sometimes you have to do things like this to make that goal a reality.

Thursday and Friday saw us birding our way northward toward Monterey, with Ricky finally getting good looks at Surf-birds. We were psyched about the Monterey pelagic trips over the weekend, as essentially all previous summer and early fall trips had found large numbers of storm-petrels and small alcids, including routine counts of 100+ Least Storm-Petrels and 10-20 Craveri's Murrelets. However, the weather on Saturday at Monterey was not great for finding these small birds; as a moderately strong NW

*(continued on next page)*

## # 700 (continued)

wind caused a 3-foot chop, "rough" by Monterey Bay standards. Despite seeing thousands of pelagic birds and large numbers of cetaceans, the Saturday trip was a real disappointment. We were able to find a Flesh-footed Shearwater, but the view was somewhat fleeting. The "gimme" Black Storm-Petrels, Least Storm-Petrels, Craveri's Murrelets, and Cassin's Auklets were nowhere to be found, and only a few poor looks at Ashy Storm-Petrels was all Ricky could consider as a lifer among the smaller seabirds.

The forecast for Sunday was about the same, but as we were heading out of the bay into the open sea, Debi Shearwater's prediction that everyone would get seasick was more than Ricky needed! Somehow, though, things turned our way. We began seeing storm-petrels feeding in the rough seas, and we got all three storm-petrels, though looks at the Least Storm-Petrels weren't the best. A Cassin's Auklet scooted out of the way of the boat, giving Ricky a barely countable look.

As we returned back into the calmer waters of the bay, I shouted "Short-tailed Shearwater"! One had banked beside the boat and landed in the water with the swarm of gulls behind the boat. As I had been watching scores of Sooty Shearwaters banking past the boat all day, identifying this smaller gem (they normally arrive in early October) was easy. I was able to get everyone on the boat onto the bird, and Captain Richard

Temullo (a fine pelagic birder) backed the boat up to the bird. At this point, one or two birders asked "What do the leaders say it is?" They had no idea who I was, or whether I had seen lots of Short-tailed Shearwaters before. They needed one of the 5-6 leaders, particularly Debi, to proclaim "Short-tailed Shearwater." Quite annoyed, I shouted "It's a Short-tailed Shearwater." Somewhere during this excitement, Debi reviewed the appropriate field marks separating the Short-tailed from the Sooty. Everyone was happy at this bonus bird, and it was an unexpected lifer for Ricky. Several birders thanked me for finding the bird among the hordes of Sooties; wondering how anyone could have picked it out. If you stay alert ...

The trip still had another hour or two, and something even more exciting was about to unfold. Captain Richard found a small pod of Killer Whales, a lifer for me and most others. We were entranced by them, even though they were simply in slow-motion swimming mode. We saw about seven in all, and they made the Blue Whales we saw earlier in the day just "ordinary". We still could not find the celebrated storm-petrel flock in the bay, nor could we find any small alcids. Yes, Ricky actually missed one target bird -- Craveri's Murrelet. We know there were plenty of them in the bay, but small birds disappear in choppy seas.

Ricky ended the trip with 18 lifers, and I found three bird lifers and several cetacean lifers. I still don't believe there is a storm-petrel flock of 5,000-10,000 birds in the bay, but I'm willing to try again in late September or October in upcoming

years. As for my next goal, I hope to find the remaining few regular nesters, and migrant pelagic species, in North America. But, am I really ready for \$150 boat rides to look for Murphy or Cook's petrels, or ventures into remote Alaska for Siberian Chickadee and Whiskered Auklet?

### CBC Web Site

<http://members.aol.com/cbirdclub>

### CBC Rare Bird Alert

(704)332-BIRD

### Deceased Members

Jeanette Austin  
Brevard, NC

Ambrose M. Wylie  
Due West, SC

---

## Membership Application and Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

(If family membership, give name of each person included.)

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

(home) (business)

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Enter/Renew Membership As Indicated:

Send Materials Indicated:

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$15)	<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Club (\$20)	<input type="checkbox"/> CBC Cloth arm patch \$2.00 ea.
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$20)	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (\$35)	<input type="checkbox"/> CBC Decals (vinyl stick-on) \$2.00 ea., \$1.75 ea. in quantity
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$50)	<input type="checkbox"/> Checklists 10/\$1.75, 25/\$5, 50/\$9.50, 75/\$12.75, 100/\$16
<input type="checkbox"/> Library/Institution (\$15)	<input type="checkbox"/> Life (\$250)	

Make check payable to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.** and mail to PO Box 2955, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

**Meeting Registration Form**  
CBC Winter Meeting, January 29-31, 1999

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (list each name for name tags)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (day) (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ member registrations at \$10 each and \_\_\_\_\_ nonmember registrations at \$15 each. Registration at the meeting will be \$15 for members or nonmembers.

**Field Trip Registration**

In the form below please indicate by **Trip Number** your choice of field trips. If registering for more than one person write the first name with each choice. **Note that Trip No. 3 and Trip No. 9 require advance registration with leader.**

**Friday** \_\_\_\_\_ **Saturday (morning or all-day)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Saturday (afternoon)** \_\_\_\_\_

I will be willing to share a ride in my 4-WD vehicle on field trips for which I am registered \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with check payable to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.**, PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

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**Pelagic Trip Registration Form**  
CBC Winter Meeting, January 29-31, 1999

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (day) (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

The pelagic trip aboard the Miss Hatteras will depart from either Wanchese or Hatteras, depending on the weather, on Saturday, January 30. There is an **obligatory** weather date on Sunday, January 31 which means that you will not receive a refund unless **both** dates are weathered out. The cost of the trip is \$70.00 per person.

I have read and understand the details regarding departure location and refund policy and agree to the conditions stated. **Each participant must sign.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with check payable to **Brian Patteson, Inc.** PO Box 1135, Amherst, VA 24521 Telephone # (703) 765-4484

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**Motel Reservation Form**  
Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting, January 29-31, 1999

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Room rate (double occupancy): \$35 plus tax (bayside), \$45 plus tax (oceanfront).** Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ bayside room \_\_\_\_\_ oceanfront room. Arrival \_\_\_\_\_ Departure \_\_\_\_\_. My check for the first night's lodging is enclosed.

Mail with deposit to **Comfort Inn Oceanfront**, P.O. Box 307, Nags Head, NC 27959 or call 1-800-334-3302

## CBC Newsletter

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# >Welcome New Members

**Dorothy Bambach & Matthew  
Ryan**  
NewBern, NC

**John & Nancy Brothers**  
Raleigh, NC

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Boone, NC

**Parker Chesson**  
Durham, NC

**Jean Corbett**  
Carrboro, NC

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