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# CBC Newsletter

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

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## Birding the Interstate 95 Corridor In South Carolina: Savannah and Santee National Wildlife Refuges

*Steve Shultz*

Each day thousands of motorists traverse South Carolina on its main north/south artery, Interstate 95. I-95 extends 1,927 miles from Houlton, Maine to Miami, Florida — 198 miles of which is in South Carolina. Most of the motorists whizzing along toward Florida, the great cities of the northeast, or other destinations may not realize they are passing very close to two fine birding destinations, Savannah NWR in Jasper County, and Santee NWR in Clarendon County.

Savannah NWR, established in 1927 and one of seven refuges in the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, protects 29,000 acres of freshwater and brackish water marsh, tidal creeks, and hardwood hammocks. Old rice paddies provide excellent impounded habitat for migratory waterfowl, alligators, and a variety of species commonly associated with wetland habitats.

During the cooler months, Savannah NWR provides wintering habitat for thousands of puddle and diving ducks. American Bitterns skulk in the abundant reeds and grasses, while Sora, Virginia, and King Rails call from deep in the marsh. Hardwood hammocks provide attractive habitat for lingering passerine migrants, and it is not uncommon to find one or two warblers that would normally be found much farther south in the early winter months.

During the warmer months, the refuge provides a

home for the sporty Purple Gallinule, a fine diversity of wading birds, American Alligators (which may also been seen sunning on warm winter days), Canebrake



Savannah NWR

Rattlesnakes, and the spectacular Swallow-tailed Kite, among others. If water levels are right, shorebirds can be enjoyable during spring and especially during the extended fall migration season.

Access to the interior of the refuge is along the four-mile Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive. Watch for a nesting Great Horned Owl in the spectacular oak trees at the drive's entrance if you visit in late winter.

To reach the refuge from the interstate, take SC exit 5 and proceed south on US17. (*continued on page 9*)

# Attu Revisited

Tom Krakauer and Judith Fortney

Few birders have visited Attu, the westernmost island of the Aleutian chain, since the summer of 2000 when Larry Balch ran the last of his Attours – famous for their challenging living conditions, and birders have been pondering ways to get there ever since. In September of 2006 Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours (VENT) put together the dream trip. No more leaky, rat-infested buildings for us; just a 300-foot cruise ship, *Spirit of Oceanus*, with all the luxury that implies. One hundred birders and eleven guides left Whittier, Alaska in the late afternoon of 8 September 2006 and began our adventure. Carolina birders included the authors, Fran and Wayne Irvin from Southern Pines NC, Susan and Warren Jones from Winston-Salem NC and Nannellyn (Nan) Lloyd from Hilton Head SC.

At least once every day during the pelagic portion of the trip we slowed down and chummed using salmon. In addition to a cloud of Northern Fulmars. Black-legged and Red-legged Kittiwakes, and Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers. We often attracted more than 100 Albatross. Close to the U.S., they were mostly Black-footed while closer to Asia, Laysan dominated. There was a sprinkling of Short-tailed Albatross – a lifer for most participants. Individuals are recognizable as their coloration changes with age, but their bills remain the same dramatic bubble gum pink. During the trip we saw more than 12 – exceeding the total population of this globally endangered species at its nadir. Close-ups all three species in a single frame were there for the taking.

While underway, we had a number of the expected west coast alcids, a constant stream of Short-tailed Shearwaters and Northern Fulmar (mostly dark morph). Fork-Tailed Storm-Petrel were frequently off the bow and less frequently, Leach's Storm-Petrel. Dark peregrines (subsp *pealei*) cruising around the boat picking off alcids or storm-petrels.

Our first landfall was Dutch Harbor, center of the Aleutian chain and famous for its fishing industry, especially crabs. Indeed there were crab pots and fishing gear everywhere. Some of us went ashore, others slept late. The ship took on enough fuel to get us to Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula (Russia)

where the trip would end more than 2 weeks hence. Leaving Dutch Harbor we searched for Whiskered Auklets – those tiny little alcids that are so hard to see. The *Spirit of Oceanus*'s height above the waterline made them more easily seen than from the small boat which most birders usually take to find these cardinal-sized birds that either dive the instant they are disturbed or are always in the trough of the wave. Even from our vantage point they weren't easy.

A very special feature of this “mother of all pelagic trips” was “Marshall's Forest.” Marshall Iliff (one of the leaders) had tied half a dozen small trees to the stern railing complete with suet and seed feeders. The idea was to shelter the small passerines that inevitably show up on a pelagic trip. It worked. And the most interesting bird was a first record for the Aleutians – a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Other on-board visitors were Orange-crowned Warbler and storm-petrels that came each night attracted by the ship's lights. Each morning they were picked up and sheltered until ready to take off again. The camphor smell of Leach's Storm-petrels is not a field mark mentioned in field guides.

When we got to deep (more than 500 fathoms) water, Mottled Petrel were seen daily. The initial views were distant and were recognizable only by the arching flight of pteradromas. But with patience, out of the 120 seen, a few provided spectacular views off the bow. And even Judith finally got a good close look at the bold M on the back and the dark gray patch on the belly.

The highlight of the voyage west however was the great spectacle of an estimated 1½ million Short-tailed Shearwaters darkening the water in every direction as far as the eye could see. The ship slowed to allow us to absorb this rare spectacle and the birds near the ship pattered away, their feet making quite a noise as they ran across the glassy-calm water. (Glassy calm is not a word that we associate with the Bering Sea!) Amidst this great congregation of birds were 50 or so hump-back whales, attracted no doubt by the same source of food that attracted the birds. They were bubble feeding so a whale would suddenly surface, mouth open, among the birds.

(continued on page 3)

## Attu Revisited (continued)

No-one left the deck for several hours during this amazing spectacle and every camera was busy.

After 7 days of sailing we arrived at Attu, early in the morning of 14 September and dropped anchor in Massacre Bay. Of course, we couldn't wait to go ashore! We tendered in and one of the first birds we found was a Common Snipe, the uncommon snipe that is, the Eurasian one. Bingo! Lifer within an hour of landing. The snipe made up for slipping and sliding in slimy, foul-smelling, rotten kelp. The snipe loved it, s/he picked around in the smelly stuff near an ancient overturned boat. This took place on Alexei Point – a place that Attuvians will recall is a 12-mile bike ride from the living quarters. Not to make it sound too good, walking on the beach was hard work because of the kelp. Walking above the beach was equally strenuous because of the bushwhacking needed to get through the waist-high weeds --one downside of fall birding on Attu. Some people also saw Skylark, Tufted Duck and/or Ruff.

Next morning, and every day thereafter, we went ashore in three groups to three different landing points distributing many pairs of eyes to different places. Our group in the Henderson Valley found a Spotted Redshank. We saw it land at some distance, then fly overhead calling. No good looks at a sitting bird. . . yet. As always when a “good” bird was relayed by radio, birders from the other two groups came running or at least walking as fast as they could. The bird eventually settled on Smew Pond and over the next several days everyone got terrific looks.

Another day everyone raced over to see a female Baikal Teal hiding in the reeds on a tiny pond near the Coast Guard's warehouse. Two participants saw this bird, photographed and ID'd it from the photo and a field guide. Then they asked Larry Balch (who was helping people get on a wagtail) if it was unusual for Attu. It is! And it was a life bird for most of the guides (including Victor Emmanuel and Larry Balch) and participants (though a few had seen one near Seattle two years ago). It's great fun to be on a trip when the guides get lifers! It was also Tom's 700<sup>th</sup> so he provided the wine with dinner that night.

Other interesting birds seen over the next few days were: Black-backed Wagtail (just lumped with White Wagtail), Kamchatka Mew Gull (potential split), Common Teal (potential split), Cackling Goose (the Aleutian subspecies with a white collar at the base of the neck), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler, Red-necked Stint, Kittlitz's Murrelet, Rock Sandpiper, one very dark *tundrus* Peregrine Falcon, the Kamchatka subspecies of Common Raven (twice the size of the U.S. *corax*, and the world's largest passerine), and Snowy Owl. The ducks and sandpipers provided the excitement on Attu, while the land birds were the “usual suspects”, Lapland Longspur, the large dark *maxima* Song Sparrow, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

Socially speaking . . . we entertained the Coast Guard aboard one evening, 20 young men assigned to one of the Coast Guard's remotest outposts. And the Coast Guard built an enormous bonfire one evening and sold us hats, t-shirts etc with the Attu logo. The Coast Guard has two canine members – Tennessee and Kiska – who ride around in a pickup truck and actually have Coast Guard rank (but don't rotate to other locations). They're serious about their jobs, definitely not into a friendly scratch behind the ears. One day we watched these two dogs fishing. The shallow creeks were full – literally full – of salmon returning to spawn. Both dogs flipped them out of the water into the brush, then showed no further interest. Never saw a dog go fishing before!

Finally it was time to move on after 8 days in Massacre Bay and so that afternoon we moved further west on Attu to drop anchor in Etienne Bay where no birders have gone before! The view that presented itself at dusk was a large bay with a sandy beach and a fairly wide flat valley between two mountains. Two guides were scouting up the valley before the masses tendered in. The participants were working the beach and the bay (Arctic and Yellow-billed Loons) when the radios called us in for a warbler. You can imagine 100 birders not taking their eyes off a creek bed and one tiny bird skulking in the brush. Poor little bird made a mad dash from one bit of brush to another. But eventually everyone did get a reasonably good look at a . . . Yellow-browed Warbler!

## Attu Revisited (continued)

Only been seen twice before in North America, once by Paul Lehman, and once by Paul Lehman and George Armistead, both times at Gambell on St. Lawrence Island.

This was a life bird for every single person there – even Dave Sonneborn who has seen more birds in Alaska than anyone else ever (the YBWA was his 400<sup>th</sup> for Alaska). This all took place in a really beautiful spot – high mountains as a backdrop, calling loons on a nearby lake, lovely sunshine. A fantastic finale for our stay on Attu.

We should mention the weather. We've all heard stories about the miserable weather on Attu. We had glorious weather. We used sunscreen not rain gear. The Coast Guard said it was the best weather in 12 months. Although we kept reminding ourselves that bad weather brings good birds, we weren't really complaining.

We should also mention the old living quarters of Attour. They're everything everyone says about them . . . stalactites growing from the concrete beams, leaky, rundown, few amenities. But so interesting. Many members of each year-class wrote their ABA lifelist numbers on the walls. These lists are a who's who of birding – Roger Tory Peterson, Phoebe Snetsinger (653 in 1984), not to mention several current participants. We saw the famous cutouts of bird shapes cut into the walls and outhouse doors. NOTE: THEY WERE ALSO CUTOUTS IN THE WALLS OF THE ROOMS. And we all thanked our lucky stars we were staying on a nice comfortable cruise ship!

We were sad to see Attu fade into the distance, and most vowed to come again should VENT repeat this trip in the fall, and even more determined if it could be done in the spring. But the goodies weren't finished – on the way to Petropavlovsk (36 hours sailing from Attu) we saw more Mottled Petrel and several Sotolander's Petrel though, sadly, the latter were in Russian waters and not ABA countable. A Middendorff's (Grasshopper) Warbler briefly landed on the ship as we tied up in Petropavlosk.

The trip netted a total of 144 ABA area birds and 19 mammals. One person got 63 ABA lifers, Dave Sonneborn got just one. As for us, Tom got 10, Judith got 4. A daily log posted by Marshall Illiff at [www.ventbirds.com](http://www.ventbirds.com) details sightings by day.



*Short-tailed Shearwaters and a Humpback Whale*  
Nan Lloyd

### New Members

Terry Anderson  
Lawrenceburg, KY

Carder Blake  
Southport, NC

Judy Grant  
Chapel Hill, NC

George Taylor  
Elizabeth City, NC

Joel Arrington  
Oriental, NC

Nancy and Holton Bond  
Kill Devil Hills, NC

Gretchen Nareff  
Yemassee, SC

Amber Williams  
Fayetteville, NC

Sue Arthur  
Southport, NC

Ed Coll  
Silver Spring, MD

Carol Peters  
Charleston, SC

Clem Wurtz  
Calabash, NC

Monroe and Sherry Baldwin  
North Myrtle Beach, SC

Greg Dodge  
Hillsborough, NC

Steve Shaffer  
New Bern, NC

Carolyn Baucom  
Boone, NC

John and Sandy Fricker  
Duck, NC

Josh Southern  
Apex, NC



H. Douglas Pratt

# Do You Know Which CBC Seasonal Meeting Produced the Highest Species Count?

*Stephen Harris*

That would be the recent Fall 2006 meeting in Savannah, Georgia! Wonderful weather combined with some excellent birding locations to produce the highest seasonal meeting species count since the CBC starting keeping records. Field trip participants tallied an impressive total of 191 birds over the weekend, a total thirteen higher than last year's Charleston meeting.

While many birds were certainly special to individual attendees, birds of particular note would be: Eared Grebe, American Bittern, Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork (notable for the enormous numbers), Black Rail, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora (notable for the easy open views), American Avocet (notable for the enormous numbers), Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Gray Kingbird, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

The entire meeting checklist is available on the CBC web site at [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

Field trips visited sites in both South Carolina and Georgia. South Carolina trips included Bear Island, the Savannah Spoil Site, Savannah NWR, and Nimmer Sod Farm. Productive Georgia sites included Tybee Island, Altamaha NWR, and Harris Neck NWR.

The CBC especially thanks featured speakers, Sidney Maddock, who spoke on Piping Plovers, and Adam Kent, who focused on the often frustrating sparrow family.

Our host hotel had everybody in suite rooms complete with whirlpools for \$79 per night (including breakfast!) so we were mightily spoiled by the fine southern hospitality in Savannah.

Please plan to attend the next seasonal meeting, scheduled for Hendersonville, North Carolina and join in on the excitement!

## Let Them Know You Are A Birder!

*John Ennis*

In the opinion of one motel owner on the Outer Banks of North Carolina who caters to fishermen: "birdwatchers bring no money to the island." We know that is not true and we know that birding areas on the Outer Banks are under intense pressure due to development and expansion of other recreational use of the beaches.

What to do? If you are on the Outer Banks for pelagic trips, Wings-Over-Water, Carolina Bird Club meetings, or just birding on your own, let business owners know.

Many birding trails and birding festivals in other states use calling cards for birders to give to restaurants, hotels, and other businesses to increase awareness of nature-based tourism. I have used them in many locations and, by the reactions I got, I know the program works!

Calling cards are a component of the North Carolina Birding Trail. The trail's promotional brochure was recently mailed to members of the CBC, Audubon North Carolina, and others plus the brochure is now available at all eighteen North Carolina welcome centers.

Four calling cards are attached to the brochure and you can print additional cards from the trail's website: [http://www.ncbirdingtrail.org/Documents/NCBT\\_CallingCards.pdf](http://www.ncbirdingtrail.org/Documents/NCBT_CallingCards.pdf).

I used the Outer Banks as an example above; however, what I said applies to every birding location in the Carolinas.

Let's use the calling cards now and not wait for formal trail openings!

# Carolina Birders Flock to Florida for Rare Duck

Steve Shultz

*Sightings from the Field:* November and December 2006 saw an unusual irruption of *birderus twitchus carolinas* (also known as the Common Carolina Twitcher) in east-central Florida. Multiple reports include small flocks at Viera Wetlands, Merritt Island NWR, all along Interstate 95, and at several Cracker Barrel restaurants. The Common Carolina Twitcher can be recognized by a glazed facial expression (from driving through the night), a slightly bewildered look (from trying to make sense of vague directions printed off the internet), and the penchant for carrying a Sibley guide with the stiff-tailed duck page dog-eared. Please send any additional reports of this interesting, but strange, creature to the editor.

Yes, Carolina birders, along with visitors from several other states as far away as California, descended en masse upon a wetland in Viera, Florida in hopes of seeing a very special avian visitor, a female-plumaged Masked Duck. The Masked Duck, a rare but annual visitor to the United States, can be quite difficult to observe due to its habit of staying in or close to heavy vegetation, so the fact that this bird was being seen in the open on a daily basis induced many to rearrange their schedules and drive several hundred miles each way for a glimpse at the duck, and the chance to check another species off their ABA or life lists.

Wayne Forsythe of western NC writes: I left my home in Hendersonville at 5:00 a.m. on November 9. The 583 mile drive to Florida was uneventful and I made it to Viera Wetlands in 8.5 hours. Within minutes of arriving at the location, I met Thomas J. Dunkerton who promptly directed me to the bird! The Rio Grande Valley of Texas would be the more likely place to hope to get a glimpse of this very shy species, but in my five trips to the Valley, no opportunities presented themselves. At 4:30 p.m. I got back in the car and headed north, spending the night outside of Savannah and birding Savannah NWR the next morning. I left the refuge at 12:30 p.m. and was back home in Hendersonville at 4:45 p.m. November 10. In 36 hours I drove 1165 miles for Life ABA Bird #650. Yes, it was worth every minute of the journey for this spectacular bird!



Masked Duck Steve Shultz

Stan Wulkowicz writes: I headed south from Maggie Valley on November 11, overnighted in Palm Coast, Florida and filled up on gas. This was a mistake because I believe the gas had water in it or something, as my Subaru coughed and jerked most of the way from Palm Coast to the Viera Wetlands! I had visions that my car would conk out and be one of the cars that one sees along the roadside of the Interstate. I had GREAT looks at the Masked Duck the morning of the 12th, got excellent photos, and had pretty good looks at a Barred Owl just across the pond. I spent about three hours at the Wetlands, mostly looking at the duck. A very satisfying bird (#751 ABA lifer for me and #666 photographed in the ABA area). I worried the full time I was there about the trip back to Maggie Valley, and if the Subaru would make it, but it never missed a beat as whatever was in the gas apparently worked through the car's fuel system. Whew! I departed the Masked Duck about 10:30 a.m. on the 12th, and was back in Maggie Valley 8:45 p.m. the same day. A fast, satisfying trip!

Judith Fortney writes: I flew to Florida to see the Masked Duck, leaving in the morning, and got to the wetland about 3 p.m. I found a nice bench, ate my sandwich, then started looking around and found the bird almost immediately. What a cutie! Not 20 feet away, browsing in the reeds, diving a bit. Then she took a bath, preened, tucked her head and took a nap. Well it's not very exciting watching a sleeping duck! So I drove around a bit, saw a Bald Eagle take a big-gish fish (8-9") from a Great Blue Heron with much squawking on both sides, saw a Pied-billed Grebe

*(continued on page 9)*



## CBC Bonus Trips!

Each year the CBC visits exciting destinations in the Carolinas and around the world. Here's your chance to join in on the fun!

### South Texas' Rio Grande Valley — April 7-15, 2007

Join trip leaders Linda Kolb and Bruce Smithson as we explore the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. From the beaches of South Padre Island through the subtropical forests of the lower valley, to the more arid uplands around Falcon Dam—this is one of the best birding areas in the whole United States.

Expect to see: Least Grebe, Fulvous Whistling Duck, White-tailed Kite, Gray, Harris's and White-tailed Hawks, Crested Caracara, Plain Chachalaca, Inca Dove, White-tipped Dove, Green Parakeet, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Green and Ringed Kingfisher, Green Jay, Chihuahuan Raven, Long-billed Thrasher,

Olive Sparrow, Altamira Oriole, and many more. With luck we might find: Muscovy Duck, Hook-billed Kite, Red-billed Pigeon, Groove-billed Ani, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Brown Jay, Tamaulipas Crow, Clay-colored Robin, Tropical Parula, Audubon's Oriole and White-collared Seedeater.

Attendance is limited to 10 people plus the leaders. Contact Dana Harris at 630-980-1049 or e-mail at [hq@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org) for final pricing and to establish your slot on this trip.

### West Slope of the Rocky Mountains — May 26-June 3, 2007

This special field trip is a bookend to last year's trip to the east slope of the Rocky Mountains. The 2007 trip will visit west slope sites in Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming to search for a variety of nesting birds and migrants. The itinerary includes spectacular Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Target birds include: Trumpeter Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye, Sandhill Crane, Calliope and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Olive-sided, Dusky, Cordilleran and

Hammond's Flycatchers, Sage Thrasher, Plumbeous Vireo, Juniper Titmouse, Pine Grosbeak and Black Rosy-Finch. John Ennis and Steve Shultz will lead the group.

Attendance is limited to 10 people plus the leaders. Contact Dana Harris at 630-980-1049 or e-mail at [hq@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org) for final pricing and to establish your slot on this trip.

### Southeast Arizona — August 6-12, 2007

Visit SE Arizona at the height of the hummingbird migration! Sites visited will include: Saguaro NP, Catalina SP, California Gulch, Madera Canyon, Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, Patagonia SP, San Pedro River, the Chiricahua Mountains, and the Cave Creek/Portal area. We will also visit Ramsey, Miller, Garden, Ashe, and Carr Canyons plus between Sierra Vista and Bisbee. Spaces have been reserved for us in Madera Canyon and Portal.

Target birds will include: twelve or more species of hummingbirds; Five-striped and Black-chinned Spar-

rows; Montezuma Quail; Varied Bunting; Hepatic and Flame-colored Tanagers; Lucy's, Red-faced, Hermit, Rufous-capped, and Virginia's Warblers; Elegant Trogon; Greater Pewee; Black-capped Gnatcatcher; Thick-billed Kingbird; Gray Hawk; Rose-breasted Becard; Bendire's and Crissal Thrashers plus many other area specialties.

Attendance is limited to 10 people plus the leaders. Contact Dana Harris at 630-980-1049 or e-mail at [hq@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org) for final pricing and to establish your slot on this trip.

## Bonus Trips in the Carolinas

### Holly Shelter/Topsail Beach, NC — February 17, 2007

Leader: Bruce Smithson Limit: 15 participants Cost: \$10.00

This trip will begin at the Holly Shelter Game Land entrance near Hampstead, NC, north of Wilmington. We expect to see Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, nuthatches, Pine Warblers and more, with an outside chance to find Bachman's and/or Henslow's Sparrows. After our search of Holly Shelter, we will drive north to Topsail Island where we'll scan the ocean for loons, grebes, sea ducks and gannets, and hope for something unusual. Also expect Sedge and Marsh Wrens as well as Swamp, Savannah, Seaside, and Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Contact the trip leader at bruce-smithson@netscape.net or (910) 799-5083 for more info and space availability before sending in registration form/check.

### Dobbins Farm/Townville, SC — March 11, 2007

Leader: Linda Kolb Limit: 15 participants Cost: \$10.00

The Dobbins Farm area can be very productive for waterfowl, wintering species and migrants, producing rarities on a more or less regular basis. While we cannot guarantee anything unusual, we should find plenty of sparrows, ducks and early spring migrants in this "bird rich" area. Participants will meet at 7:00 am at the Townville Post Office parking lot. The trip will include the ponds of Dobbins Farm, the Beaver Creek WMA and the grounds of the Tokeena Beagle Club. The beagle club has planted many acres for birds and wildlife and has given us permission to walk this area. Contact Linda Kolb at Rapahana4@hotmail.com or 864-972-1180 for more information. Contact Dana Harris at 630-980-1049 or e-mail at hq@carolinabirdclub.org for more info and space availability before sending in registration form/check.

### Costa Rica April 1-13, 2007

Simon Thomson reports that space on this trip, which is especially designed for CBC members, is filling up fast! For more information or to register for the trip, please contact Simon Thompson at 866 253-4247, 828-253-4247, or Travel@birdventures.com. Find more information on this opportunity at the CBC website, www.carolinabirdclub.org, or the Ventures website at www.birdventures.com

## CBC Bonus Day Trip Registration Form

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

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

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please update my membership record with this address information.

Enclosed is my check for \_\_\_\_\_ Dobbins Farm day trip(s) (\$10), \_\_\_\_\_ Holly Shelter/Topsail day trip(s) (\$10), \_\_\_\_\_ Shackleford Banks day trip(s) (\$10), . My total is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the above registrations.

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trips leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip.

I release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 353 Montabello, Bloomingdale, IL 60108.

## Birding the Interstate 95 Corridor In South Carolina: Savannah and Santee National Wildlife Refuges *(continued)*

SC170 branches off from US17 after a few miles, and once on SC170 look for the entrance to the wildlife drive on the left. The drive is a one way loop, and you will pass the exit prior to arriving at the entrance. You'll know you've gone too far if you reach the bridge over the Savannah River.

Father north along the interstate the highway crosses massive Lake Marion which, at 110,600 acres, is South Carolina's largest reservoir. Along Marion's north shore in Clarendon County is the Santee NWR. Established in 1942, the refuge's four separate tracts protect 15,095 acres of mixed habitat that can be especially entertaining for waterfowl and sparrows in the cooler months, and breeding passerines in the warmer months.

Of the four units (Dingle Pond, Bluff, Pine Island, and Cuddo), Bluff provides perhaps the best opportunity to view migratory waterfowl, especially geese. While Canada Geese are the most common visitor, Snow, Ross's, Greater-white Fronted, and Cackling Geese may be found from time to time. The best place to look for wintering geese is from an observation platform on the Wright's Bluff Nature Trail. To visit the trail, and hope for a nice selection of geese in the fields, take I-95 to exit 102, and follow the signs to the Bluff Unit, which is literally moments away. The entrance road to the unit passes a visitor center where birders can pick up refuge information and check on the latest sightings. Here and at several other locations nearby one can look across the expanse of water, scouting for waterfowl, gulls, and other birds. Proceed

along the entrance road past the visitor center to the parking lot for the Wright's Bluff Trail. This one mile loop trail leads through mixed woodland, crosses swampy areas on wooden footbridges, and leads to the aforementioned viewing platform. The platform is about halfway along the circular trail, although it seems as if beginning the walk in a clockwise fashion gets a scope-laden birder to the platform most quickly.

The platform provides a elevated view across acres of agricultural land managed for waterfowl and other wildlife. A recent visit provided satisfying, if distant, views of Canada Geese, Ross's Geese, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Ring-necked Ducks, and a beautiful pair of Sandhill Cranes.

Nicely complementing the Bluff Unit, the nearby Cuddo Unit provides opportunities to view passerines, especially sparrows, and waterfowl. A 7.5 mile wildlife drive and two hiking trails provide access to weedy fields, flooded impoundments and lake views.

To visit the Cuddo Unit, simply follow the brown highway signs from the bottom of the ramp at exit 102.

The next time you are driving I-95 through South Carolina and want a chance to stretch your legs, or maybe find that life bird (or reptile!) consider a visit to Savannah and/or Santee NWR, you might just find yourself planning a trip in the future just to visit these wonderful birding spots!

### *Masked Duck (continued)*

swimming very rapidly in circles underwater - chasing a fish no doubt. Both of these spectacles were new to me. Then around 4:30 p.m. I drove back to the Orlando airport on the chance there'd be a plane back to RDU. There was, and the penalty was less than the cost of a hotel., so I was home by 10:30. One of my more successful chases -- saw a very cooperative lifer, 30 species in 90 minutes, two other birdy events **and** spent less money than expected. How good can it get?

As for me, well... Tommy Wade, Dan Hudson and I were stopped in South Carolina for a crime we did not commit, released on our own recognizance, and spent a night at the worst motel in north-central Florida. On the plus side we enjoyed beautiful weather, watched a Loggerhead Turtle in the Canaveral surf with the Space Shuttle towering behind us, enjoyed old town St. Augustine, and had a wonderful lunch on the waterfront in Savannah, Georgia. Oh yes, and we saw the bird! The 1,600 miles driven was definitely worth it to see the little tropical duck swim out of the reeds in the golden Florida sun...

# Spring Meeting Returns To The Southern NC Mountains!

## Hendersonville - May 3-6, 2006

*Gail Lankford*

Yes, we return to this beautiful area, but there are some changes from last spring's meeting. We will be based in Hendersonville, famous for Jackson Park, a quaint downtown, and apples! (although admittedly fall is apple season) You can look forward to new birding sites south and west of Hendersonville, along with some of the best field trips from last spring. We will place another order for blue skies and warm temperatures, and hope for better luck than last year. The warblers will be back, so if you missed any last year, now is your chance to redeem yourself!

Meeting dates are May 3-6, a weekend we hope will coincide with the big push of northbound migrants. Most of the breeding neo-tropical migrants will be on territory and singing to show off their bright new spring plumages, so why not make it a point to join us and give these little jewels the attention they deserve!

Field trips will be all day Friday and Saturday, as usual, plus Thursday afternoon "on the way" to Hendersonville. One or more Sunday morning trips are also possible, and if scheduled will be announced on the website ([www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)) or at the meeting.

Riverbend Park /Lake Hickory and Pacolet Valley are good possibilities for members approaching the Hendersonville area on Thursday, or on the way home Sunday. Connemara, Dupont State Forest, Gorges State Park, Blue Wall Nature Preserve, Pearson's Falls/North Pacolet River, Jones Gap and Caesar's Head State Parks, Warrior Mountain, Cleveland County, and Lake Adger are some of the new destinations for which we have field trips planned for Friday and Saturday.

Friday night's presentation will be a fantastic slide show by nature photographer Bill Duyck of Asheville. Bill has taken amazing photos of birds feeding their young in the nest, as well as many other avian subjects. Bill's accompanying narrative is informative, engaging, and humorous. I suspect you will be entertained and enthralled! Saturday night's presentation

by Drew Lanham of Clemson University will describe his research linking mountain bird conservation with local flora.

The spring meeting's headquarters will be the Quality Inn and Suites at 201 Sugarloaf Road in Hendersonville, located one block east of I-26 off exit 49A. For reservations call 800-228-5151 (this is the hotel's direct toll free number) or 828-693-9905. The rates are \$70 (plus tax) for exterior rooms (these are located in a separate building from the lobby), and \$80 (plus tax) for interior rooms (facing the lobby). Both rates include a free hot breakfast. Remaining rooms blocked off for CBC will be released to the public after April 3, but any rooms available after that date will still be available to CBC at the above rates. Cancellation policy is by 4:00 PM date of arrival. Each room has a coffee maker, iron and ironing board, hair dryer, free wireless high speed internet connection, and free local calls. Some rooms also have microwave and refrigerator, and some rooms are pet friendly. The lobby area contains a heated pool, bar/lounge, dining room for breakfast only, and an exercise room.

Hopefully we can arrange another dessert social for Friday night (one can never have too much chocolate or sugar after a day of birding!) like last year. A buffet dinner on Saturday night is an option, but not yet negotiated. There are many nearby restaurants, and a listing of local eateries will be available at the CBC meeting registration desk.

Gail Lankford, Dwayne Martin, and Simon Thompson are meeting planners. Call Gail at 828-667-5755 between 9a.m.-9p.m. for further information, or email her at [whocooksforyou@charter.net](mailto:whocooksforyou@charter.net). Dwayne can be contacted at [redxbill@charter.net](mailto:redxbill@charter.net). Simon is at [travel@birdventures.com](mailto:travel@birdventures.com).

Hope to see you there!



# North Carolina Birding Trail (NCBT) News *from Salinda Dailey*

*"To conserve and enhance North Carolina's bird habitat by promoting sustainable bird watching activities, economic opportunities, and conservation education"*

## **Piedmont Site Nominations Open!**

The piedmont region site nomination process opened on October 1, 2006. If you want to nominate a site for the piedmont region of the Trail, go to the Site Nominations section of the website to review the directions and download the necessary forms. The piedmont region site nomination process will remain open until April 1, 2007.

Now that we're implementing the Trail in the piedmont, we'll be holding a series of informational meetings on the NCBT across the region, to drum up support and excitement for the project. The first of these meetings took place north of Raleigh on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Others will follow in the Sandhills, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem areas come the New Year; stay tuned for meeting announcements.

## **Coastal Plain Trail Guide Design Underway**

No birding or wildlife trail is complete without a trail guide or map to direct visitors to the sites. The NCBT guides will be developed as three stand-alone publications for the coastal plain, piedmont, and mountains. We are currently in the design phase of the coastal plain guide, working with a Raleigh-based design firm. We hope to have the guide available for distribution by late Spring 2007.

Early in the New Year, we will have coastal plain trail guide information posted on our website in PDF format so that you'll be able to download information and maps electronically. We'll send out an announcement when this is up and working.

## **Birder Friendly Business & Birder Friendly Community Program**

The comments and evaluation results have been overwhelmingly positive regarding the three Birder Friendly programs we've held in the coastal plain [Plymouth (July), Wilmington (Sept.), and Columbia (Nov.)]. These trainings provide participants with a binder full of guidance materials, a copy of *The Sibley Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America*, and extensive training on marketing, hospitality, birding as a travel hobby, and birders as a niche market. Participants report that the presentations, notebook and handouts will be useful for their businesses and communities.

If you are interested in a hosting a Birder Friendly program in your community in the coastal plain or piedmont, please contact us. It's a good investment of a few hours of time and \$20, with the potential to reap many future rewards for your business and community as the NCBT progresses across the state. (*Mountain area opportunities will open in late 2007, when we begin implementation of the Trail in that region*).

## **Grants and Funding**

The NCBT has been very fortunate to have received funding for the initiative from the following organizations over the past few months:

\$1,700 from the N.C. Department of Commerce in the form of a Tourism Matching Funds award to develop a magazine advertisement for the NC Birding Trail in two national birding magazines.

\$25,000 from the Progress Energy Foundation to support printing and production costs for the coastal plain region trail guide.

\$100,000 from the GoldenLEAF Foundation to support coastal plain and piedmont trail guide design and development, and continued support for the Birder Friendly Business and Birder Friendly Community training programs.



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### Upcoming CBC Meetings

Hendersonville, NC May 3-6, 2007  
Santee, SC Fall 2007

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4201 Sentimental Lane, Apex, NC 27539

919-779-2826, sshultz@nc.rr.com

Submission deadlines are due the 1st of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

**Headquarters Secretary**, Dana Harris, Bloomingdale, IL

630-453-8270, srharris@mindspring.com

**Rare Bird Alert**: 704-332-BIRD

**CBC Website**: [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

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