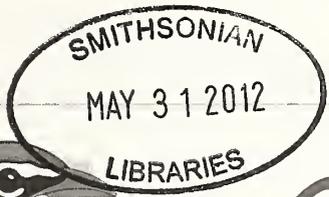


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Volume 58 June 2012 Number 3

Fall Meeting in the South Carolina Upstate

Irvin Pitts



Located in the South Carolina upcountry, the city of Greenville is our destination when we gather for the fall 2012 CBC meeting the weekend of September 28-30. Nationally acclaimed for its downtown amenities, Greenville boasts scenic streetscapes, cultural arts, shops, dining, greenways, and parks highlighted by the beautiful Falls Park on the Reedy with its 60-foot waterfall and unique 355-foot long pedestrian suspension bridge. The city is well known for its revitalization efforts, successfully accomplished through strong public/private partnerships that have resulted in a thriving "state-of-the-art" business, entertainment and recreation community.

More importantly to birders, Greenville is also ideally located in proximity to some of South Carolina's finest and most treasured natural resources, including such mountain gems along the Blue Ridge Escarpment as the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area and the Jocassee Gorges as well as locally popular birding hot-spots such as Lake Conestee Nature Park. Birding opportunities will be plentiful, and field trips are being designed to offer participants the opportunity to enjoy the best this region has to offer. Our destinations will also include Sassafras Mountain, Nine Times Preserve, Table Rock State Park, the Townville area, and the Clemson Forest as well as locations in and around Greenville including Paris Mountain State Park, Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve and others.

Species we hope to see include migrating Broad-winged Hawks, Peregrine Falcons and other raptors as

well as multitudes of transient Neotropical songbirds including a variety of wood warblers such as Chestnut-sided, Tennessee, Magnolia, Blackburnian and many others.

Participants will also enjoy excellent evening presentations. Our keynote speaker on Saturday is Patrick McMillan, host, co-creator, and writer of the popular and award-winning ETV nature program *Expeditions with Patrick McMillan*. Over the past fifteen years Patrick has worked as a professional naturalist, biologist and educator. His range of experience has concentrated on botany (plant science) though he is also well-respected through his work in ichthyology, herpetology, mammalogy and ornithology. Patrick is a professional naturalist, lecturer, and director of the Campbell Museum of Natural History at Clemson University.

On Friday evening, award-winning natural history and conservation photographer Clay Bolt will join us. Clay's significant work has been featured by *The Nature Conservancy*, *Scientific American*, *Outdoor Photographer*, *The Telegraph*, *Outdoor Photography* and *Digital Photographer* among others. In addition, he was a major photographic contributor to the book *Conserve A Legacy: Natural Lands & Waters in South Carolina* with Southeastern Conservationist Thomas Wyche and is very active with a number of regional conservation efforts including Discover Life in America and the Partnership for the Blue Ridge.

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Birder's Book Review

Steve Shultz



Birds of Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire
Bart de Boer, Eric Newton, and Robin Restall
ISBN 978-0-691-15336-0, 192 pages, paper
2012, Princeton University Press, \$27.95

Popularly known as the “ABC Islands”, the trio of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao lie in the sparkling Caribbean just a few dozen miles from the mainland of South America. Many visit as day-trippers while on a cruise, or fly to one of the many resorts that cater to sun-worshippers, snorkelers, and divers. Located south of the “hurricane belt”, the islands not only offer reliably good weather, but reliably good birding as well.

While located in the Caribbean, the birdlife encountered on the islands is more South American in nature, though visitors familiar with Caribbean avifauna will no doubt find some old friends mixed in with their southern neighbors. Due to the South American nature of the avifauna, Caribbean field guides are of limited use in Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao.

Birding guides specific to the ABC Islands have been in short supply until the recently released *Birds of Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire* by Bart de Boer, Eric Newton, and Robin Restall. Bart is a Dutch ornithologist who has written two books on the wildlife of the area. Eric resides on Curacao and is an avid birder, and you may recognize Robin as the illustrator of *Birds of Northern South America*.

The book covers all of the species regularly seen or expected to be seen in the islands, and provides close to 1,000 illustrations on 71 color plates. I found the illustrations to be rather good. Not as precise as the drawings in Sibley's guides, but certainly better than many of the plates in the National Geographic guides (which I steadfastly maintain provide some of the

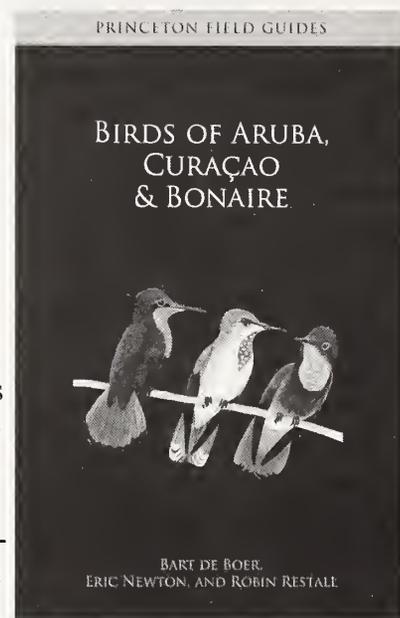
worst illustrations of any of the major guides).

Each species rates a paragraph or so of text that includes the local names for each bird on each island (handy if you are trying to describe a desired species to a local), a brief written description of the bird, details on calls and sounds, a brief sentence or two on “habits and habitats”, and the status or occurrence in the covered area.

A checklist at the back provides a quick and easy way to differentiate which birds occur on which islands in cases where the species is not present on all three. Unlike some guides to Caribbean-area birds, common species from North America are illustrated.

The preface to the plates and species accounts provides an overview of the islands' geography, flora and fauna, and points out birding hot-spots on each of the islands.

Overall I found the book to be very easy to use, compact in size, and think it would be of benefit to those visiting Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao. Now if I can just figure out a way to get there for a few weeks myself, I might be able to fill in some tick marks on that checklist!



Climate Change Helps Seabirds?

The New York Times reports that increasing wind speeds in the Southern Ocean are allowing Wandering Albatrosses to make shorter foraging flights during the breeding season. Analysis of more than 40 years of data suggest that in 2008 birds spent an average of 9.7 days on each foraging trip. This compares to 12.4 days in 1970. Shorter foraging trips, and shorter fasting periods by incubating birds, may be the reason that birds now average one kilogram more than at the beginning of the study.

CBC Outer Banks Field Trip

By the time this reaches you, the Southeast should be warming up for another hot, humid summer. The kind we all know and love. The kind where bird activity dries up just about as fast as the local reservoir. What better time then to look back to a much colder time. A much windier time. Yes, December on the Outer Banks of North Carolina is just about the polar opposite of June on the Outer Banks of North Carolina (well, except for the mosquitoes).



Last December an intrepid group of bundled birders explored the Banks for all things avian. This sporty LeConte's Sparrow was a surprise. Literally. The bird was identified only after the photos were reviewed! (photo courtesy of Ken Christison)



Birding. Carolina Bird Club style! Yes, sometimes those tricky little fellas like to hide in the marsh or drop behind an inopportunist-timed wave. Others, like this young Brown Pelican, like to be the center of attention. Literally.

Uninjured and fully flight-capable, this bird apparently decided that mooching from fisherman on the Oregon Inlet groin makes for better living than the old-school method of diving into that very cold ocean for your own fish. (photo courtesy of Jon Rouse)

The now-one-year-old Jeanette's Pier stays open throughout the year, a definite advantage for coastal birders searching for scoters, loons, gulls, and whatever else might show up. However, as convenient as a perch above the pounding waves might be, the pier offers little protection from the light breezes that normally waft against the Banks in winter. At this point the wind was only blowing about 25 m.p.h! I think we can all see why the Wright Brothers thought this a good place to fly a kite. (photo courtesy of Ken Christison)



Birder's Trivia



Most of you reading this Newsletter think birds are pretty neat. After all, you are a member of a bird club. Or you sat down at your favorite coffee shop and picked this up from the pile of magazines on the table and are no doubt thinking, "What is up with these people? Are they really in a club that's all about looking at birds? They must be loopy."

In either case, birds ARE amazing, and the variety of species astounds even the more jaded among us. To see just how amazing, we offer this brief trivia questionnaire. Answers will be printed in the next edition of the Newsletter. (So if you are that coffee drinker, hope that the same bloke who left this edition does the same with the next!)

1. What species covers its chicks with sand when leaving the nest in order to protect them from predators?
2. What are the only two species of bird to be recorded on all seven continents?
3. What is the heaviest parrot? The largest parrot?
4. What is the fastest running bird that can also fly?
5. What is the largest and heaviest species of owl?
6. What closely related group of birds is thought to make the loudest call?
7. What is the only non-human species to make and use tools?
8. What is the world's only nocturnal fruit-eating bird?
9. What is the world's largest and heaviest bird?
10. What is the only creature to have its breeding season during the Antarctic winter?
11. This bird has the longest wingspan and longest incubation period. What is it?
12. What is the largest and heaviest of the eagles?
13. What family of birds uses mounds of decaying plant matter to incubate their eggs?
14. What is the only bird species to only eat leaves?
15. What is the largest living rail?
16. What is the heaviest living flying animal? (2 possible answers)
17. What is the hummingbird species with the longest bill? (and for extra credit, how long is it?)

Fall Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Our meeting headquarters is the Greenville Holiday Inn at I-85 and 4295 Augusta Road. There are two special room rates being offered to CBC members: \$59.00/night (not including taxes) and \$62.00/night that includes a breakfast buffet. Some rooms are equipped with microwaves and small refrigerators and are provided on a first-come first-served basis. All reserved rooms are non-smoking. The Holiday Inn will also be our location for our evening programs and

for our Saturday night dinner buffet. To register for a room contact the Holiday Inn at (864) 277-8921 and be sure to mention you are with the CBC.

Registration information along with additional meeting and banquet details and field trip descriptions will be included in the next Newsletter. Make your hotel reservations soon and be sure to join us for a fun-filled weekend of September 28-30, 2012!



CBC Nebraska Trip

Steve Shultz

Thirteen members of the CBC journeyed to the Platte River Valley and Sandhills of Nebraska from March 28-April 1 in search of good birds, good company, and encounters with the famous congregations of migrating Sandhills Cranes that fill the valley in early spring. We found all of this and more while enjoying some unusually balmy weather. Like 90 degrees. In Nebraska. In March.

Instructions to those visiting the Sandhill Crane viewing blinds on the banks of the Platte River warn participants to bring multiple layers of socks, the warmest coat they have, and even then be prepared for cold.



*The group at Switzer Ranch, Burwell, NE
Irvin Pitts*



*Greater Prairie-Chicken, Burwell, NE
Steve Shultz*

These instructions clearly did not take 2012's La Nina into account. Instead of temperatures in the thirties, the late-March trip enjoyed daytime highs of 75, 86, and 90! A light jacket sufficed for the late evening and early morning crane, grouse, and prairie-chicken viewing.

The early spring meant that some of our target birds, notably American Tree Sparrow and Northern Shrike had already moved north, while species not usually seen until later in the year, including Burrowing Owl, Franklin's Gull, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and American Golden-Plover were found and enjoyed.

Starting in Omaha, the trip headed west, encountering the first Sandhill Cranes near Grand Island. Flocks of grey cranes dotted cornfields for miles and miles as the birds fattened up on waste grain in preparation for

ongoing flights that would take them to breeding grounds as far away as Siberia. Wetlands interspersed among the agricultural fields held shorebirds, geese, ducks, and more. A favorite stop was at Funk Waterfowl Production Area where participants enjoyed rosy-breasted Franklin's Gulls, Ross's and Snow Geese, 25+ American Golden-Plovers, and a variety of other shorebirds.



*Sharp-tailed Grouse, Burwell, NE
Irvin Pitts*

Evening found us in one of Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary blinds on the south bank of the Platte. While Tom Turkeys displayed on the far bank, cranes began to fly in from the fields and roost in the river, eventually covering the "mile wide and six-inch deep" waterway in a blanket of grey.

(Continued on page 6)

Nebraska

(Continued from page 5)

Since the evening show differs somewhat from the morning experience, just nine and a half short hours after we left, we were back at Rowe Sanctuary listening to the calls of the cranes as they awakened and prepared for the day. To say that the sight of so many cranes flapping, calling, and displaying is incredible would be poor justice. It truly is something one has to experience in person.

After the cranes departed the river, we found ourselves viewing Harris's Sparrows, Spotted Towhees, and other "feeder birds" from the comfort of rocking chairs at the visitor center.

Leaving the valley behind, we drove north and west into the beautiful Nebraska Sandhills. The agricultural fields gave way to rolling hills, waving golden grass, and scattered cedars. This is the favored habitat of the Greater Prairie-Chicken and the Sharp-tailed Grouse, birds we hoped to see on the lek at Switzer Ranch on the shores of Calamus Reservoir. The reservoir itself provided plenty of good birding including views of American White Pelicans in high breeding color, more waterfowl, and strangely for Nebraska in March, several species of butterfly and one snake!

will remember fondly the opportunity to hold a glass of wine in one hand while turning the focus wheel of a spotting scope trained on displaying prairie-chickens with the other. After a home-cooked ranch dinner, many of us walked the property looking for birds and enjoyed a strange duet between one of the trip leaders and an endearing Eastern Screech-Owl.

Come dawn the group had split into two groups, one to view lekking Greater Prairie-Chickens and the other to see displaying Sharp-tailed Grouse. Both enjoyed an unforgettable experience with birds displaying just yards from the blinds.



*Old school buses make great viewing blinds!
Switzer Ranch, Burwell, NE
Steve Shultz*



*Viewing shorebirds, waterfowl and more
at Funk WPA
Steve Shultz*

Sometimes you just get lucky, and this was the case at a fuel stop in tiny Ravenna, NE when a customer at the gas station where we were fueling mentioned a pair of Trumpeter Swans just a quarter-mile away.

The swans, plus some unexpected Burrowing Owls, pushed the total number of species spotted to 88, neatly surpassing the total amassed by a well-known professional tour company the week before, and besting my trip total from the previous year's scouting trip by 15 species!

I think those on the trip would agree that the experience was unforgettable!

After a long day that started before dawn in the crane blinds, the lodge, shady porches, and hospitality of Switzer Ranch provided welcome relaxation. Many

CBC Publications Online!

The most recent editions of the Newsletter and The Chat are online on the CBC website. All CBC members will use the same username and password to access these publications. The username is "**member**" and the password is "**birdfun**". This is a membership benefit, please don't share the password with non-members! The password will be changed from time to time, but can always be found in the most recent print edition of the Newsletter.

Go to <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/newsletter> to access the Newsletter, and <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat> to access The Chat.

Executive Committee Changes

Please welcome Jeff Click from Easley as South Carolina Vice-President. Jeff takes over from Paul Seridge. Paul's tenure was marked by his significant efforts to make improvements to the finance and budgeting aspects of the Club, and his hard work and innovative ideas are greatly appreciated as they make the often difficult job of forecasting incomes and expenses more manageable.



Welcome New Members!

Tammy Smith New Bern, NC	John McGee Raleigh, NC	Mary-Catherine Martin Bonneau, SC	Ronald McLearn Durham, NC	Leona & Vance Krauth Hillsborough, NC	Christine Stoughton-Root Merritt, NC	Mary Douglas & Tom Jones Charleston, SC	Virginia Lynn & Jose Diaz Myrtle Beach, SC	Sally West Mt. Pleasant, SC
Chris Montroy Ft. Mill, SC	Michael Grossman Charlotte, NC	Heber Coltrain Williamston, NC	Douglas Shadwick Chapel Hill, NC	Ann, Cynthia and Isabelle Ceraldi Abbeville, SC	John and Adrienne Little Raleigh, NC	Gordon Warburton Marion, NC	Nancy and Larry Pellegrini Belmont, NC	Susan Hadenchuk Bolivia, NC
Tony Desantis Camden, NC	Deborah Copeland Wake Forest, NC	Joette Borzik Shenandoah Junction, WV	Anne and Paul Dayer East Aurora, NY	Ron and Janet Zick Charlotte, NC	Jane Halpin Cary, NC	Jamie Dozier Georgetown, SC	Tom and Jane Kline Raleigh, NC	Marilyn Williams Bryson City, NC
Michele Barnhart Wake Forest, NC	Jennifer Schrand Cary, NC	Pat & Haines Hargrett Lexington, SC	April Norris Raleigh, NC	Claude & Sandra Falls Cleveland, TN	Anne McLaughlin Hot Springs, NC	Renee & Bart Savitz Pink Hill, NC	David Paynter Wilmington, NC	

Stacy Smaltz Wilmington, NC	Michael Grossman Charlotte, NC	Heber Coltrain Williamston, NC	Douglas Shadwick Chapel Hill, NC	Ann, Cynthia and Isabelle Ceraldi Abbeville, SC	John and Adrienne Little Raleigh, NC	Gordon Warburton Marion, NC	Nancy and Larry Pellegrini Belmont, NC	Susan Hadenchuk Bolivia, NC
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Deborah Copeland Wake Forest, NC	Joette Borzik Shenandoah Junction, WV	Anne and Paul Dayer East Aurora, NY	Ron and Janet Zick Charlotte, NC	Jane Halpin Cary, NC	Jamie Dozier Georgetown, SC	Tom and Jane Kline Raleigh, NC	Marilyn Williams Bryson City, NC	James Swarr Melrose, FL	Craig Elder Saint Stephen, SC
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Jesse Dale Linville, NC	Katrina Roman Leland, NC	Robert Hakeem Charlotte, NC	Eddie Owens Cary, NC	Chris and Jean Williams Durham, NC
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Deceased Members:

Bill Phillips Lenior, NC	Terry Nelson Randleman, NC
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Lynne Mattocks Lucas



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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Greenville, SC September 28-30, 2012
Coastal NC January 2013

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 mclark66@sc.rr.com

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Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of December, February, April, June, August, and October.

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