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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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## CBC Fall Meeting... September in Charleston!

Irvin Pitts

Charleston, a city rich in history and nationally acclaimed for its beautiful landscapes and well-preserved architecture, will be our destination when we gather for our Fall 2014 Carolina Bird Club meeting the weekend of September 26-28. Charleston, a city of elegant, Southern charm, boasts fine dining at distinguished restaurants and unique shopping experiences. The city's cultural center, Historic Downtown, allows visitors to explore cobblestoned streets and experience unsurpassed, historic Southern architecture while enjoying various galleries and museums located adjacent to the scenic and historic harbor. Folks will find there is much to see and do in addition to varied and plentiful opportunities for fabulous fall birding!

Charleston's proximity to some of South Carolina's finest and most treasured natural coastal resources allows us to offer trips to habitats ranging from wild, scenic beaches to longleaf pine savannas. We expect excellent birding, and our field trips are being designed to offer participants the opportunity to enjoy the best this region has to offer. Destinations include notable hotspots in the Charleston area, coastal barrier islands, former plantations, beautiful gardens, old growth cypress swamps and much, much more. Shorebird migration should be going strong, and we will seek out these southbound migrants as well as many of the other marsh and sea birds associated with rich coastal environments. Fall along the coast can also be particularly exciting for Neotropical songbird

migration, and we will explore some of the area's "migrant traps" in search of these colorful jewels. In addition to our exciting slate of field trips led by a competent team of top birders, participants have an opportunity to enjoy excellent evening presentations on bird-related topics. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend!

Our meeting headquarters will be the InnPlace Hotel, located near the airport in North Charleston just off I-26 and minutes away from downtown Charleston. Special room rates of \$89.00/night (not including taxes) are being offered to CBC members. Some rooms are equipped with microwaves and small refrigerators that are available on a first-come first-served basis. The entire hotel is a non-smoking facility. To reserve your room, contact the InnPlace Hotel at 843-747-1900. Be sure to identify yourself as a Carolina Bird Club member in order to receive the meeting rate. The InnPlace will also be the location for the evening programs and other social events related to our meeting.

Look for more details including the field trip schedule and descriptions in the next CBC Newsletter. Make your hotel reservations soon, and we look forward to seeing you in Charleston the weekend of September 26-28 for a fun-filled weekend of fall birding!

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## Brown-headed Nuthatch Nest Box Program

You know them, you love them, those cute little upside-down brown nuthatches sneaking a sunflower seed from your feeder or sounding off like a dog's squeak toy from the tall pines nearby. But did you know that the Brown-headed Nuthatch appears to be declining across the Carolinas, and that the lack of suitable nesting cavities may be the among the most significant causes?

Current land management techniques, especially in suburban yards and parklands, dictate removal of standing dead timber, a common location for nuthatches and other cavity nesting species to raise young. The resulting lack of suitable nesting cavities is, in some cases, at least partially made up for by human-placed nesting boxes. One species, the Eastern Bluebird, benefits greatly from the proliferation of nesting boxes erected in yards, parks, and golf courses. Unfortunately, Brown-headed Nuthatches, which will attempt to utilize nest boxes with bluebird-sized entrance holes, are not as aggressive as the larger bluebirds, and in most cases where there is competition for the same cavity, the bluebird dominates.

Fortunately, the solution is fairly simple. By placing nesting boxes with entrance holes of 1 or 1 1/8 inch in diameter, nuthatches and other small cavity-nesters including chickadees, titmice, and wrens, can utilize the cavity without the potential for more dominant bluebirds to usurp the box. By presenting a balance of boxes with bluebird-optimized entrance holes and boxes with nuthatch-optimized entrance holes, you can increase the diversity of cavity nesting birds in your yard as well as help the Brown-headed Nuthatch reverse its decline.

Existing boxes with larger entrance holes can be refitted to be nuthatch-friendly with the addition of an excluder that reduces the size of the existing entrance hole to one inch. Audubon North Carolina is making an excluder available to interested parties at no charge. To receive yours, e-mail your request to: [nuthatch@audubon.org](mailto:nuthatch@audubon.org)

## South Carolina Wetland Enhancements Completed

Recent enhancements at a pair of South Carolina wetland sites have improved habitat quality for waterfowl and other birds dependent on wetlands for feeding and nesting.

Washo Reserve, located twelve miles south of Georgetown in the Santee Coastal Reserve, is an important nesting site for wading birds, and is among the oldest continuously used rookeries in the country. Herons and egrets have been using the site for decades, and since the mid-1990s, Wood Storks have nested in numbers approaching 150 pairs.

In recent years an increase of aquatic weeds and reduction in the number of live cypress trees resulted in decreasingly attractive nesting habitat. A collaboration between The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited resulted in installation of a new water control structure that will allow better management of water levels to reduce weed growth and foster cypress regeneration. A total of 648 acres of habitat were improved during implementation of this initiative.

Four new water control structures at the Bonneau Ferry Wildlife Management Area north of Charleston will allow for better water level management over 387 acres of wetlands. Forage for wintering waterfowl should improve as managers can better regulate the level of the water from season to season. This ability to optimize water levels also improves habitat for other wetland dependent species.

In addition to the new water control structures, 5,000 linear feet of canal maintenance and embankment stabilization ensure that water can flow to the most optimal locations at the best times of the year.

The Bonneau Ferry project was completed as a result of collaboration between the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited and benefited from the South Carolina Lowcountry Phase III North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant.

# CBC CBBT Trip Report

Steve Shultz

Frequently, February mornings on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT) can be described in three words: cold, windy, and exciting. And while conditions often make humans chilly and wind-chapped, the close-up views of sea ducks usually make up for the discomfort. So it was a special thrill when the fifteen participants on the February 22-23 CBC CBBT trip awoke to glassy seas and (relatively) warm temperatures. Instead of “cold, windy, and exciting”, we could look forward to “reasonably warm, calm, and exciting!”

Gloves, wool hats, and chemical hand warmers stayed in the car while the group enjoyed views of scoters, grebes, Purple Sandpipers, Razorbills, and Long-tailed Ducks under some of the best viewing conditions I've ever had on the bridge-tunnel. The calm seas allowed us to obtain long-range scope views of birds on the Bay and the Atlantic, as well as enjoy close-up looks of ducks floating just yards away on the flat water.

Highlights on the complex's four manmade islands included “singing” Black Scoters, various plumages of Surf Scoter, unusual numbers of White-winged Scoters, stunning looks at Long-tailed Ducks, nearly a dozen Red-necked Grebes, and a Wood Duck that took up with a raft of sea ducks. More than thirty

Harbor Seals on islands three and four entertained as they porpoised, bobbed, and sunbathed, while a pair of Yellow-rumped Warblers proved that there really are few habitats that the little birds will not occupy.



*Drake Long-tailed Duck*

This year's influx of White-winged Scoters and Red-necked Grebes was evident on the bridge-tunnel, and birds of all types were numerous enough that on the southbound trip, we were able to tally all three scoters and Red-necked Grebe while riding in a car moving at posted speeds!

While at the scenic overlook at the north end of the complex, a southbound birder related news of Snowy Owls and King Eiders just north of our intended afternoon destination of Chincoteague NWR. Results of a hasty vote indicated the group wanted to chase the rarities, and we were off on a wild goose chase of sorts. The goose was a Ross's that had been alongside US Highway 13 about a half hour north of the bridge. Fortunately the young Ross's was easily found in a large flock of Snow Geese, and after brief views, we were again on the way north with visions of northern owls in our heads.

Sadly, the information received was not entirely accurate, and this, combined with the number of people enjoying an unseasonably warm day at the shore, meant any Snowy Owls at Assateague Island were no doubt as far from the paved parking areas as possible. With not much daylight to spend, we regrettably left Assateague for a rendezvous with more sea ducks at



*Harbor Seal on CBBT Island #4*

*(Continued on page 6)*

# CBC Colombia Photos and Donation News!

Scott Winton & Natalia Ocampo-Peñuela



Chestnut Piculet



Black-tailed Guan



Black-fronted Wood-Quail



Birding... CBC style!

The Carolina Bird Club recently donated to the conservation organization Saving Species, whose main objective is to stop extinctions in the most biodiverse and threatened places in the world. Saving Species has funded conservation projects in Brazil, Madagascar, and Colombia. This collective of senior conservation scientists invests all its donations into the protection or restoration of important habitat for critical species by partnering with local organizations. The funds donated by the CBC will contribute to bird conservation in Colombia in places that generate the largest conservation benefit by protecting high concentrations of endemic and threatened birds. This donation was inspired by the success of a recent CBC bonus field trip to Colombia led by the authors. Colombia is home to more bird species than any other country in the world, but unfortunately many are at risk of extinction. The trip leaders and CBC executive committee agreed that a portion of any unspent trip funds should be set aside for bird habitat conservation in Colombia, and we felt that Saving Species would be an ideal recipient for such a donation due to their ongoing conservation efforts in Colombia. For more information on Savings Species, see <http://savingspecies.org>.

**Welcome New Members!**

	Tressa Krenzer Clemmons, NC	Rachel Paradis Cary, NC	Nell Joslin Raleigh, NC	Jennifer Bruce & David Kindel Simpsonville, SC
Deborah & Lloyd Burtaine Myrtle Beach, SC	Danny & Diane Bosley Greenville, NC	Pauline Sterin Arapahoe, NC	Terry Cox Columbia, SC	Miriam Conner Lexington, NC
Julia Mode Morganton, NC	Heyward & Carolyn Douglass Seneca, SC	Mary Jo Bertsch Melanie Furinsky Greenville, NC	Sara Kummer Ninety Six, SC	Christopher Feeny Martinez, GA
Elizabeth & Barry Kelly Burnsville, NC	Kathryn & Dennis Allen Pisgah Forest, NC	Raymond Carter Jacksonville, NC	Diane Midness Oriental, NC	Robin & Mark Prak Raleigh, NC
Jamie Adams Wilmington, NC	Karen Edwards Wilmington, NC	John Scavetto Charlotte, NC	Jeannie Chapman Traci McSwain Spartanburg, SC	Clay & Joyce Holland Southport, NC
Michael, Stephanie, Lysa & Cameron Fulbright Cary, NC	Jane & David Nagurney West Chester, PA	Tom & Marilee Bush Alexander, NC	Michael Dorcas Davidson, NC	Christopher & Karen King Rougemont, NC
Jackie & Thomas Lawing Matthews, NC	Ed & Pat Simpson Monroe, NC	Donna Murray Spindale, NC	David Bailey Greensboro, NC	Shay & Greg Pittillo Wilmington, NC
Shawn Smolen-Morton Florence, SC	Dave & Milissa Weesner Wilmington, NC	Richard Watkins St. Matthews, SC	Bill & Kathy Ehmig St. Helena Island, SC	Hunter, Lillian, Rosa & Jacob Kome Clemson, SC
Steve & Nancy Underwood Newport, NC	Anne Bailey Greensboro, NC	Steven Howell Rocky Mount, NC	Kimberly Childs Asheville, NC	James Thompson Gibsonville, NC
Jon & Suzie Whiteside Asheville, NC	April & Scott Friend Rock Hill, SC	Janet & Richard Paulette Deep Gap, NC	Rene & Sandra Wilbur Raleigh, NC	Bruce & Lynn Richardson Manns Harbor, NC
Michael Trescott Matthews, NC	Linda Stecklein Wilmington, NC	Sherry Ellsworth Sanford, NC	Carrie Stilwell Asheville, NC	Susie Bell Asheville, NC
Suzanne & Daniel Sands Cary, NC	Floyd Swagerty Charleston, SC	Robin Kitson Raleigh, NC	Liz Honnold Hendersonville, NC	Lib Mullinnix & Joye Durham Black Mountain, NC
Susan Madson & Joye Norris North Myrtle Beach, SC	Tom Puplava Hope Mills, NC	Thomas Corwin Sherrills Ford, NC	Carol Jaworski Canonsburg, PA	Phyllis Sprunt Boone, NC
Sandra & Bob Peckham Wake Forest, NC	Steven, Carlene, Samantha & Wayatt Sharp Fayetteville, NC	Joanie Harrison Sleeping Dog Cabin Rentals Bryson City, NC	Nancy Iha Province, NC	Barbara & Roger Lumb Aurora, NC
	Gene & Kimberly Rollins High Point, NC	John Haigh Durham, NC	Margaret Kopriva Jacksonville, FL	Tammy Hester (Life Member) Beaufort, SC
		Bao Do Mint Hill, NC	Robert Oberfelder Cary, NC	
		Laura Upchurch Raleigh, NC	Alan & Holly Hubbard Efland, NC	
			Cheryl Gerhart Churchville, VA	

# CBC CBBT

(Continued from page 3)

Ocean City, MD. The wintering King Eider dealt our group a busted hand when boat traffic in and out of the inlet continually forced the raft of ducks to hide out of sight behind the far rock jetty. A few of us got a consolation prize Common Eider for our efforts, but the setting sun soon brought the day to a close.

Sunday morning dawned bright, clear, and nearly windless, perfect conditions in which to explore the varied habitats of Chincoteague NWR. Swan Cove provided picture-perfect views of Tundra Swans, Snow Geese, and most of the regions dabbling ducks, while adjacent Tom's Cove offered up shorebirds feeding on flats exposed by the receding tide and more ducks and grebes. Scoters and loons on the calm Atlantic gave those who did not get their fill on the CBBT even more chances to enjoy wintering waterbirds.

Moving from shorebirds to landbirds, Chincoteague's Woodland Trail produced singing Fox Sparrows, an endearing Brown Creeper, and views of endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrels, among other treats. After a countdown on the edge of Snow Goose Pool, Carol Bowman won the trip's "door prize" by guessing the closest to the number of species seen so far.

Just after the official end of the trip, word came that a handsome drake Eurasian Wigeon was found in Black Duck Pool, and most of the attendees were able to regroup and enjoy views of the European visitor, an excellent exclamation point to an enjoyable weekend of coastal birding.

While the CBBT "duck season" is over for now, look for another CBC Bonus Trip offering to this exciting destination next winter!

## The Chat and the CBC Newsletter Now Available Online Only... Choose Your Method of Receipt!

Trying to cut back on snail mail? Looking to downsize to a smaller post office box? You can now choose to receive *The Chat* and/or the *CBC Newsletter* online only instead of receiving a printed copy in the mail.

While there are a number of benefits to hardcopy publications (You can share them with friends! You can pass them along to a budding new birder!) some folks prefer to read publications online instead of receive them in the mail. In an effort to respond to these requests, the CBC Executive Committee embarked on a process review that would allow members to receive Club publications electronically instead of through the mail, for those who choose to participate. The resulting product can be credited in a large part to the efforts of our Webmaster, Kent Fiala, for creating the system that allows for user logons to enable web viewing of current *Chat* and *Newsletter* issues.

Also, in conjunction with this new feature, there is a new way for you to correct or change your mailing address and other contact information online. You can

even check when your dues are payable!

To access these new features, first navigate to the CBC website at [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org). Next, click on the new link "[Member Services](#)" in the sidebar that is on the left side of each page. From the Member Services page click on the "[Manage my membership information](#)" link. From here you opt in or out of the electronic-only publication delivery and manage your address information.

If you choose to receive publications only online, you will be able to read them by navigating to the website, and selecting either *The Chat* or the *CBC Newsletter* link from the sidebar on the left of each web page. In order to access the current issue(s) you will need to log in. If you haven't yet registered your login, you will first need to do that at the [login registration](#) page.

Members who select online delivery will receive an e-mail (at the address you provide to the Club) each time a new issue is placed on the website.

# Birder's Book Review

Steve Shultz



*Rare Birds of North America*  
Steve N.G. Howell, Ian Lewington & Will Russell  
ISBN 978140 0848072, 448 pages, cloth  
2014, Princeton University Press, \$35.00

Rare birds in North America present a conundrum for field guide writers. While many (most?) birders are interested in honing the skills needed to identify a rarity, their occurrence is not frequent or widespread enough to warrant valuable page space at the expense of more common species that, justifiably, deserve greater attention and detail. So rarities are often relegated to the upper corner of the page with only a brief notation, or are omitted altogether. Even when included, entries often do not have enough accompanying information to satisfy those interested in identifying rarities and understanding their patterns of occurrence. *Rare Birds of North America* aims to fill this void by presenting 262 species of birds that are rarely, but regularly, seen in North America, and providing sufficient information to help birders not only identify those once-in-a-decade birds, but to gain a better understanding of how and why rarities occur.

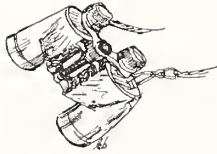
The book begins by examining migration, vagrancy, and what causes “rare” birds to appear in North America. Topics including drift, mis-orientation, overshooting, and dispersal delve into what brings these magical strays into our “local patches”. A section on topography, molt and aging describes plumages and terms used in the species accounts.

The remainder of the book consists of species accounts, and each bird receives a treatment that includes excellent illustrations by Ian Lewington. Text includes a summary of records, distribution and status, field identification, and habitat and behavior. I especially like the drawings, which are not only of impressive quality, but compare rare birds side by side with their more common American counterparts, where such comparisons are warranted. For example, having Long-toed Stint and Least Sandpiper drawn side by side is not only convenient, but instructive. Most birds rate several illustrations, often including in-flight and gender/age specific plumages.

The book provides an excellent overview of birds rare to North America and serves as a worthy partner to your favorite North American field guide.

*The Sibley Guide to Birds (Second Edition)*  
David Allen Sibley  
ISBN 9780307 957900, 599 pages, Flexibound  
2014, Alfred A. Knopf, \$40.00

Often cited as the most significant field guide to American birds since the venerable Peterson guide, *The Sibley Guide to Birds* receives a refresh for 2014. The second edition, available from booksellers now, adds drawings and descriptions of 111 additional (mostly rare) species and takes into account taxonomic changes since 2000. But does the second edition deserve valuable shelf space beside your existing first edition? I suggest that it does not, for there are some rather disappointing aspects to the new volume. One of the chief complaints of the first edition was that the coloring of the plates, especially the reds, was not realistic and came off as overly rich and gaudy. Sadly, this has not been corrected in the second edition, and at least in my copy, is even worse. Not only are the colors not particularly realistic, the overall contrast and density makes some birds nearly unrecognizable. The once beautiful renderings of ducks are now a veritable mess, with the Black-bellied Whistling Duck a prime example. A side by side comparison of the plates from both editions shows the earlier version to be much superior. In addition to the coloration issues, the text of the new edition comes across much less reader-friendly than in the original. Replacing the first edition's black print with grey, the small font is particularly difficult to read, not something that will be appreciated by users in anything but optimum lighting conditions. My suggestion on *The Sibley Guide to Birds, Second Edition* is to wait. Wait for a third edition, or hope for improvements in subsequent printings, but your field guide dollars can be better spent elsewhere. If your reason for considering this book is the addition of the new species, *Rare Birds of North America* covers them quite well, and with more in-depth review.



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### Upcoming CBC Meetings

Fall 2014 - Charleston, SC  
 Winter 2015 - Nags Head, NC



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

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